DOMESTICATING THE CITIZEN: HOUSEHOLD AUTHORITY, THE MERCHANT CLASS FAMILY AND THE EARLY MODERN STAGE

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EMILY RUTH ISAACSON

Dr. William Kerwin, dissertation supervisor

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The undersigned, appointed by the dean of the Graduate School, have examined the dissertation entitled

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and hereby certify that, in their opinion, it is worthy of acceptance.

Professor William Kerwin

Professor Catherine Holland

Professor David Read

Professor Devoney Looser

Professor George Justice

In memory of Walt Pennington and Richard Swanson

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Prologue

I am a braue Shoo-maker
and one of Crispins crew,
And has within my Budget,
the bones of old Sir Hugh:
And a trading I will go,
I'le go, i'le go,
And a trading I will go. ("Jovial Tom of all Trads, OR The Various Cries of *London-City*." 1687)

Jovial Tom of all Trades works variously as a chimney sweep, a tinker, a cooper, a coster-monger, a shoemaker, a tailor, a broomsman, a mountebank, a sharper, a barber and a piper; he was, he also explains, a miller born. He knows the cries of each of these London workers, calling them out as he sells his various skills throughout the city. That this ballad is sung to the tune of "A begging we will go" points to the vagrant nature of this man who "scorns to play the Knave." Tom finds his way in a city that assaults the senses. Tom's London assaults the ear, but the city assaults all of the senses with its web of information, material goods and social relations. London is difficult to get a handle on.

For the past five centuries, London has drawn multitudes. From about 1500 to 1900 it drew enormous numbers of people; even as virulent epidemics raged in the late seventeenth- through the nineteenth centuries, the city continued to swell in size. The city attracts artists, who write about it and critics and historians who reconsider it. The recent trends have been rather grand in scale, attempting to argue for a consistent city by looking at small, particular phenomena. But the city, of course, was not cohesive. Instead, the city was and is a location of intertwined people, learning and relearning to interact with one another. The most consistent characteristic of London is its ability to continue to draw people in: the city is so full of material that, in any era of criticism,

much awaits discovery. This dissertation will look at one of those small pieces of the city in order to draw out the experience of people whose daily lives rubbed up against each other in the swelling metropolis of the early seventeenth century.

This project began as a basic question about household space in the city: what happens when domestic space overlaps with commercial space, as it does in so many city comedies? This question arose when I attended a seminar at Chicago's Newberry Library, run by Frances E. Dolan. She introduced a variety of conduct books from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties*. Even as these conduct books argue for the primacy of the head-of-household, or householder, the books allot certain spheres of authority to other members of the household. I do not want to mistake the word spheres for the idea of the public and private spheres that is a commonplace in literary criticism about the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but I use the word in a similar manner. Although the separation of the public from the private, of the male from the female, is nearly as distinct in the early modern period, the period's conduct book writers authorize different members of the household to perform different tasks and to hold expertise in different realms of the household.

Because the separation of the spheres is not particularly stable in this period, the various household domains interact in ways often unexpected, and even more often, with conflict. Although many critics have dealt with the violent responses to conflict within the household, I want to deal with the smaller moments of conflict and the responses to those moments. The chapters of this dissertation will address moments that may appear to be aberrant. Those aberrations, however, come only in the city comedies, which

clearly caricature city life even as they attempt some form of mimetic representation of city life. The moments of discord in the household require particular negotiations around the conflicts created by the clashing of household spaces, the clashing of wills and the clashing of status within the family.

My goal in this project is to look at two genres operating from opposite expectations of the city home. To attend to these problems, this dissertation will look at a variety of early modern conduct books and ten comedies, written between 1590 and 1632. Eight of these plays take place in the city, true city comedies; two plays occur outside of London, but feature London characters. This look into the early modern household will open up a space to consider a variety of issues facing early modern Londoners, including but not limited to fears about adultery, widowhood, paternity, dowries, marriage of children, child abuse, thieving servants, ambition, the marketplace, and gender identity.

This dissertation relies on the paradigms developed by new historicist and material culturalists, with a narrowing of focus under the influence of feminist criticism. Feminist criticism has provided for me a set of questions to ask, and a certain interest in the ways that family roles are gendered and ways the expectations for those roles are gendered. In the end, this dissertation uses these ways of thinking to reconsider the way that we look at both the genre of city comedy and the way that we understand the early modern London family. This is an entity separate from other families in early modern England, even as it sometimes resembles them. Although this dissertation necessarily excludes certain familial relationships, sometimes focusing on one gender in the dyadic household relationship, or eliding over relationships generally untreated by the conduct

books (i.e. siblings), the aim is not to write a comprehensive history of the early modern London family. Instead, I intend to find a new way to consider it and find new ways to discover it.

Chapter One

Situating the Household: City and Stage

> "Yea even to this day have all sorts of people come from families, and so shall to the end of the world" William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622).

> *Plenty*:
>
> I scorn it.
> Though I keep men, I fight not with their fingers,
> Nor make it my religion to follow
> The gallants' fashion, to have my family
> Consisting in a footman and a page,
> And those two sometimes hungry.
>
> 1.2.37-42. Philip Massinger, *The City Madam*. (1632)

William Gouge's oft-cited conduct book *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises* (1622) expanded on a series of sermons he had preached in London's Blackfriars parish. He reminds his audience – both in early modern London and in the modern rare books library – of a central assumption of the early modern period: family signifies society's central structure. In his statement above, Gouge insists that family is the one thing that all people have in common no matter their condition: family is and will continue to be a universal experience. What Gouge envisions for the family, however, remains less clear, since Gouge's preferences are neither internally consistent within his book, nor present in the city that surrounds his congregation, he suggests. Gouge wrote this book after the major city comedies appeared, but his work represents the culmination of an expansion in publication of such manuals for the London household. As such, his is one of the most frequently cited in current scholarship on the early modern family.

In Philip Massinger's *The City Madam* (1632), the country gentleman Plenty desires a family with one of John Frugal's daughters, but speaks of his own current

family as the London gallant's entourage. What Plenty identifies in the above quotation as family defies modern expectations of the nuclear family. Plenty simply defines his family as those dependent on the gallant for their wages. Lawrence Stone, and many others, have pointed out that the definition of family was once much more flexible than the twentieth century definition of the term. In the early modern period the family included all inmates of the household. The London merchant's household generally included the householder (head of household), his wife, their children and their servants, as well as the occasional relative such as a brother or aged parent. This family was faced with a period when, as Robert Weimann remarks, "the traditional system of lineage relations, with their family loyalties and fealty, and the universal order of the old church gave way, [and so] centuries-old sources of validity came into disarray" (11). Many writers of the period presented competing permutations of what the London family should be in this city newly flexible due to the shifting economic and religious systems.

These quotations demonstrate the divergent responses of various members of London society about changes in both the city and family structure. Although neither may be realistic renderings of the early modern household, they are imaginative responses to a situation preoccupying early modern thought. Jean E. Howard suggests that "[p]art of the historical work of this dramatic genre [city comedy] is to render intelligible and imaginatively to manage the disruptions caused by such things as the emergence of the great trading companies and the changes in commercial practices occasioned by their activities" (Howard, "Evidence" 168). Both the minister Gouge and the playwright Massinger critique the situation of the family in the city. As moderns

looking back on the history of the family, we can use both types of texts to "render intelligible" the early modern imaginative version of the family.

This dissertation will explore the necessary negotiations of authority between the London merchant householder and other family members, all people conscious of living in an era of startlingly new experiences. The combination of the relative realism of city comedy and the ideologically central place of the family suggests a need to examine the two together, something that has been done rarely thus far in criticism.[1] The city comedy's conception of family life requires mediation since caricature and hyperbole mark the genre; and so this dissertation will also turn to the idealized family prescribed in conduct books of the London preachers, another stylized, London genre. The conduct books present the difficulty of an idealized view of the family structure that assumes the householder always fulfills his obligations. Should the householder leave unfulfilled his responsibilities, other family members must forbear with patience and prayer, maintaining the patriarchal structure of the family and the community. In this failure, the fissures of the family appear and these are the same moments when the comedy posits visions of badly maintained household authority. The comedies, while not responding directly to the conduct books, interrogate the possible situations of the household when the householder cannot (correctly) enforce his (just) authority over the rest of the household: the plays question his economic viability, virility and community-wide reputation.

This dissertation will argue for both a renewed interest in the London merchant family as a particular institution of the city and a reconsideration of the terms of city comedy to include family as an object of commentary by these early modern authors. To

do this, this dissertation will examine three major couplings of the merchant class family – husband-wife, parent-child, and master-servant – and discuss the early modern onstage expression of those relationships. Each chapter will move in two major stages: first, the chapter will consider the structures of the family as outlined in the conduct books, while attending to specific inconsistencies in a hard-pressed belief in the ideal patriarch; second, the chapter will move to the plays, which present alternative ways family members approach those fissures and contradictions. The plays posit alternatives to the responses that the conduct books suggest for dealing with inappropriate householder behavior. A consideration of the two provides a richer understanding of what is undoubtedly a nuanced experience in the early modern period. Even as the conduct books and the plays navigate the complex web of relationships in the household, this dissertation will navigate the complex web of the ideal household and the perceptions of the household, suggesting possible realities for early modern Londoners.

London, its Merchants, and their Families

Before discussing the London household, I should explain one of the basic assumptions of this dissertation: the city of London underwent a series of rapid changes in the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries that affected Londoners in both their daily lives and in their psychological understanding of their community. This shifting world led to a firmer societal control over the family and a reinforcement of the lines of patriarchy even as "new" ideas of companionate marriage gained popularity.[2] Historians have thoroughly documented the radical shifts in life in early modern London and England.[3]

The early modern Londoners were themselves keenly aware of the material changes in their city. In a description of a single site in his *Survey of London* (1598), John Stow provides a snapshot of the history of both the city and its cultural changes. For example, on Coleman Street Warde, Stow describes The Windmill Tavern, a house that was "sometimes the Jewes Synagogue, since a house of Fryers, then a Noble mans house, after that a Marchauntes house, wherein Mayroalities have been kept, and now a Wine Tavern" (Stow 278). This description identifies the expulsion of the Jews; the dissolution of the monasteries and their sale to the nobility; the growth of an affluent merchant class; the influence of the merchants in the politics of the city; and the dilapidation of buildings as they devolved into public ordinaries. With his sense of nostalgia and loss, Stow renders the transitional nature of London in its very buildings.

The radical shifts in culture certainly affected London, but the city avoided some of the most difficult cultural changes experienced in the country and on the continent. For example, despite many of the religious changes – and the ongoing religious wars on the continent – London itself lacked the "grass-roots sectarianism or the fanatical tradition of religious assassination that proved so catastrophic in the Netherlands and France, London's parishioners escaped massacre and mayhem" (Porter 36).[4] What London did see, however was a shift in the physical structures of the city as the city moved towards a secular mercantile economy. The Protestant Reformation allowed a series of new opportunities for the entrepreneurs in the city and London experienced a rapid period of growth.[5] Lena Cowen Orlin explains that "By 1600 London had overtaken all European centers except Naples and Paris demographically; by 1700 it would eclipse these two cities, as well, achieving parity with the great metropolis of

Constantinople. In 1600, London was thus thoroughly established as the English national lodestone" (Orlin, "Introduction" 3). This city, once merely provincial and earlier dwarfed by other English towns, now found itself the national center and on its way to being one of the major centers of Europe.[6] Although England was still a small part of the global economy, it was entering into a vast trade and reimagining itself as central to the world stage.[7]

This city afforded many opportunities and migrants arrived in droves, mingling with established Londoners of various social statuses. Since London was still something of a medieval town without a centralized urban plan, the city consisted of a confusing array of alleys and streets, with buildings unlike those in modern London. This congested, medieval nature of the urban environment caused people to mix in ways unlike their experiences in the countryside. Roy Porter explains that "[t]he city itself remained a social mishmash, wealthy, middling and poor jostling wherever mazes of backyards and blind alleys led off main streets" (Porter 45). Additionally the gentry came in to the city to do business during legal terms and increasingly stayed to experience entertainments in and out of court. With the vast migrant population of foreigners, country gentry, and country workers seeking their fortune, the city became not only the center of the national economy, but also an area that "[a]bove all … represented mobility, change and instability" (Pelling 82).

Even though the early modern period was a time of great cultural change, the primary changes for Londoners centered on the physically expanding city and the exploding marketplace of goods that surrounded them for the first time.[8] Orlin argues that

> the conflicts experienced on a regular basis by the greater number of Londoners undoubtedly had to do with their next neighbors, with boundaries and fences, shared chimneystacks, common cesspits, blocked windows, waste disposal, rainwater drainage, and building maintenance. The population explosion put the most common domestic functions under uncommon pressure. (Orlin, "Boundary Disputes" 345)

Many kinds of conflict occurred, often falling beyond the residents' control. Orlin explains that the that boundary disputes arose over many facets of London life demonstrate the essential anxiety surrounding urban life in this new metropolis. Thus, not only did London face major cultural changes creating anxiety, but the city also faced a population forced to live in crowded quarters, coping with the quotidian experience of many neighbors.[9]

The changes that early modern London – and England – faced in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth century increased awareness of the family structure, leading to a desire to control it as a single organism under the supervision of the householder.[10] Susan Amussen argues that "[o]rder in families was … easier to enforce than order in villages" (Amussen 33).[11] Although Amussen discusses villages outside of London, her argument also applies to the city. The intensity of the close quarters that Orlin describes heightens the anxiety about the family and the culture, rather than dissipates them: if people live in close quarters and experience a series of confrontations with neighbors, then those people will look to maintain order elsewhere. Amussen explains that the home was easier to control than the village, and thus control over the family became increasingly important.

This urgent need to control the family gave rise to a variety of metaphors to describe and control the structure, with the household as state in small the most prominent. Belinda Roberts Peters explains that the period saw the rise of the metaphor

of the household as state, it also increasingly understood the state as household, with the King as householder and the country as his wife. James I described the Act of Union between England as Scotland as a marriage between himself (the husband) and the state (the wife). Thus, Peters explains, "[b]ased on mutual consent, marriage nonetheless formed a relationship absolute in both duration and rights of authority. It was a lifelong contract, instituted by God and thus unbreakable except by his hand; and it required the rule by the husband of his wife as for all other authority relationships in society" (Peters 1-2). Peters suggests that up until the Interregnum the metaphor of husband and wife was the one that defined the state, but afterwards the relationship of father and son that defined the state. As Lawrence Stone has explained "[p]atriarchy was now reinforced by the state, however, in the much modified form of authoritarian dominance by the husband and father over the women and children within the nuclear family. What had previously been a real threat to political order was thus neatly transformed into a formidable buttress to it" (Stone 111). Prior to the Renaissance, suggests Stone, the isolated family unit might resistance to authority of the crown, but in the sixteenth century that unit shifts to reinforce the power of the state.[12]

In both criticism about the early modern period and in the period itself, the terms "family" and "household" are used interchangeably. Lawrence Stone has suggested that while the modern conception of the nuclear family began to emerge in the period between 1500 and 1800, a variety of models for the family existed side by side during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[13] Stone's work focuses on the variations of affective ties of family members and attempts "to chart and document, to analyse and explain, some massive shifts in world views and value systems" (Stone 21). Despite

shifts in values and affective ties, one definition of the household holds true for much of the period: "A household consists of all persons living under one roof" (Stone 28). Generally, this household consists of the householder, his wife, their children, and at least one or two servants.[14] In city households of merchants and craftsmen, this last group might include a wide variety of people, from the maid- or manservant to the apprentices and journeymen. Whatever their title within the household, this last group consists of unmarried young men and women who have contracted with the family for a number of years of service and who physically reside in the home.[15]

London families often failed to match the basic structures that the household manual writers outlined, so the attempt to control the family on London takes on an even more urgent timbre. The family structure was shifting and conventional structures of family were not always practical or realistic. Because of "[h]igh mortality in London … many households, no less than 16 percent of Southwark in the 1620s, were headed by women; … remarriage in the capital was common; no less than 25 percent of the marriages of London tradesmen were to widows" (Archer 184). Due to the high remarriage rate in London for both widows and widowers, age differences abounded and structures of power constantly needed to be renegotiated.[16] Despite the wide range of servants in the household, the manuals speak of them as one type. Of course, financial experience varied across the city, as did individual personalities and the composition of individual families. Nevertheless, the conduct book representations of family frequently ignored the actual experience of early modern Londoners.

That material situation of the merchant and his family also contributed to anxiety about the family, and therefore the maintenance of order in London.[17] Ian Archer

suggests, for example, that "[w]omen probably enjoyed more independence in the capital because of the nature of their work, participating in the front of the shop, running an alehouse, buying provisions in the market" (Archer 184). Both the producers of goods and the moralists denouncing consumerism targeted women as their audience, Jean E. Howard suggests. Material knowledge of the city of London affords a different viewpoint of households than that of the conduct books. Keith Wrightson explains that although "older models of social order persisted … they failed to provide an adequate account of contemporary reality, or to express the shifting alignments of a society undergoing profound, if gradual, social, economic and political change" (Wrightson, "Sorts" 50). The manuals prescribe a picture of the imagined family, but the reality lies in a combined reading of various texts of the period.

Clearly, this household is a complex network of authority, necessitating a variety of ways to negotiate authority. Compounding this problem of authority even more, as Orlin explains, "[i]n the expanding Tudor and Stuart economy, many men were new to this role in household government" (Orlin, "Man's House" 65). The conduct books attempted to give these new householders a guide to leading a proper, profitable Christian household. The household was a testing ground for many in the city, a place combining the various roles of merchant, householder and citizen. For the Puritan writers, "good members of the family are likeliest to proue profitable to Church and Common-wealth" (Gouge 647). These are families entering into a new sense of economic independence and social ability, householders entering in to new sorts of public forums.[18]

Some of the most enthusiastic, and therefore most often cited, proponents of these new restrictions of household authority were Puritan preachers. These writers frequently

invoke the need for the well-ordered family as a way to explain the necessary reliance on the household order to maintain social order. Like many reformers, the Puritans wanted a purer version of the church, a return to the "traditional" values of a literal scriptural interpretation Sid Ray describes their work as "renovating and energizing" the ideology found in humanist and Pauline doctrine, rather than a construction of a new ideology of the household (Ray 6). Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), for example, controls the readers' experience by including Biblical glosses in the margins to match the Biblical example he presents as evidence. Certainly, the conduct books writers ground their arguments in the New Testament Pauline doctrine, but they also frequently include some examples of Old Testament models as well as classical models. Mostly, however, the writers rely on Biblical models that emphasize a hierarchically structured household that ensures the stability of the state. The harmony of the state depends entirely on the harmony of the household.[19]

Achieving this harmony requires a rigid structure of the household. The conduct books writers identify the household as being one of three relationships: husband-wife, parent-child, and master (mistress)-servant. These writers also insist upon the centrality of the household to London life and to governance of the state. In *Bethel* (1607), Matthew Griffith explains that a good Christian should aspire to be two things: "both a good *seruant* to *God*, and a good *Subject* to the *King*: and my scope in this *Manuall*, is to teach both" (Griffith sig. A4). These dual roles for the primary subject of the king – the householder – are important to the vast body of early modern conduct literature. Householders needed to care for their families, but also deserved their allegiance. Christopher Hill suggests that "[t]his was part of the protestant inheritance. The religious

and disciplinary responsibilities of heads of households towards those under their care was emphasized in Luther's *Short Catechism* of 1529" (Hill 445-446).

Amussen and Orlin have thoroughly discussed concept of the house as a small state in relation to these necessary responsibilities for the householder. The desire to give the father control over his household – to make his king of his own castle, as Orlin remarks – is important in a time when people were subject in almost every way.[20] The household was a place where the householder was hierarchically located in a position of almost absolute authority. Orlin notes that in fact that the very household furniture gives the householder a position of authority over other members of the house: he sits in a chair, whereas the other members of the household must share a bench or two (Orlin, *Elizabethan Households* 26).[21] The position of absolute authority, however, brings with it absolute responsibility. Time and again, the other members of the household are reminded that they must remember the public face of the family through the householder: it is his reputation on the line, not the subordinate's own. The Puritans remind the householder of this as well, in order to urge him to take responsibility for properly training his family.

A failure to do such things appropriately will undermine the hierarchy of the household, but even more dangerously, the hierarchy and stability of the state:

> For although there be never so good lawes in cities, never so pure order in Churches, yet if masters of families doe not practise at home catechising in their houses, and ioyne their helping hands to Magistrates and Ministers, they may in truth (but uniustly as many have done) complaine that their children and servants are disordered, and corrupted abroad, when in truth, they were disordered and are still corrupted and marred at home. (Cleaver and Dod sig. A3-A4)

The householder could best maintain order through regularly catechizing his family. These are not to be merely economically efficient or successful households; these are

instead to be godly households, where financial rewards display the family's godliness. The catechizing further emphasizes the analogy of the householder as magistrate. As the head of the state was the head of the church, so too is the head of the household the head of the family's spiritual needs.

Another analogy for the family is the physical structure of the home. Lena Orlin has argued that the idea that a man's house was his castle first appears in the sixteenth century, and "these changes were experienced by householders of all stations, not just the residents of the great houses, as many 'new' men of lower classes acquired land and property for the first time in the expanding economy of the Tudor and Stuart years" (Orlin, "Man's House" 57). In *Bethel* Griffith describes the family as a household of "God's workmanship" ("To the Christian reader"); in 1651, Robert Abbott published *A Christian Family Builded By God, Directing all Governours of Families how to act*, which assumes a similar premise. Griffith encourages the reader to serve God by being "some part of Gods *building*: for as in a *materiall building*, that *stone*, or *timber*, cannot bee properly said to bee serviceable to man, which is no part of his building: so it holds too, in this which is *Mysticall*, and *Metaphoricall*" (sig. B1v). The well-ordered family is the house of God.

Even though not all of the authors use the metaphor of the house to explain the family, all of the authors write of the sites of relational authority in the household, husband-wife, parent-child, master-servant. These relations make for a complex, sometimes contradictory series of responsibilities and duties for family members. When families do not follow their assigned roles, the household may fall to pieces. All of these structures of the household depended on a belief in household hierarchy, and clearly

defined lines of authority. Unfortunately, for both the preachers and the modern reader, those lines of authority are not always as clear, and even within the individual texts, there are numerous contradictions and moments when the writers defer to the practical reality.

The evolving household and notion of who could be a householder points to one of the phenomenal changes in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: an increasing awareness of a merchant class. Although this may not have been the modern middle class, emerging as it did in the eighteenth century, this was still a new way to understand the social order. This is particularly important in the cultural history of the household, since as Lawrence Stone reminds us, "Attitudes and customs which were normal for one class or social stratum were often quite different from those which were normal in another" (Stone 23). Because of the governing structure of London – the Lord Mayor always came from a guild of the city – the merchant became an essential figure in the imaginative renderings of early modern London life as the city itself experienced greater national and European dominance. Still, this was – and is – a difficult category to define, because it does not quite parallel the modern understanding of a middle class. Because the majority of the country continued to operate under a highly stratified system of land ownership, the newly rich merchants of the city found alternative ways to express their power in the kingdom.

The class under study here is a particularly amorphous one that often had difficulty defining itself. Keith Wrightson explains that the rhetorical strategies of the late sixteenth century determining class moved away from the "classical" class markers of "noblemen; gentlemen; yeomen; citizens and burgesses; husbandmen; artisans; labourers" (Wrightson, "Sorts" 28). Wrightson argues that the classical terminology was

ill suited for day-to-day operations. Rather, beginning in the early- to mid-sixteenth century, early moderns turned to the use of "sorts" of people to describe others in relation to themselves. Wrightson argues that "[i]ts widespread employment as a term of social description, however, appears to have been a distinctively sixteenth-century development, and in particular an innovation of the mid-to-late sixteenth century" (Wrightson "Sorts" 31). The anxiety surrounding the changes in social structure often actually derived from the newly rich citizens, attempting to define themselves as something other than the background from which they came. At all levels of society, however, the emergence of the wealthy London citizen became a source of anxiety, even as the middling sort of people increasingly attracted the interest of playwrights.

The household manuals appealed primarily to this new merchant class in London: many of the books' dedications mention specific parishes in London where the treatises were first published, and all have London printers.[22] The audience of these books is somewhat difficult to determine, since as Ian Green explains, a large market for second-hand books existed in the city of London.[23] Nevertheless, many of these specifically Puritan books are dedicated to or originated in sermons for the wealthier merchant class of the city. Thus, texts like Gouge's initially intended to speak to those non-aristocratic members of London society who were contributing to the rapidly changing city through their accumulation of capital and increasing socio-political importance. The city household manuals differ from their country counterparts – the books of country husbandry and housewifery – because they are specifically about the structure of the family.[24]

Further complicating the matter of audience is the question of literacy in the period, but critics frequently overstate this concern. David Cressy identified a remarkably low literacy rate among most people of the early modern period, but his findings have since come under fire from a variety of critics, beginning with Margaret Spufford in *Small Books and Pleasant Histories*. Spufford argues that Cressy's calculation of literacy – the ability to sign a name or put an "X" in its place – underestimates literacy levels, because children in the early modern educational system of the grammar school and home schooling learned to read before they learned to write. She suggests instead that "[t]he chapbooks provide supporting literary evidence that schooling to the level of reading was a commonplace" (Spufford 29). Frances E. Dolan follows Spufford's estimation of Cressy's work and instead assumes that many people, including a large number of women, could read and quite a number could write in some fashion. Dolan points to the inadequacy of the material evidence of early modern literacy, but cites the fact that many Protestant reformers encouraged reading literacy. Whatever the case for the rest of England, London had a higher rate of literacy than the areas in its periphery, since in contemporaneous texts "London was noted for its high level of educational achievement" (Beier and Finley, "The Significance of the Metropolis" 23). So, although impossible to accurately gauge literacy rates, this dissertation will follow in Dolan's assumption that many people could – and did – read.

The conduct books often assume a large reading audience, since many of the authors inherited the Protestant reformation tradition.[25] Although others wrote about the family in the city, the majority were Puritan writers, who presented a very specific version of the family that they wished to see emulated throughout the city. Furthermore,

these conduct books are dense with words and have a variety of glosses to help the reader. The physical size of the books themselves (usually an octavo or smaller) suggests the affordability of the texts and the assumption that the texts would be used with regularity.[26]

Importantly, too, the books recognize that the audience would might sometimes respond to the ideas negatively and even with some hostility. Gouge specifically remarks in his dedicatory epistle that members of his congregation grumbled about the wife's absolute subjection to the husband. Even without citing the preachers' defenses, critics have often assumed that members of the congregations did not receive these very well. Valerie Lucas argues that "[t]he preachers' relentless insistence upon the necessity of female subjection suggests that women displayed considerable resistance to the role model set forth in sermons and conduct books" (Lucas 232). Thus, the actual situation fell outside the realm of the ideal that the preachers insisted upon: women of the period may have been less willing to be as tightly restricted to their homes as the strictest of the Puritans would prefer.[27]

The different expectations of the merchant's household and the upper class household appears most clearly in the different treatment of women, both wives and daughters. For many merchants, attempting to keep the family in check meant enforcing a structure of privacy on the lives of wives and daughters: Ann Rosalind Jones argues that "the most widely disseminated feminine ideal was the confinement of the bourgeois daughter and wife to private domesticity in the households of city merchants, professional men and, in England, Protestant fathers and husbands. The court lady was required to speak; the bourgeois wife was enjoined to silence" (Jones, "Nets and bridles"

40). The middling sort distinguished themselves from the wealthy by attempting to mold godly wives and daughters. However, even if the conducts books desire this, the reality does not necessarily match, Jones acknowledges.

At the same time as these writers were declaiming ambitious women and decrying the disorderly household, others were writing in defense of women's abilities. Even the Puritans occasionally admit that lower members of the household hierarchy might sometimes give good advice to the householder. Certainly, householders would be shirking their duties by asking their subordinates to sin. More importantly, as Vivien Brodsky has persuasively argued, the early modern London household was not strictly created in accordance with Puritan expectations. In 1616 a tract appeared entitled *Asylum Veneris, or a sanctuary for ladies*, apparently written apparently by Daniel Tuvill. The tract argues in favor of women's abilities and questions the rationale of such subordination as called for in Clever and Dod's *A Godly Form of Household Governement*, one of the most popular tracts on household management. Tuvill suggests that "The dissection of their [women's] weaknesse hath happened to bee a strict anatomizing of their owne [men's weaknesses]" (Tuvill 3). Thus, if the writers are shouting about women and other subordinates, the writers are projecting their own flaws onto those inferiors.

Although Tuvill does not suggest a new household power structure, his text points to the problems of the householder's absolute control over the women (and by extension other subordinates) in the household. Tuvill suggests that men have always proscribed to women a role inherently detrimental to them: "It hath been our pollicie from the beginning to busie them in domesticall affaires, thereby to diuert them from more serious

imployments, in which if they had not surmounted us, they would at least haue showne themselves our equals, and our parallels" (Tuvill 100). Tuvill acknowledges women's intellectual capacity, suggesting that every age has seen women who shined intellectually, despite the age's strictures. He desires not to revisit completely the household structure, but rather to eschew the Puritan's arguments about the wife's inherent physical and intellectual flaws.

The household at stake in this dissertation is headed by a merchant or other London guild member. This is a non-aristocratic household, but may have elevated its social status through a purchase of a family coat-of-arms or land outside of London. At the same time, one of this household's essential elements is this purchasing power: money was made not through land-ownership, like the money of the aristocracy and upper gentry, but through industry and speculation on capital. Even with this distinction the actual, material family is often difficult to locate. Nevertheless, the works about the domestic sphere provide insight into early modern perception of real life, or the merchant class life to which people might have aspired.

Gertrude Noyes has identified the English conduct book as a peculiar genre, "merging … the sermon and the courtesy book into a curiously amphibious product" (Noyes 8). This genre includes a wide variety of books, from English translations of Castiglione's *The Courtier* to Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties*. The term is somewhat elusive, since the conduct described for the courtiers of Urbino is a far cry from the ideas that Gouge espouses in his conduct books. Nevertheless, the same term serves to describe both. The Puritan conduct books tend to have certain things in common: most emphasize the importance of a godly household; most are divided into sections according

to the major members' relationship to the householder; all cite Biblical references for support; and all insist on the active maintenance of the household's hierarchical structure. Even with their different stances on a range of things from child abuse to marital concord, the texts maintain a specific prescription for the household in London. These are then natural foils to the city comedies, which revel in the topsy-turvy and the sometimes carnivalesque – and decidedly un-Puritan – atmosphere onstage.

The problem for a study of these household manuals is the actual usage of the texts. Certainly, the outcry of the texts against certain behaviors does not warrant an assumption that all servants are out of control, nor that all children hate their parents and run away from home to get married. Ann Rosalind Jones points out that "[t]he reaction against feminine ambition seems vastly out of proportion to the number of women actually departing from traditional norms" (Jones, "Nets and bridles" 41). Thus, although many of the pamphlets and other published matters declaim female ambitions, the materials themselves acknowledge that readers should neither assume that the admonitions universally apply, nor assume that they themselves contain all these flaws. Gouge acknowledges the importance for the reader to be aware that "Concerning the many faults and vices of bad Husbands, Wiues, Parents, Children, Masters and Seruants, taxed in these Treatises, let met intreat you, not to apply them too generally to all" (Gouge sig. ¶3). Even he, the most compendious cataloger of household failures, acknowledges that his vast lists of contraries do not apply to each and every person in his congregation, and this admission on his part reveals the seams of his arguments and lists of contrary behaviors. Although some of the contraries may occur, he uses anecdotal evidence, a notoriously difficult thing to verify.

At the same time, the ideals in the texts, be they positive or negative, present one perception of the popular imagination. Even if they are neither purely descriptive or prescriptive texts, the work of these preachers remains valuable in any study of the early modern family. Max H. James suggests that "*Of Domesticall Duties* by William Gouge is a storehouse of conventional ideas concerning domestic relationships in Shakespeare's general period" (James 45). This representation of the conventional ideals is important for this study, because even if these are not the real situations that the playwrights are responding to – and perhaps especially since these are not the real situations – the seams show. The seams show in the inconsistencies. The seams show when authors pause to point out what outrages them and how a household might fail. Tuvill suggested that those outrages that over women were really projections of what the writers disliked in themselves and other men; perhaps the same can be said about their response to the family itself. Thus complaints about the family reflect both problems the subordinate creates and problems the householder himself creates. Looking at the plays through the lens of these texts gives us a sense of how very complicated the actual situation was. If the householder is not holding up his end of the bargain, then things in the household are not going to go well: if the householder is unjust, unfair, or neglectful, often the subordinates will respond out of their own need for protection. Cleaver and Dod admonish the householder to remember to take care of his own soul as well as the souls of those inmates of his house. In order to maintain a godly household, "then [the householder] must likewise be diligent and careful to reform themselves, both inwardly and outwardly, in such points and duties as hitherto they have left undone: otherwise, they may iustly say unto them: Physitian heale yourselfe: or, why doe you will us to doe

that which you doe not practice your self?" (Clever and Dod sig. A4). The conduct books only glance at these situations; the city comedies, however, trade in them. It is to those that this chapter will now turn.

City Comedy as a Mirror of London

The foil that this dissertation presents for the ideal puritan family is the less-than-ideal family inhabiting city comedy, a stage tradition generally popular from the late 1590s to about 1630. Most often, these plays celebrate what Gail Kern Paster has called a site of "ironic and amoral delights" (Paster, "Introduction" 16). The general definition that this dissertation will work with and expand upon limits the genre to plays that are urban in setting, more-or-less contemporary in time and generally satiric in tone. The object of the satire depends on the agenda of the playwright, and can include anything from the gallants traipsing about the city, the burgeoning merchant economy, the practices of shopkeepers, the newly moneyed citizens or the world of immorality within the city. Despite the satire, the genre holds a place in modern criticism as a more discursively accurate representation of the London experience than most other genres. At the very least all of the traffic in material goods open up a wide range of possibility for critics interested in perceptions of the period. In her recent book, *Theater of a City*, Jean Howard suggests that London comedies play a "role in rendering the *un*familiar intelligible and in *creating* rather than simply calling upon an audience's sense of itself as knowing urban dwellers" (Howard, *Theater of a City* 39). That is, city comedies – or London comedies, as Howard more broadly defines them – not only reflect the practices

of the period, but also create and participate in those practices by layering discursive meaning upon places and objects.

These definitions become particularly – and intentionally – exclusive of plays that fit within the regime of London comedies, which I will for my current purposes continue to call city comedies. What critics – such as Theodore Leinwand, Susan Wells, and Mary Beth Rose – have focused on is tone of the comedies, paying particular heed to the anti-nostalgic cynicism of plays by authors such as Middleton, Jonson and Marston. However, for the critic concerned with what the plays reveal about London itself, these limitations should feel restrictive and incomplete. Should we look only at the "cynical" plays of Middleton and Jonson, we would see a city full of angry, duplicitous Londoners. If these plays present themselves as either mimetic experiences or as exemplars of behavior for the London citizen, then the economically cynical plays are not doing a particularly good job. Howard, for one, moves away from this notion that the plays only dictate or represent London life by explaining instead the ways that the plays develop beyond our current understanding life in early modern London, which in turn allows for opportunities to reexamine the discursive space of the city.

Even if there is a sense that these plays depend on the delight in the amoral in order to entertain the audience, they still participate in a culture that expects art to "teach and delight," as Philip Sidney explained (217). Moreover, in the battles to regulate the stage, many authors insisted that this was a place for people to learn how to live. Frances Dolan explains that Thomas Heywood's *Apologie for Actors* argues that plays were "morally instructive" (Dolan, *Dangerous* 20). Since many dramas are overt in their didactic purposes, and since many of the city comedies do at the very least cast out the

scapegoat from their societies, the comedies can be about delight in disorder as well about learning moral order. The city comedies can act as conduct books for an audience that would include the merchants who owned copies of Cleaver and Dod's texts or who listened to sermons given by William Gouge.

Because this dissertation will follow in the broad brushstrokes of its predecessors in speaking of this genre, it is necessary here to explain the ways that critics have defined the term "city comedy."[28] First brought to critical attention by R. C. Bald (1934) and L. C. Knights (1937), the term found major treatment in Brian Gibbons' work *Jacobean City Comedy* and has been subject to studies by Andrew Leggatt, Theodore Leinwand, Susan Wells, Janette Dillon, and Jean E. Howard among others. Although each critic refines the term for his or her own usage, the term remains somewhat elusive and difficult to define. Wendy Grisswold helpfully identified seven major characteristics of the genre: a London setting, socially heterogeneous characters, trickery, money, social mobility, cynicism and moral ambiguity.[29] Even with that rubric the term's usage remains vague. Because of the vagaries of the term, the inclusion or exclusion of plays becomes difficult to negotiate, and often relies more on the critic's decision about what to include in order to define the term, rather than a definition applied to a variety of plays. Ultimately, the term's rubric fails just as any attempt to define strictly generic categories eventually fails: exceptions are inevitable, and many things fall outside of the intended definitions.[30] At the same time, generic definitions of city comedy provide a convenient, although limited, focal point to begin discussion of early modern dramatic form. Most of the early definitions of the term focus on tone and recent studies often continue this trend. A more specific definition emerges when the critics shifts focus from the satiric tone to the

merchant and the discourse of mercantilism. Even in city comedies that do not have merchants, per se, mercantile goods abound.[31]

In *Jacobean City Comedy*, Brian Gibbons identifies city comedy as emerging from the popular tradition of verse satire in the late 1590s, particularly as an extension of a genre that was banned in England at the end of the sixteenth century. City comedy appears to sublimate those energies repressed by the state. In addition to verse satire, city comedy takes as its influences the strong native traditions of coney-catching pamphlets, jest books, Morality Plays and Tudor Interludes, as well as Italian Popular Comedy (Gibbons 25-26). This form fathered, as Gibbons claims, by Ben Jonson transforms "typical elements of city life into meaningful patterns, expressing consciously satiric criticism but also suggesting deeper sources of conflict" (Gibbons 17). The satire-centered critique of the plays interrogates the nascent capitalism, which increased the gentrification of urban spaces and the merchant class.

Gibbons focuses much of his energy on examining the sub-genre in terms of formal qualities, trying to distinguish the form from earlier plays through isolating its tone, thematics and cynicism. Strictly, Gibbons defines city comedy "by the fact that the plays are all satiric and have urban settings, with characters and incident appropriate to such settings; they exclude material appropriate to romance, fairy tale, sentimental legend or patriotic chronicle" (Gibbons 24). For this reason, Gibbons chooses to include as the crowning achievements of the form Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), but to exclude what he describes as sentimental comedies about the city, such as Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599).[32] Because of Gibbons's interest in the playwright's articulation of "a radical critique of their Age," he includes Marston's

The Malcontent and Jonson's *Volpone* in his analysis of the form (Gibbons 17). Although the two plays do register the same tone and cynicism of Jonson's and Middleton's city comedies, the inclusion of the two begins to muddy the definition's boundaries, since neither play physically takes place in London.[33]

Gibbons discusses the social situation in relation to the formal qualities of the genre by identifying the satire as one of the economic system, which locates city comedy within nascent capitalism. At the same time, Gibbons does not suggest that the plays are about the ins and outs of the monetary system, but rather that "[t]he plays delineate the forces of human emotion which money unlooses" (Gibbons 30). This emotive force is important in subsequent definitions of the form, and is in fact part of the most recent attempts to redefine it: Howard's recent work focuses on the emotional responses evoked by the comedy's attempts to make sense of cultural events.[34] However, Gibbons's work is uninterested in these specific cultural events, and rather looks at the emotions within the plays without contextualizing them in the actual period, as later critics would do.

Reconsidering and refining Gibbons's thesis, Alexander Leggatt's *Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare* makes a fine distinction in his work from Gibbons' by arguing that he will define the genre according to location or milieu.[35] This is, in fact, one of Leggatt's primary methods to define the term: "For this writer [citizen comedy] means comedy set in a predominantly middle-class social milieu" (Leggatt 3). This frees Leggatt's definition from the reliance on formal devices that Gibbons's work imposes. Leggatt also excludes sentimental comedies like Dekker's, explaining that "[t]he realistic London setting, and the interest in domestic themes … were not new, but there was a new way of commenting on contemporary society. Instead of the good-tempered, easy-going

manner of the earlier plays, we are offered wry, sardonic wit. The prevailing spirit is satirical" (Leggatt 8). This is satire of the economic system in place in the early modern period and the social milieu operating in the system. Primary to Leggatt's definition are the two goals of the main characters of the plays: money and marriage. Or, as Leggatt explains, "how to get money, and how to spend it; how to get a wife, and how to keep her" (Leggatt 4). This definition, however, continues to insist on an examination of marriage in exclusively economic terms.

Because of this preoccupation with social milieu, money and marriage, Leggatt includes Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* as a play that continues the tradition of citizen comedy. Although the play includes urban characters interested in inheritance and marriage partners, it does not take place in the city, but rather in the Nottingham countryside. The plot of many city comedies involves a member of the London citizenry taking advantage of a country gentleman, but Massinger's play reverses this situation and has the country characters outwit the city characters. It is, in fact, something of an anti-city comedy. This modifies the term city comedy, because it takes as the kernel of the definition the presence of city characters, rather than an urban setting. Allowing plays featuring city characters opens up the possibility of interesting and important comparative work in terms of perceptions of city families. This dissertation will follow suit in examining this play in chapter 3.

Leggatt is freer in his definition of the terms than Gibbons, opening up the exploration of the plays to a side-by-side comparison of the satirical, the sentimental, and the mixed-genre plays of the later period. With the inclusion of Massinger, Leggatt argues for a continuation of the genre that insists on widening the possibilities for the

genre. Leggatt does not restrict the plays to the time period that Gibbons insisted on, but allows the category to include plays from the Caroline period. Even with the changes in political structures in the period and the tendency of the plays to be derivate, the writers of the period do not cease to take interest in London. Traditionally, the plays after Middleton's and Jonson's great city comedies had been left out of a definition of the term, but Leggatt allows for their inclusion. Leggatt acknowledges some shifts in the genre throughout the period between 1590 and the closing of the theaters, but he attributes these more to the practicality of the changing theatrical companies than to any other more esoteric ideological shift. Leggatt does see some drifting away from the Elizabethan and Jacobean style the Caroline period, because "[f]ew of [the Caroline plays] focus clearly on the middle class; genres also become more mixed, and comedy co-exists with romance and melodrama in many cases" (Leggatt 13). Nevertheless, he glances toward some of these plays as essentially related to the genre.

Not all critics welcomed the opening up of the definition, despite a usefulness for understanding the material and emotional history of the period. Susan Wells is one of the more prominent critics who rejects such an expansion. She points first to the major critical thrusts concerned with the sociological and the generic and then reconciles the two definitions by the identifying the marketplace as the central figure of the city. She explains "that this critical opposition, threatening on the one hand to divorce the city from its specific historical context and on the other to dissolve the genre in to that context, can be overcome by analysing the city comedy as a response to specific contradictions within the hegemonic ideology concerning the City of London" (Wells 37). Wells sees the dynamics of the city as a result of the shifting alliances of the

commercial and the communal; thus, city comedy is an attempt to reorder those and recover their harmony (Wells 37). Ultimately, the genre both controls and celebrates that market economy, but without the sentimentality of works like *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. Wells sees aspects of Carnival, which allow for both celebration and satire in one situation. Her definition strictly limits the plays to those that are necessarily satirical of *all* citizens of London, and generally grotesquely so. Locating these plays firmly within the rapidly shifting economy of the late sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries, Wells describes them as invoking "the tradition of festive liberty, but without nostalgia" (Wells 49). These are plays without a specific sense of morality present in other genres, even genres that include some satire. This is not comedy about specific people, but more about what happens when sex and money come into contact with each other.

Wells' attempt to reconcile the competing claims of the earlier definitions was not the only one in era of rethinking formalist criticism: Theodore Leinwand also calls into question the classic texts on city comedy, citing their inadequacy to encompass all that city comedy potentially provides for the audience (1986). Leinwand cites dissatisfaction with "a reading … based purely on literary conventions, [or] a reading whose touchstone is the satirical quality (and so the morality)" (Leinwand 4). Instead, he attempts to look at both qualities together and, like Wells, suggests that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive. Leinwand continues to focus on the economic aspect of the comedies and looks for character types, because city comedy is "the staging area upon which these already self-conscious urban roles are brought into sharp relief" (Leinwand 10). Leinwand cites specific urban roles (merchant-citizen, gentry, woman), all caricatures of "real" denizens of the city, as useable stereotypes for the people of London.

That is, this is the shorthand of the way that people can think about one another. Leinwand follows Gibbons's suggestion of a critique of the age, but instead explains that the plays interrogate the adequacy of these types, and not the morality of the city.

Another useful attempt at genre defining for this dissertation is Viviana Comensoli's *'Household Business': Domestic Plays of Early Modern England* (1996). Rejecting city comedy as the center of her study, Viviana Comensoli proposes instead the "English domestic play" as a genre arising in London at the end of the sixteenth century and remaining popular until the closing of the theaters in 1642. She suggests that this genre emerges from the native traditions of England, rather the plays of the classical world or the *commedia del arte* of Renaissance Italy. Working against J. P. Collier's identification of domestic tragedy, Comensoli argues that the domestic plays included both tragedy and comedy, and that they should be studied together as such. She pushes away from comedy, because "citizen comedy, while often including *domus* scenes, takes the city rather than the household as its fulcrum, spanning a variety of settings: taverns, London houses, streets, docks, and brothels. The city is thus continually felt as a compelling force" (Comensoli 7). Instead, Comensoli first looks for the roots of the forms in native medieval plays and then examines the domestic tragedies based on true-crime and the comedies that take place within the household. Her emphasis on the household moves away from the city and the middle- or lower- classes, instead defining domestic drama as "a new genre in which the historical and ideological contexts scrutinized are a composite of the world portrayed on stage and the society of the playgoer" (Comensoli 17).

While the overall argument that Comensoli makes about domestic space is well taken in my own work, she examines the London household in the same category as households in rural areas and in small towns around England. However, if London is a different case from the rest of England as Brodsky argues, then the city families are distinct from the families outside of the city. Even if household manuals purport to have an audience both within and beyond London, the relationship of the reader to the text would not necessarily be the same. Moreover, the structure of the city, the proximity of family members within the domestic space, and the heavier reliance on commerce necessitates a different type of family structure in the city, one potentially more progressive, or at least more flexible. That city locations feature prominently in the plays does not necessarily mean that the domestic space is unimportant. The domestic space in the city is not an isolated space, and so the mismatches in authority are all the more evident.

Janette Dillon's *Court and City 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (2000) insists that the city and the theater were inextricably linked to the court at Westminster, and that the interplay of these locations produces those who inhabit the locations (Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City* 6). The theater acted as mediator between the particularly fluid locations of the city and the court. This necessarily divides space as places that are city and not-city, focusing on "the visible mobility of relations between court and city, as influenced by the development of the market and as represented within the domain of theatre, itself a place for testing a playing with different ways of seeing, estimating and valuing" (Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City* 15). To examine this in the theater, Dillon focuses not only on city comedy, but also on other plays that present

London spaces, including *Love's Labour's Lost*, *I Edward IV*, and the Jonsonian entertainment, *Britain's Burse*. Dillon intends to move the discussion of the amorphous space of the city and the court away from the critical dominance of city comedy to a broader examination of the discursive spaces of London throughout all dramatic genres.

In contrast, Jean E. Howard's book *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (2006) focuses on specific locations within the city of London and the town growing between London and Westminster, but avoids general discussion of the court. Howard eschews the term "city comedy" in order to look at a broader range of plays, giving each sub-genre a more descriptive term, such as chronicle history comedies. Howard traces the development of the plays in conjunction with the development of the city, particularly the conjunction of plays she terms "town comedies" and the move towards the West End. Howard insists not that the plays are mirrors of the city, but rather that the plays "helped … to construct and interpret the city" (Howard, *Theater of a City* 3). Thus, the city comedies taught the audience about how to live in London, a particularly important goal, given the high rate of strangers in the city (from both abroad and the countryside). The plays actively took part in helping the audience understand what "constitute[d] them *as* Londoner" (Howard, *Theater of a City* 39). Even in reimagining the term for the plays, Howard elevates comedies to a higher level of importance than other genres for studying the construction of London identity as separate from other identities. Because London was so varied, and the influx of new people to London every year so great, the London plays worked to help people negotiate their own experiences in the city. Howard argues that through the repeated staging of very specific London locations (or specific types of sites), the theater layered significance upon them

and made meaning. The plays both reveal to Londoners the realities of the city and discursively construct the city. In doing this, some plays staged a potentially realistic London, but others plays attempted to push for alternative norms.

London is of necessity a different type of place from other parts of England, and thus London households are sites of alternative possibilities because of the nature of the urban space.[36] Mary Beth Rose suggests that "Jacobean city comedy brings into the light of representation precisely those dissociations and contradictions in English Renaissance sexual ideology which romantic comedy evokes but seeks to reconcile and contain" (Rose 43). These comedies do not necessarily reconcile beliefs about sexuality and money, but rather put them on display. Even as it is tied to these ideas, the London family is put on display in these plays. The imaginative rendering of the London family proposes a variety of potential responses and suggests to the modern critic possible psychic and emotional responses of early moderns to their changing environs.

Using the (Unfound) Archive

Work on the household, and particularly on the structures of authority within the household has generally been limited to one specific relationship across classes and geography. The work done previously on the family is important and useful, but lacks the specific focus of this dissertation. Frequently, interest lies ultimately in the household of the wealthier sort, especially those outside of London. Part of this is due to lack of material evidence, which is a problem of archive, or lack thereof; yet another reason lies in the way that the aristocratic and gentry households register with modern critics. Even though the particular household under study in this dissertation is notoriously slippery to

define, the comedies themselves lend specific aid in finding what would later come to be known as the middle class family.

Most previous work concentrates on a particular relationship, the question of gender, or a particular London role, and not the specific household this dissertation examines. I suggest that a gap exists in that this type of concentration, especially the concentration on single relationships across class or geography. Although such discussions are important, they do not provide an adequate picture of the city's vibrant and nuanced household. Much historical work on the city and its denizens exists and this dissertation will contribute to that a focused examination on a single type of idealized household (and whether or not that may have been realized). There are a number of critical books, however, pivotal to this study: these are works that are useful to me in both understanding the methodology of research for this project and understanding the space that has been left for my particular study. In addition to Lena Cowen Orlin and Jean E. Howard, whose work I relied on heavily throughout this introduction, the critics most influential to my work are Frances E. Dolan, Wendy Wall, and Natasha Korda. All write about aspects of the household, and all touch on the merchant class household, but each focuses on aspects of early modern household different from the concern of the present study. Their work influences my work, and this dissertation is an extension of the larger critical project in which they participate.

Frances E. Dolan's *Dangerous Familiars* (1994) considers roles of the early modern family. Her book examines how a crime would subvert the structures of household authority, focusing particularly "on the most extreme, violent instances of

domestic conflict" (Dolan, *Dangerous* 1). This focus on criminal activity shows rather than a normative space, a space violated where

> [s]uch representations … [of the wife killing the husband] both reinforce the household as the sphere in which women act and suggest that women were not only confined to the household but were empowered within it. … By depicting the home as an arena of female power as well as subordination and by representing the *feme covert* as both subsumed by her husband and stealthily insubordinate, accounts of petty treason show how the analogy between the household and commonwealth could work to grant the household significance as a locus of conflict. (Dolan 31)

Although this is important work, this focus on the extraordinary can only hint at what life was like for the majority of Londoners. This reading eschews the quotidian and even as it is useful to look at the violated home for points of slippage in the ideology of the family of the period, it does not render the real lived lives of the early modern merchants' family.

In contrast to Dolan's focus on the extraordinary moments of violence, Natasha Korda's *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies* (2002) attends to the material aspects belonging to the daily life of the middling household, that indicate "the symbolic dimension of household things and the historical dimension of household worlds" (Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies* 2). Korda is especially interested in examining a variety of texts for traces of the material culture and using those traces to reconsider Shakespeare's visions of the domestic. To do this, Korda ultimately looks particularly at the "instability [of claims of ownership] and the disputes over household property that they occasioned" (Korda 4). The material goods of housewifery are essential in determining the wife's subjective experience. This is nowhere more profoundly complex than in the contradiction of her experience as the keeper of the household goods living under the legal fiction of coverture. Although my own work is

about a broader selection of the family, and generally about writers other than Shakespeare, Korda's methodology of looking at the discussions of housekeeping has been influential in thinking about my dissertation's topic.

In the final book of great importance to this dissertation, *Staging Domesticity* (2002), Wendy Wall aims to explore the fraught situation of the housewife in early modern England, both in the home itself and as represented onstage.[37] Wall uses cookery books and conduct books to discuss the strange social position of the wife in the home: the wife was to be subordinate, but actually had control over all physical bodies in the household. Wall's main argument, that "In the early modern period, domestic labor was represented in two importantly different ways …: as a reassuringly 'common' sphere in which people immersed themselves in familiar rhythms, and as a profoundly alienating site that could never be fully inhabited or comprehended" sets up a tense dichotomy between the household as a site of national, indigenous rituals and the household as a feminine/servant space, a site of shame for elite men (5). Wall further argues that representing this onstage enabled people to see both at once, to work out new ideas about housewifery and nationality. Wall describes this particular act as the cultural fantasy of the era.

Studies of the early modern household tend to lack a material archive, and therefore rely on written texts that may or may not have basis in reality. Korda deals with the difficulty of the inadequate material archive, and her attempts to develop an archive of the material life of the early modern household required what Joan Thirsk describes as "every kind of ingenuity is needed to reconstruct" the material circumstances of the household (qtd. Korda 7). Although city comedy and conduct books have been examined

before, and sometimes in conjunction, they still provide a wide range of potential archival work. In her paper at the 2006 meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America, Jean E. Howard emphasized the need to use the drama as an archival source. She suggested that we focus not necessarily on actual material practice in this archive, but rather what she calls "imaginative renderings of the city" and thus imaginative renderings of lived experiences (Howard, "Counter Narratives").

The general focus on the satirical and economic timbre of the comedy privileges the public forum at the expense of the private household and the emergent culture of capitalism at the expense of the dominant and residual cultures that are also in play in much of the work.[38] Jean Howard has moved towards locating the economic – and especially the consumer character of the comedies – in the gendered experience of London. She explains "the genre of city comedy focused on the figure of woman and the language of gender to express and manage the anxieties occasioned by new market practices" (Howard, "Evidence" 164). Howard's combining of new historicist and feminist criticism in her work proves a useful model for my own work in this dissertation.

In moving through the these critics' studies, I want to extend the discussion of the domestic through reconsidering the definition of city comedy. For this dissertation I have selected the following criteria for the plays: first, all dramas are comedies; second the drama must take place in London or contain London characters typical of city comedy. In order to limit the characters and the families that I will examine, I looked for male head-of-household characters, identified as either citizens or by a particular trade. Although many plays undoubtedly qualify as city comedies under Griswold's

terminology, they do not necessarily fit my purposes here and so works by Fletcher and by Rowley have been cast aside. Within the plays that fit my criteria, other families emerge, but in general, I limit the discussion of the family units to those who qualify as merchants or citizens.

The number of texts that treat the household is vast, so it is necessary to limit this work to a few primary texts to focus the study, while still acknowledging some of the other works that were written in the early modern period. One of the problems that I find in the criticism about the household and the stage is a heavy emphasis on and reliance on William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties*. Although this is an important work on which I do rely, I do not want to limit myself to this particular text. The work was published in 1622, which is somewhat late for the period. At the same time, it is in many ways a good approximation of what Puritans thought about the household, since Gouge lifted much of his material from other Puritans. Thus, it remains a central part of my research, if not the sole source of information about the ideal Puritan household.

Certainly many of the Puritan writers held similar views on the overall household hierarchy, but many also presented different metaphors for that hierarchy, which implies a debate about the ideal household and, more importantly, implies the problems inherent in the attempt to avoid the practical realities of the city when envisioning the family in London. The most popular texts seemed to have been *A Godly Forme of Household Government*, initially written in the 1590s by Robert Cleaver (then emended and released in many subsequent editions by John Dod) and Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises*. These, however, were certainly not the only books available. Other books in the genre included W. B.'s *The Covrt of Good Counsell* (1607), Alexander Niccholes' *A*

discourse, of marriage and Wiving (1615), R. R.'s *The House-holders Helpe, for Domesticall Discipline: Or A Familiar Conference of Household Instruction and correction, fit for the godly government of Christian Families* (1615), and Anglican Preacher Matthew Griffith's *Bethel: Or a form for families* (1633).[39] Additionally, a variety of texts discussed specific relationships in the household, moving the focus away from the primary relationship of the home (husband and wife) to the relationship of the parent and the child or the relationship of the master and the servant. These include such texts as John Fit John's *A Diamonde most Precious, worthy to be marked: Instructing all Maysters and Seruantes, how they ought to leade their lyves, in that Vocation which is fruitfull, and necessary, as well for the Masters, as also for the Seruants, agreeable unto the holy Scriptures* (1577), Walter Darell's *A Short discourse of the life of Seruingmen, plainly expressing the way that is best to be followed, and the meanes wherby they may lawfully challenge a name and title in that vocation and fellowship* (1588), and Thomas Fosset's *The Servants Dvtie. Or the calling and Condition of Servants. Seruing for the instruction, not only of seruants, but of Masters and Mistresses* (1612). By looking at a variety of the texts about the early modern household, I hope to explore further the anxieties about the household and look for those moments of slippage on the parts of the authors that may show the more authentic, practical concerns of the household.

Although the latter books are different from the Puritan's household manuals in their singular focus, as a set they describe the varying perceptions of problems in the merchant class home. Interestingly, many of the texts about servants appeared earlier than the conduct books, which lends further credence to the Susan Amussen's argument about the increased desire to regulate the family. The interest in how to behave as master

and servant is important earlier, because it is more pressing to learn about bringing someone into the home than the seemingly intuitive relationship between a husband and wife or a parent and a child. That Puritans felt the need to publish texts on how to run the entire family points to their desire to give control the householder in an increasingly unstable society.[40]

In the chapters that follow, I will argue for a reexamination of the merchant family. This study will consider a variety of playwrights, because they present different ideas about family and about the influence of London on the family. The great difficulty of this work is to narrow the focus of each chapter and thus make what appear to be arbitrary decisions about whom to include in each chapter. Moreover, because of this necessity to focus, the study necessarily omits particular relationships: parents and their sons; masters/mistresses and their maidservants; siblings; and the householder and his elderly relations. I take inspiration from Natasha Korda's introduction, where she remarks that she does "not intend to offer an exhaustive survey of Shakespeare's 'domestic economies'; such an endeavor would require a very much longer book" (Korda 14). This acknowledgement of necessary limitations is important in this work as well. Because the goals of this dissertation are two-fold, each chapter will examine a significant relationship within the family while bearing in mind a characteristic of comedy. The chapters will then consider plays selected to fit the specific set of requirements for the dissertation. The plays were selected by a wide search through both well-known plays and those less-frequently read, from the earliest examples of city comedy in the late 1590s until the end of the Caroline period.

Chapter Two, "Inadequate Household Governance: Husbands and Wives" will examine that most studied of the familial relationships, the husband and wife. The conduct book writers' biggest concerns about this relationship were the ways that the householder gained authority and maintained that authority. No matter the opinion of the writer, the plethora of text in regards to this relationship suggests strong concerns about the negotiation of authority between the husband and the wife. Gouge himself remarked that many women in his congregation responded angrily to his calls for wifely submission. He also makes frequent reference to those abhorrent practices already underway. Clearly, the roles were shifting and the negotiations of authority ongoing.

For this chapter, I have chosen Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, playwrights who were contemporaries and collaborators. Together they present distinct versions of the same city, even within the same play: Middleton's is often cynical, while Dekker's is somewhat more romanticized. At the same time, while Dekker tends to appear romanticized, this chapter will question this assumption about Dekker's work. By discussing the general assumptions about the tone of the plays, this chapter will consider the necessity of economic satire for the definition of city comedy.

The chapter will consider Middleton and Dekker's presentation of the negotiation for authority by highlighting an obsession with the threat of wifely adultery. Looking specifically at the Eyres and the Damports in Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, the Quomodos in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*, the Yellowhammers and Allwits in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, and the citizens' subplot in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, the chapter will consider the various possibilities for undercutting the ideal of the husband-wife hierarchy. All of the plays give space either

for wives to air their grievances against their husbands, or for husbands to prove themselves unworthy of their authority. These plays put the very survival of the ideal household under pressure, with varying comic results.

Chapter Three, "Roughly Maintained Authority: Parents and Children," will examine the relationship of the parents to the daughter, and especially the violent abuse that occurs in some of the plays. One of the most vexing things to the modern reader about the conduct manuals' explanation of this relationship is the repeated insistence on the fostering of both fear and love in the child from an early age, something complex even for early moderns. The conduct books' tendency to decry doting on children suggests that people in the early modern period loved their children without instilling fear, and occasionally loved them overmuch. The situation of parenting creates a paradox: while the English parents might love their children and their children must love them back, parents threatened a great deal of physical control over their children. Sometimes, as the conduct writers admit, parents might exceed their own authority in their punishment of their children. Thus, the chapter considers the proper maintenance of authority over daughters in relation to marriage settlements and the daughter's determination of the proper circumstances wherein she might rightly ignore her parents' authority.

Most interesting in the plays is the response to parental violence, particularly when it relates to perceived youthful indulgence and idleness. To understand the response to this situation in the playhouses, this chapter will examine works by Philip Massinger and William Shakespeare, who are, unlike Dekker and Middleton, separated by a relatively large span of time. Massinger's career overlaps with the end of

Shakespeare's and occurs within the same company, but the younger playwright's most significant work comes after Shakespeare's death. This chapter will look particularly at Massinger's *The City Madam*, a reworking Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Massinger's revision brings into focus the cultural shift from concern with good civic governance to concern with good household governance. To think about this shift, the chapter will look at the relationship of Sir John Frugal and his daughters, as a reflection of the relationship of the Duke of Vienna and his subjects. More important to Massinger's play (and an important fact in early modern London life) is the existence of proxy parents: in *The City Madam*, Sir John Frugal leaves his family under the charge of his recently reformed prodigal brother, Luke, just as in *Measure for Measure* the Duke leaves Vienna in the hands of Angelo. Both plays present governors unwilling to enforce their own rules on their subjects, so the role of the proxy governor willing to violently enforced lapsed rules is important.

Two plays that are not necessarily city comedies will also prove interesting for discussion in this chapter. Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* takes places in a town near London, and includes London characters. This chapter, however, will focus on the relationship that George and Margaret Page have with their daughter Anne, particularly as it relates to their attempts to dispose of their daughter in marriage. Massinger's play *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* does not take place in London, but acts as a sort of anti-city comedy, with the city character, Sir Giles Overreach, proving completely irascible and easily overcome by the much more knowledgeable and amiable country gentry. Overreach will provide an example of a violent, single father and his methods of disposing of his daughter in marriage contrast sharply to the methods of the

Pages. This examination of the families will consider the essential nature of marriage in a comedy.

Finally, Chapter Four, "Covenanting with the Family: Masters and Servants," will examine the final family coupling that the conduct book writers identify, the master and the servant. The lack of blood relation between the servant and the family complicates this particular dyad, because the master must select the servant from outside of the family, with what should be a great deal of careful deliberation. What is important here is understanding the role of the servant in the middle class household, as opposed to the upper class household, which is a typical focus of critics and historians. The flexibility and instability of the merchant class social experience opened up a space where conduct writers could redefine the roles and responsibilities of the master and the servant. As a result, this creates a complicated patriarchal situation.

This flexibility of the roles of servant and master allows for the questioning of these roles onstage. This chapter will consider misbehaving servants and how the householder deals with those servants (and how those servants got to be so ill-behaved in the first place). To do this, the chapter will examine Venturewell and Jasper as well as George, Nell and Rafe in Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, Lovewit and Face in Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist*, George, and Touchstone, Quicksilver and Golding in Jonson, Chapman and Marston's *Eastward Ho!* I have selected these plays and playwrights because they took interest in classical learning and wit and all are highly self-conscious about their participation in the genre we now know as city comedy. By examining the servants and masters of these plays, this chapter will argue that they incorporate not just characters of Greek New Comedy (such as the crafty slave), but

encompass the possibility to put pressure on the notions of servanthood in early modern London.

Notes:

[1] The criticism on Middleton is the exception to this statement, generally. Even there, however, the consideration of the family is only according to economic principles – that is, the family becomes an economic means to fiscal solvency.

[2] I place new in quotation marks because the idea of companionate marriage is not a Puritan innovation, but rather something that most humanists of the early sixteenth century proposed and the Puritans later popularized. Thus they get the credit. See, for Humanist examples, Erasmus's treatise on marriage, Bacon's essay on marriage.

[3] See especially Roy Porter, *London: A Social History*; A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay, eds., *London 1500-1700: the Making of the Metropolis*; Peter Ackroyd, *London: a Biography*; Lawrence Manley, *Literature and culture in early modern London*.

[4] Of course, there were sectarians in the city, but for the most part, the city fathers were far more concerned about the stability of the city and its marketplaces.

[5] "With the buyers' market in land and property created by the Dissolution promoting new workshops and housing, the Reformation fuelled London's economic expansion" (Porter 37).

[6] For more on this emergence of London from a provincial capital to a center of economic life, see David Harris Sacks' "London's Dominion: The Metropolis, the Market Economy, and the State" and Lena Cowen Orlin's "Introduction." Both are in Orlin's *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2000).

[7] See Robert Markley's recent work on England and the global trade, for example. It is, of course, important to note the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 as well as England early attempts to colonize Virginia, with the success of its first colony at Jamestown in 1607.

[8] "The material life of early modern London … depended upon its participation in a world of things in motion – commodities, artifacts, people, and the products of people's intellects; a world whose success was evidenced by the fact of change" (Sacks 22).

[9] See Stephen Greenblatt's work on the circulation of social energy for a discussion of the cultural anxieties. Greenblatt's work on the circulation of social energy, as explained in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* and *Shakespearean Negotiations*, is of course, highly influential in early modern cultural and materialist studies, but his focus tends towards the extraordinary, whereas the work of Orlin and others begins to examine the quotidian, to attempt to deal with the day to day experience of the middling sort of people.

[10] I have really only scraped the surface when it comes to the changes of early modern life. One major factor that critics generally do not discuss the climate change that occurred from about 1300 to 1850. A series of particularly volatile seasons occurred, due to the overall lowering of the global temperature and changes in the gulf stream. Brian

Fagan discusses the implications of this event in his book *The Little Ice Age: How Climate Made History, 1300-1850.*

[11] Amussen cites the following fears of the early modern villagers: The factors … – population growth, inflation, Puritanism, the polarization of wealth and the increase in poverty, and the fear of disorder – were common to all England; throughout the kingdom those in authority had to resolve as many local conflicts as possible, feed the poor and maintain order as best they could. As their governors struggled with these problems, villagers in early modern England were made constantly aware of the social implications of an analogy between family and political order" (Amussen 33).

[12]Even if some of the doctrine of the family prescribed and believed in the sixteenth century grew from continental humanism and pre-Reformation interpretations of Pauline doctrine, the notion of family as state was relatively new. Nevertheless, "The domestic doctrine had been given fresh impetus in post-Reformation England, where the loss of an authoritarian priesthood (compounded by the absence of a state police) helped provoke a perceived crisis of order" (Orlin, "Familial" 29). More than anything else, the desire to come to the aid and defense of the family structure was necessitated not by the absence of family structure or theory prior to the Reformation, but rather as a direct result of the Reformation was a desire to reinvigorate traditional structures, because "patriarchal theory, for the first time called into doubt" (Orlin, "Man's House" 67). Frances E. Dolan concurred with this argument in *Dangerous Familiars*, explaining that "As political upheaval made manifest changing conceptions of authority and obedience, domestic order seems to have become more rather than less important" (Dolan 91).

[13] Although Stone does not necessarily acknowledge it, this is much in keeping with Raymond Williams's concept of dominant, residual, and emergent cultures: all of these things can occur at one time, but not all of them are the dominant culture. This suggests that culture does not change radically and abruptly, but rather over a longer period of time. Although Stone suggests that there are radical changes in affective structures in the period in question, more recent criticism has suggested that those changes are more gradual, more along the lines of Williams's gradual change.

[14] Susie Phillips's current work troubles this notion, as she argues for an awareness of slaves of African origin in the city. While I am convinced by her argument, it does not bear out in the plays, and the conduct books certainly do not attend to it. Therefore, I am going to omit that potential relationship from this dissertation.

[15] Many critics have called into question Stone's insistence on the idea of a crisis of social order in the period. See Ralph Houlbrooke and Rosemary O'Day in particular.

[16] See, for example, Vivien Brodsky's "Widows in Late Elizabethan London: Remarriage, Economic Opportunity, and Family Orientations."

[17] See Lena Cowen Orlin's anthology, *Material London, ca. 1600*.

[18] The metaphor of the house as a state in small does have important political ramifications, ones that developed throughout the seventeenth century, and especially in those homes of Puritans resistant to the increasingly authoritarian governments of James I and Charles I. One the one hand, this state in small can provide, as Orlin explains, internal stability and thus state stability. One the other hand, they are becoming what Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse have described as "a self-enclosed social unit in whose affairs the state could not intervene" (Armstrong and Tennenhouse, "The

literature of conduct" 8). This poses a problem for the church as well as the state, since the father of the household is equated with the king and becomes the head of the household church.

[19] Almost all conduct book writers participate in this wider political agenda of ordering society through ordering the family. In *A discourse, of marriage and wiving* (1615) Alexander Niccholes rationalized that "for euery married man, for the most part, hath three common-wealthes under him: he is a Husband of a Wife, a Father of Children, and a Master of Servants, and therefore had neede of gouernment in himselfe that must gouerne all these" (Niccholes 44). Thus, the government of the household also depended on governance of the self. The household is a central metaphor in conduct books for both the state (house as microcosm of the state) and man (a macrocosm of the human body), with the husband as both the governor and the head. William Gouge wrote "Oh if the head and severall members of a family would be perswaded every of them to be conscionable in performing their owne particular duties, what a sweet society, and happy harmony would the be in houses? What excellent seminaries would families be to Church and Commonwealth?" (Gouge 2). "The primary political function of the household society was the maintenance of order; because of its complexity, structure was necessary to domestic order" (Orlin, *Private Matters* 86).

[20] See Linda Anderson's recent book on the variety of permutations of servanthood represented in Shakespeare's plays, *A Place in the Story* (Newark: U of Delaware P, 2005).

[21] For this and more about the material life of the family, see Orlin's *Elizabethan Households*.

[22] In response to the changes in property ownership, a plethora of manuals were printed covering a variety of topics, from husbandry to courtier behavior, to household authority. Michelle Dowd notes that "writers such as [Thomas] Tusser, Richard Braithwaite, Gervase Markam, and William Gouge set out guideline for proper housewifery that were tailored to their specific audiences" (223). Unlike Tusser, Braithwaite and Markham, Gouge was specifically interested in a London audience rather than the country estate of the gentry, nobility and aristocracy.

[23] See Green's *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2000.

[24] The most famous of the texts on husbandry being by Gervase Markham and Thomas Tusser. Both wrote a great deal of interesting things, but neither is particularly useful to this study.

[25] For a useful explanation of the different types of Puritanism in the early modern period, see Margot Heineman's *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981) and Christopher Hill's *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1964). Our modern estimations of Puritans as a single, cogent religious unit are misleading. As these two works explain, the term was used widely. Hill in fact notes that "The word 'Puritan' too is an admirable refuge from clarity of thought" (Hill 13). He defines his own usage of the term as based on the work of Henry Parker: "The shrewd Henry Parker insisted that it was necessary to distinguish at least four types of Puritans – Puritans in Church policy, Puritans in religion, Puritans in State and Puritans in morality.

Puritans in Church policy and religion I shall take, as contemporaries did, to be those who remained within the State Church but wanted a cleaner break with popery" (Hill 20).

[26] During a one-day seminar, Fran Dolan pointed out this fairly obvious fact. Although Gouge's book is lengthy, it's actually quite small in size, and someone could fairly easily slip it into a pocket to look at later.

[27] Despite the apparent conservatism in some of Gouge's ideas, however, he was actually quite progressive in a number of matters, most especially when it came to the issue of a husband beating his wife. Gouge found this behavior always unacceptable.

[28] Although there is debate about the term and about which plays fit the term, there is general agreement that these plays were performed in the private theaters by the boys companies. But even that is not always the case. This is a particularly slippery category that often ends up defined in part by the critics personal preferences. And that may well be the case here.

[29] Griswold argues, along with most other critics of the form that "City comedy offers a relentlessly cynical view of human motivations. Greed, vanity, and lust drive the characters to action" (Griswold 23).

[30] This is perhaps why Northrop Frye's definition of each genre becomes more and more complex, with nearly endless permutations of terms.

[31] In my recent conference presentations, I have been working towards defining city comedy based around the idea of the material goods up for sale in the shops. Even if the merchant himself is absent, those goods of the household and of the body abound in the play. For example, in the paper presented at the 2007 Renaissance Society of America, I pose the following concerns: "Robert Herrick's poem, "Delight in Disorder," suggests in its loving attention to his mistress's garments, an interest in the very materials that define her outward appearance. It is not merely the listing of the object, but the explanation of the *wearing* of those objects that defines the eroticism of this poem – the disorder of the post-tryst mistress delights the eye of the narrative persona. Even in this poem about lust, mistresses and art itself, critics can find an important aspect of early modern material culture – an inventory of the apparel and accessories of the mistress. This poem opens up the real possibility of the accessorized body, a body adorned by objects found throughout the plays commonly called city comedies. Should anyone want these objects, he or she need only wander over to the shops of *The Roaring Girl* or the tents of *Bartholmew Fair*. But what, exactly, does it mean that the shops are so central to the city comedy? And what does it mean for our understanding of the accessory as a part of the creation of early modern subjectivity?" (Isaacson, "City Comedy as an Accessorized Genre.")

[32] Thomas Dekker has the unfortunate distinction of becoming something of a whipping boy for many of the critics trying to define city comedy.

[33] Gibbons' definition of city comedy does seem to allow for this somewhat, since Gibbons does point out that both plays are veiled critiques of English life. Taking that as a standard creates the difficulty, then, of excluding almost all of early modern drama, especially after new historicism. Even though this aspect of Gibbons's definition strikes me as incorrect, or at least somewhat arbitrary, I find the idea that thinking about plays outside of London that are still about London liberating for use of comparison. This will be important in chapter three, where I include a discussion of Shakespeare's *Measure For*

Measure in comparison with Massinger's revision of it, *The City Madam* as well as Shakespeare's *Merry Wives* and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

[34] For a fuller articulation of this argument, see Howard's "The Evidence of Fiction: Women's Relationship to Goods in London City Drama." (*Culture and Change: Attending to Early Modern Women*. Ed. Margaret Mikesell and Adele Seeff. Newark: U of Delaware P, 2003); see also Howard's *The Theater of a City*.

[35] Leggatt also includes plays that are veiled references to London, rather than sticking to a strict definition of the city being in England. If Gibbons and Leggatt begin to include such plays that are what he calls references to London in *The Malcontent*, *Volpone*, and less well-veiled in *The Dutch Courtesan*, why should he not include Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, with its Vienna as a fairly obvious allusion to contemporary London? This problem of slippage has led latter critics to redefine the term to mean plays intentionally about the native locations, but even here the choice of plays causes some slippage in the definition.

[36] See Vivien Brodsky on how London differed from the country and smaller urban areas for widows. This difference can be extrapolated and applied to all members of the community.

[37] In her current project, Wall is working on the tables of contents in the conduct books, and other household treatises.

[38] See Raymond Williams' *Marxism and Literature* for a full explanation of these terms.

[39] Griffith was not a Puritan, and was in fact a Royalist supporter during the civil wars. His work is useful because it develops some of the same themes as the earlier, Puritan writers and gives more credence to Amussen's claim of the sweep towards conservatism in the clamping down on family order.

[40] The manuals were not the only source of advice about the household, nor the only sources of commentary available to the middle class consumers in London. Some of the most exaggerated versions of the household gone awry appear in the ballads printed on broadside sheets. This is a household at the opposite end of the continuum from the idealized home of the Puritan handbooks. Frances E. Dolan, Linda Woodbridge and Joy Wiltenberg have made extensive use of this form to consider the experience of women in the early modern period, and these texts prove useful also to the search for understanding the attitudes about the household space. Although the broadside ballads themselves are tangential to the specific project of this dissertation, the blending of new historicist and feminist work that these critics have done is influential of this project and has provided models for thought and technique. See Wiltenburg, Joy. *Disorderly Women and Female Power in the Street Literature of Early Modern England and Germany* (Charlottesville, VA: UP of Virginia, 1992); Woodbridge, Linda. *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Urbana, IL: U of Illinois P, 1984).

Chapter Two:

Inadequate Household Governance: Husbands and Wives

> *…Tell him that*
> If woman should to man be wo[e],
> She should not be what God did make her,
> That was to be a helper, so
> God did then give,
> man now doth take her. ("The posie of a young man to his Love, shewing her what a woman should be," *Love's Garland*. circa 1620s)

The conduct books of the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century exert most of their energy on the ideals of the married couple, since they were, as André Burguière and François Lebrun argue, "at the centre of the family network" ("One Hundred Families of Europe" 22). Although instances of family exist that do not begin with the marriage of a man and a woman, the normative inclusion of an adult into a family other the family of origin began with the marriage ceremony. And so, in courting a woman, a man might indicate how this all-important relationship *should* work. The poem above comes from an inscription on a poesy ring – a ring given as a love token – and appeared in a collection of such verses some time in the 1620s.[1] This statement of wooing, that a woman should be a helper to her husband, highlights the importance of the household hierarchy even if the sentiment itself lacks conventional romance. A woman brings only suffering to a husband should she refuse to be the helper *that God had ordained she should be*. Even the descriptive title of this poesy suggests the necessity of an early indication that the wooer expects that his future wife fulfill ideals. Wooing a wife while imagining these ideals is one thing; negotiating household authority after the service is another thing entirely.

The artisan/merchant home's murky realms of autonomy produce the complex delegation of familial authority. The location of the shop within the home obscures the wife's authority in the family, because the demarcation between the home and the shop is ambiguous.[2] These are problems that the Puritan writers often ignore, but that the playwrights push to the forefront. When Margery Eyre of Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) tries to defend her housekeeping as a good citizen's wife, she comes into conflict with her husband, his apprentices and his journeymen. At the same time, dissention arises in the Eyre home about who may control the maids. Dekker here, and Thomas Middleton elsewhere, displayed these moments of tension, complicating notions of the heterogeneously hierarchical household. Even in the homes that are not strictly shops, the question of authority is difficult to assess for the modern reader as well as the early modern audience.[3] By taking away the agency of the wife, the household manuals often ascribe a corresponding responsibility on the husband, a sort of super-agency. The husband must take responsibility for members of the household, both for practical authority over their day-to-day living and for their spiritual well being. It is the householder, the conduct books claim, who will be held accountable both by the community at large and by God for all that occurs within his family.

This becomes a particular problem when the husband is somehow inadequate or inappropriate in his authority, as even conduct book writers acknowledge might sometimes happen. The home is ordered under the head of the household but that order cannot always be sustained if the head is not good. Matthew Griffith (1633) writes that "Some houses are now faine to hop Headlesse; as hauing such Governours, as are either Tyrants, or Fooles: and how is it likely they should ever direct, and moderate others, who

are themsleves so irregular? When indeed, the Head should represent that Majesty of God, at home" (Griffith 8). Although Griffith initially ascribes the desire to function without a head to the rest of the household – it is the household that "fains to hop" – he still acknowledges that that very desire comes from the inadequacy of that head.

However this language's slipperiness belies the problem of the authority in the household. The conduct books suggest that the wives – who are "lesser" or "weaker" vessels – must have learned their rebellion, which suggests a new set of questions in considering wives in the household.[4] Assuming that that wives are like the ones described by the household manuals strips them of all agency, an unpalatable option for modern critics and readers. At the same time, taking wives' misbehaviors as ways to subvert the unequal balance of the household then risks making real the stereotyped housewives that the early modern period advanced. Instead, these moments of fissure show the unnaturalness of the ministers' ideal situation and its intense impracticality in a rapidly transforming, unconventional urban landscape. The inadequacy of the householder appears not only in his inability or unwillingness to be the moral center of his home, but also his inability or refusal to participate in honest shopkeeping. The conduct books' lists of inadequate and inappropriate householder behavior highlight the narrow margins of the way to control that space.

This chapter will consider the difficult negotiation that the conduct books identify within marriage and how the blurred boundaries of the shop and the home further complicate that negotiation, particularly in the plays of Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton. Dekker and Middleton, collaborators and prolific singular authors, considered the intertwined problem of fidelity and authority in the merchant household.

For Dekker the problem of infidelity and household insubordination stems from economic and class factors, with the threat of infidelity coming from the landed gentry gadding about London, busy seducing the city wives. Dekker's play, *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, suggests an inability to be an appropriate husband, because external events and people interfere. For Middleton, the problem lies as much within the wives as within their husbands' characters. The wives of Middleton's plays are often given to lustful thoughts and are generally attracted to suitors of a higher social status than their husbands. Although Middleton does attend to the cross-class relationships that are so important to Dekker's play, the husbands of Middleton's plays almost *deserve* the infidelity on the part of the wives, because they fail as upright householders and merchants. Unlike Dekker's husbands, these are often abusive or neglectful of their wives and their families, sometimes willing to forgo their husbandly duties altogether.

The collaboration of Middleton and Dekker in *The Roaring Girl* adds a new dimension to the negotiation of the home and the shop by contrasting two merchants whose wives work within their shops. While this chapter will not focus specifically on ascribing authorship, as many studies have done, it will assert that looking at this co-authored play gives a richer, more complex understanding of the cultural expectations of the husband and the wife, particularly the issue of fidelity within marriage in the city.[5] The play juxtaposes two merchant couples demonstrating concerns different from those Middleton raises in *Michaelmas Term* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. Instead of neglect or abuse, these husbands demonstrate affection for their wives. However, one husband is so over-fond of his wife that he nearly loses his authority in his household when she demonstrates her potential for infidelity. Even more clearly than the other

plays of this chapter, *The Roaring Girl* presents the overlapping spheres of authority – the home and the shop – where the ability to be a good householder merges with the ability to be a good merchant.

Household Authority and Companionate Marriage

Conduct book writers take marriage seriously, because marriage was the entrance into the adult world.[6] In his conduct book, *A discourse, of marriage and wiving* (1615), Alexander Niccholes insists that marriage, "of all the humane actions of a mans life, is one of the greatest weight and consequence, as there on depending the future good, or euill, of a mans whole aftertime, and dayes" (Niccholes 4). Niccholes even compares the deliberations for choosing a marriage partner to the stratagems of war. Once married, however, the man would find "a friend, and comfort for society, but also a companion for pleasure, and in some sort a seruant for profite too, for a wife is all these" (Niccholes 5). Despite war-like strategy in gaining the situation, marriage had advantages and was "an aduenture" (Niccholes 9). The position of the householder – and the privileges of exerting what Lena Orlin calls the "absolute political power of domestic patriarchalism" (Orlin, *Private Matters* 138) – far outweighs the burden of the role's responsibilities. However, domestic harmony depends on structuring the relationship in a manner that gives both husband and wife rights and responsibilities.[7]

Being a householder is a difficult responsibility: in spite of wife's duty to obey, the householder has the duty to deserve obedience and respect from his subordinates. Thus, being the householder carries clear privileges, but inadequate submission to the responsibilities of the house may lead to a lack of control. The conduct books take

particular interest in the root of cacophonous households, while hinting at sympathy for those subordinates living under an inadequate householder who may lack frugal behavior or have unreasonable (perhaps unlawful) demands. Even in the strict household hierarchy, the husband should treat the family members with some respect and grant a certain amount of autonomy, thus ensuring a stable and harmonious household. Should the householder not do such things, the wife may express her contempt for her husband. Even the conduct books acknowledge this as reasonable.

No matter how careful the negotiation, a husband could forfeit his claim to household authority by acting inappropriately to his role. In addition to providing positive examples of obligations to the family, Gouge outlines familial roles through a series of "contraries." For example he warns husbands against too much spending and making unreasonable demands. Warning that

> Contrary is their practise who by their profanenesse, riotousnesse, drunkennesse, lewdnesse, lightnesse, unthriftinesse, and other like base carriage, make themselves contemptible, and so lose their authoritie: though a wife ought not to take these occasions to despise her husband, yet is it a just judgment on him to be despised, seeing he maketh himselfe contemptible. (Gouge 355)

Gouge asserts a claim for proper household behavior that is lawful, that is in keeping practice with good Christian values, and that is beneficial to the security and well-being of other household inmates. Gouge's many contraries imply that these things were either common events, or were at least thought to be so. Even though a wife should not despise her husband, her husband's unbecoming behavior gives her an understandable reason to despise him. Thus, Gouge slyly acknowledges that unnecessary hardships and unlawful behavior will result in a wife's reasonable – even commendable – contempt for her husband.

Stefano Guazzo's *The Court of Good Counsell* (1607) includes a practical understanding, sometimes missing from the better-known conduct books like Gouge's or Cleaver and Dod's, where the household is almost always ideal. For example, although Guazzo avoids condoning it, the text acknowledges the situation of remarriage and the ideas of proparenting.[8] This book acknowledges the importance of understanding that not all households would be perfect. Even though a number of Londoners would have experienced a rapid shift in their families, through spousal death, the lack of ready-made divorce meant that it was important to choose well the first time. The book acknowledges the necessity of getting counsel before making the decision:

> Therefore let him that intendeth to marry, and tye himselfe to that honorable state of life: (being the first bargaine of thrift, and the first step to good husbandry) take all the best Counsell he can in the world in the choyce of a Wife, yet scarce sufficient enoug: for being once done it can neuer be recall'd, but eyther lamented too soone or repented too late. (Guazzo sig. B1)

Careful deliberations for a woman are important since her station will depend entirely on her future husband's ability and "marriage aduanceth a wife to the degree of her husband" (Gouge 425). For the husband, the maintenance of his household and the proper use of economic resources are at stake. Natasha Korda has argued that the wife is keeper of the property, even if she is not the owner. This is a point of tension, as the author acknowledges, because if the man chooses a wife who has a difference "eyther in yeares, or in calling: whereof doth arise the many quarrels about house-keeping and manners of life" the household will not run properly (Guazzo sig. B1v). Guazzo obliquely acknowledges that the household contains two people who may have distinct ideas about how best to run it.

The dichotomy of the wife's role as household manger and the husband's role as the public face of the family meant that public judgment held the householder accountable for all. This household situation is thus fraught with conflict.[9] Roles for the wife that Robert Clever and John Dod (1630) prescribe include taking charge of the servants and ensuring that the household stays within its financial means. She must ensure that the family, and therefore the householder, appears well before the community.[10] Should the housewife fail to fulfill her role properly and should the domestic economy run amok, Gouge explained, not only would God judge the householder for any sinfulness incurred, but "The blame of all [household faults] before men [would] lie upon him" (367).[11] The nature of this relationship proves a potential ground for conflict if husbands failed to demonstrate proper authority, or even involved themselves too much in the wives' spheres of authority.

The disagreement over duties is possible for many reasons, and for some of them, Guazzo blames the husband. Although the author warns the wife against idleness (he has a long discourse on women's vanity as an impediment to good housekeeping), he warns that the husband should not usurp the wife's role in overseeing the household:

> But those men are to be laughed at, who hauing wise and sufficient wiues, will (as they say) set their Hens to brood, season the put, dresse their owne meate, teach the Chamber-maides, and take their wiues office from her: such husbands offend their wiues much, shewing thereby that eyther they mistrust them, or despise them. (Guazzo sig. E2v)

This passage acknowledges the subjectivity of the wife and her capacity to rule over the home: she is perfectly capable to order and to keep the home without her husbands' interference.[12] If a husband usurps his wife's role, he risks offending his wife for underestimating her ability as well as the contempt of the community that recognizes the

husband's lack of trust. Either situation is one that overrides the love that the husband is to have for his wife, "his onley treasure on earth" (Guazzo sig. C4). Even more important to the financial stability of the house, those husbands "Who are ouer busie in prying into euery businesse of the house, and will haue their hand in all … cannot but neglect other more weighty matters, which more properly belong vnto them. [Often these are the men who] are most negligent of such affaires as appertaine vnto themselues" (Gouge 368-369). Thus not only does taking over a wife's duty insult her, but it also occupies too much of the householder's time when he should be attending to those public and financial duties necessary for maintaining his household.

Conduct book writers generally assume that the role of the wife is linked to her intrinsic nature and that she will naturally know how to fulfill her role as a housekeeper and overseer of the kitchen. But even the best of wives might not always do the best things for the households. At this point, the husband must determine how to properly correct his wife. Guazzo insists that in the domestic space, "the rule of the house belongeth to the wife, and that God hath made women more fearefull then men, to the end they should be more fit for the wary matching and keeping of the house, whereunto the carefull feare oftentimes is requisite" (sig. C4). Even though the wife naturally has domain over the domestic space, the husband should know how things work, because he might need to correct faults in the home.[13] This ability to correct flaws in housekeeping, however, creates a point of tension in the authority over the household. If the husband is to take charge of the household even as he cannot naturally know certain aspects of housekeeping, he potentially will find conflict with his wife over who has authority to control the servants and set priorities of housekeeping.

No matter the credit the conduct book authors want to give wives in their abilities to keep a highly functional home, the texts ultimately argue for the biological inferiority of women. Women are going to be less capable of controlling themselves in regards to not only the household (where they have to be given specific duties and discipline), but also their own sexuality. The two are tied together for these authors, as they are tied together for many early moderns and the characters of plays. Jane Anger suggests that this home is an elusive place. She openly identifies the connection between good housewifery and fidelity, saying "In woman is only true fidelity: except in her, there be [no] constancy, and without her no huswifery" (quoted in Sheperd 39). Even if it is not in conduct books directly, in the popular imagination, infidelity stems from discord in the home.

Dekker's "Romanticized" London

Often dismissed as romanticized (*The Shoemaker's Holiday*) or doggerel attempts at the form (*Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!*, both cowritten with John Webster), Dekker has been treated less seriously as a playwright commenting on London and the economic and social situation therein. Recent work by Jean E. Howard does acknowledge *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, but she does this by revising the idea of city comedy to the broader term "London comedy," and placing the play among "London chronicle comedies" (Howard, *Theater* 20). Howard's critique of the play continues to focus on economics, but complicates the reading of the play by investing the economic interests of the play with the material culture of early modern London. This section will suggest a further investigation of the realism of this play that relies on the family as a

central point of departure. The external pressures of the city influence the husband-wife negotiations in this play.

Based in part on Thomas Deloney's *The Gentle Craft*, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* follows three plots, centering not on the cross-class marriage of the former mayor's daughter to a country gentleman, but on the rise of the quasi-historical figure Simon Eyre.[14] Through a series of dubious financial dealings and some fortunate deaths of London aldermen (compressed in time by Dekker), the London shoemaker Simon Eyre ascends to Lord Mayor of London. Jean Howard suggests that rather than merely look sentimentally at surreptitious cross-class romance and that romance's mirror in Eyre's journeyman and his wife, the play seems to be "a somewhat nostalgic celebration of an established craft industry, the play actually acknowledges the importance of new kinds of commercial activity as the route to social prominence" (Howard, "Evidence" 166). The play celebrates not the nostalgic past of the historical Simon Eyre, but the early modern present of nascent capitalism. Still, Howard does not depart from conventional readings that locate the play only in the marketplace. The inclusion of the family in that marketplace is important for a clearer understanding of the actual nexus of relations within the merchant class home and the shop.

To reconsider Dekker's romanticism and civic nostalgia, this section will attend not to the Lacy-Rose plot and Simon Eyre's meteoric rise, but instead to the relationship between Simon and Margery Eyre, married for thirty-six years, and the relationship between Eyre's journeyman Ralph Damport and his wife Jane.[15] In particular, the Ralph-Jane plot presents the difficulty of the apparently-widowed London working woman. Unlike wives in Middleton's plays, Jane's apparent spousal loss reduces her to a position

of bare necessity, where she must work in a stranger's shop and begrudgingly opt to marry the persistent gentleman suitor, Hammon. As Dekker presents a plot mirroring the primary romantic plot, he questions the absolute certainty of the power of romance. Jane and Ralph do reunite in the end, but a situation outside of their control – Ralph's inability to avoid conscription based on his class position – threatens both Ralph's masculinity and his role as a husband. Moreover, Ralph's position as a subordinate in Simon Eyre's household strips him of the role of householder and threatens his wife's financial stability. Ralph is always-already stripped of his position as householder in this marriage, which further vexes the situation of family in the early modern period.

The relationship of the other middle class couple, Simon and Margery Eyre, changes due to Simon's rise in stature, even as he remains firmly rooted in the London citizenry. During the ongoing change in status, Margery and Simon wrangle for control over the household, language and their finances.[16] The play shows the couple with their extended family in their workshop and in the street. Roy Booth describes the scenes in the workshop as Dekker's "extraordinary excursion into the ordinary," inspired by Shakespeare's scenes at the Boar's Head Tavern (195). The play suggests its desire to represent the realities of London life, but as David Scott Kastan explains may be instead "a realistic portrait only of Elizabethan middle-class dreams – a fantasy of class fulfillment that would erase the tensions and contradictions created by the nascent capitalism of the late sixteenth century" (Kastan 151-152). Even in moments of fantasy – Simon always seems to get his way as householder, despite some of his bad householding skills – the overlapping space of the home and the shop makes it difficult to know where Simon's authority ends and Margery's begins.

Simon is not particularly respectful of anyone in his shop, hurling taunts and insults at anyone nearby, but these may well be affectionate names for those around him. By taunting Margery thus he violates maintenance of proper decorum of the household that that the Puritan preachers – Gouge especially – insisted upon. The first time Eyre refers to his wife (and in public, no less), he explains that "The wench with the mealy mouth that wil neuer tire, is my wife" (*SH* 1.1.127-128). Throughout the play he finds epithet after unusual epithet to call Margery: he calls her midriff (*SH* 1.135; 1.159); cracked groats and mustard tokens (*SH* 1.1.204); Dame Clapperdudgeon (*SH* 1.4.110); bombast-cotton-candle quean (*SH* 2.3.35-36); Queen of Clubs (*SH* 2.3.26); tittle-tattle (*SH* 2.3.58; 2.3.94); brown-bread tannikin (*SH* 2.3.59); powder-beef quean (*SH* 2.3.63); and in a great flourish prior to the shoemaker's feast, he says to her

> Away, you Islington whitepot, hence you hopperarse, you barley pudding ful of maggots, you broyld carbonado, auaunt, auaunt, auoid, Mephistophilus: shall *Sim Eyre* learn to speak of you, Lady *Madgie*? vanish mother Miniuer cap, vanish. (5.4.46-49)[17]

This is certainly offensive according to Gouge's assertion that "contrary are such titles … set her [the wife] in too meane a rancke, as woman, wench, &c … and opprobrious names, as *slut*, *drab*, *queane*; and names more befitting beasts then wiues, as *Cole*, *Browne*, *Muggle*, &c" (Gouge 372). Potentially even worse, in the eyes of the Puritans, Eyre tosses some of these same insults at the maids in his home and occasionally calls Margery by her servants' names (1.1.159), lowering her to the level of the servants and not his companion wife. Gouge dislikes the obviously insulting names for wives, but he also he dislikes "their Christian names contracted, as *Sal*, *Mal*, *Besse*, *Nan*, &c" (Gouge 372). Eyre constantly refers to his wife in this way, calling her either Madge or Madgy no less than fourteen times throughout the play.

Critics generally take these insults as just that. Thomas Worden argues that "[a]ffectionate and comic though his epithets may be, however, they are still terms of abuse" (450). Roy Booth argues that these insults are "in part de-activated because Margery endures it all with comic placidity" (196). What critics tend to miss in Eyre's final enthusiastic encomium of his wife, is that despite his command that she should "away, … Islington whitepot," Eyre says to her "no, come, my Lady *Madgie*," indicating that she should follow him to the feast (*SH* 5.4.54). Despite his earlier refusal to acknowledge Margery by a title befitting her new role as the wife of the Lord Mayor of London, Eyre does indeed call her by a proper name. Sort of. Although Eyre violates certain principles and insults his wife, he still brings her along as companion to his feast with the king (though she is fairly silent by this point).

Margery also takes liberties in her role as wife in her interrogation of Simon's mercantile ability. Margery's involvement in Eyre's shop highlights her own concerns for the financial well being of the shop and by extension her own home. The romantic male character Roland Lacy disguises himself as the Dutch shoemaker Hans Meulter in order to look for work in Simon's shop. At this point, Simon is a relatively profitable shoemaker, but he has neither yet made gains from his financial speculations, nor risen to the Lord Mayor of London. Simon has only his aspirations, not their attainment. When Lacy/Hans enters the shop, the workers in the shop invite him to stay: Firk first insists that Eyre "hire him … that I may learne some gibble, gabble, twill make vs worke the faster" (*SH* 1.4.44-45). Firk appeals to economic purposes: including Hans in the shop will make the shoemakers better laborers and thus enrich Eyre further. Eyre's initial response, "Peace, *Firke*, a hard world, let him pass, let him vanish, we have journeymen

enow: peace, my fine *Firke*" (*SH* 1.4.46-47), suggests that Eyre worries about hiring another apprentice. If he hires Lacy/Hans, Eyre must feed and lodge yet another worker, whose skills remain unknown. As a merchant, Eyre must pay attention to his reputation as well as his actual financial situation.

It is at this point that Margery is most vocal. Larry Champion has observed that Margery is often a difficult wife: "For one thing, she delights in offering her husband gratuitous advice which runs counter to his intentions, as first observed in [scene one in] her incredulous response to her husband's offer to furnish boots for Lacy for seven years if the new-made colonel will but leave Ralph home from the wars" (Champion 25). In this scene, Margery seemingly echoes Eyre's initial statements, saying that "Nay, nay, y'are best to follow your mans councell; you shall see what will come on't: we haue not men enough, but we must entertaine euery butter-boxe: but let that pass" (*SH* 1.4.48-50). Because she speaks sarcastically in telling her husband to follow his workers' advice, she expresses her own fear that they cannot afford to hire another worker, much less one from a country known for producing heavy drinkers. Her final comment, "but let that pass," is one she repeats throughout the play, which suggests that her comments mean nothing; yet, that she has made the overall assertion undermines her husband's authority in his shop. As a merchant's wife, she should be in charge of her household not the shop. At the same time, she lives in a house containing her husband's shop, so her status is fraught as a wife in charge of a private sphere. Margery's small points of resistance in this scene point to a greater level of resistance on the part of city wives, and so she represents the wife that Cleaver and Dod eschew, because she is not subject to her husband:

> First, if she be not subiect to her Husband, to let him rule all the Household, especially, outward affaires; if shee will make against him, and seeke to haue her

> owne wayes, there will be doing and undoing. … This is allowable, that shee may in modest sort shewe her minde; and a wise Husband will not disdaine to heare her aduise, and follow it also, if it bee good. (Cleaver 86-87)

Even as Margery speaks her mind and acts as the apparently difficult wife, she also actually does give good advice to her husband, advice she knows that he will not follow.[18]

Although Margery certainly meddles in the shop, Simon does not resist meddling in the home, the realm of Margery's expertise and duty. Natasha Korda explains that the wife's "responsibilities include not only saving, storing, and maintaining, but marking, ordering, accounting, dividing, distributing, spending, and disposing of household property, including both durable and perishable goods" (27). Eyre demands at the end of the scene, "runne wife, bid your maids, your Tullibubs, make readie my fine mens breakefasts" (*SH* 1.4.91-92), calling for Margery to take charge of the meal. Previously in that scene, Eyre had spoken of Margery's rule over her maids, insisting that she be in charge of her women, instructing Margery to "Call the quean [her maid Cicely Bumtrinket] up" (*SH* 1.4.34). Certainly, Margery has some control over the household staff, but in welcoming Hans, Eyre directs her only to take care of the food, wresting control from her. Instead, he enlists Firk and Hodge to do the other work of hosting the new worker, instructing "*Hodge* entertain him, *Fyrk* bid him welcome" (*SH* 1.4.90-91). This scene reflects the implications of Gouge's discussion of contrary husbands, those who are to their wives "*grievous* by bringing such guests into the house as they know cannot be welcome to them: *burdensome* by *infrequent*, and *unseasonable* inviting of guests, or imposing other like extraordinary businesses, over and above the ordinary affairs of the house" (Gouge 368).

Gouge's admonition suggests that husbands may have behaved this way towards their wives, usurping what little power women had over the domestic sphere by taking the privilege of deciding that guests were welcome, no matter the wife's objections or situation. Although Margery is clearly in charge of the household staff, she must still obey her husband's wishes, though she objects to his decisions. That Eyre apparently fits this sort of contrary husband suggests the very situation Gouge warns against, which in turn suggests that the command of the middle class/merchant class household was transitory. The play also obscures the difficult tasks often under the control of the wife, suggesting the menial nature of these tasks.

The rise in social status that results from Eyre's prosperity and prominence first as Master Sheriff and later as Lord Mayor further confuses the command of the household. In scene ten, Dekker uses Margery to mock the pretensions of the upwardly mobile, having her spend her time concerned with Eyre's rise and with her own wardrobe. She wants to "haue a pair of shooes made, corke … woodden heele too" (*SH* 3.2.29-30), a ridiculously extravagant demand for a shoe, not to mention completely impractical. As she spends her husband's money, Margery complains "how costly this world's calling is" (*SH* 3.2.46). Despite pretending to care about the expenses as the dutiful housewife, Margery concerns herself with fripperies rather than proper household maintenance.[19] Although tangential to the problem of housekeeping, this is nevertheless an important point in the Eyre's negotiation of power, because if earlier Margery was unwilling to spend extra money on another apprentice, then here she is spending Simon's money rampantly to attain social status.[20] Further evidence of Margery's vanity is her lack of concern for Ralph, newly lamed by war in France. Margery, busy with her new clothing

greets him, "how dost thou, good *Ralph*? I am glad to see thee wel" (*SH* 3.2.59-60), rather than noticing his injuries sustained in a war into which he was conscripted.[21]

Despite Simon's tendency to undermine Margery's authority by publicly insulting her and by usurping her household authority, he nevertheless trusts her for important endeavors. Simon asks Margery to oversee Lacy and Rose's clandestine wedding. When Eyre orchestrates the marriage of the two, he sends Margery as his deputy, telling her "Lady *Madgy*, take two or three of my piecrust eaters, my buffe-ierkin varlets, that doe walk in blacke gowns at *Simon Eyres* heeles, take them, good lady *Madgy*, trippe and goe, my brown Queen of Periwigs, with my delicate *Rose* and my iolly *Rowland* to the Sauoy, see them linckte, countenaunce the marriage" (*SH* 5.1.21-26). Margery is to act as witness to the clandestine wedding at the Savoy, which is, according to Amy L. Smith, "the chapel of the hospital between the Thames and the Strand, … a spot well-known for clandestine marriages" (344).[22]

Simon's rise to mayor does not mean that Margery refrains from making suggestions that Simon will not listen to. However, toward the end of the play, these are suggestions about comportment as a rising citizen, particularly in front of the king. Margery insists that when Simon meets the king that he "haue a care what you speake to his grace" (*SH* 5.4.45). Simon, of course, refuses to listen and hurls insults at her (see the Islington whitepot insult above). Nevertheless, Simon takes her with him to meet the king. The marriage seems to fall into a position of appropriate household behavior – Margery does not speak before the King, Simon retains his identity as the mad mayor of London – but this rings false ultimately. This is due to the fact that the play shifts its

emphasis at the end from the London workshop's and central figure of the artisan to the court's tying up of the main romantic plot.

Even as the play ends with a happy marriage and an apparent reification of a middle class hierarchy in the Eyre household, it eschews complete nostalgia and wish fulfillment, by suggesting that the companionate marriage based on romantic love may not work as well as desired. Because the Damports do not participate in class endogamy, as Rose and Lacy do, they should be the couple that demonstrates a conduct book's "ideal" young, married couple. The class conflict underlying the entire play foments the near-cuckoldry of Ralph Damport, which suggests that the difficulty of keeping a good house – or at least a good marriage – faces further destruction with the intrusion of the gentry classes into the artisans' lives. The conscription that will ultimately lead to his wounding and questions about his masculinity (the latter part of the play is rife with impotency jokes at the expense of Ralph) is first of all an outside force that Ralph cannot control. The play introduces the citizen characters surrounding Eyre's workshop attempting to rescue Ralph from conscription. The characters complain to Lacy (now set as commander over a force for France) of the injustice of "press[ing] a man within a yeare and a day of his mariage" (*SH* 1.1.149-150). As her husband faces conscription and prepares to leave, Jane "cannot speake for weeping" (*SH* 1.1.203), and demonstrates a deep emotional affection for her husband. This is a connection that cannot be broken throughout the play.[23]

Jane unintentionally comes close to infidelity. Because the now-lamed Ralph arrives home after Jane's departure from the Eyre workshop, he does not know where to find her and cannot reclaim his role as her husband.[24] Thus Hammon can persuade Jane

that her husband has died in the wars in France and she is free to remarry. Jane resists his advances, explaining that

> My husband liues, at least I hope he lives,
> Prest was he to these bitter warres in *France*,
> Bitter they are to me by wanting him,
> I haue but one heart, and that heart's his due,
> How can I then bestow the same on you?
> Whilst he liues, his I liue, be it nere so poor,
> And rather be his wife, then a kings whore. (*SH* 3.4.73-79)

Jane insists upon her faithfulness to her husband, calling up an internal desire to be a faithful wife by foregoing any potential material gain of taking up with a gentleman able to provide finery. Jane's insistence in the initial face of her possible widowhood elicits audience sympathy, since she remains the parallel to the romantic female lead. Nevertheless, women in her precarious position might have to forgo the romance for the reality of London.[25]

Ultimately, however, Jane gives in to Hammon's wooing and accepts his marriage proposal. This action on her part has caused a certain degree on critical disagreement, such as Rhonda Arab's complaint that "the play implies that [Jane] has no choice but to marry Hammon, as if being alone in London is simply not a viable option for a young woman" and that the play is therefore misogynistic (Arab 203). This does not indicate a necessarily misogynistic attitude on Dekker's part, but rather a real awareness of the expectation that city widows regularly remarried and often out of necessity. Vivien Brodsky has argued for understanding the London remarriage market to be highly active; moreover the "formal obstacles and informal pressures from well-organized male structures served to make rapid remarriage an attractive alternative to the independent exercising of a craft or trade as a widow" (142). The records of London indicate that

"Nearly 47 per cent of all tradesmen's widows had remarried within six months or less – a significant difference from widows of craftsmen, only 28 per cent of whom had found a new partner in the same interval. Combining the two groups we find that some 67 per cent of all widows had remarried within a year" (Brodsky 132). Thus, although Jane would fit into the latter group – the widows of craftsmen rather than tradesmen – a relatively rapid remarriage would not have been unexpected.[26]

Even if Jane were not in a potentially precarious situation, Hammon is a particularly persistent wooer; in this behavior he fulfills a shadow of a proper Petrarchan lover, and highlights the shift in middle class values in the city.[27] Hammon is not, according to Rhonda Arab, particularly manly and actually "stands for all that Simon Eyre and his men stand against" (Arab 189). In his persistence (he asks her three times to marry him), Hammon convinces Jane that Ralph might be dead, but she will not acquiesce to Ralph's demise, only that "If ever [she] wed a man it shall be [him]" (*SH* 3.4.122). The actual acceptance of Hammon's proposal occurs offstage, placing it in the background of the plot.

However, by foregrounding Ralph's recognition of Jane's shoe and the reunion scene between the spouses, the play affirms the power of the companionate marriage. As Ralph begins to make shoes for Hammon's bride-to-be, he recognizes the size, shape and work on the model shoe as his own. Ralph uses this material possession as evidence that he shall be able to find the woman whom Margery had so summarily dismissed and he claims that "I hold my life, / By this old shooe I shall find oute my wife" (*SH* 4.2.46-47). Ralph stakes his marriage on his ability to recognize his own handiwork, exemplifying the romantic power of the husband in this situation of loss. It is through this love token

that Ralph rescues his wife from her near-adultery (though of course, since she is unaware that he is actually alive, she would not be committing quite the crime of the lusty housewife of the city). Even as Hammon pleads with Ralph to sell his wife, Ralph and Jane reunite based on the idea that theirs is a companionate marriage.[28]

This relationship, unlike Simon and Margery's, seems based entirely on affection, and suggests an incompatibility of romance and householding. Ralph and Jane are both dependents, even while Jane should be a dependant of her husband's. The loss of her husband – first to conscription and then to apparent death – places her in a precarious situation. Widows are not uncommon in the time period, nor were widows who chose remarriage. Both are quite common in plays, including the first play that the next section examines. In *Michaelmas Term*, rather than have someone report the assumed death of a husband, Middleton uses a plot device of a faked death, similar to the device of Jonson's *Volpone*, to suggest that the husband is dead.

Lusty Widows and Chaste Maids: Middleton's "Cynical" London

Because Middleton and Dekker co-wrote *The Roaring Girl*, a frequently anthologized the non-Shakespearean play, they become easy foils for critics. Although Dekker's world is full of background strife (such as Henry V's campaign in France in the background of *The Shoemaker's Holiday*), critics assign to Middleton a greater degree of cynicism and even – some suggest – a greater degree of realism. For example Jean E. Howard is "inclined to feel that Middleton is here [takes] delight in rewriting 'scandal' simply as fact" ("The Evidence of Fiction" 172). Rick Bowers suggests that "Middleton's comedy examines behaviours with an amoral sense of big-city reportage.

Incidents that would have enraged the morality of satirists such as Ben Jonson or John Marston are, for Middleton, a matter of current events" (Bowers paragraph 18). More or less alone among the critics, Herbert Jack Heller focuses on Middleton's Puritan leanings, suggesting that he espoused in his city comedies a Calvinist theology about sin in a secular, profane world. Heller argues that Middleton "represents grace at work … [in] a secular and typically profane urban setting … [that] suit a Calvinist's belief in human depravity and the demonstration of grace upon the undeserving" (Heller 33).

Middleton's interests are fairly clear: Samuel Schoenbaum explains it nicely that "Middleton, more than the others, is concerned with the effects of the competitive struggle on family relationships – on ties of blood or marriage" (292). This section considers how Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* (1605) and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1611) interrogate the space of the household as both a domestic space and a mercantile space. Both of these present a continuum of bad householding – from Ephestian Quomodo, the rapacious draper of *Michaelmas Term* to Mr. Yellowhammer, the socially ambitious goldsmith of *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* to Mr. Allwit, the extraordinarily lazy wittol of the same play – creating an atmosphere where wives assert themselves beyond the allowed hierarchy. In both plays, the bad householding emerges from questionable economic practices, be it a desire to swindle land from the country fool or a desire to climb socially by betrothing children to inappropriate partners. Oftentimes in Middleton, the assertion of power by the wife comes in the form of cuckoldry, but even then the wives are sometimes sympathetic characters, or at the very least, savvy inhabitants of what Schoenbaum describes as "a harsh city" (298).

Frequently, critics of Thomas Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* consider Ephestian Quomodo amiable, despite his rapaciousness and his gulling of the naïve country landowner. In "Jacobean City Comedy and the Ideology of the City" Susan Wells compares Quomodo's false funeral with Volpone's and Quomodo's dream of social advancement with the more sinister Giles Overreach of Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1632). Wells writes of audience response to Quomodo, "Who, after all, can entirely hate a character who parodies Falstaff?" (50). Wilbur Dwight Dunkel is one of the few who suggests that although the play begins with an "indication suggest[ing] that Middleton's sympathy is with Quomodo and his satellites because they are refreshingly clever," the audience eventually sides with Richard Easy, who eventually develops a wit of his own (13). Little critical attention focuses on Quomodo's wife Thomasine.[29] Although she fits aspects of the citizen's wife with a wandering eye, this designation ignores the possibility of Thomasine's depth and a possibility of an alternative to the economic reading of the play.[30] Thomasine certainly fails to fulfill her wifely duties by cuckolding her husband, but Ephestian Quomodo can hardly claim that he fulfills his householder's obligations either. Considering the many ways that Quomodo fails in his duties, it should perhaps be no surprise and even a cause for sympathetic appreciation of Thomasine that she unknowingly cuckolds him. Thomasine acts in accordance with her desires, but those desires are not outside of social and economic pressures of London.

In typical Middletonian style, this play focuses its satiric sights on the unscrupulous merchants of London. The play opens in a corrupt London where Quomodo and his "spirits" plan to swindle the country gentleman Richard Easy, in town on business during the Michaelmas Term. Quomodo instructs Shortyard and Falselight

to use various disguises to gull Easy into signing over his lands to Quomodo. Meanwhile, the pseudo-gentleman Andrew Lethe, Quomodo's choice of suitor for his daughter, sends a letter to Thomasine in which he presumes that her objection to that marriage stems from her own affection for him. Thomasine disabuses him of this fact fairly publicly and his mistress learns of this. In the end, Quomodo fakes his own death, looking to test his associates, and instead finds himself punished for his cozening. Thomasine's relationship with her husband is troubling in that Quomodo pays her little attention, and does not care that she might have scruples or right ideas. Moreover, he merely orders her around and expects that she – and in fact all of London – adores him unconditionally.

Of course, all London does not adore Quomodo, as Thomasine makes clear in her quick remarriage and feigned mourning at her husband's "funeral." Certainly her comment after consummating the marriage with Easy, "What a difference there is in husbands! not only in one thing but in all" (*MT* 5.1.52-53), suggests that Thomasine found herself sexually unfulfilled by her apparently deceased husband Quomodo.[31] Additionally, Thomasine makes this remark shortly after Easy has badgered Shortyard into returning the entirety of his swindled estates, so she seems pleased with the material goods that Easy will be able to provide. Even so, Thomasine cares more for his person than for his lands, remarking that "Did he want all, who would not love his care?" (*MT* 5.1.60). Thomasine demonstrates her desire for the relationship with Easy despite the potential loss of money in the lawsuits.[32] Even if the audience might consider the quick remarriage of a recently widowed woman unscrupulous or undesirable, Thomasine still holds some personal attachment for Easy.[33]

Thomasine's initial response to Richard Easy exposes her husband's questionable business practices, undermining his authority both within his home and his shop. When Quomodo refuses to allow Thomasine the opportunity to sit in his shop, rather than obeying his commands she secrets herself above the main stage to watch the action, thus giving herself the opportunity to see her husband's misbehavior and the naïveté of the charming country gentleman.[34] As she observes the action below her, Thomasine is dismayed and suggests one possible reaction to Quomodo's behavior:

> Why stand I here (as late our graceless dames
> That found no eyes), to see that gentleman
> Alive, in state and credit executed,
> Help to rip up himself does all he can?
> Why am I wife to him that is no man?
> I suffer in that gentleman's confusion. (*MT* 2.3.226-231)

Here Thomasine verbally emasculates her husband, implying that Quomodo is not using his authority over the household appropriately. Matthew Martin posits that for Quomodo, "[l]and, the goal of his economic activity, becomes the festishized object of his sexual desire" (47). Quomodo has removed his sexual attention from his wife and has further disgusted her by these questionable dealings.[35] Conduct book writers did not attend to the sexual satisfaction of the wives, but even they understood that sometimes wives might reasonably find their husbands contemptible. Thus, considering the popular understanding that manhood related to sexual performance, and the Puritan conception that manhood related to proper Christian oversight of the household, the problems in the Quomodo household are vast. [36]

The emotional attachment to Easy that Thomasine develops is more than mere sexual desire. Thomasine remarks in that she "suffer[s] in that gentleman's confusion" (*MT* 2.3.231), so that her attachment to him forms initially out of pity. The play

emphasizes this pity for Easy when again watching from above Thomasine remarks of Easy that

> Thou art deceiv'd; thy misery but begins:
> To beguile goodness is the core of sins.
> My love is such unto thee that I die
> As often as thou drink'st up injury;
> Yet have no means to warn thee from't, for he
> That sows in craft does rape in jealousy. (*MT* 3.4.266-270)

Thomasine shows her pity for the young dupe, explaining her own pain at each injury caused by her husband's hands. Thomasine's awareness of the theft involved in the work of the unscrupulous merchant identifies Quomodo's questionable position as an authoritative householder. Quomodo claims gulling is only to provide for future generations of his family, but he fails as a householder, because according to Gouge "Contrary is the course of such parents as by vnrighteous meanes thinke to provide well for their children. For many doe … by vnjust and wrongful courses defraud others to make their children rich" (503-4). Even semi-legal means to beget a fortune are contrary to the authority of a good householder, and thus Quomodo negates any potential rightness. In her asides about his behavior Thomasine is clearly aware of where he fails to meet community expectations.

Although Thomasine fills the part of aggrieved party in a corrupt household, her behavior falls into a moral vortex of household violations that fall outside of the hierarchical ideal of the conduct books. This behavior, nevertheless, is tied to the failings of her husband, both as a companionate husband and as the merchant-householder. In her shunning of the potential seducer Lethe, Thomasine acknowledges that he has no chance with her, because "'tis for his betters to have opportunity of me" (*MT* 2.3.8-9). Thomasine has the capacity for cuckolding; however, when her husband fakes his own

death and funeral, Thomasine indicates a more vexed relationship than if she were the only one violating the norms of the city household. When she speaks with Rearage after the funeral – and after an excellent feigning of grief – Thomasine acknowledges that what many people speak of is true, that

> he ne'er used me so well as a woman might have been used, that's certain; in troth, 't'as been our greatest falling out, sir; and, though it be the part of a widow to show herself a woman for her husband's death, yet when I remember all his unkindness, I cannot weep a stroke, i'faith, Master Rearage: and, therefore, wisely did a great widow in this land comfort up another; Go to, lady, (quoth she), leave blubbering; thou thinkest upon thy husband's good parts when thou sheddest tears; do but remember how often he has lain from thee, and how many naughty slippery turns he has done thee, and thou will ne'er weep for him. (*MT* 4.3.57-68)

Quomodo's trick on Easy is neither his first sin, nor the only *type* of sin he has committed. If the neighborhood speaks ill of Quomodo – and it certainly is true that they dislike him – then the rumors that he has mistreated his wife may hold at least a germ of truth.

Thomasine's sympathy for Easy and the particularly active remarriage market in London render Thomasine's quick marriage to Easy after her first husband's funeral more complex than simple widow's lust. Viven Brodsky concludes that "the records point to the existence of an active remarriage market, particularly for the widows of city craftsmen and tradesmen. Such women appear to have remarried quickly and to have often married single men younger than themselves" (123). Like Jane Damport, Thomasine Quomodo participates in this active market; like many of the widows in the records, she marries a younger man. In approaching Easy, Thomasine indicates that she has been preparing for this, telling him "Delay not now; Y'ave understood my love; / I've a priest ready" (*MT* 4.4.78-79). This seems to reinforce the reading of Thomasine as the insatiable housewife, since she apparently cannot to be without a husband. At the same

time, she is merely acting in accordance to the example that Quomodo has set forth for her: she is opportunistic in the marriage market, and had laid preparations to take advantage of her newly "single" state.

Thomasine is not, however, a character lacking agency or merely following the example of her husband without thought. Instead, Thomasine asserts herself in the manner displayed by her husband and in doing this she bucks some of the expectations of the wife of the proper citizen. Since her husband is clearly not a proper citizen, Thomasine has had to make allowances for herself to survive in London. She is a woman of the town who knows how to deal with her comically villainous husband and who is merely willing to seek her pleasure and the financial security of herself and her family at any cost, not unlike Quomodo himself.[37] The end of the play reaffirms Thomasine's marriage with Quomodo, even if contrary to her liking. However, she has proven herself capable of making appropriate decisions for her daughter and negotiating the city's legal system for the benefit of Richard Easy. Jean Howard points out that "[i]n the end … there is no longer any possibility of [Quomodo's] believing that she is the kind of wife who defines herself through marriage solely to him. … By pretending to be dead, Quomodo in effect gave his wife the opportunity to cuckold him without knowingly committing adultery" (*Theater* 133). Even if Alan Brissenden's assertion is correct, that Easy will be "free to resume his liaison with Thomasine, presumably, since she still favours him" (31), Thomasine's behavior in the play dovetails with her husband's inability to avoid sin in his avarice.

In *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* characters inhabit households in greater violation of the hierarchical expectations than the Quomodos, not only in the Allwits' home in

their clear use of the wife's sexuality and procreative ability as the source of financial stability, but also in the Yellowhammers' goldsmithing household in search of greater social circumstances. The central tensions of the play revolve around what Pier Paolo Frassinelli describes as "a thematic grid – sex, marriage, economic exchange and biological reproduction – built around the central narrative line that culminates with the weddings of the young Yellowhammers" (Frassenelli paragraph 16). Although the play has at least four concurrent, intertwining plots, the marriages of the elder Yellowhammers and the Allwits sit at the center of the problem of the converging domestic and mercantile spaces. The Yellowhammers provide some useful commentary on the state of marriage in the merchant's home/shop, while the Allwits present an obscured, topsy-turvy vision of such a home, with their makeshift choice of marketable goods in Mrs. Allwit's fecundity. The two families interact because the Yellowhammers wish to arrange a marriage between their resistant daughter, Moll, to Sir Walter Whorehound, who happens to be the "benefactor" of Mr. Allwit and the father of all seven of Mrs. Allwit's children. Although the Yellowhammers rarely actually interact with each other, they do occasionally give voice to the popular conception of the social-climbing merchant in the city.[38]

The play opens with an act of parenting – a domestic activity – placed in the space of the shop, foregrounding the conflict of the authority over the spaces. The printed play begins with the stage direction, "Enter Maudlin and Moll, a shop being discovered."[39] From the very beginning the shop is a fraught location, caught between the world of the commodified daughter and the world of commodities. In this initial scene, the wife invades the space of the shop to teach her daughter about how to be good marriage

material, as she deals with her husband's customers. Janelle Day Jenstad suggests that at his entrance, Mr. Yellowhammer accuses "Maudlin of professional incompetence … her speculates that she has used inappropriate language because she has been dazzled by the Westminster customer" (paragraph 16). The play opens with questions about the authority of these two spaces, even as it suggests the importance of the wife in the shop space: should the husband be absent from the shop, the wife can do the work of the shop. This means, however, that some domestic activities must follow her into the mercantile space.

Even though the scene opens as a domestic space mapped onto a mercantile space, the mercantile space intervenes into the domestic, as customers repeatedly interrupt the conversation. While Yellowhammer attempts to complete the transaction of his daughter in the home, customers arrive; at this point Yellowhammer oscillates between the language of the householder trying to dispose of his daughter and of the shopkeeper tending to the customers. While he speaks with Maudlin and Moll about Moll's obstinacy, a gentleman enters: Yellowhammer speaks to Maudlin and Moll, "Nay, he [the parson who will marry Tim and his fiancée] disclaims it, / Calls Latin papistry, he will not deal with it. / – What is't you lack, gentleman?" (*CM* 1.1.94-96). In these lines, Yellowhammer shifts from concerns of the family to the language of the shop, calling out the standard shopkeeper's greeting. Yellowhammer continues to work onstage throughout the scene, both as the householder and as the shopkeeper, seamlessly alternating between his concerns as a householder and his concerns as an artisan and merchant.

In their discussions with Moll, Maudlin and Mr. Yellowhammer indicate their expectations for the nature of Moll's impending marriage, which in turn implies problems with their own ideas. In that opening scene, Maudlin scolds Moll for obstinacy and her refusal to be bright, quick and light in her behavior. Maudlin reprimands:

> You are a dull maid o' late; methinks you had need have somewhat to quicken your greensickness – do you weep? – a husband: had not such a piece of flesh been ordained, what had us wives been good for? to make salads, or else cried up and down for samphire. To see the difference of these seasons! when I was of your youth, I was lightsome and quick two years before I was married. You fit for a knight's bed! drowsy-browed, dull-eyed, drossy-spirited! I hold my life you have forgot your dancing. (*CM* 1.1.4-13)

Maudlin insists that the wife is an ornament to her husband, but not the sort of ornament that the Puritan preachers desired. Rather than desiring a her to be a good housekeeper and a sensible, godly woman, Maudlin desires her daughter to be able to entertain her husband with her dancing and musical abilities and, as Roma Gill suggests, "berates her daughter for failing to show the proper enthusiasm for fashionable accomplishments" (Gill 30).[40] Maudlin demonstrates ideals associated with the upper classes in London, rather than practical ideals for a merchant's wife. However, as Alan Brissenden points out, "the Yellowhammers are socially ambitious" (Brissenden 36).

These social ambitions point to a fluidity in moral structures, which fits within the general discord of the household. Evidence of problems with the hierarchy of the Yellowhammer household emerges throughout the play. After Allwit has described the nature of Sir Walter's relationship with Mrs. Allwit, Yellowhammer briefly considers the situation:

> Well, grant all this, say now his deeds are black,
> Pray, what serves marriage but to call him back?
> I've kept a whore myself, and had a bastard
> By Mistress Anne, in *anno* –

> I care not who knows it; he's now a jolly fellow,
> H'as been twice warden; so may his fruit be;
> They were but base begot, and so was he.
> The knight is rich, he shall be my son-in-law;
> No matter, so the whore he keeps be wholesome,
> My daughter takes no hurt then; So, let them wed:
> I'll have him sweat well ere they go to bed. (*CM* 4.1.251-261)

Yellowhammer remains unconcerned about his future son-in-law's previous sexual history because the man is wealthy; in fact, he himself has behaved badly in the past. Since his bastard son is now a warden, Yellowhammer most likely engaged in some indiscretions as a youth, rather than some infidelity at the time of his marriage (the illegitimate child is presumably older than his two legitimate children). This does not mean, however, that Yellowhammer has been a particularly faithful partner to his wife.[41] Because Maudlin and Yellowhammer interact with each other so seldom onstage and because this is the only mention of this illegitimate child, its effect on their marriage remains unclear. However, this points to the moral ambiguity of this householder, who should guide the home's morality. Or, as Jean Howard puts it "So much for the family values of Cheapside" (Howard, *Theater* 138).

Yellowhammer sees the rejuvenating – the restorative – powers of marriage to a good, chaste woman. He anticipates that marriage calls the sinner back from his sins and encourages him into a life of goodness and morality, placing the onus of morality on marriage and on the future wife. This is somewhat in keeping with contemporary attitudes about marriage, since marriage is seen as the center of the moral compass and the married man is generally considered to be a better citizen than the unmarried man. However placing these words in the mouth of one of the most unsympathetic, unscrupulous characters of the play undermines the value of the idea, and suggests that

the husband must first become moral, and heal himself of his sinful ways and then instruct his family on the proper way to live a godly life, as Gouge would have it. Rather than acknowledge the importance of the householder as the moral arbiter of the household, and take responsibility for running a Christian home, Yellowhammer rather sees marriage as a way to absolve past transgressions, just as his bastard son's appointment as a warden of the city absolves the illegitimacy of his birth. Blinded as he is by Sir Walter's wealth, Yellowhammer takes his own experience as exemplary, proving himself unashamed by those things that conduct book authors found worthy of abhorring.[42]

It is Allwit who warns Yellowhammer against Whorehound, because Allwit knows when his benefactor marries, he must retake the reigns of his household. As others have noted, the marriage of Allwit and his wife appears to be the most functional in this comedy.[43] Even if it is not a function family in terms of the Puritan expectations, this family, as Alan Brissenden explain, is "a successful business enterprise" (37). Brissenden claims this as a failure of a family. However the Allwit family *does* function economically, and by the end of the play the family even functions according to hierarchical expectations. This exposes the fissures in the idea that the middle class family values finding their resting place within the merchant household: if the household of the whore and the wittol is the best-functioning, the other households must be abysmal failures. At the same time, the Allwit household is fraught with the necessary negotiations of the Puritan household. Allwit does not always play the proper role of the householder, and his greatest sin in this regard is not only his willingness to yield his sexual license with his wife to another, but also ceding his procreative duty to another.

In his long commentary on wittoldom, Allwit describes marriage as difficult and consumptive of both the husband's finances and emotions. Because Sir Walter provides for Allwit, he is able to live a life free of jealousy and free of fiduciary anxiety. Sir Walter has "maintain'd [Allwit's] house for this ten years; / Not only keeps [his] wife, but 'a keeps [him] / And all [his] family" (*CM* 1.2.15-17). This long-standing relationship between the Allwits and Sir Walter has allowed Allwit to avoid bringing goods into the home and procreating with his wife, two of the householder's central duties. Gary Kuchar suggests that Allwit is ultimately the most successful character, because "[g]iven Allwit's complete awareness of his perverse desires and his total lack of shame, it is he rather than the cuckolder, who paradoxically remains in control throughout the play" (Kuchar 25). Despite the fact that Allwit remains in control of Sir Walter, his control in his own household is more tenuous and only in his final assertion of power over Sir Walter does he regain complete control over his household.

Allwit's refusal of his household duties and his thrill in this abandonment undermines his authority throughout his home. The servants refuse to recognize him as their master, so Allwit's abdication of his duties as husband disrupts the entire household order. Although the gossips and Puritans comment upon the similarity in appearance of the new baby and Mr. Allwit, the servants know better. The servants know that Allwit refuses to fulfill his duties as householder and know where the money comes from, so they respond in kind. They call Sir Walter, not Allwit, "master" and instead insist that "Oh, you're but our mistress's husband" (*CM* 1.2.62). When Allwit tries to argue that this makes him their master, the servant replies in Latin that "*Negatur argumentum*" – the argument is denied – and then turns to his fellow servant to further denigrate Allwit as

"but one pip above a servingman, and so much his horns make him" (*CM* 1.2.63-66). This is precisely the sort of lack of authority that the conduct books warn of. Because Allwit is willing to give up certain duties in the home, he becomes comically emasculated and unable to keep his authority in other areas of his household.

By the end of the play, the Allwits have the most normally functioning marriage, even if the relationship leads to their opening a brothel in the Strand with Mrs. Allwit as the main attraction. When Sir Walter is led in, wounded from the duel with Touchwood Junior, Mrs. Allwit faints and Allwit sarcastically remarks that "Heyday, my wife's laid down too; here's like to be / A good house kept, when we're all together down" (*CM* 5.1.9-10). At this point Sir Walter verbally abuses them and Allwit breaks from him. The Allwits also think that Sir Walter has killed Touchwood Junior and that they might be harboring a criminal, so Allwit denies him a chamber in the house. Although Mrs. Allwit argues on Sir Walter's behalf, that killing Touchwood Junior was in self-defense and therefore not punishable, Allwit continues to insist that he will not provide Sir Walter sanctuary in his home. Sir Walter appeals to Mrs. Allwit for solace and sanctuary, but she responds

> Alas, sir, I am one that would have all well,
> But must obey my husband. – Prithee, love,
> Let the poor gentleman stay, being so sore wounded:
> There's a close chamber at one end of the garret
> We never use; let him have that I prithee. (*CM* 5.1.122-126)

Mrs. Allwit acknowledges her husband's authority over his household, rather than Sir Walter's over the family and the space that he has paid for. This pushes to the forefront the difference between family and home in an important way. Allwit distinguishes his claim of authority over the household space from the authority over his family that he has

willingly forfeited in his wittoldom. Even if Allwit's assertion of authority relates to Sir Walter impending abandonment of the family and his liability as a murderer, Allwit responds too to Sir Walter's curses and abuses against Mrs. Allwit and the children, particularly those that Sir Walter wants in his will:

> … I bequeath to that foul whore his wife
> All barrenness of joy, a drouth of virtue,
> And dearth of all repentance: for her end,
> The common misery of an English strumpet,
> In French and Dutch; beholding, ere she dies,
> Confusion of her brats before her eyes,
> And never shed a tear for't. (*CM* 5.1.103-109)

Some of Allwit's interest is pecuniary, since in the will Sir Walter leaves only curses; but Allwit's response is severe and up to that point he had tried to give Sir Walter the benefit of the doubt in his delirium.

No matter her sympathy for the wounded knight, Mrs. Allwit obeys her husband, since he is her legal master. At the same time, she gives compassionate advice, which is not out of line with the ideas of many of the writers. The scene ends on her advice about ways to earn money and Allwit's acceptance of that advice. He even asks her, "What shall we do now, wife?" (*CM* 5.1.155). Unlike Quomodo of *Michaelmas Term* or even Simon Eyre of *Shoemaker's Holiday*, Allwit willingly asks his wife's opinion about what may ultimately be her domain of knowledge. Clearly, even in her morally lapsed state, Mrs. Allwit is better able to provide her husband advice about attaining money than Margery was able to make suggestions to Simon Eyre.

This final section of this chapter will move to the collaborative work of Dekker and Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*, a dramatization of the celebrated transvestite Moll Frith. In addition to the typical romantic plot of a comedy, the play presents several

merchants and their wives, all operating on the same street and interacting with one another. Placing distinct relationships up against each other, the play demonstrates the wide range of difficulties that a householder might face, when the mercantile space blurs the limits of the domestic space. Even in the narrow bounds of proper household authority, one husband manages to demonstrate a relatively proper authority as householder, while another does not and cannot in the end right his wrongs.

"Distressed needle-women and trade-fallen wives": Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*

When the roaring girl Moll Cutpurse duels the gallant Laxton, she protests that all gallants prey upon the women of the city. The needlewomen and trade-fallen wives she mentions in her speech may allude to Mrs. Openwork, a sempster's wife, and Mrs. Gallipot, an apothecary's wife who also presently supplies money to Laxton (*RG* 3.1.96). More than any other play in this chapter, *The Roaring Girl* displays the actual work of the shop and proposes a division of labor within the mercantile space of the home, because it shows all three citizen wives – Mrs. Gallipot, Mrs. Openwork and Mrs. Tiltyard – working within shops.[44] The play contrasts the two main couples – the Gallipots and the Openworks – and in doing so ties appropriate householding to responsible shopkeeping. Although both marriages come under siege from would-be seducers, the Openworks reconcile. Openwork treats his wife as conduct books encourage and participates in the work of his own shop (though he does make a test of his wife). Gallipot, in contrast, is overfond of his wife and spends his time hunting with another citizen, leaving his wife alone and vulnerable in the shop. In the end, his marriage is most threatened, and though

no infidelity occurs he continues to respond to his wife in ways contrary to conduct book ideals.

This subplot follows a typical pattern of gallants' attempts at seducing city wives.[45] The gallant Laxton suggests that he takes interest only on Mrs. Gallipot's ability to provide money and he has, in fact, avoided consummating the relationship with her (despite her attempts otherwise).[46] As Laxton's demands for money increase, Mrs. Gallipot seeks new ways to acquire it. Eventually, when her husband catches her reading Laxton's letter, she pretends that the letter threatens blackmail as she violated a prior marital contract with him. Meanwhile, Mrs. Openwork flirts with the less successful Goshawk. Unbeknownst to her, Mr. Openwork sent this gallant to visit his wife to cheer her, and eventually, to test her fidelity. Though both wives reform at play's end, during most of the play they engage in what Mary Beth Rose names "sexual collusion" (Rose 82). That these wives neither consummate their relationships with suitors, nor actually compromise their chastity distinguishes their potential infidelity from Mrs. Allwit's knowing infidelity and Thomasine Quomodo's unintentional infidelity.

Like their counterparts in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Michaelmas Term*, these women appear in the shops rather than the household proper, a complex location of authority. The citizens' wives first appear when the gallants – Laxton, Goshawk, and Greenwit – enter to purchase wares desirable for London's fashionable young men. Mrs. Openwork calls the shopkeeper's cry, "Gentleman, what is't you lack? What is it you buy?" (*RG* 2.1.1-2). In much of her recent work on the topic of city comedies, Jean E. Howard has discussed the use of women as advertisement within the shops, luring men to make purchases. She argues

that "[t]he new economy and the desires it spawns have disrupted the integrity of families, overturned female chastity, put everything up for sale. This is ground zero of the genre's dystopic vision" (Howard, "Evidence" 172). Mrs. Openwork and Mrs. Gallipot both run businesses for their absent husbands and both participate in the business of the home. However, Openwork is out of the house because he is doing business; Gallipot is away hunting. These shops look like the family space of the Yellowhammers and the Quomodos, with the wife physically located in the shop, and the authority of the home questioned through control of the wife's body.

A central problem for these marriages is the class endogamy of both. Both wives come from social statuses higher than the merchant class. Mrs. Gallipot was, as Laxton explains, "a gentlewoman born … though it be her hard fortune now to shred Indian pot-herbs" (*RG* 2.1.9-10).[47] Mrs. Openwork refers to her life before her marriage as when her husband "took [her] from a lady's service, where [she] was well beloved of the steward: [she] had her Latin tongue, and a spice of the French, before [she] came under him" (*RG* 2.1.348-351). Both of these women come from backgrounds other than the city. Though their backgrounds remain somewhat obscured, both wives clearly resent their entrance into the merchant class.

This resentment of the wives makes clear one of the risks of class endogamy for citizens. Gouge warns that

> Some equalitie in outward estate and wealth is also befitting to the parties that are to be maried together, lest the disparitie therein (especially if it be ouer-great) make the one insult ouer the other more then is meet: for if a man of great wealth be maried to a poore woman, he will thinke to make her as his maid-seruant … And if a rich woman mary a poore man, she will looke to be the master, and to rule him: so as the order which God hath established will be cleane peruerted: and the honour of marriage laid in the dust. For where no order is, there can be no honour. (Gouge 189-190)

Though the Gallipots' and Openworks' disparity in money is not as great as Gouge warns against, the wives care about it. They married London shopkeepers with a good deal of money despite the wives' claims. The Gallipots, for example, own property in nearby Hockley Hole, and he speculates on foreign goods. Nevertheless, Mrs. Openwork's clings to her notions about status in her continual insistence that she gave up friends, "rich hopes and golden fortunes" (*RG* 4.2.153).

These husbands differ from the husbands in Middleton because these husbands display affection and fondness for their wives, but this runs a risk of household mismanagement as serious as displays of ill will. Conduct book authors do suggest that husbands praise their wives for good work, but they also warn about the easy to slide into inappropriate over-fondness. In addition to disliking insulting nicknames, Gouge dislikes the idea that husbands would give their wives nicknames that "set the wife in too high a place ouer her husband, as *Lady*, *Mistresse*, *Dame*, *Mother,* &c" (Gouge 372). He instead insists that "[t]he mildnesse and familiarity which is required of a husband must be such as may stand with his authority and place of eminency (as some of those names doe not,) … Christians therefore must take heed that by their practise they iustifie not corrupt customes" (Gouge 372). Giving a wife an over-fond, over-affectionate nickname removes the husband from his place at the head of the household and turns that household into one of those that, as Griffith sees it, is "faine to hop Headlesse; as hauing as hauing such Governors, as are either Tyrants, or Fooles" (Griffith 8). Additionally, Gouge argues that while husbands should be mild in reproving their wives, they should not be of "a seruile and timorous minde … loth to offend, and (as they thinke) to prouoke tier wiues" (Gouge 379). Good husbands should treat their wives with affection as befits

"true kindnesse and loue, which forgetteth not an husband-like grauity, sobriety, modesty and decency" (Gouge 388).

Openwork interacts with his wife in ways Gouge might admire, but ways that at the same time undermine his authority as a good shopkeeper. Openwork's affection for his wife results in acknowledging her occasional superiority in mercantile ability. Openwork remembers an order that needed to be taken care of, and he asks his wife "Ha' you done with my lord's shirt?" (*RG* 2.1.163). Mrs. Openwork responds, saying "What's that to you, sir? / I was this morning at his honour's lodging / Ere such a snail as you crept out of your shell" (*RG* 2.1.163-165). Although Openwork is himself the sempster, his wife also does some of the sewing and goes out among customers. Because she does not need her husbands' reminder to complete work for his shop and can keep her appointments, Mrs. Openwork proves a better businessperson than her husband. Openwork even praises his wife's work, agreeing with her pronouncement that she can better distribute the shop's wares. Gouge says to husbands that "[t]he *loue* which an husband oweth to his wife, further requireth that he wisely *commend* and *reward* what she hath *well done*" (Gouge 369). Although Gouge speaks of wives doing their home duties, the combined space of the home and the shop places some of that good work within the public shop space. When the husband is not available to greet customers or complete orders, as Yellowhammer and Quomodo are in their plays, the wife must take up that duty.

In contrast to the honest praise of Openwork, Gallipot demonstrates saccharine over-fondness for his wife. He calls her by a pet name – Prue – even as he reprimands her for ill manners at dinner. He says to her "Nay, honey Pru, how does your rising up

before all the table show, and flinging from my friends so uncivilly! fie, Pru, fie!" (*RG* 3.2.6-7). Throughout this particular scene he continues to call her pet names, like "duck," "mouse" (*RG* 3.2.11), "sweet drug, sweetest Prue" (*RG* 3.2.16), "wasp" and "little rogue" (*RG* 3.2.30-31), and "pretty kind rogue" (*RG* 3.2.42-43). Unlike Simon Eyre's epithets, Gallipot's names are expressions of affection. Nevertheless, they are not appropriate things to call a wife, since Gouge finds shortened versions of names demeaning (much less pet names). This over-fondness of the pet names renders Gallipot unable to properly head his household. With clear contempt for her husband, Mrs. Gallipot despises any of his attempts to make her happy. He faces her constant irritation with him and contempt for him, even though – or especially because – "heaven knows how [he has] strained [himself] to please her night and day" (*RG* 3.2.35-36). She claims that she "cannot abide a man that's too fond over me – so cookish. Thou dost not know how to handle a woman in her kind" (*RG* 3.2.25-27) and agues that "I cannot abide these apron husbands; such cotqueans! You overdo your things; they become you scurvily" (*RG* 3.2.32-34).

While Mrs. Openwork scorns her husband by believing unpleasant rumors and refusing her new station in life, Mrs. Gallipot actually attempts to cuckold and bankrupt her husband. Even if, as Laxton claims, he merely seeks financial advantage and not her virtue, Mrs. Gallipot risks ruining her husband's public image.[48] He claims that he is keeping her pure and preventing her from sinning against her husband, but explains that she attempts otherwise:

> The other night she would needs lead me into a room with a candle in her hand to show me a naked picture, where no sooner entered, but the candle was sent of an errand: now, I not intending to understand her, but like a puny at the inns of venery, called for another light innocently; thus reward I all her cunning with

> simple mistaking. I know she cozens her husband to keep me, and I'll keep her honest as long as I can, to make the poor man some part of amends. An honest mind of a whoremaster! (*RG* 2.1.138-147)

Laxton, in all his posturing, claims to care about her chastity even as he robs her husband. More likely, Laxton merely finds Mrs. Gallipot unattractive in her availability to him, preferring instead the unavailable Moll Cutpurse.

Despite her attempts to cuckold Gallipot, Mrs. Gallipot knows the importance of keeping up household appearances, in terms of both its morality and financial stability. When Laxton first speaks with her, she insists that he "Be not forgetful; respect [her] credit; seem strange" (*RG* 2.1.58-59). When, she realizes that she cannot immediately procure the large sum Laxton requests, she wonders what she might be able to pawn, but decides against such a scheme since pawning her childbed linen, "if [her] mark / Be known, [she is] undone; it may be though / [Her] husband's bankrout" (*RG* 3.2.70-72). Even if Laxton speaks truth in discussing Mrs. Gallipot's attempts at a sexual relationship that would damage her soul, she clearly cares for the public appearance of the household, knowing that anything that she might do will color her husband's reputation.

When Mr. Gallipot interrupts his wife reading Laxton's letter, she must think quickly to excuse the letter, so she rips it up and cries. Distressed, Gallipot goes through a list of things that are possibly upsetting her: their child at the wet-nurse has become ill or died (*RG* 3.2.93); the property that he owns in the nearby village of Hockley Hole has caught fire (*RG* 3.2.94-95); or his investments – either through his agent or the ship – have been lost (*RG* 3.2.98). He begins with a clear domestic concern and moves through increasingly risky financial ventures. That he assumes his wife's grief is related to these things again foregrounds the blending of the merchant's public financial life and his

domestic sphere. But in believing these things, he is open to his wife's duplicitousness, which eventually leads to a confrontation when the wives run off to see *Westward Ho!* with their gallants.

One of those gallants is the man that Openwork has set to charm his wife, but Openwork merely tests his wife and eventually proves her to be honest and himself to be a good husband and merchant. Openwork appears over-fond of his wife, and admits that he fears offending her to such a point that he is willing to send in a man who will attempt to seduce her. Openwork explains to Goshawk that

> I am of such a nature, sir, I cannot endure the house when she scolds: sh'as a tongue will be heard further in a still morning than St Antling's bell. She rails upon me for foreign wenching, that I being a freeman must needs keep a whore i' th' suburbs, and seek to impoverish the liberties. When we fall out, I trouble you still to make all whole with my wife. (*RG* 2.1.314-320)

What Goshawk does not know is that Openwork is testing both him and Mrs. Openwork. Although this sleight of hand is unfair, Openwork's doting on his wife is less intense than Gallipot's. Additionally, Openwork works in the shop at the beginning of the play – he is not hunting with Gallipot and Tiltyard – attending to both his shop and his wife. Thus, Goshawk's seduction of Mrs. Openwork will inevitably fail, and the Openworks will reconcile in the end. Instead of forbidding his wife to speak, as does Gallipot, Openwork claims that he wanted to ensure his wife's love, and has now decided that his house "thus besieg'd, … holds out, 'twill never fall" (*RG* 4.2.236).[49]

The Gallipot line does not end so happily, underscoring the nearness of both over-fondness and abuse towards wives. Gallipot initially believes that his wife made up the story about Laxton's letter and only wanted to help him, but eventually sides with Laxton, who claims that he "neither [has] nor had a base intent / To wrong your bed" (*RG*

4.2.337-338). Although Laxton made this particularly clear to the audience in the beginning of the play, he remains duplicitous in this confrontation with Gallipot. Nevertheless, Gallipot is fooled and goes from being particularly fond of his wife to relegating her silence in the end, with the threat of wicked names. He says to her, "Wife, brag no more / Of holding out: who most brags is most whore" (*RG* 4.2.349-350). Rather than reconcile with his wife upon whom he doted earlier in the play, Gallipot turns to threats of insult, "whore" being a name that Gouge describes as "opprobrious" because it denies the "neare coniunction which is betwixt man and wife aboue all others … and … [the] Christian grauity and discretion" required of a husband in relating to his wife (Gouge 372). Unlike Simon Eyre, Gallipot issues this insult as a threat rather than an affectionate tweak; unlike Simon Eyre, Gallipot has little control over his house or his shop.

The merchants of this chapter have demonstrated various levels of control over their households and shops. Each points to the close linking of the ability of the merchant with the ability of the husband: only honest merchants make honest husbands. As good householders are capable in the mercantile space, so good merchants are capable in the domestic space. At stake for all of these householders is the female body. The wife's chastity, her tongue, or her apparel each plays a significant role in the reputation of the household, and therefore in the householder's experience. The householder's very masculinity is under pressure in these households. At the same time, the plays present a variety of experiences for householders. The relative ease with which Allwit leaves *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* suggests the absolute importance of householder hierarchy,

even over the public reputation and over concerns for a Christian household. A householder may not care about his public reputation, but he must maintain his proper role as head of the household in order to maintain his control over the rest of the home.

This ability to maintain control entails more than merely controlling the wife's body; it means controlling the body of the daughter as well. The next chapter turns to the concern of the father for the daughter, particularly in terms of disposing the daughter in marriage. The relationship of the parent to the child – the only blood relationship in the household – places additional pressure on the householder's attempts to maintain authority. Rather than associate the ability to keep a shop well with the ability to keep proper order in his household, the father-daughter relationship associates the good father with the ability to provide properly – and honestly – for his child's future.

Notes:

[1] For more information about amatory gift-giving in general and poesy rings in particular, see especially Jane Donawerth, "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange"; Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*; Peter Stallybrass and Ann Rosalind Jones, "Fetishizing the Glove in Renaissance Europe"; Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd*; and Marcell Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*. The poetry of Robert Herrick and John Donne is also rife with such love tokens. I thank Maggie Simon for bringing this poem to my attention.

[2] Ralph Tresswell's surveys of London in the 1590s are a good source of information about the physical layout of the middle class home.

[3] Because, as Rosemary O'Day writes, the contradictions about the family, and especially the relationship between the husband and wife, "were part of the fabric of Western culture" the conflict is deeply entrenched in the conduct books (O'Day 35).

[4] For interesting commentary on women as vessels of various types, see Gail Paster Kern's *The Body Embarrassed*.

[5] Mary Beth Rose has identified Middleton and Dekker, in their work on this play, as progressive in their attitudes about women, relatively speaking; Jean Howard disagrees to the degree of progressiveness.

[6] For a discussion of the rhetorical failure of the conduct books' language in attempting to mediate the contradiction of a hierarchical companionate relationship, see Sid Ray's article " 'Those Whom God Hath Joined Together': Bondage Metaphors and Marital Advice in Early Modern England," which appears in Kari Boyd McBride's *Domestic Arrangements in Early Modern England*. Ray pays attention not only to the Puritan writers of London, but also a variety of other household writers, and the ancient traditions from which they claim their authority.

[7] In regards to the idea of companionate marriage, Laura Gowing argues that "While popular culture made it clear that sex was central to marital order and disorder, the advice proffered by clergy was more preoccupied with the 'friendly' love, as central to Renaissance doctrines of marriage advice as to their Puritan successors, that was meant to ease the burden of obedience" (Gowing 187). Thus the advice to early modern husbands about loving their wives, and particularly about avoiding hatred of their wives (Gouge 426) suggests that the right to the love offsets the responsibilities of the subordinate in her required allegiance and obedience.

[8] This is the practice of a person other than the biological parent taking over the rearing of the child, such as a step-parent or a member of the extended family. This will be an issue that comes up at greater length in the discussion of Massinger's *The City Madam* in chapter three.

[9] This is not the idea of the separation of the spheres, as outlined in various narratives about eighteenth century domestic life, but it points to different roles within the family. The wife's duty is not exclusively *within* the house, but it is intrinsically linked to running the household. Thus, she certainly goes out of doors to the markets, but she does not participate in politics. Nor does this necessarily suggest that the wife avoid involvement in financial affairs of the house – in fact the conduct books want the wife to take care to maintain a frugal household, and inventory the home. See Natasha Korda's book and Lena Orlin collection *Elizabethan Households* for more on the wife's financial control of the household.

[10] Wendy Wall's book *Staging Domesticity* deals extensively with the duties of the wife. Natasha Korda's book *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies* also suggests some specific duties of the wives in plays, with particularly attention to the maturely goods of the household.

[11] Even in the various broadside ballads of the period, Sandra Clark explains, it becomes clear that "Within the marriage, a successful modus vivendi can be achieved if both partners dedicate themselves to obtaining and conserving wealth" (Clark 123).

[12] Daniel Tuvill alone seems to see the household duties of a wife as a sort of trap for women. He explains that "It hath been our pollicie from the beginning to busie them in domesticall affaires, thereby to diuert them from more serious imployments, in which if they had not surmounted us, they would at least haue showne themselves our equals, and our parallels" (Tuvill 100). He also admits that every age has its great intellectual women.

[13] It's not entirely clear if should correct the errors in the housekeeping by actually doing the things himself, or that he should just point out that she missed a spot.

[14] For a discussion of the role of shoemaker – and the making of holidays – see Thomas Worden's essay "Idols in the Early Modern Material World (1599): Deloney's *The*

Gentle Craft, Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, and Shakespeare's *Henry V*." In this essay, Worden discusses the different moments of holiday making, and particularly the relationship between *Henry V*'s Saint Crispin's day speech and the holiday making that Eyre engages in at the end of Dekker's play (and Deloney's novel). Saints Crispin and Crispianus are, of course, the patron saints of shoemakers (as is St. Hugh, but that's a different story). Crispin and Crispianus are the central characters of Rowley's later play *A Merrie and Pleasant Comedy: A Shoemaker, A Gentleman* (1617-1618), about two princes who disguise themselves as shoemakers in order to protect themselves and win back their kingdom. For specifics about the fact that *Shoemaker's Holiday* is about a specific date in the early modern calendar, see Marta Straznicky's article "The End(s) of Discord in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*." Rhonda A. Arab provides a Bahktinian reading of the play in her essay "Work, Bodies, and Gender in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*."

[15] In the final scenes of the play that Simon Eyre, now fifty-six years old, explains that he married "this old wench … [and] danced the shaking of the sheets with her six-and-thirty years ago" (21.29-30).

[16] The idea that the wife might know things about running the shop, or that she might have some education that her husband does not, or some common sense that her husband lacks in not unique to this particular play (and there is always the question of whether or not Margery actually has common sense). In Thomas Middleton's play, *Anything for a Quiet Life*, Lady Cressingham, wife to the foolish alchemist Sir Francis, explains when her husband asks her "How come you to know these thrifty principles" about real estate (1.1.55-56), explains her education. She reminds him that he "father was a lawyer, and died in commission, and may not [she] by a natural instinct have a reaching that way" (1.1.57-59)

[17] Rhonda Arab points out the affiliation of these insults with the stomach, and thus the association of the female with the stomach here. Arab suggests that "Disdain for Margery is expressed in the play by giving her the wrong politics, but it is also expressed by associating her with the grotesque body. … Whereas the body of the artisan male is celebrated for its vitality and vigor, the body of the artisan woman is associated with the repulsive and disgusting" (Arab 197).

[18] Simon's shifting alliance between Margery and his men highlights the difficulties of having the home and shop in one space. Because Eyre resists their suggestions, both Firk and Hodge threaten to leave to find other work, should he deny the hire. Firk threatens that "If Saint Hugh's bones shall not be set a-work, I may prick mine awl in the walls and go play" (*SH* 4.66). This threat of abandoning their master, and a suggestion that he would then lose productivity and thus economic advantages, convinces Eyre to relent and hire Hans Meulter. At the same time, Eyre's concern with losing his men is not merely economic, since Eyre remarks "I love my men as my life" (*SH* 4.69-70). This allegiance between Eyre and his men again points to a fairly obvious tension between Eyre and his wife, in their negotiations of power within their household, for if Eyre is more willing to defer to his workers' opinions than his wife's, he violates certain aspects of good government of the household as listed by the various writers of conduct books. Ultimately, having Hans in his shop will benefit Eyre, so the point is moot, but that Eyre ignores what is actually good advice of his wife's demonstrates his reluctance to participate in the divisions of the household labor of men and women. Here, Eyre seems

to not be Cleaver's wise husband who will take his wife's good advice. Instead, Eyre is the husband who refuses to pay much attention to his wife, and would rather spend his time with his workers, the contrary husband who Gouge admonished.

[19] Or, as Jean Howard explains it, "Early in the play [Margery] is shown working alongside her maids and her husband, cleaning the shop and overseeing the women's preparation of thread for the male apprentices and journeymen. The minute news comes of Eyre's spectacular elevation, however, Margery becomes an avid consumer, seeking out … cork shoes and [a] French hood, and beginning to elevate her speech as well" (Howard, "Evidence" 167).

[20] Like Howard, Michelle Dowd suggests that much of the anxiety about the "uppity" Simon Eyre gets displaced onto Margery in these scenes. Dowd suggests that "Concerns about the troublesome nature of Eyre's quick rise in status [i.e. the questionable speculation in trade and the untimely death from the plague of many of his immediate superiors in the London guild system] gests displaced onto Margery and her spending habits. Margery is not a site of anxiety about wayward female sexuality … but the ridicule that accompanies her economic pretensions introduces to city comedy a new anxiety about women who have money to spend" (Dowd, "Leaning" 225-226).

[21] While this scene certainly demonstrates Margery's apparent absurdity, it also demonstrates the tensions for the rising merchant class. When Ralph asks about the location of his wife, Jane, Margery dodges the question. When pressed further, she responds "O Ralph, your wife! She was here a while, and because she was married grew more stately than became her. I checked her, and so forth. Away she flung, never returned, nor said bye nor bah; and Ralph, you know: ka me, ka thee. And so as I tell ye" (*SH* 10.84-89). When Ralph answered his conscription, Jane, his new wife, lamented her fate. Simon Eyre told her that "This fine hand, this white hand, these pretty fingers must spin, must card, must work. Work, you bombast-cotton-candle quean, work for you living, with a pox to you" (*SH* 1.210-213). Eyre tells her to work to make her living, showing the importance of work. Margery's response to Ralph's question suggests a frustration by the woman in charge of the maids of the household: Jane apparently stayed on with the Eyres for a time, but behaved in a way that Margery found unfit for her station, which even in its cruelty suggests that Margery did maintain at least some control over the goings-on of her household. Margery felt that Jane's attitude was out of keeping with her station, so Margery took it upon herself to correct the young woman. That Margery did this shows not only Margery's control over her household, but also her concern for her own reputation within her household, for if Margery has maids acting out of station, then she obviously does not have control over her household. Should Margery not maintain the proper authority over the maids – especially when it is the maids doing the usurping, rather than her husband – Margery clearly would damage her own reputation, and by extension the reputation of her husband.

[22] Smith further notes that "by placing a middle-class woman [Rose] largely in control of the wooing and wedding, this play shows how a wedding could critique the class, paternal, and gender hierarchies such ceremonies are often taken to support" (Smith 336).

[23] Even more troubling is the fact that Ralph finds himself unable to convince Lacy to allow him from the conscription in the moments immediately following Lacy's

discussion of his clear intention of skipping out of his duties to his king, and his intention to send Askew in his place to France. But then again, Lacy's sort of a jerk.

[24] See Thomas Worden's "Idols in the Early Modern Material World (1599): Deloney's *The Gentle Craft*, Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, and Shakespeare's *Henry V*." *Exemplaria* 11.2 (1999). 431-471. For information about fetishism and Ralph's lameness.

[25] Vivien Brodsky explains that "At the individual level, how men and women experienced their often short-lived unions and the deaths of their infants and children remains a matter for conjecture, but the evidence suggests it would be difficult to sustain a view of the metropolitan family as a particularly stable and secure institution" (Brodsky 137).

[26] Certainly, Jane departed from working the fraternity of Eyre's workshop, and has entered into a fairly menial, albeit apparently secure, position. But this position is not necessarily secure, and to understand the instability of the position of an unattached young woman in London, we can look at the works of Isabella Whitney, whose *A Sweet Nosegay* hints at the difficulties of being a good serving woman of any sort in the city, and the sorts of self-protection a woman would need in such a vulnerable position. As a wife, Jane probably had more security. But as a young widow, she may be more vulnerable. Single women in London were vulnerable, and if the poet Isabella Whitney is to be believed, those single women working in others' homes, had much to do to protect themselves from the gossip of other servants and the lecheries of the city. Whitney tells her sisters to pray to God every morning, "beseching him from dangers to defende. / Your soules and boddies both" (Whitney, "A modest meane" 6-7). Whitney does not merely have her sisters pray for their eternal souls, but also for their earthly bodies, which seemed to face some kinds of dangers in the city of London.

[27] See T. G. A. Nelson's article "Pre-loved Partners in Early Modern Comedy" for a comparison of romance plots of Roman comedies and Early Modern English comedies, especially in regards to women who are either widowed or otherwise sexually compromised. See also "There's Meat and Money Too: Rich Widows and Allegories of Wealth in Jacobean City Comedy" by Elizabeth Hanson, " 'My naked weapon': Male Anxiety and the Violent Courtship of the Jacobean Stage Widow" and *Widows and Suitors in Early Modern English Comedy*, both by Jennifer Panek.

[28] Roy Booth describes the scene as one where Hammon demonstrates his lack of manliness, in his court foppery. He writes that "The rejected Hammon, trying to outbid manliness with wealth, then offers a generous £20. (Generous when real cases of wife selling turned on amounts like 10 shillings, or 29 shillings at 2d a pound)" (Booth 205).

[29]In his article "Redeeming Beggary/Buggery in *Michaelmas Term*" Theodore Leinwand discusses the homosocial/homoerotic aspects of the play, suggesting that "the play indicates that in some instances, homosocial relations in Jacobean London may have been founded upon, at the very least may not have been antipathetic to, homoeroticism" (54). This discussion of male-male relationships almost entirely elides the female characters of the play.

[30] Theodore Leinwand describes city comedy as peopled by "already self-conscious urban roles" (*The City Staged* 10).

[31] Even if Thomasine is woefully unregretful about his death, she genuinely believes Ephestian Quomodo dead.
[32] I had a conversation with Herbert Jack Heller about Thomasine's ability to elicit the audience's sympathy at the 2006 SAA. He contends that any time Middleton gave a character his own name, he intended the character to be sympathetic and likeable. I don't know if I entirely believe that, but certainly, there are many other names to give characters, and Middleton – like Jonson and most of the other authors of city comedy – has a habit of giving characters relatively generic, descriptive names rather than more realistic ones.
[33] In her article on the violent wooing of wealthy widows, Jennifer Panek asks "What was the function of the 'lusty widow' stereotype in early modern English culture? How did it profit men to believe in it and promulgate it?" (Panek, "My naked weapon" 323).
[34] Most critics agree that Quomodo does not have to work too hard to gull Easy out of his land. Dunkel describes the young landholder well: "Easy … is so provokingly stupid that his losses seem almost justifiable" (13).
[35] Broadside ballads provide an alternative vision of this household, and especially the negotiation of authority that takes place between the husband and the wife in the London household. Sandra Clark has argued that in the broadsides "The married state does not tend to be idealised; and failings, both by husband and by wife, commonly derive from an inability, or a lack of proper desire, to retain the profit and substance within the partnership" (120). This presentation of the failings of marriage would have provided entertainment for the audience, certainly, in its depiction of the foibles of daily life, but it also describes a grotesquely exaggerated household, rather than the ideal Puritan one. Of the ballads that Clark describes are many that expostulate on the shrewishness of wives, but some "account for the cuckoldry as the wife's response to the husband's sexual inadequacy … or his spendthrift ways" (Clark 126). One of the ballads that she speaks of in particular is the 1689 ballad about the young wife who cuckolds her husband because "I make it full well appear, to be both just and true, / I kept my Maiden-head for two year, *for nothing at all wou'd do*" ("The Scolding Wife's Vindication" 27-28). This response of the wife in the ballad shows that the husband has been shirking a different set of duties, particularly those that would identify his "manliness."
[36] See Will Fisher's recent book on masculinity and physical appearance.
[37] When Quomodo reveals himself to Easy in Act 5 and threatens a lawsuit, Thomasine says that "The judge that he'll solicit knows me well" (5.2.137). Even with the potential innuendo of her comment, Thomasine clearly knows how to make the system work to her favor.
[38] Janelle Day Jenstad explains that goldsmiths were some of the wealthiest merchants in London, since they dealt in luxury goods. Because of this, "Socially, the retailing goldsmiths were adjacent to the gentle classes and were well positioned to cross that permeable yet psychologically important boundary between merchant-citizen and gentleman" ("Social Conversion" paragraph 3).
[39] Bullen's complete works does not include this stage direction, but it is in the original and most other modern versions, including the one in *English Renaissance Drama: A Norton Anthology* and the one in the Revels Student edition anthology of *Plays on Women*, have this particular stage direction. I am awaiting the Oxford Complete edition

that should be coming out at any moment. The Oxford table at SAA 2007 had the proofs, so it's really going to happen.

[40] See in particular *The Court of Good Counsel*'s discussion of the problems that daughters who are poorly taught to be housekeepers and the burdens that they will be on their husbands. I will treat this text in chapter three in relation to the parent-child relationship.

[41] No matter what Yellowhammer's behavior has been, his infidelity would not have been taken particularly seriously by the early modern courts. Laura Gowing explains that "Men sued their wives for adultery; women sued their husbands for extreme cruelty. Effectively, only women could be penalized for extramarital sex and only men could be guilty of violence" (Gowing 180). Gouge seems alone in asserting that despite the fact that socially, the woman's adultery causes more problems, "in regard of the breach of wedlocke, and transgression against God, the sinne of either partie is alike" (Gouge 219).

[42] Frassinelli suggests that "In Middleton's comedies, the rationale that sustains this distinction between 'whore' and 'wife' is turned into the subject of an irreverent scrutiny, in which both women's objectification and men's desire appear to be entirely overdetermined by the process of reification into which they are inserted" (Frassinelli paragraph 24).

[43] See Gary Kuchar's "Rhetoric, Anxiety, and the Pleasures of Cuckoldry in the Drama of Ben Jonson and Thomas Middleton." Frassinelli, however, argues that "One step down from the Yellowhammers in the social hierarchy – they not only lack land and aristocratic titles, but also a proper means of subsistence – the Allwits are their symmetrical comic counterpart" ("Realism" paragraph 11).

[44] Mario Digangi points out that "the citizen wives are subject to a more subtle form of sexual defamation [than Moll Cutpurse] that generates a constant aura of suspicion around their activities as shopkeepers and tradeswomen" (148).

[45] Most criticism of Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1608)focuses on the title character, Moll Cutpurse and her gender-bending attire and attitudes. Mary Beth Rose's *The Expense of Spirit* takes this issue up at length, discussing *The Roaring Girl* and *Epicoene* in relation to the early seventeenth century tracts, *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir*. For a recent article on Mary Frith, see Gustav Ungerer's "Mary Frith, Alias Moll Cutpurse, in Life and Literature."

[46] "By this light, I hate her, but for means to keep me in fashion with gallants; for what I take from her I spend on other wenches, bear her in hand still. She has wit enough to rob her husband, and I ways enough to consume the money" (2.1.78-82). However, when he counts the money from her he remarks that "she puts out a candle with the best tricks of any drugster's wife in England"(*RG* 2.1.119-120).

[47] Laxton here refers to the fact that Mrs. Gallipot minces tobacco in her husband's apothecary shop, apothecaries being some of the most common sellers of tobacco at this time.

[48] Laxton claims that his relationship with Mrs. Gallipot is merely one of taking financial advantage: "By this light, I hate her, but for means to keep me in fashion with gallants; for what I take from her I spend on other wenches, bear her in hand still. She has wit enough to rob her husband, and I ways enough to consume the money" (2.1.78-82).

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[49] Mario Digangi argues that "Despite Goshawk's failure to seduce Mistress Openwork then, what emerges from this episode is the potential for infidelity and conjugal disorder when a gentlewoman perceives that she has traded fortune and status for the drudgery of citizen life" (Digangi 161). Although the episode does expose a specific problem, the play suggests instead that this potential is always there: women are exposed in the shops. What Openwork has that Gallipot does not have is an actual working relationship with his wife and actual attention to his shop. Thus, despite the inevitable risk of London, Openwork manages to maneuver along the fine line that is a relatively good husband, even as he plays a trick on his wife to test her. Although the trick is a generic convention, its use suggests the risk of such a trick. Nevertheless, because Openwork is such a good and loving husband, the seduction ultimately fails and he and his wife reconcile.

Chapter Three

Roughly Maintained Authority: Parents and Children

> Oh! it was I that made hym refuse
> The holsome monytion of his father dere,
> And caused hym styll of a wife to muse,
> As thoughe she shoulde be his joye and chere! (Thomas Ingeland, *A Pretie and mery new Enterlude, called The Disobedient Child* 1560? page 46)

Thomas Ingeland's interlude, *The Disobedient Child*, has Satan speak the above lines after showing the interactions between a London father and his son pursuing a marriage partner. In the piece, the son refuses all of his father's advice, including what educational and career choices he should make and with whom he should marry. The son eventually marries his choice of bride, but she reveals herself to be particularly froward after the wedding. Satan insists that the young man would have been better off if he had only listened to his father. The selection of the marriage partner is the central tension of the parent-child relationship: all that the parents do for their child ultimately serves to appropriately dispose of that child when the son or daughter is of a marriageable or employable age (and sometimes both). The conduct makes the importance of this parental obligation clear. [1]

The conduct books typically identify the relationship between the father and the son as the most important for commentary; city comedies, on the other hand, present fathers and daughters in conflict over what would seem routine household events.[2] This early modern father-daughter relationship, well noted in commentary on plays of Shakespeare's such as *Lear* and *The Tempest*, is provocative in the city comedies precisely because the conduct books overlook the daughter's separate role in the household.[3] Because this dissertation takes the conduct books as a point of departure in

defining the merchant home, that general absence is intriguing.[4] Although many city comedies acknowledge the influence of the parents over the son's choice of marriage partner (such as Tim Yellowhammer or the son of the rich Londoner in *The Disobedient Child*), most of the plays present the parent's participation in the choice of the daughter's suitors. The plays inextricably link this decision to the acquisition of wealth and status, because, as Stephanie Chamberlain explains, "[a]t her marriage, a woman brought a dowry or marriage portion, which was normally given by the bride's father to the groom's father, ostensibly to pay for the couple's maintenance as well as to guarantee payment of the bride's jointure upon the death of her husband. The marriage portion was then used by the groom's family to provide for its daughters, to pay debts and to purchase land" (Chamberlain 171). Although Chamberlain speaks primarily of the upper classes, city comedy's merchant class characters make clear that they pay attention to dowries and jointures as well. Thus, this presence of the daughter acknowledges her essential place in the merchant economy as part of acquisitive goods.

Modern perceptions and the anxiety of the texts converge at the complex nexus of household members' interests and wills, particularly in the debates between parents in regards to their children. Lawrence Stone has argued that because of the system of practice of sending adolescents out of the home, "the choice of marriage partner was the one major issue of conflict between parents and children at this time" (84). Gouge, echoing other conduct book authors, reminds parents to pay careful attention to their children's futures. This means paying attention to the vocation that their child will enter into; this also means monitoring the child's future financial security, through the small portion to be left when the child is no longer a dependent of the parents. Most

importantly, though, it means that the parents must find a suitable marriage partner for their child. With a female child, this need becomes more urgent, since daughters will lack independent financial means.[5] That parental involvement in the selection of a marriage partner can prove vexed, however. Parents may choose partners ill-suited for their child, but well-suited for their own financial gain; even more frightening to the parents, the children may have ideas of their own. This search for a secure marriage partner for the daughter underlines the tenuous grasp of power that one member of the household has over another. Nowhere is this more evident than in the city comedies. Throughout the plays, aggressively acquisitive Londoners use their daughters to forward their own status and fortune, forcing their daughters into what Gayle Rubin describes as "the traffic in women."[6]

Because of the fraught nature of the marriage decisions, these daughters of the city comedies often find themselves the victims of familial violence. In *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, Maudlin uses such vitriol in hauling Moll off from the wharf that even the Thames waterman, who Rick Bowers notes are "not known for sensitive perceptions," object to the rough handling of the daughter ("Comedy, Carnival, and Class" paragraph 15).[7] If Lawrence Stone's assertion that "There can be no doubt … that more children were being beaten in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries … than ever before" (117) is correct, then the early modern period does seem have accepted more violence than the modern period accepts. Sensational pamphlets, studied by Frances E. Dolan, suggest an early modern fascination with the murder of children by parents, but the existence of those pamphlets by no means suggests that early moderns condoned such

extreme forms of violence.[8] The plays, too, suggest the inappropriateness of extraordinary violence against daughters.

The plays question the metaphor the family as state by following it to its logical conclusion, which in turn undermines the conduct books' insistence on it. If the householder is the king of the family, surely the householder should be able to exact punishment for bad behavior. This should include, then, the ability to physically punish the child for misbehavior. The plays present parents – fathers – physically punishing (abusing) or verbally threatening to punish their daughters for their refusal to agree to bad marriage partners. If the plays work, as Jean Howard suggests they do, by reimagining the possibly ways to behave in London, then the particular plays of this chapter will question the viability of violent behavior towards daughters: specifically, the plays punish those perpetrators of violence. These plays impose the typical comic ending of marriage of two young characters against the parents' will; and, when the parent(s) cannot abide by this ending, these plays inflict upon that character punishment, including banishment and insanity.

To explore this in the plays, this chapter will look at the works of Philip Massinger and William Shakespeare. First, this chapter will look at Massinger's city comedy, *The City Madam* (1632) because it reworks Shakespeare's, *Measure for Measure*. Massinger takes Shakespeare's play about patriarchal, civic government and moves the play into a London merchant's household, suggesting a heightened concern in the Caroline era for the family's central place in the social structure. Moreover, Massinger's play, while it redeems the household subordinates and exiles the deputized uncle, identifies as a household problem the householder's failure to properly educate his

daughters. As *Measure for Measure* places some blame for the city's failure on the Duke, *The City Madam* places it upon the householder, who has failed in his patriarchal duties. Although the merchant of the play is not himself abusive towards his daughters (and wife), the deputy in his absence is more than merely physically or mentally abusive. He plans to sell the daughters to "Indians" for sacrifice in a cannibalistic ritual.

From the city of London, the chapter will move outside the bounds of the city. Two plays, Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597?) and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1620s) do not fall strictly into the "city comedy" category, because they take place outside of London. They do, however, include city characters fulfilling and amplifying typical city comedy roles. Massinger's play shows a Londoner looking for a match for his daughter; Shakespeare's play foregrounds a Londoner's attempts to seduce proper citizen wives, who espouse typical merchant class attitudes about marriage. These two plays present parents desirous of an acquisitive marriage and daughters aware of the flaws of this acquisition, which contrasts to the daughter's acquisitive desires in *The City Madam*. Shakespeare's only contemporary English comedy, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is frequently treated for the plot of Falstaff and the Merry Wives themselves. Certainly, some critics pay attention to the Page's attempt to marry off their daughter, but most critics are silent on this less-entertaining plot. By looking at these two comedies ostensibly about marriage, this chapter will recast them in a light that suggests that the plays are instead about family and familial governance. Each suggests that parents' desires – whether citizens of London or of Windsor – always fail when those desires are acquisitive, affirming the argument of the conduct books.

Parental Controls: Educating Parents in the Conduct Books

The conduct books make two primary assumptions about children that influence marriage negotiations. They first assume that children are essentially the property of the parents. This is not necessarily in line with the ancient Roman concept of the *pater familias* who held the power of life or death for children under his household (though this desire for that much control is evident in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*). Gouge describes children "as the goods of their parents, to be ordered and disposed by them" (Gouge 442). As a result of the "ownership" of their children, parents are invested with heavy responsibility for the child's upbringing. While this seems perhaps an obvious point of parenthood, the conduct books focus on the parents' proper education of the child, because this ensures the child's willing obedience, an obedience founded in perfect Christian humility, the second assumption of the parent-child relationship.

For this obedience to occur, the parents in turn have specific obligations to their children: to educate them in Christian obedience and to participate and guide the marriage negotiations when the children have reached the proper age. These primary responsibilities of the parents include a variety of smaller things that parents must do to be successful Christian parents. According to Matthew Griffith, parents must bring up children well; mothers should nurse their own children; both parents should provide food and clothing; avoid penury or lavishness; educate them; teach good manners; and bring them up for employment (Griffith 340). Moreover, there should be some of money left for the children when the parents die, so that the children will be provided for later. Children, likewise, are to attend to their duties owed to their parents throughout their lives, including loving, fearing, and obeying their mother and father. Should children not

attend their duties, most conduct books reason, the parents actually are to blame for the failure, since they failed to provide proper education.

Even though the conduct books expect both parents and children to fulfill specific obligations in the relationship, the books clearly place children in a significantly inferior position. The period seems to have faced a crisis in its understanding of the child as property, because of an emergent understanding of the child as an autonomous being. Claire M. Busse suggests that "[m]any … authors found themselves grappling with inconsistencies caused by the clash of what were considered traditional definitions of children as parental property with emerging conceptions of an individual's moral agency and independent choice" (Busse 212). The subordinate position of the child might last even unto adulthood, beginning with professional or marital choices and extending to parental intervention when the adult male child fails to conduct his own household in a godly manner. In *The Householder's Helpe* (1615), R. R. insists that "Fathers are to admonish their children, though they dwell apart from them, and haue families of the owne" (R. R. sig. B1). However, not all of the writers agree on this point: Gouge insists that "by marriage they are freed from the power of their parents" (Gouge 452). The debate over the role of the parent in the child's life indicates that the parent-child relationship was changing in the period.

The disagreement over the state of childhood among modern critics compound the difficulties of defining the parent-child relationship. Certainly the treatment of children was rougher than it is today, but the level of violence of the society – and especially the violence towards daughters – is as of yet unclear. The great number of admonitions against violence towards the children indicates that the levels of normative violence were

much higher – and that there was a much higher tolerance for such normative violence than there is in modern western societies. Certainly, the period witnessed a serious debate about the treatment of children, with Roger Ascham calling for education of boys without the rod: Ascham argues that children learn better if they do not fear learning. Instead, learning to love knowledge through reward of success will facilitate learning. Lawrence Stone takes this as evidence for a high level of rough treatment of boys in the schools. Despite any admonitions against harsh punishment, the early moderns accepted some form of physical punishment as necessary, but that physical punishment must be tempered appropriately.[9] R. R. insists that the parent (father) should "correct after anger, not in anger, and in passion" (R. R. 36). The parent must avoid showing wrath to the child, because the parent's anger might trigger inappropriate or excessive punishment of the child.

Thus, the conduct writers place the burden of good behavior on the hierarchical superior. Griffith insists that "The *Heathen* himselfe could say that there be two principall causes in bad parents of bad children; the one is the *evill* of *nature*, in the *disposition*; the other is *evill education*" (Griffith 359-360). R. R. proclaims that "Contrariewise, dost thou neglect this dutie of instructing them: then dost thou make them most miserable, poore, filthie, naked and deformed: yea, most lothsome and odious both to God and men" (R. R. sig. A3). The conduct books are not then "parenting guides" like the modern Dr. Spock, but rather stand as testament to both the absolute power of the householder and the absolute responsibility of that power. If the householder fails to raise good Christian children, then both the householder and the children will find themselves odious to the community and to God.

The wife's complex position of authority created a difficult situation to negotiate under actual circumstances. On the one hand, mothers should nurture their children; on the other mothers might harm them in the very process. According the Rebecca Bushnell and Margaret Ferguson, mothers would educate children early in their lives, but boys would eventually leave home to attend grammar school. The conduct books identify various problems with mothers educating their children, despite early modern practices that expected this education. Even as some treatises, like Griffith's, insist that "In manners, they [the children] must obey the precepts of their mothers" (Griffith 370), most show skepticism about the mother as educator of the children. The treatises tend to be fearful, moreover, of the problems of the transmission of bad characteristics through nursing.[10] Although this is a concern generally discussed in context of wet nurses, the risks of transmitting the bad qualities of the mother would not be surprising. Finally, various treatises complain of mothers who dote too much on their children: Ursula Potter explains that "The Tudor interlude, *Nice Wanton*, is a variation on this familiar story and betrays the same pedagogical bias, tracing the prodigal children's turning point back to school crimes of truancy and the tossing away of schoolbooks, and to a mother who does nothing to correct them. … [T]he cockering mother of this play is forcefully confronted with her own guilt for the crimes and deaths of her children" (Potter 245). The overwhelming anxiety about the role of the mother stems from what Jennifer Panek describes as "the unstable position of mothers in early modern conduct books, where there is an unresolved tension between the mother's biblically mandated position of authority over her own children, and her female weaknesses, which render her fitter for subjection than for government" (Panek, "The Mother as Bawd" 416).

The conflicts in the mother and father's roles in the family lead to practical difficulties in the duties of the children, however. Because God has "cast and made them subiect vnder the power and authoritie of their parents, to obey and serue them in his stead" (Clever and Dod 342), children are intended to be completely subject to their parents. Clever and Dod further explain that the Bible mandates that children

> *Honour thy Father and mother*, which honour consisteth not in bowing the knee, or pushing off the cap, or giuing to their parents the vpper hand onely: but in this, that they loue them with all their hearts, that they feare and dread them, that they chearefully do their commaundements, will and pleasure, that they seeke their worship, credit, profit and preferement in all things lawfull; and if neede require, that they giue their liues for them. (Clever and Dod 342-343)

This becomes a problem, as the authors acknowledge, when the parents require of their children something unlawful or demand of their children something unreasonable. Clever and Dod generally avoid such acknowledgements that such a thing might happen, but they imply that parents do not have complete control over the life of their children, as parents in ancient times might have had.

Few writers deal exclusively with daughters and much of the advice aims at both male and female children, with a few books acknowledging certain behaviors and expectations specifically for daughters. Parents would teach daughters skills other than those taught to the sons, but most conduct books avoid this particular need. The notable exception to this is *The Court Good Counsell* (based on Stefano Guazzo's work translated into English and sold by W. B. in London in 1607), which includes a single chapter on the rearing of daughters: chapter XXII claims that it is "Of the diuersitie of the care that Parentes ought to take of their Daughters, in the bringing vp of them, more than they take for the bringing vp of their Sonnes" (Guazzo H2v). This title suggests one of two things about raising daughters. On the one hand, it could be that that "the care"

described above as "more than they take" for sons is that the advice that follows applies only to daughters; on the other hand, it could be that parents are to take particular care in raising their daughters altogether, because the rearing of daughters is more difficultly managed. Most likely, it is the former because the advice in the chapter pertains to making a young woman into one who will be both a good housewife and a good partner for the husband.

It seems, then, that rearing daughters in the early modern period is intrinsically related to marriage. One of the goals of the rearing of a daughter is to strike a balance between appropriate book learning and the learning of household management:

> I say nothing of those that are taught in their chambers to write, to read, and sing, and neuer come downe into the kitchin; but I will leaue that charge to the poore husbands, whose house goeth to decay, and all for hauing so learned a wife.
>
> Then if you cast your eyes upon one of those which can do nothing but sow, & spinne; you shall see in attyre, in talke, and in behauiour, the very figure of a countrie Milkmayde, who will haue as good a grace amongt other women, as a Ricchenstuff-wench among courtly Ladyes. (Guazzo sig. H3)

Though the author claims to avoid judging women who are well educated in the courtly arts and who demonstrate intellectual abilities, he clearly does judge them by hinting that the household of this woman will be left in ruins once she leaves her role as daughter in one house for the role of housewife in her husband's. Nevertheless, some learning is important, since without it, the wife will have no graces to recommend her to the other women of the neighborhood.

In selecting a marriage partner for daughters, Guazzo's text makes it clear that the father must take charge of the selection and he must be mindful throughout the daughter's life to make her a suitable partner for a man with a profession. Guazzo suggests that

> It behooveth then all discreete Fathers, who are to bestow their Daughters in Mariage, to consider what calling his Sonne in law is like to bee, and so to frame

> his Daughter accordingly: as, if he purpose to marry her into the countrey, to bring her vp in Countrey huswiferie. If the Father meane to marry his Daughter to a Courtier, he must set her to the Court to the seruice of some great Lady, and must be learned to read, to write, to discourse, to sing, to play in Instruments, to daunce, and to be able to performe all that which belongeth to a Courtier to do: by this meanes many are marryed to great Gentlemen, without one penny dowrie giuen by their father. (Guazzo sig. H3-H3v)

Though Guazzo writes for a wider audience than other conduct books, his last hint here – many young women with good skills might marry great courtiers based solely on their charms – indicates the daughter's social mobility, a mobility that many Puritans would probably decry as parental over-acquisitiveness. Though they would agree with Guazzo that the best way to raise a daughter is to "bring them up chast, as well in body as in minde" (Guazzo sig. H3v), they would find Guazzo's hints at upward social mobility distasteful. Nevertheless, that social mobility is important for many wealthy merchants' daughters.

Whether or not they are interested in social mobility, most of the conduct books deal uncomfortably with the problem of disposing children in marriage. Jennifer Panek has suggested that "[p]arental power over a child's choice of spouse is … a problematic subject for conduct book authors, as they uniformly attempt – and fail – to reconcile a belief in an absolute parental authority with an equally strong belief in the ungodliness of forced and loveless marriages" ("The Mother as Bawd" 418). All of the conduct books agree that the child should heed the parent's advice on the choice of marriage partner. Even Satan in Ingeland's *The Disobedient Child* agrees with this point. However, while the parents are to have total moral authority over their children's choices, they are generally admonished not to ignore their children's thoughts on the matter entirely. The conflict comes, of course, when the parent refuses to acknowledge the potential rightness

of a child's objection or when the child's refuses to accept a satisfactory and pragmatic choice the parents make. Clever and Dod insist that

> let them yeeld vnto them this dutie, that their fathers hauing prouided for them, such as are not of a wicked life, nor deformed, or euill fauored, nor of a contrary religion, they willingly submit themselues vnto their choise: which if for the present, or vpon the sudden, they cannot yeeld vnto, let them by earnest calling vpon the name of GOD, not onely desire him to direct their parents in a godly and fit choise, but also to subdue in them this corrupt affection, and to frame their wils to be pliable vnto their fathers in such lawfull cases. (Clever and Dod 358)

As in so many cases, the conduct books come down on the absolute side of the parent, only notionally acknowledging that reasonable objections to the suitors might exist. Clever and Dod are unwilling to recognize such a situation.[11]

In contrast, Gouge willingly writes of two ways that parents might create problems in their children's marriage bargains. Gouge first objects that

> The extreme in the defect is, when parents carelesly let their children passe the floure of their age: and neuer consider whether need require that they should mary or no. Their children may sit long enough before they seeke out a match for them, vnlesse it be brought to them: and when one is offered though it be neuer so fit, yet except they may make and aduantage thereof to themselues, they will hardly yeeld to it. Thus they make their children to seeke out marriages for themseules, and without their consent to make them vp: or else to liue in discontent, if not in vncleannesse. (Gouge 564-565)

Parents neglect their duty to their children when they allow the child to age beyond marriageability and fail to seek any marriage partner. Gouge also hints at the tendency of some parents to desire matches for their children that will be to the financial or social benefit of the parents and he elaborates further that

> In a like excesse doe they offend who for outward aduantages match their children to such as by nature are vnfit for marriage, to ideots, to idolaters, to profane persons, or they care not to whom. And if their children like not these matches, they will doe to the vttermost of their power what they can to force them thereunto. (Gouge 565)

Thus, parents do not always do their duty toward their children, because the parents are vain and avaricious. Completely acquisitive marriages are odious and offensive to God. When the marriage partner is generally ill-suited to their child, parents should avoid considering the outward advantages that partner might bring.

At times, parents will not only try to force the children into unpleasant matches for financial gain, but also will "doe the vttermost of their powers" to compel the child into marriage. The conduct books' concern with inappropriate parents dovetails with tropes of Greek New Comedy, and reappears in many of the city comedies. Northrop Frye explains that

> New Comedy normally presents an erotic intrigue between a young man and a young woman which is blocked by some kind of opposition, usually paternal, and resolved by a twist in the plot … At the beginning of the play the forces thwarting the hero are in control of the play's society, but after a discovery in which the hero becomes wealthy or the heroine respectable, a new society crystallizes on the stage around the hero and his bride. (Frye 44)

In the next section, this chapter will turn to plays – both city comedy and plays related to London – in order to question this assumption about the relationship of the parent and the child in the context of the marriage plot.

Massinger's *The City Madam*: Shakespeare Redux

Massinger's *The City Madam* recasts the basic plot of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* - the stern authority figure absenting himself and leaving a deputy to run his corrupted city – into a comedy of manners about a city household. The play aligns good civic governance with good household governance, even as it points to the failure of the metaphor. *The City Madam* lacks the one distinctive feature of *Measure for Measure*: the Duke figure's reformation.[12] Rather, the householder, one Sir John Frugal, learns nothing

about being merciful in his governance and uses his absence to teach his daughters and wife lessons about modesty and economy. Although these daughters certainly face the sort of moral reform that Lucio and Angelo experience at the end of *Measure for Measure*, this play focuses on the rule of authority within the materialistic household. The daughters learn a lesson of household authority that is quite different from what the citizens of Vienna (London) learn about the authority of the state in *Measure for Measure*.[13]

Massinger's play relies for its effect not on the confinement of characters (though there is plenty of that), but rather on what seems an instance of egregious abuse of the daughters both to teach them a lesson and to make the household run more smoothly. Although Sir John Frugal neither raises a hand against his daughters nor intentionally puts them in harm's way, his brother Luke serves as a deputy-parent doing this with an abandon and relish that tops even Angelo in its cruelty. Like Angelo, he is stern and power-hungry in his deputized state, but his behavior suggests the shortcomings of the metaphor of the house as a state in small. If the deputy is in charge, then the punishments meted out in the plays should be equivalent. Nevertheless, Luke metes out punishments more capricious even than those decreed by Viennese law.

Massinger's play mirrors the rigidity of Shakespeare's Vienna by recognizing the rigidity of the capitalist marketplace. Although Luke persuades him to give a few days relief to his debtors – Penury, Hoist, and Fortune – he cannot convince Sir John Frugal to allow the debtors permanent relief. Sir John is unwilling, even, to extend the mercy for long:

> You [Luke] shall prevail.
> Give 'em longer day. But do you hear, no talk of't.

Should this arrive at twelve on the Exchange,
I shall be laugh'd at for my foolish pity,
Which money-men hate deadly. (*Madam* 1.3.112-116)

Frugal allows them this relief, but he does not want this to become public knowledge, particularly with those active at the Exchange. His concern with public appearance is first and foremost as a merchant, not as a householder. This concern for his appearance as a merchant comes at the cost of disorder in his household, as further demonstrated by failure to care about the public opinion of himself as a householder.

The initial censure of Sir John Frugal fulfills the forebodings of the early modern conduct book writers that the ill behavior of the family will shame the householder by insinuating his ill-kept authority. Instead of presenting direct public censure, the play shows Sir John's two young apprentices, Tradewell and Goldwire, speaking about Sir John's experiences at home and abroad. The young apprentices acknowledge that Sir John seems so often to be a good businessman, but wonder at his household's luxuriance:

Goldwire: 'Tis strange my master in his wisdom can
Give the reins to such exorbitancy.
Tradewell: He must,
Or there's no peace nor rest for him at home.
I grant his state will bear it, yet he's censur'd
For his indulgence, and for Sir John Frugal,
By some styl'd Sir John Prodigal. (*Madam* 1.1.28-33)

Sir John certainly has the resources to spend the money that his wife and daughters demand for their finery and their "Variety of fashions" (*Madam* 1.1.25), but those outside his home question his householding. Even members of his own household – his two apprentices – describe the behavior as indulgent. As in many city comedies, it is, Jean Howard points out, "the female consumer, rather than the male traveler or merchant … who [bears] the brunt" of the complaints about foreign and luxurious fashions (Howard,

"Women, Foreigners, and the Regulation of Urban Space" 151). Rather than criticize Sir John for the expenditures in terms of the fineries, the apprentices insist that Frugal is still a wise man; instead, they are surprised by his willingness to indulge the women of his family so. Their discussion of the household suggests a greater community questioning the goings-on in the Frugal household, which is indeed far from being a frugal place. Even while the citizen-merchant keeps his business afloat with frugality and wisdom, he cannot say the same for his household.

Sir John cannot but admit that the household is disordered: the father of one of his daughter's suitors calls him to account. Lord Lacy says to Sir John of his brother Luke,

> 'Tis more
> Than can admit defence. You keep him as
> A parasite to your table, subject to
> The scorn of your proud wife, and underling
> To his own nieces. And can I with mine honour
> Mix my blood with his that is not sensible
> Of his brother's miseries? (*Madam* 1.3.130-136)

Lord Lacy sees the household as a disordered place, because the nieces treat their uncle as their servant instead of treating him as a respected elder of the family.[14] Lord Lacy wants Luke treated if not as Sir John's equal, then at least as his appropriate emissary and a trusted senior member of the household. Sir John is correct in mistrusting his brother: he himself was the first-born child, but his parents' preference for his younger brother Luke robbed him of any inheritance. Luke "had a fair estate, which his loose riots / Soon brought to nothing" (*Madam* 1.3.141-142). Sir John mistrusts Luke, because he neither wants to give up estates he earned through honest industry nor neglect his family to order to leave the "estate to [Luke's] disposure" (*Madam* 1.3.149).

Thus Sir John does expect certain things of his family, but collapse of the initial marriage bargains for his daughters illustrates that Sir John's expectations do not meet the expectations of the community around him. Although Sir John wants his daughters, Anne and Mary, to marry the wealthy young suitors, Sir Maurice Lacy and Master Plenty, his wife, Lady Frugal, resists the young men and, on the advice of her astrologer, encourages her daughters to expect lavish things, rule of the house, and men of even higher social standing than their current options. The entire house is clearly out of sorts. Lady Frugal turns not to her husband for advice on the marriage matches, but to a quack astrologer.

When the suits fail, Sir John realizes that he has an uncontrollable household, that his attention to the mercantile exchange has been at the expense of his family's proper ordering and, by logical extension, his family's ability to function and perpetuate itself. After Lacy and Plenty reject the daughters as wicked from their mother's belly, Sir John admits that they are socially deserving of these suitors but "the perverseness / Of their manners (which they did not take from me, / But from their mother)" prevents them from accepting the proposals (*Madam* 2.3.33-35). Lacy and Plenty insist that they will travel the world seeking their fortunes rather than marry these daughters, leading Sir John to complain "What's wealth, accompanied / With disobedience in a wife and children?" (*Madam* 2.3.46-47). Sir John's awareness of his family's disobedience opens the door for other characters to shift the blame for the failure of the home – and particularly of the children – onto the mother.

Many other characters also find that the disorder in the household comes from the mother, rather than the householder. Sir John, as noted above, suggests that the daughters

learned perverseness from their mother. When Lord Lacy stops by to tell the family about Sir John's "departure" for a monastery, he insists that his motives were driven by

> [Lady Frugal's] pride
> Above your rank, and stubborn disobedience
> Of these your daughter, in their milk suck'd from you;
> At home, the hardness of his entertainment,
> You willfully forgetting that your all
> Was borrow'd from him; and to hear abroad
> The imputations dispers'd upon you,
> And justly too, I fear, that drew him to
> This strict retirement. (*Madam* 3.2.59-68)

Lord Lacy clearly places on the mother full blame for the daughters' poor behavior. The blame resides not merely with Lady Frugal's own modeling of poor manners, but additionally from the behavior's very literal entrance into their bodies through the milk they sucked from her.

Both Gail Paster Kern and Wendy Wall have looked at the concerns of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century about the transmission of the wet nurse's characteristics to the child. Even if the primarily worries in the period were about the transmission from the wet-nurse, nursing mothers might also transmit poor behavior: should the mother be flawed in any significant way, those flaws will transport themselves through her milk. Wall explains that "[n]umerous medical and religious authors writing between 1500 and 1700 maintain that the nurse's qualities were transmitted to the child primarily through bodily fluid" and not merely by the influence of the nurse's presence (Wall, *Staging* 136).[15] Paster also discusses concerns about nursing and maternal agency, so pervasive in the period.[16] Thus Lord Lacy puts into words the material concerns that the early moderns about the breast's influence over the child's personality. Paster explains that "[a]mbivalent social construction of reproduction and infant feeding, taken

together, give discursive particularity and material form to the fear of maternal agency and competition for the maternal body so pervasive in Elizabethan-Jacobean drama" (Paster, *Body* 216). Thus, Lady Frugal is to blame for her daughters' failures, not the householder, even as the householder finds himself shamed for the misbehavior.

When Luke assumes control over these disordered women as the deputized householder, he expresses his frustration with the very existence of his now-dependents. He complains to the "Indian chief" that "[t]hey … eat too much, and if they stay in London, they will find friends that to my loss will force me / To composition" (*Madam* 5.1.57-59). Luke has changed their finery (their "whim-whams" [*Madam* 4.4.28]) to "buffin gowns and green aprons" and "A French hood … [that] / Now 'tis out of fashion, [but] a fool's cap would be better" (*Madam* 4.4.26, 4.4.28-29).[17] To demonstrate his new power as head of the household, Luke forces the women of the household into a type of livery, which as Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass explain, "acted as the medium through which the social system marked bodies so as to associate them with particular institutions. The power to give that marking to subordinates affirmed social hierarchy: lords dressed retainers, masters dressed apprentices, husbands dressed their wives" (Jones and Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing* 5). Here, the deputy dresses the members of the household who need to be reminded of their place.

Luke insists that the women must now appear in their proper guise as a citizen-merchant's family, but his claims belie his contempt for them. Luke reveals that his intention in this is "not in revenge / Of [their] base usage of [him], but to fright / Others by [their] example" (*Madam* 4.4.134-136). Luke plans, like Angelo in *Measure for Measure*, to reform the city family even as his own power and lust for power (here

money) greatly increases. *Measure for Measure* presents the social ill as stemming from over-abundant lust; *The City Madam* presents instead the desire for money. Thus, money remains at the center of household control.

The bargain that Luke strikes with the Indians indicates his great hatred for his nieces, and his eagerness for their deaths. This is more shocking than Angelo's condemnations and attempts to expedite the death of Viennese citizens, because the Indian proposal itself seems far more savage as the Indians are not members of "civilized" society. Most importantly, the Indians worship not the Christian God as the audience is to initially believe, but instead the Devil. Disguised as the Indian chief, Sir John Frugal says they worship

> The devil. Why start you at his name? If you
> Desire to wallow in wealth and worldly honours,
> You must make haste to be familiar with him.
> The devil – whose priest I am, and by him made
> A deep magician (for I can do wonders)
> Appear'd to me in Virginia and commanded
> With many stripes (for that's his cruel custom)
> I should provide on pain of his fierce wrath
> Against the next sacrifice (at which
> We, groveling on our faces, fall before him),
> Two Christian virgins, that with their pure blood
> Might dye his horrid altars, and a third
> (In his hate to such embraces as are lawful)
> Married, and with your ceremonious rites,
> As an oblation unto Hecate
> And wanton lust, her favourite. (*Madam* 5.1.26-41)

Luke is all too willing to allow that his sister-in-law and nieces sail to Virginia for the Indians' satanic ritual sacrifice. Thus as a deputy parent, he uses the ultimate threat of violence against those whom he has been charged to care for. Gouge would likely find Luke the most contrary of all. His violence includes his wrath and his hatred, which lead to excessive punishment and sin.

Although Luke's behavior surprises Lady Frugal and her daughters, as well as the trusting Sir John and Lord Lacy, this unrepentant side of Luke should not surprise the audience. The audience has seen Luke as both the begrudging servant to the ridiculous Lady Frugal and daughters, as well as the tempter of youth. Early in the play, Luke lures John's young, innocent and honest apprentices to risk their own stability in the household by taking advantage of Sir John's generosity and wealth. The apprentices protest not about being good servants, but rather because their "father's bonds, that lie in pawn / For [their] honesties, must pay for it" (*Madam* 2.1. 75-76). Luke's response, "A mere bugbear / Invented to fright children" (*Madam* 2.1.76-77), suggests his disregard for the familial order, and indicates to the audience that he will clearly make a poor household manager.

Luke, having swindled his brother's patrimony, continues to believe in the (criminally) self-made individual, rather than the care for the family, its community standing and the householder's responsibility. Of course, the apprentices' fathers will find themselves in trouble when their sons steal and cheat, and Luke himself calls in the their debts even after convincing Sir John to show mercy. Luke cares more for the ability to earn capital – and he acknowledges this once he has control over the fortune – than the place of mercy and kindness in the system. This clearly extends to his opinions about the family. In the end, though, like Duke Vincentio, Sir John steps in and rescues his family from this apparent oblivion. His intervention reincorporates his daughters and wife into the family, and allows them to be appropriately aligned with the proper husbands. Sir John banishes Luke to Virginia, the very place he thought he would send

his sister-in-law and nieces. The play reestablishes the household by ridding itself of the most odious members of the family, and insisting on the obedience of the daughters.

The plays the rest of this chapter considers occur in an England more-or-less contemporaneous with the playwrights' own. Like city comedy, they include an array of social situations, but center particularly on the lives of the "middle class" characters. In contrast to city comedy, Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* present small towns and the invading Londoners (Falstaff and Fenton in Shakespeare, and Sir Giles Overreach in Massinger). In certain respects, they play to the opposite of the city comedies where the country squire is duped: instead of being able to dupe the foolish small townsfolk, the Londoners find themselves foiled in their attempts to cheat the country people. The plays prove a useful foil for the city comedies, since they also provide the contemporaneous society and have similar plots.

Presenting the parent-child relationships in these plays against the parent-child relationship of *The City Madam* further suggests the limits the belief in children as parental property. Contrasting Shakespeare's play with Massinger's allows for a consideration of the edges of allowable violence against daughters. In both *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* parents attempting to "sell" their daughters to the richest suitor, the suitor most appropriate for the parents' social gains; parents in both plays use varying degrees of violence to ensure the complacency and cooperation of the daughter; the daughters in both plays succeed in their own desires; and the other characters of the plays express their outrage over the amount of violence used against the daughter. Shakespeare's play, in which parents attempt to force a daughter to marry against her preference, ends with a reintegration into society of all of the

characters, and thus treats the subject lightly. Massinger's play, however, treats the subject darkly: rather than willingly accept the new son-in-law into the family, Sir Giles Overreach offers instead to kill his daughter in the presence of all of the characters. Thus the play reveals the London father's villainy towards his daughter and all those around him.

Converging on the small town citizens: Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor*

Although Shakespeare's direct discussions of merchant class London come only in the Eastcheap scenes of *1 Henry IV*, *2 Henry IV* and *Henry V*, his London characters maneuver their way into comedy's realm in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Windsor, only about thirty miles from London, affords a location where these Londoners can intermingle with small town citizens. It is, as Ralph Berry explains in *Shakespeare and Social Class*, "the only play in the canon grounded in the middle class, and it presents a collision of values and rank in which Falstaff comes off badly worsted" (Berry 50).[18] While Falstaff occupies his time by encroaching upon Ford and Page's wives, George and Margaret Page deal with their own familial problem: their daughter Anne's. This subplot introduces suitors as unsuitable as those suitors that Middleton lampoons in *Michaelmas Term* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. The daughter's preferred suitor, the poor gentleman Fenton, loves her and provides a level of gentility.[19] The parents' two suitors provide money instead, but the two are also what Natasha Korda describes as "blatant fortune hunters" (Korda, *Domestic* 102).

This subplot – though a relatively small part of the play – illuminates the problems of the parent-child relationship that so often appears in comedies. While this

subplot seems not to relate to Falstaff's plot, the plots converge in Windsor Forest at Herne's Oak.[20] That both Page parents intend to have their daughter "captured" by their respective choice of suitors, and that this will be to the disapproval of the other parent, suggests the marital discord and the familial disunity in the Page household. Fenton is himself steeped in London tradition, which accounts for some of the parental disapproval. Ultimately however, the comic ending of the play necessitates overturning parental authority, even as the parents have attempted to exert their own authority throughout the play – against one another. In this way, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* limits parental authority over the child.

From the beginning, the play makes clear the odiousness of George Page's choice of suitors. When Sir Hugh Evans suggests to Abraham Slender that he should marry Anne Page, he asks "Mistress Anne Page? She has brown hair, and speaks small like a woman?" (*Wives* 1.1.43-44). Doubtful of her identity, Slender does not complain about the plan that he marry the young heiress, worth "seven hundred pounds of moneys, and gold and silver" (*Wives* 1.1.45-46), and prepares to marry her. Evans and Shallow make clear that this is to be a financial, not emotional, transaction and Slender is willing to follow their lead, explaining that

> I will marry her, sir, at your request. But if there be no great love in the beginning, yet heaven may decrease it upon better acquaintance, when we are married and have more occasion to know one another. I hope upon familiarity will grow more contempt. But if you say 'marry her', I will marry her. That I am freely dissolved, and dissolutely. (*Wives* 1.1.227-233)

Slender notably demonstrates his lack of mastery of the English language.[21] The other characters point to his misspoken "dissolutely," but Slender misspeaks throughout the passage, saying "decrease" rather than "increase" and "more contempt" rather than "less

contempt." David Landreth suggests that Slender – whom he calls an "imbecilic drip" – cannot be a good husband for the very fact that he speaks incompetently (Landreth 442). Even in his misspeaking – his meaning the opposite of what he says – the verbal slippage points to the problems of the forced, acquisitional marriage that Shallow and Page try to arrange. Certainly, any character in any play could suggest that the marriage of a daughter to a man she does not love risks increasing contempt on the woman's part, particularly if she brings the money into the marriage.

Page's inability to distinguish Slender's inappropriateness as a marriage partner further increases the possibility for his daughter's contempt. Both *A Godlie Forme of Household Government* and *Of Domesticall Duties* suggest that the children should not be married off to unfit partners, including those "of a wicked life, nor deformed, or euill fauored" (Clever and Dod 358) or those who are "by nature … vnfit for marriage, to ideots, to idolaters, to profane persons, or they care not to whom" (Gouge 565). The play codes Slender as undesirable, most clearly demonstrating in his speech above that he may well be an "ideot." His overt reliance on the "book of songs and sonnets" for his wooing (*Wives* 1.1.181-182) further suggests his intellectual failings.

Slender is also physically unattractive in ways that put into doubt his masculinity. When Mistress Quickly interrogates Slender's servant Simple, she asks what he looks like and Simple explain that "he hath but a little whey face, with a little yellow beard, a Cain-coloured beard" (1.4.20-21) and that "he is as tall a man of his hands as any is between this and his head" (*Wives* 1.4.23-24), even though he is, as Mistress Quickly describes "a softly spirited man"(*Wives* 1.4.22).[22] In *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, Will Fisher argues that "masculinity was not

only constructed in contrast to femininity, but also in contrast to boyhood" (Fisher 87). Different prosthetics of the gendered body could render the wearer more or less masculine, thus beard growth, in addition to genitalia, indicated levels of masculinity. Within the wide range of facial hair possibilities – and even based on the very ability to grow a good beard – emerged a hierarchy of facial hair that "was consistently linked with both fighting in battle and begetting children" (Fisher 87).[23] Slender's beard is a "little yellow beard" and he has a "whey face." Ben Crystal and David Crystal explain that yellow indicates jealousy (506) and define whey-face as a "milk-face, pasty-face" (494). Slender's beard is also "Cain-coloured," which suggests that it is not quite yellow, but rather a reddish-yellow, the presumed color of Judas's beard.[24] Thus, Slender is not merely *not* a grand physical specimen, but he also fails to demonstrate the necessary masculinity necessary for a productive marriage.[25] Even if Slender can grow a beard, it is only a style that invokes the effeminate French styles work by the courtiers, and suggests a certain procreative disability.[26]

Slender's inadequacy as a suitor places Anne in a difficult situation. When the parent chooses poorly, the daughter finds herself in the difficult position of either disobeying the parents, or facing an uncertain and bleak future. Gouge (as always) has a solution that may or may not satisfy:

> If there be no iust exception against the partie commended, they ought with the vttermost of their power to endeauour to bring their affection to the bent of their parents will: and as an helpe thereunto, be perswaded that their parents are as carefull of their good as they themselues are, and wiser then themselues: yea aboue all they ought to make instant prayer vnto God … that he would be pleased to alter the course of their affection, and to settle it on the party whom their parents hath chosen for them; if at last they see no iust cause to the contrary. But if notwithstanding all the meanes that they can vse, they still finde their heart altogether auerse, they may in a reuerend manner entreat their parent to forbeare to presse that match, and to thinke of some other. (Gouge 450)

As she should with every other problem, the daughter should pray for God's guidance and for God's ability to persuade the parents otherwise. Gouge does suggest that it may be possible in extraordinary cases – refusing to find a match altogether – to involve the magistrate in the parent's place, but this is not a satisfactory answer in general.

Anne's complains of her father's acquisitive intentions in making the match with Slender, and her father responds as an overbearing parent attempting to control his child's emotional ability. Anne knows that her father fails to notice Slender's "world of vile ill-favoured faults" because the man brings in "three hundred pounds a year" (*Wives* 3.4.31-32). It is with this blind spot that Page can insist to Anne (in a rare direct address) that she must "Love him, daughter Anne" (*Wives* 3.4.65). In this passage, Page has also scolded Fenton to abandon his suit of Anne and to quit the Page household as his "daughter is disposed of" (*Wives* 3.4.68). Though conduct book writers clearly think that parents should have some part in helping their children decide with whom to marry, Page's absolute insensitivity to his daughter's possible desires – or her desire to avoid such an odious match – places him in the role of a poor father. Children should attempt to mold their emotional desires to match their parents' suggestions, but the conduct book writers imply that this is done only with difficulty and only by the child: parents cannot find success in commanding their daughter's emotions, as Page attempts here.

If Master Page's choice of suitor is odious, Mistress Page's choice is no better. The play presents less of Doctor Caius's suit to Anne, but sets him up quite clearly as another fortune hunter and a generally questionable option. Caius is a foreigner, first and foremost, but he is also particularly (and perhaps peculiarly) rash and preternaturally jealous of anyone and everyone in Windsor. Anne knows that she does not care for this

man and even tells Mistress Quickly, Caius's maid, that "Alas, I had rather be set quick I'th'earth / And bowled to death with turnips" than to be married to Caius (*Wives* 3.4.86-87).

Mistress Page's reasons for preference for Caius are as dubious as Master Page's are for Slender. Despite all of the problems with Caius, Mistress Page give to the doctor

> [her] good will
> And none but he, to marry with Nan Page.
> That Slender, though well landed, is an idiot,
> And he my husband best of all affects.
> The Doctor is well moneyed, and his friends
> Potent at court. He, none but he, shall have her,
> Though twenty thousand worthier come to crave her. (*Wives* 4.4.82-88)

Mistress Page does not consider important the lands and rents that Slender has (his three hundred a year), the very things that the acquisitive Master Page desires; instead, she desires the ready money that Caius has access to, and most importantly, the court connections that he can provide. Both parents look at these suitors for the wrong reasons: they desire personal gain.[27] In *The City Madam*, it is the daughters who want all of this finery and the connections. In this play, it is the parents. In any respect, it is bad parenting.

The Pages generally object to Anne's choice of Fenton on the grounds that his rank is too much above her and that he has been a wild youth. While this does appear to satisfy concerns of the conduct book writers about sensible mates, it contradicts Anne's will. Page complains to the Host of the Garter Inn that

> The gentleman [Fenton] is of no having. He kept company with the wild Prince and Poins. He is of too high a region; he knows too much. No, he shall not knit a knot in his fortunes with the finger of my substance. If he take her, let him take her simply: the wealth I have waits on my consent, and my consent goes not that way. (*Wives* 3.2.65-71)

Page complains that Fenton is, in essence, a city character of too high a rank for his daughter.[28] Should Fenton marry Anne, Page will disown her and remove himself from his parental responsibility. The objection that he does not want a fortune hunter contradicts his clear desire to select a more blatant fortune hunter in Slender; the objection that he is of "too high a region" and "knows too much" contradicts Mistress Page's desire for the court connections that Caius will apparently bring.

Fenton himself knows of this objection, acknowledging that Page views his daughter as little more than an economic good to be had on the marriage market. This is a complaint that Page has clearly expressed to Fenton, since Fenton explains to Anne

> He doth object I am too great of birth,
> And that, my state being galled with my expense,
> I seek to heal it only by his wealth.
> Besides these, other bars he lays before me –
> My riots past, my wild societies;
> And tells me 'tis a thing impossible
> I should love thee but as a property. (*Wives* 3.4.4-10)

Fenton identifies Page's first and foremost objection as fortune hunting, but Page tells the Host of Garter that it is actually about his mischievous behavior with Prince Hal (chronicled, obliquely, in *1 & 2 Henry IV*). The syntactic reordering of the two concerns highlights the pains parents should take to find a proper mate for their daughters: they should care about intentions of their daughters' future mates and take past behaviors as indicative of future promise. Nevertheless, Fenton is actually the best match for Anne, since, he claims, he has reformed himself from those wild riots.

Anne finds herself in a strikingly difficult situation that, in pitting one parent against the other, leads to her easy ability to dupe both parents. Although Anne initially wants Fenton to continue his attempts for her father's approval, she gradually acquiesces

to the necessary disobedience in order to achieve her desires. Anne writes a letter that Fenton reads to the Host of the Garter, explaining that while Anne participates in the shaming of Falstaff,

> Her father hath commanded her to slip
> Away with Slender, and with him at Eton
> Immediately to marry….
> Now, sir, her mother, ever strong against that match
> And firm for Doctor Caius, hath appointed
> That he shall likewise shuffle her away, …
> And at the dean'ry, where a priest attends,
> Straight marry her. …
> Her father means she shall be all in white;
> And in that habit, when Slender sees his time
> To take her by the hand and bid her go,
> She shall go with him. Her mother hath intended,
> The better to denote her to the Doctor –
> For they must all be masked and visored –
> That quaint in green she shall be loose enrobed,
> With ribbons pendant flaring 'bout her head;
> And when the Doctor spies his vantage ripe,
> To pinch her by the hand, and on that token
> The maid hath given her consent to go with him. (*Wives* 4.6.23-44)

Both parents have commanded the child to fool the other parent in the effort to meet their desired end. Although Ann has claimed that she will go along with either parent – she has given her consent to each plan – the nature of the plans suggest forms of kidnapping, of stealing away at the very least. Slender is to "shuffle her away," which David Crystal and Ben Crystal suggest implies to "spirit, smuggle, remove secretly" (309). The Doctor's plan is to "pinch her by the hand." Though this is not an overtly violent act, it still implies some sort of physical force by the Doctor to instigate the flight. No matter what, the scene requires that Anne disobey one parent, by leading the other parent to assume that she has been kidnapped.

The actual shaming of Falstaff includes comic violence towards Anne, or at least towards the figures cloaked as Anne. The stage directions for this scene make this kidnapping clear:

> *During the song, enter Doctor Caius one way, and exit stealing away a fairy in green; enter Master Slender another way, and exit stealing away a fairy in white; enter Master Fenton, and exit stealing away Anne Page. After the song, a noise of hunting within.* (*Wives* 5.5)

The male characters are all stealing away the person that they think is their desired young woman, and this violence implicates the parents' desires. Should Anne have had her parents' permission to marry the proper suitor, then he would have been able to avoid the comic violence of this scene, which includes not only the quasi-violence towards Anne, but also a fair amount of ritual violence against Falstaff.

Of course, Anne marries Fenton, and of course the parents accept this as a fact, since this is a comedy. Rather than blame Mistress Page for her failure to obey her husband's desires, the play instead, as Natasha Korda explains, "seems more interested in shaming both parents for attempting to inflict upon their daughter the miseries of 'forced marriage' (5.5.227)" (Korda 101). Thus, the resolution of the play is more interested in the parent-child relationship than the husband-wife relationship that is central to the Falstaff plot.[29] The household's disorder throughout the play derives from the competing authorities that the Page parents have attempted to assert over their daughter. Mistress Page has been honest when it comes to her role as the chaste wife and Page has not been so overcome by jealousy, as his counterpart Ford has been.[30] Nevertheless, their parenting has been flawed, as Fenton admonishes his in-laws at the end of the play:

> You would have married her, most shamefully,
> Where there was no proportion held in love.
> The truth is, she and I, long since contracted,

> Are now so sure that nothing can dissolve us.
> Th' offence is holy that she hath committed,
> And this deceit loses the name of craft,
> Of disobedience, or unduteous title,
> Since therein she doth evitate and shun
> A thousand irreligious cursed hours
> Which forced marriage would have brought upon her. (*Wives* 5.5.212-222)

Most interestingly, Ford, who felt that he had the least control over his home in his jealousy, tells the parents to accept Fenton as their son-in-law, since "Here is no remedy" but to accept the legally valid marriage (*Wives* 5.5.223). Thus, while Fenton can scold his in-laws about their acquisitive desires in the marriage trade, it is Ford, another citizen of Windsor, and another member of the middle class, who can teach the Pages how to respond to their daughter. Ford facilitates the necessary reconciliation at the end of the comic scapegoating of Falstaff and the romantic transgression of the two young lovers.

Where Shakespeare presents families dealing comically with the reintegration of society, Massinger instead moves to melodrama. In doing this, his play *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* makes clear the condemnation of the London blue. Unlike *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which separates the London characters from the merchant class, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* identifies the merchant class with London. Sir Giles Overreach is clearly a Londoner, but in the country his behaviors become amplified, and eventually condemned by all characters.

The London blue goes to the country: Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*

Disparaging of the match between Margaret Overreach and himself, Lord Lovell of Massinger's 1633 play identifies the problem of the match being one of

disproportionate status. He complains that the daughter of a citizen would besmirch his bloodline, and that even

> Were *Overreach'* states thrice centupled; his daughter
> Millions of degrees much fairer than she is,
> (How e're I might urge presidents [precedents] to excuse me)
> I would not so adulterate my blood
> By marrying *Margaret*, and so leave my issue
> Made up of seuerall peeces, one part skarlet
> And the other *London*-blew. (*New Way* 4.1.220-226)

Overreach's London blue finds no welcome in the country. This play, while not properly a city comedy, contains characters who have wandered out of the city and into the countryside near Nottingham – the riotous youth Wellborn, the unscrupulous extortioner Sir Giles Overreach, and the obsequious Jack Marall. The play acts not as a city comedy, but as a sequel to an abstract city play. Unlike *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, this play includes the London citizen who, having used prowess typical of the city comedy to gain wealth, decides to retire to the country and enjoy the land acquired through those questionable means. When the citizen takes to his lands, stolen from the foolish country gentry of Middleton's plays, he meets the resistance of the gentry of Massinger's.[31]

Certainly, the confluence between the country and the city was central to the early modern socially mobile experience. Katherine Eisaman Maus suggests that

> In Massinger's time, it must have seemed as though the urban and rural elites were changing places. While many members of the provincial gentry abandoned their rustic lifestyles for the excitements of London, urban nouveaux riches, having made their fortunes in so-called vulgar occupations, acquired rural estates and set themselves up as country squires. (1835)

Thus, Massinger's play may strike a chord with an audience aware of shifting ownership of country lands and of increasing fascination with the city on the part of the wealthy – or no longer so wealthy – gentry. This flux of English citizenry appears most often in the

city comedies, when the country gentleman comes into the city seeking his fortune, or seeking work as an apprentice. Thus, Massinger's play, while not a sequel to any specific comedy, is a sequel to the entire genre. In this sequel, the city characters acknowledge that their presence in the country may be unwanted, and so they continue to discursively locate themselves in the city by constantly referring to city places, such as the prisons.

When the citizen moves to the country he takes with him the stereotypical city manners and methods deployed by city comedy characters, but these do not serve in the country. Although the truly villainous city characters always lose by the end of the city comedy, the country setting provides a more spectacular fall. Even the good qualities of the city are ones that the villainous city characters call up: Overreach describes Margaret as "The blest child of my industrie, and wealth" (*New Way* 3.2.53), with industry being a positive city virtue. Giles Overreach's behavior would fail in the city: like Yellowhammer in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, he would lose his daughter to the young man she truly loves; like Ephestian Quomodo in *Michaelmas Term*, he would run some risk of punishment for his crimes; like Laxton of *The Roaring Girl*, he might suffer some moderately humiliating emasculation. Overreach's behavioral flaws demonstrate extraordinarily poor management of his household. Rather than expect people to serve him out of gratitude, he show his own gratitude to his servants by beating them; rather than directing his daughter's marriage through appropriate channels, Overreach threatens her first with beatings, then with death. All of these things breach conduct book suggestions about the home, and even his daughter Margaret articulates the problems in his home. Unlike city comedies that culminate in an appreciative laugh or in the promise of future employment in other wards of the city, the play punishes Overreach's response

to his daughter's secret marriage with hallucination and the directive that he be sent to Bedlam.

Sir Giles Overreach does not limit his attempts to gain fortune and lands to cheating neighbors of his dead wife's relatives, but includes his daughter Margaret as a commodity on the marriage market. Overreach's desires match *all* of the desires that the Pages expressed in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: he wants land, he wants money and he wants court connections. Even more, he wants his grandchildren to have a hereditary title. Overreach's primary goal in marrying his daughter well is that

> She must part with
> That humble title [of young mistress], and write honorable
> Right honorable, Marall, my right honorable daughter;
> If all I haue, or e're shall get, will doe it.
> I will haue her well attended, there are Ladies
> Of errant Knights decay'd, and brought so low,
> That for cast clothes, and meate, will gladly serue her.
> And 'tis my glory, though I come from the Cittie,
> To have their issue, whom I have vndone,
> To kneel to mine as bondslaues. (*New Way* 2.1.74-83)

Overreach tells Lovell, later in the play, that "All [his] ambition is to haue [his] daughter / Right honorable, which my Lord can make her" (*New Way* 4.1.99-100). If Overreach can attain a marriage between his daughter and a wealthy, titled member of the gentry – in this case the older widower Lovell – he will have power over children of those men whom he has defrauded. The desire to marry daughters off to their betters is a frequent trope of city comedies, but Overreach's social ambition displays sheer sadistic pleasure. Rather than satisfy himself with the possibility that his descendants will be titled through their blood (instead of through a purchased coat of arms), Overreach wants to shame the gentry who have shamed him as a member of the city and a man wealthy through scheming rather than inheritance.

Overreach's behavior clearly contradicts the regulations of the conduct books. By desiring his daughter to marry this Lord and by willingly using any mean necessary, Overreach is a contrary parent. Gouge insists that

> Contrary is the course of such parents as by vnrighteous means thinke to provide well for the children. For many doe not only too carkingly, and distrustfull moile and toile to scrape together great masses of money, or great store of land, or other stockes for their children, neglecting duties of piety and mercy, but also by vniust and wrongfull courses defraud others to make their children rich. (Gouge 503-4)

Gouge not only wants parents to choose good mates for their children, but also instructs parents to avoid dishonesty in their attempts to secure financial security for those children. Although the conduct book authors generally praise industry and highlight the importance of leaving children money in the will, they do not want parents to sin in order for this to occur. More than marrying the child to an "ideot" as Master Page wants to, Overreach here sins because he wants to use all means possible of making himself and his descendants wealthy and powerful. Overreach does not care if this it means both violating Christian decency and bending the rule of law.

Overreach wants his daughter to marry a man who, although a good man, would not make an appropriate husband for Margaret. Margaret herself knows this. Katherine Eisaman Maus suggests that both Margaret and her future mother-in-law Lady Allworth "are staunch and articulate spokeswomen for traditional values," most especially the values of the hierarchical country gentry (Maus 1838). Margaret's arguments against her marriage to Lovell sound not only like the gentry's arguments, but also like the conduct books' arguments meant for the London audience. On the one hand this play certainly condemns Londoners – the insanity of Overreach is certainly an apt punishment for the atheistic and amoral character. On the other, his London-born daughter has been able to

find some sort of moral virtue despite his overreaching attempts to compromise her virtue. Certainly some of this might be attributed to her dead mother, who may have been a member of a gentry family.[32] Overreach even describes Margaret as being like her mother, learning all of her modesty "not from me, / But from her mother" (*New Way* 3.2.25-26). With this hybrid heritage, Margaret espouses claims of the conduct book writers, which are not all that far from the gentry's point of view about social mobility through marriage.

Margaret argues that the differences in status between herself and Lord Lovell render this marriage bargain inappropriate for her. Before it is clear that she reciprocates young Allworth's love, it is clear that she recognizes some of the disparities between herself and Lord Lovell that would make an unhappy marriage. She insists to her father that "There's too much disparity/ Betweene his quality, and mine, to hope it" (*New Way* 3.2.100-101). Certainly, Margaret speaks from a point of view that she cannot even hope to be truly wooed by the man of such a stature, when she herself is only newly wealthy. Margaret understands that she is herself ultimately the London blue.

This sentiment echoes those of Lord Lovell as well as the conduct books. In addition to not wanting to taint his family's red with Overreach's London blue, Lord Lovell recognizes that the match is completely inappropriate in other ways. When speaking to Lady Allworth, Lovell acknowledges that Margaret is indeed beautiful and will have a great deal of money, but, he explains that he knows

> The summe of all that makes a iust man happy
> Consists in the well choosing of his wife;
> And there, well to discharge it, does require
> Equality of yeares, of birth, of fortune.
> For beauty, being poore, and not cried vp
> By birth or wealth, can truly mixe with neither.

> And wealth, where there's such difference in years
> And fair descent, must make the yoke vneasie. (*New Way* 4.1.211-218)

Lovell and Margaret seem essentially to be making the same point, though Margaret mostly bases her argument on the fact that the man from the upper gentry will not stoop to marry her, despite the wealth. The complaints of both characters echo the warnings about parents helping their children choose suitable partners in the conduct books. Lovell and Lady Allworth discuss the further problem that the money that Margaret stands to inherit – despite her virtue – will always remain tainted by its original source, Overreach's duplicitous dealings with the gentry, first in London and then in Nottinghamshire.

Overreach does not concern himself with such trifles. Rather, he works to ensure a rich husband for his daughter. He treats Margaret as a commodity for the marriage market, over-decorating her despite the fact that her natural beauty charms the men of the play, including Lovell. Overreach insists that the women in the household must prepare her to impress: he tells Marall to "bid [his] daughters women trimne her up; / Though they paint her, so she catch the Lord, I'le thanke 'em" (*New Way* 2.3.113-114). Overreach is willing for the women who care for Margaret's appearance to use any recourse, including the potentially controversial cosmetics, to make her appear well before the potential suitor.[33] This, despite the fact that, according to Allworth, Margaret is already so beautiful that even a feigning Lovell will be less able to resist her charms than Ulysses was able to resist the Sirens (*New Way* 3.1.68-70).

Overreach insists that he be involved in all aspects of his daughter's appearance for the meeting with Lovell, from those cosmetics he insists upon, to her dress, and even to her behavior. Like Luke Frugal, he recognizes the importance of control over his

subordinates' clothing, but he wants his daughter to dress as the rich heiress that she is, to impress her social superiors. He takes one look at her dress and immediately complains that it is not luxurious enough:

> Ha, this is a neate dressing!
> These orient pearles, and diamonds well plac'd too!
> The Gowne affects me not, it should haue beene
> Embroider'd o're, and o're with flowers of gold;
> But these rich Iewels and quaint fashion helpe it.
> And how below? since oft the wanton eye,
> The face obseru'd, descends vnto the foot;
> Which, being well proportion'd, as yours is,
> Inuites as much as perfect white, and red,
> Though without art. (*New Way* 3.2.29-38)

Focusing his attention on his daughter's dress, he indicates that though this gown is particularly expensive, it is not nearly expensive enough. Overreach then moves to other parts of Margaret's appearance. The timing of this particular passage, when Overreach initially asks "how below" and remarks on the wandering, wanton eye, sets the audience up for a bawdy joke that suggests Overreach's fetishization of his daughter's body, then moves quickly to her shoes.[34]

This obsession with Margaret's clothing – and the potentially erotic scope of Overreach's eye – foreshadows Overreach's willingness to use his daughter's body as the central object in the financial transaction between himself and the suitor. Overreach intends to sell off his daughter to the highest bidder, treating his daughter's chastity as a commodity that he can use to entrap Lord Lovell, financially and in terms of the marriage contract.[35] Margaret should avoid modesty, and instead be forward. When she protest that her father asks her to become too intimate and too inviting, he scolds her

> Virgin me no Virgins.
> I must have you lose that name, or you lose me.
> I will have you priuate, start not, I say, priuate.

> If thou art my true daughter, not a bastard,
> Thou wilt venture alone with one man, though he came
> Like *Iupiter* to *Semele*, and come off too.
> And therefore when he kisses you, kiss close. (*New Way* 3.2.112-118)

Overreach insists that she must lose her virginity to Lord Lovell during that very afternoon's visit. Then, he can threaten Lovell with a lawsuit and thus force the marriage: Overreach simply does not trust his daughter's charms and beauty, nor the dress that she wears, nor the overly-sumptuous meal that he will set before Lovell, nor his vast wealth. He instead plans to force this man upon his daughter (which also presumes the old man's lechery) and then force the Lord to marry the young woman to make her honest, "to cure [her] wounded honor" (*New Way* 3.2.153).

These things alone would designate Overreach as an inappropriate father and householder, but he compounds his inappropriateness by resorting to violence in all things, including and especially violence against his daughter. At the same time, the violence defeats his purposes in the play. Overreach offers violence to everyone in the play – his servants, the neighbors he sees as rivals, and even Lord Lovell – but his violence against his daughter shows his desire to rule as the absolute *pater familias*, controlling his child's body, life and soul. When Overreach believes that he has secured the marriage license for Lovell and Margaret (though it is in fact the license that will enable Allworth to marry her), he insists that she will not defy him by playing coy or insisting on her modesty. As Margaret feigns her desire to marry Lovell at court in London, celebrated appropriately, rather than in some private ceremony in the country, Overreach insists that the event must take place at once, and that she *will* stop complaining. She should marry Lovell in the country, and not delay, or

> lose a night

In which perhaps he might get two boyes on thee.
Tempt me no farther, if you do, this goad
Shall pricke you to him. (*New Way* 4.3.101-104)

This threat of violence, typical of his threats to his household subordinates, allows Margaret to marry the man of her own choosing. This exchange and the one immediately following show Overreach's inability to express an emotion other than anger toward his daughter, and his lack of concern for social behaviors. Overreach even refuses to care who gives his daughter away at the church, allowing her to marry without her father present.

Overreach's violence towards his daughter is not limited to the threats that characterize his behavior throughout the play. When he learns of her marriage to young Allworth, he goes into a rage, complaining that he has been "gull'd by children / baffull'd, and fool'd" (*New Way* 5.1.287-288). This shock at being duped by his own daughter – who has clearly learned something from her duplicitous father – results in his attempt to murder her. In the presence of all of the gentry characters, he exclaims,

Village Nurses
Reuenge their wrongs with curses, I'le not wast
A syllable, but thus I take the life
Which wretched I gaue to thee. (*New Way* 5.1.290-293)

Overreach no longer uses language, instead turning to violent force and running at his daughter with his sword. The threat of violence against his daughter here – a real, physical display of aggression, rather than the verbal displays earlier in the play – denote him as a character inappropriate as the householder, as well as a character inappropriate to a marriage plot. Like the characters who cluck at Mrs. Yellowhammer's physical handling of her daughter, the country characters find Giles Overreach's death threats to his daughter appalling and beyond the reasonable bounds of parental discipline. Frances

Dolan explains that John Taylor, the water poet, associated "domestic murders with women and finds men who assault their family members even more shocking, for they stray out of the appropriate sphere and scale of action" (Dolan, *Dangerous* 151). Although some physical discipline occurred in the home, extraordinary violence, particularly attempted murder, signified bad householding and inadequate masculinity.[36]

Marriage, then is always at issue for the householder, whether dealing with his own or trying to arrange for his daughter's. In these plays, the desire for a purely acquisitive marriage falls apart, shaming those who are socially over-ambitious. This does not completely deny the ability of daughters to marry "above their stations," because the daughters of these plays do marry with men of social standing. The daughters however, stand to inherit money at their marriage or age of majority, so they too bring an important factor to the marriage. What the plays condemn is the use of excessive force against the daughters in order to maintain the household. While it is comic in some cases, generally the violence results in some sort of fall or banishment from the community for the perpetrator of violence.

In the next chapter, this dissertation will look at the final dyad of the household, the master and the servant. This is the most malleable relationship in the household, in part because it is a contracted relationship, but also in part because the servant fits within a larger generic tradition. Servants have been vital to all of the plays in these past two chapters, so it is time to give those characters their due.

Notes:

[1] It is a commonplace of twentieth century criticism that the early moderns did not form strong affective bonds with their children, due to the high mortality rates. However, those rates in England are not as high as many critics assume. According to André Bruguière and François Lebrun, the mortality rate for children was lower in England than in other parts of Europe prior to 1570. They cite the example that one in four French children died before their first birth, whereas in England the figure was one in five.
[2] Certainly, city comedies also show the father/son relationship, or relationships that approximate that one, with a guardian uncle standing in for a parent. And certainly, in a play such as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, the mother-son relationship is quite important, even while the parent (father)-daughter relationship is central to the argument of the play. Middleton is particularly interested in the parent child relationship, seeming to have a large number of potential family nexuses: in *A Mad World, My Masters* he depicts a mother-daughter relationship; in *A Fair Quarrel* he depicts a mother-son relationship. Unlike Shakespeare, Middleton does not use the absent mother as part of the solution of the play. *Merry Wives*, of course, is an exception, because as Carol Thomas Neely points out: "The play is in striking contrast to Shakespeare's other comedies which achieve happy endings in part by the elimination of mothers and by projecting marital consummation into the future, after the plays' end" (Neely, "Constructing" 8).
[3]Marianne Novy's work is some of the most interested in the parent-child relationship in Shakespeare. Good general discussion of parent-child relationships in Shakespeare's plays is included in Novy's book *Reading Adoption: Family and Difference in Fiction and Drama*, Janet Adelman's *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's plays,* Hamlet *to* The Tempest and Diane Elizabeth Dreher's *Domination and Defiance: Fathers and Daughters in Shakespeare*. For discussions of *Lear*, see Coppélia Kahn's article "The Absent Mother in *King Lear*" in Ferguson, Quilligan and Vickers's *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourses of Sexual Difference in Early Modern London*, Stephanie Chamberlain's article " 'She is herself a dowry': *King Lear* and the Problem of Female Entitlement in Early Modern England" in Kari Boyd McBride's *Domestic Arrangements in Early Modern England*, and Iska Alter's article "*King Lear* and *A Thousand Acres*: Gender, Genre, and the Revisionary Impulse" in Novy's collection *Transforming Shakespeare*. For a discussion of the father-daughter relationship in *The Tempest* see Ann Thompson's " 'Miranda, Where's Your Sister?': Reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*" in Sellers, Hutcheon and Perron's *Feminist Criticism: Theory and Practice.* For other discussions of father-daughter relationships see Novy's article "Adopted Children and Constructions of Heredity, Nurture, and Parenthood in Shakespeare's Romances" in Immel and Witmore's *Childhood and Children's Books in Early Modern Europe, 1550-1800* and Novy's article "Multiple Parenting in *Pericles*" in David Skeele's *Pericles: Critical Essays*, and the chapter on infanticide in Dolan's *Dangerous Familiars*.
[4] One of the general problems that the city comedies seem to deal with is the issue of child-as-commodity. According to Claire Busse "Any reconsideration of the child's role in the family would have implications for early modern English society as a whole. Redefinition of children's status would force a reexamination of well-established

institutions that relied upon the mandatory labor of child servants and apprentices" (Busse 213). Furthermore, "Poor laws enacted throughout the sixteenth century, which simultaneously worked to aid the plight of poor children and orphans by placing them in apprenticeships and service positions and to punish children who resisted such employment, most clearly reveal instances where we can see children as possessions" (Busse 217).

[5] Stephanie Chamberlain explains, for example, "Dowry, at once the mechanism through which marriages are contracted to protect social hierarchies as well as to secure marital and political alliances, also becomes a means by which to endow daughters with lands, property and cash within a social system favoring primogeniture" (Chamberlain 171).

[6] See Rubins' "Traffic in Women" where she explains that the marital settlement is an agreement not between husband and wife, but rather a bargain between husband and father-in-law. The daughter is just the property that circulates between the two.

[7] She drags Moll from the wharf by her hair.

[8] Dolan explains that "While pamphlets portray women as so attached to their offspring that they cannot tell the difference between their blood and their children's, pamphlets and plays portray men as so attached to their 'house,' to a familial identity that includes not only offspring but ancestors, family honor, and property, that they cannot detach themselves even through assaults on the 'house' since these are simultaneously assaults on themselves" (Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars* 153). Thus, attacks on children, particularly the ones that end in the death of the child, are threats to the household and are frowned upon and looked at with horror and disdain.

[9] According to Lawrence Stone, "Only psychotic parents treated their own children with … calculated ferocity, but whipping was the normal method of discipline in a sixteenth- or seventeenth century home, mitigated and compensated, no doubt, by a good deal of fondling when the child was docile and obedient" (Stone 120).

[10] Wendy Wall explains that "Numerous medical and religious authors writing between 1500 and 1700 maintain that the nurse's qualities were transmitted to the child primarily through bodily fluid" (Wall 136).

[11] Busse cites one particular example – Gibbons' *A Work* – that presents a character who is, "[d]espite the presence of such immoral practices … unwilling to compromise his position, [and continues to assert] that the maintenance of social hierarchies (father above child) is more important than attempts to challenge the pervasive greed that motivates marriage negotiations" (Busse 228).

[12] L. C. Knights characterizes *The City Madam* in this way: "The first symptom of decadence that we notice in Massinger is his dependence on Shakespeare" (Knights 270).

[13] Carol Thomas Neely has suggested that though the play is about Vienna, *Measure for Measure* is "the only comedy full of the details of urban life" (Neely 14). See also Leah Marcus's *Puzzling Shakespeare*.

[14] Certainly, this is in the mouth of a member of the gentry, but Lord Lacy is someone who deals with the merchants on a regular basis, and is willing to have his son marry a daughter of the merchant class.

[15] Wall also explains that "When writers of household and medical guides offer advice on how to assess the breastmilk of potential nurses, they highlight the commodified nature of this substance. Most popular was the 'fingernail test,' in which the consistency of nurse's

milk was evaluated for its thickness, but parents were also to scrutinize her hair color, disposition, verbosity, and skin clarity, while observing the color and *taste* or her breastmilk" (Wall, *Staging* 135). The Frugals did not send their daughters out to nurse, but instead Mrs. Frugal herself nursed them. Lord Lacy seems to suggest that this might have been a mistake.

[16] Paster also cites the alarming scene in *Macbeth* where Lady Macbeth describes what Paster calls her "murderous weaning." Paster cites Janet Adelman on this point.

[17] At this point, Massinger plays on the anxieties about the importation of foreign goods, as well. Jane Schneider suggests that "As a prophylactic against resource depletion, and against domestic crises of unemployment, the builders of state typically encourage the home manufacture of textiles, their export and the management of the export trade by native merchants" (Schneider 107).

[18] Freedman describes it as "Shakespeare's only topical satire, part citizen comedy, part city comedy, part humors comedy, and part court comedy"(Freedman 190).

[19] Ralph Berry describes Fenton as sanctimonious, but still a better choice for Anne than "the horrors of marriage to Slender or Caius" (Berry 55).

[20] Adam Zucker's current work on place in Shakespeare's plays includes a chapter on the tree in Merry Wives. Zucker argues that this tree is of particular generic importance because Windsor forest "grounds the play in its comic conclusion." All of the plots coalesce here at the tree, as do the highly conventional aspects of the play and the highly localized political aspects of the play. Zucker's book *Comedies of Place* is forthcoming from Palgrave.

[21] Evans says, for example "It is fery discretion answer, save the faul' is in the 'ord 'dissolutely'. The 'ort is, according to our meaning, 'resolutely'. His meaning is good. (1.1.234-236).

[22] Though Fenton might not be any great shakes either, since he has a "wart above [his] eye" (1.4.141-142)

[23] Of course, the most famous discussion of bad beards is in William Harrison's *A Description of England*.

[24] For a discussion of the Judas colored beards in one of the city comedies, see the gossips' scene in Act 3, scene 2 of Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. The Puritan gossips object to one of the apostle spoons given by Whorehound to his "godchild," because it has a red beard, the color of Judas, which they think might not be a good choice for a christening present.

[25] Fisher explains in fact that "Protestant preachers often explicitly promoted bearded masculinity" as a way to differentiate themselves – and all protestant men – from the clean shaven effeminacy of the orders of the Catholic church (Fisher *Materializing* 99).

[26] Fisher examines the prosthetic beard used by the character Follywit in *A Mad World, My Masters*. He points out that Follywit's choice of a thin beard, a French ruff and strong perfume "are the hallmarks of an effeminate courtier. So even though Follywit fashions himself into a man, he nevertheless only seems to be able to become an effeminate one" (Fisher *Materializing* 90). Furthermore, Fisher explains that "prosthetic facial hair [used by the boys companies for stage productions] may have been used not only to materialize the polarized differences between men and boys, but also, more

subtly, to materialize differences of degree between all sorts of males" (Fisher *Materializing* 90).

[27] David Landreth argues that the two suitors offered by the parents do not work because linguistically, they are both incompetent. He suggests that "Either Slender (according to Page) or Caius (according to his wife) is the ideal match for Anne, but in that idealization the parents share a blind spot: they can't read both men's incompetence as speaking subjects. Fenton is by no means the ideal match, but he is the only suitor who meets the standards of masculine, controlled fluency that the wives have labored to establish as a general rule for proper men" (Landreth 443).

[28] Mistress Page is less hostile towards Fenton, as she tells him she "will not be [his] friend nor enemy" (3.5.89).

[29] Carol Thomas Neely points out that "The older women's schemes are thwarted only by the Page's daughter, Anne, who has the last word about her marriage in a world in which men supposedly had authority over women, parents over their children, the old over the young" (Neely 11).

[30] Korda also suggests that Anne has gained the qualities that make the merry wives so efficient in their righteous shaming of Falstaff, because "through her discreet management of her elopement, Anne demonstrates that the wives' independent, yet trustworthy, domestic supervision has been carried on to the next generation of the play's women" (Korda, *Domestic* 102).

[31] The idea of the sequel to a play is obviously not unheard of on the early modern stage. Certainly, Shakespeare wrote second, third and fourth plays in response to the popularity of previous plays. A prominent example of a city comedy as a sequel to another play is John Fletcher's 1611 play *The Woman's Prized, or the Tamer Tam'd*, a sequel to Shakespeare's' *The Taming to the Shrew*. This play introduces a recently-widowed Petruchio in a London neighborhood full of city comedy types.

[32] It is through Overreach's dead wife that Wellborn is nominally related to Overreach, and Wellborn himself is something of a small-time country landholder

[33] Here, I'm reminded of Hamlet's suggestion to his mother about women and cosmetics, as well as the discussion of the gillyflower in *The Winter's Tale*.

[34] Schneider's suggestion of trade regulation as prophylactic takes on a whole new meaning with Sir Giles Overreach's behavior towards his daughter here.

[35] Overreach is not entirely unlike the courtesan's mother in Middleton's *Mad World My Masters*.

[36] Dolan also explains that "Although nonfatal forms of violence against children have left little record, assize a quarter sessions documents suggest that when children were murdered, it was usually by members of their families or by members of households in which they worked as servants and apprentices" (Dolan, *Dangerous* 122-3).

Chapter Four

Covenanting with the Family: Masters and Servants

> So wee Christians in the building of our spiritual Tabernacles, in building of our saluation vpon the Rocke Iesus Christ, in framing and leading our liues according to Gods holy will an his word, must do al things, frame out all our actions and works according to that sampler, which Iesus Christ our Lord & Master did shew vs in the mount of Calvary, where hee was crucified for vs, that is, according to the passion of Christ, we must always haue a bloody passion of Christ in our minds, as a frontlet betwict our eyes, as a ring vpon our fingers, and as a nosegay betwixt our breasts. Thomas Fosset, *The Calling and Condition of Servants* (1613)

Thomas Fosset's *The Calling and Condition of Servants* (1613) discusses at length the relationship of the master and the servant, and not the varying relationships found throughout the merchant home. Critics have left this text relatively untouched, perhaps because it deals only with one familial relationship and because, as Linda Anderson adroitly observed *A Place in the Story*, critics have said very little about the servants either in the dramas or in the conduct books.[1] Fosset's book presents a variety circumstances faced by masters and servants, using all of the methodologies typical of the genre to discuss the problems and their solutions; but rather than rehash the same stories used in other conduct books, he looks to more obscure Biblical examples. Furthermore, Fosset takes the Biblical examples out of a purely spiritual context, and moves them into the realm of the material, as he does in the passage above. This passage attempts to materialize the spiritual by encouraging all to remember their own servitude in the guise of remembering Christ.[2] This remembrance requires the individual to think on Jesus in his or her material possessions, from the flowers used to ward away noxious odors to the ring adorning the finger. Not only should people behave as good servants, for the sake of Jesus Christ, people also should do that service with great and willing cheer, also for the sake of Jesus. This material realm of servanthood opens up the dichotomous problem of the instruction and supervision of servants. The middle class had to balance the

discursive ideal of the cheerfully obedient servant with the potential reality of just hoping for good behavior with a cheerful front.

The role of servants in the home is probably the most vexed relationship to negotiate, given the high number of variables influencing the hierarchy of the master-servant relationship. As Fosset notes, the householder must understand the difference between the necessary outward appearance of good servitude and his desire for the spiritual cooperativeness of those same servants. The early modern definition of servitude remains expansive, since it includes those members of the household who do the things that we most commonly think of as servants (maids, manservants) as well as the journeymen and apprentices filling the many London artisan and merchant homes.[3] In plays of the previous chapters, control of servants has been a clear problem. In Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, Margery Eyre wants control over her household, but comes in conflict with the apprentices who serve under her husband; Simon Eyre fights with Margery about her own servant, Cicely Bumtrinket, as well. Sir Giles Overreach in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* maintains a variety of servants acting as his evil agents, even as he heartily abuses them throughout the play.

The place of the apprentice in the home is fraught because of the position's temporary and unstable nature. Additionally, the position brings the problem of status inconsistency into the merchant home: apprentices could be younger brothers from gentry families sent to London to learn a trade.[4] Within this status inconsistency resides a host of problems, since on the one hand the apprentice owes loyalty and obedience to the master of the workshop, but on the other hand he comes from a socially superior category, which may lead to resentment. Even more, the servants have little long term

obligation to their masters. Eventually these young men and women will leave their masters' homes and have no further obligation to them, unlike the children of the householder who are obligated through the ten commandments to always honor and obey their parents. Thus, as Patricia Fumerton suggests, "[t]he master-servant bond was thus at best insecure and at worst subject to gross violation, unmooring apprentices and servant from any secure social, economic, or physical place" (Fumerton, "London's Vagrant Economy" 211).

Further compounding these problems for the servants is the simple fact that most of these young men and women were foreigners in London.[5] Jean Howard points out that the apprentices were "part of the guild economy, [but were] nonetheless … new to the city" (Howard, *Theater* 8). In a city full of new faces, the servants necessarily navigated a variety of hurdles unique to the young and relatively unattached members of society. Layered upon these members of the household were a variety of status markers that identified them discursively as outsiders, as a different category entirely from other members of the family. This distinction makes for wide ambiguity about the place of servants within the home and about the master's treatment of those servants.

This ambiguity of the master-servant relationship creates a more diffuse range of possibilities for conflict than the other familial relationships and this proves particularly fruitful for city comedies. The central role of the servant is not new to city comedy, or even early modern English drama, but rather derives from an ancient tradition of plays, dating back to Aristophanes, Plautus and Menander.[6] The "tricky servant" or *dolus servus* character proves a useful tool to hold up for this abstract category, because this servant frequently appears as the object of moral didacticism of the early modern plays.[7]

This chapter will argue that although the conduct books present a strict household hierarchy, the city comedies, taking their cue in part from the wily servant of classical comedy, present a more complex and flexible situation in the merchant household.

The wily and witty servants of the play – in contrast to the perfectly well behaved and obedient servants – push the boundaries of the acceptable, but still find themselves rewarded or at least unpunished by play's end. Some of the flexibility about the role of the servant stems directly from the wide range of servants present in the early modern home, which not only leads to some confusion about roles, but also points to the difficulty of personalities and the different roles that they play within the home. The plays examined in this chapter will reveal part of that range of servants. The plays of this chapter are all self-consciously aware of theater traditions: Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* mocks the form of the city comedy, even as it operates in the genre; Jonson's *The Alchemist* shows clear influence from Roman New Comedy; and Jonson, Chapman and Marston's *Eastward Ho!* responds to Dekker and Webster's earlier play *Westward Ho!* Even as each play self-consciously participates in the traditions of theater, they mold those stock characters in a way that draws attention to the servant's unique situation in early modern London.

Forms of servitude and mastership: Suggestions from Anxious Puritans

Previous studies that have included servants frequently focused on servants who are not merely misbehaving, but rather posing an outright danger to their masters. Frances E. Dolan's examination of servants in *Dangerous Familiars* pays particular attention to servants who, in collusion with the housewife, murder the householder or

otherwise do him bodily harm. These are the servants of the anonymous *Arden of Faversham* (1588-92), studied both by Dolan and Lena Cowen Orlin in *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*. Wendy Wall's study of servants in *Staging Domesticity* examines the use of medicine to treat servants and the bodily control the housewife exerts over servants. In contrast, this chapter will focus on the directives of the conduct books in relation to the flexible space of servitude. Even as the chapter owes a debt to these previous studies, it focuses on more benign relationships, with permissive masters who know that they still maintain control while indulging some misbehaviors of their servants.

Any discussion of servants faces the initial problem of appropriately defining the servant. Even conduct book authors find this difficult, due particularly to the servant's complex position in the home. The household tracts, as Mark Thornton Burnett suggests, insisted "that masters and servant occupied fixed places in the hierarchy" ("*The Changeling*" 298), but the tracts nevertheless place servants in amorphous relation to other members of the household. Because servants are merely contracted to the family, they owe a different sort of allegiance to the family than the children owe. Within this nexus of household authority, servants often fall into positions similar to children of the family: Gouge explains that "Children while the be vnder the gouernment (euen the eldest that are heires) differ nothing from seruants" (Gouge 442). At the same time, "[t]hough the seruitude of a seruant be greater then of a childe, yet a parent hath in many respects a greater power ouer his childe, then a master ouer his seruant" (Gouge 451). Servants, therefore, are at once under more obligation to the householder than his children, and under less obligation.

Apprentices certainly belonged in the merchant class and artisan households, but the necessary self-sufficiency of even a modest merchant household required a great deal of labor. Thus, household servants were not a privilege of the upper class, but rather necessary for the merchant class family.[8] In *Staging Domesticity*, Wendy Wall imagines a typical day for a London housewife, an account highly suggestive of the sort of daily work of the household and the important contribution servants made to the successful merchant class household. Wall imagines the day of the housewife:

> *You rise early in the morning to fix breakfast for the journeymen, apprentice, servants, children, and spouse who constitute your family. Sometime this week you will need to starch linens in preparation for the Lord Mayor's procession, supervise laundering at the river, instruct the children, buy goods from the peddler and grocer, fetch water from the conduit (and get the latest gossip), weed the kitchen garden, and work in the shoemaking shop in your house. For now, however, you've arranged objects on the kitchen dresser as reminders of the specific chores that must be done today*. (Wall 19)

Wall then describes household and bodily management, both the materials necessary for the daily running of a household and the actions that the wife will perform over the day, such as a planned blood-letting for an imagined serving woman, whom "*This morning you had to punish her for oversleeping by uncovering her naked in bed in front of the other workers … Your husband thinks that a sound beating is in order, but you insist that cleansing her tardy spirits is a sure-fire remedy*" (Wall 21). Thus the household is a place of particularly difficult work, much of which necessitates the inclusion of household servants. The housewife finds herself in a situation that requires a great deal of effort and strength, as well as assistance. Sometimes, as Wall imagines, part of that job involves determining how best to manage the servants.

Although the duties of the servants of the household that Wall describes might differ from those duties of apprentices (or even among the servants that Wall describes),

the essential characteristic of all of these young men and women was that they entered into a contract with a family, serving for an allotted period of time. In trying to define servitude, the early modern conduct book writers felt the need to remind masters that servants and apprentices had covenanted with the family, and therefore could not maintain a will of their own. In his 1650 text *A Christian Family Builded by God, Directing all governours of Families how to act*, Robert Abbot explained that "[b]y servants, you must understand those that by covenant cannot dispose of their service as they please, but must be at the command of those that hire them" (Abbot 60). Service consisted of an economic agreement requiring that in exchange for the money and board the youth earned in the process, he or she must absolutely surrender his or her will to the master's commands. That these young people living in the house had their own wills creates a certain level of difficulty for the master of the household – servants might not do as they are told, and sometimes they might actually be correct in doing so. With what Stone calls "a distinct adolescent subculture" (120), servants and apprentices stood in a position that brought anxiety to the master class in London, both through their potential for public riotousness and the potential for domestic disorder.

The relatively ambiguous status of the servant in the household and in London requires that the householder exhibit an even stronger authority than he must over his wife and children. He must choose his servants well; he must fulfill his part of the contract in providing for his servants food, clothing, rest and shelter; and he must avoid miserly behavior that will inhibit the servant's ability to do good work. Gouge even warns that "[w]hen masters are poore, meane, weake, aged, or otherwise impotent, then proud seruants are prone to despise them" (Gouge 595). The fear that Gouge expresses

underscores the general imagined concern about the servants' potential threats to the household. The danger that servants could bring into a home meant that householders take care in choosing people to fill the necessary positions. The servant could threaten the physical safety of the master, and as Dolan explains, "The violently rebellious servant was as threatening a figure as the murderous wife; indeed, the two were feared to conspire in petty treason" (Dolan, *Dangerous* 59). Most likely, the servant could be a negative influence on the children in the home. Griffith warns that "what deadly *poyson* may wicked servants be to our children" (Griffith 379). These are but the initial concerns for the master hiring a servant. However, the servants most often were not a terrifying threat, and instead might be merely obnoxious or lazy.

Despite the concerns expressed in the conduct books, servants generally behaved properly. The duties of apprentices, and their position as virtually equivalent to servants appears in an anonymous tract about the apprentice riots of the late 1590s, titled *A Students Lamentation*. The author scolds the riotous apprentices, saying

> I am ashamed to call you Prentices: for how can I call you by that name which you despise. For Prentices indeed are those, that bewrayed your practices: such, as being seruants know how to obay, that being masters they may be obeyed: for it is as great praise for a subiect to obay dutifully, as a Gouernour to rule well. (*A Students Lamentation* sig. B4 v-B4r)

Servants, this tract suggests, are generally good. In fact, those who told the town leaders of the riotous youths' plots were fellow servants. The author claims his own position as an apprentice and in this authority explains the pressures that these young men might put upon one another. Although the general perception may have been that the servant class was continually on the verge of overturning order, at least a few servant voices called for order and for honor within the ranks of servants and apprentices.[9]

As becomes clear in most of these examples the conduct books typically code the servant as male, despite the existence of female servants as evidenced in the plays and in works of Isabella Whitney.[10] Because of this convergence of social class and gender in the role of the male servant in the middle class home, the need for subservience is further distinguished from that of other members of the household. The role of the apprentice places an outsider in the midst of the family. Unlike female servants, already prepared by gender for the subservient role, these male subordinates require particular attention to thwart potential upheaval of the household order. This sort of subservience needs examples, and the conduct books abound in explanations of the servanthood of Christ in his cheerful sacrifice on the cross, Jacob in his servitude to Laban for the hand of Rachel, Joseph in Potiphar's home and in Pharaoh's service. Abbot insists that servants must pay attention to the examples of these Biblical precedents, and that if they do not, "at the last they will lie down in sorrow" (Abbot 65). Thus, this good service based on these male examples is an expression of piety.

Thomas Fosset provides some of the more shocking Biblical examples in *The Servants Dutie*. Fosset includes those other servants that the Puritan conduct writers include, typical of the genre, but also mentions Abraham as a servant of God. Rather than focus on the obvious story of God's demand that Abraham sacrifice his long-awaited son Isaac, Fosset points to Abraham's willful submission to circumcision as paragon of good service. Fosset explains not only Abraham self-circumcised, but also that he circumcised all males under his roof. Abraham's male servants willingly underwent Abraham's knife, despite the lack of precedent for such a procedure in the law books. When Abbot speaks of Abraham, he suggests only that "*Abraham* armed with all his

trained servants, that is, his *Catechized* servants, whom he had so well instructed, that they would follow him through all dangers" (Abbot 67). Like his interest in remembrances of Jesus (in our nosegays, from this chapter's epigram), Fosset again forces servanthood into the realm of the material and most particularly the bodily material form. Thus, servanthood is not merely about being spiritually guided by the master, or in thought bound to the master, as Abbot suggests. Instead Fosset insists on the physical obedience of servants, even to the point of risking emasculation.

Fosset's surprise at the servants' willing submission to Abraham's knife belies a squeamishness with servitude and these comments further situate the role of the servant in the male. Fosset explains that the sequence of events

> was a verie admirabole and strange thing, not onely that *Abraham* should so soone circumcise and cut himselfe, and his sonne, of whom hee had power, but chiefly that his seruants would bee brought so quickly to so great a matter as to haue their skinnes cut in that place, and after that manner: being a thing not onely exceeding painefull, but very strange and neuer before heard of … therefore their obedience was the more maruelous and commendable that they would so speedily conforme and resigne themselues, and their wills to the will of God and their maister, in a matter of great importance. (Fosset 41-42)

Fosset reminds his audience that Abraham had absolute power over his son, so that it is no surprise that he was not only willing to, but also able to circumcise Isaac as God commanded. The servants, surprisingly, are also willing to undergo this, which Fosset marks as something painful when they "haue their skinnes cut in that place." He alludes to the fact that these servants are adult or young adult males, not infants as is the Judeo-Christian custom of circumcision. Fosset's anxiety over his own genitalia increases his wonder at these servants and reinforces not only the image of Abraham as a good servant, but as a master worth serving. This sequence of events thus indicates Abraham's holiness.

This example suggests to the reader the absolute submission of a servant to his master, even more than those of the other Biblical examples in the conduct books. Jacob, one of the most common examples of a faithful servant, merely works for fourteen years, and suffers the "indignity" of marrying the wrong woman in order to be with his beloved Rachel. Abraham actually runs the risk of cutting off his own penis, an organ that not only finds its importance in the sexual function, but also in the evacuation of liquid waste from the body.[11] Nevertheless, Fosset insists on the servant's willing sacrifice of himself, exclaiming, "for what is obedience, but as it is defined by the learned, … a voluntarie and reasonable sacrificing of a mans owne will, voluntarily, freely, and without any constraint" (Fosset 22). Although Fosset does not suggest that his contemporary servants need to undergo circumcision by their masters, he is arguing that the good servant of the good master will be willing to sacrifice his own will, even sacrificing his very masculinity, should the need arise.

Service in London, in addition to being a location of anxiety about gender, has layered upon it the additional difficulty of the status inconsistency of the servants. Servants could be younger brothers from a variety of classes, and many of them come to London to serve men who are ultimately their social inferiors. The author of *The Honour of London Prentices* (1647) suggests, however, that this was typically not a problem, since most apprentices were quite good, even if they were from a wide range of the populace. He mentions servants entering into London "from all Shiers and Countries if the kingdome of England and dominion of Wales the sonns of Knights esquires gentlemen ministers yeoman and trades men come up from their particular places of Nativity, and aboud to be prentices in London each one to a trade, occupation, mistery or

profession: sutable to their serverall condition, quality or education" (*The Honour of London Prentices* sig. Ar). Thus, the early moderns understood that a wide range of people entered London for essentially the same purpose: to enter into a trade so that they could ultimately, as Roy Porter suggests, gain citizenship in London and membership in a guild. Porter argues that this

> assured assimilation for tens of thousands of youthful newcomers to the big city, while, for younger sons of country gentlemen, initiation into the 'art or mistery' offered prospects of soaring into the civic hierarchy to enjoy business contracts, perquisites and pomp. It might even lead to a fortune sufficient to buy into land. (Porter, *London* 49)

So, most servants most likely cooperated and looked to gain honestly through their labors as apprentices in merchant and artisan households. Nevertheless, the servants made the merchant class anxious.

Rather than suggest that the problems of status inconsistency resided with economic or class systems, the conduct book authors place the fault with the individual servants for their arrogance. A householder must know how to wisely judge character when meeting with potential employees, in order to ensure that he has good servants. Robert Abbot insisted that "Masters must make it their first care to chuse servants aright" (66). Gouge and others concur with this idea, but this is not an easy task. The city is full of bad servants, Gouge claims, who demonstrate contrary behavior through their

> *Arogancy*, when their words are high and lofty against their master, pretending that they are as good as he, though for a time they be vnder him. Clerkes, prentises, waiting women, and such like, being borne of gentlemen, and men of godd degree, are for the most part guilty of this fault: the reason is, because their birth and parentage maketh them forget their present place and condition; or else (which is worse) maketh them wilfully presume aboue it. (Gouge 600)

Even if Gouge's perception differs from the reality that Roy Porter describes – that servants on the whole did their job and did it properly – the fact remains that many of the

conduct book authors remained skeptical of the ability of servants to behave on their own volition. Thus, the general concern is that servants, especially those who are younger children of the landed classes, will think themselves better than their city masters.

Just as the behavior of wives and children reflect the householder, the servant's behavior ultimately reflects the master's worth. The ambiguous role of servants in the household amplifies this concern. The conduct book writers perceive that servants often demonstrate a lack of concern for the maintenance of the masters wealth or increase in his worth, and so the servant represents a necessary figure in the household that may cause potential leakage of goods and reputation. All of the conduct books point to this as one of their greatest concerns in terms of bad service, as the merchant class brings servants and particularly apprentices into the home primarily to help serve this function of prosperity. To Gouge, servants can be quite useful in this regard, because "Great is the benefit that by seruants faithfulnesse will redound both to master and seruant" (Gouge 622); Fosset insists that servants should take the example of Jacob and learn "to be carefull for their Masters profit, studious and desirous to see them goe foreward and prosper in the world. And this the[y] must doe howsoeuer their Masters deale with them, and although they deserve it not" (Fosset 38); and Abbot insists that servants should be aware "In seeking to encrease their masters good to their lawful power: for *talents* are put out to the servants for the masters gain" (Abbot 63). Each of these authors, in a different decade of the seventeenth century, argues for the potential assistance in prosperity that the servant might provide to the master.

Even with this general acknowledgement of the potential profit that good servants might bring into the home, the conduct books focus much more energy on the bad

servants and the havoc they can wreak on the master's fortune and reputation. Fosset fears that servants can bring bad behavior into the master's home and corrupt the master himself in his financial dealings:

> There bee many seruants in these daies such as this *Gehezi* was, greedie bribing companions: yea one can not come to a man of any place or fashion to seeke for fauour, iustice, and equity but think *Gehezi* waiteth and gapeth for somewhat, or else hee shal hardly be welcome, & he may chance to stand without. And thus Couetousnes and Bribery beganne to creepe into the houses of great men, of such as be in sublimity, and authority, by meanes of the Seruants, but now the Maisters perceiuing this practise & gaine of the seruants, haue taken it into their owne handes, not that they would not haue their seruants couet, and take, but that they would haue them doe it for them, and not for themselues. (Fosset 30)

Gehezi is an obscure reference, and Fosset's text provide a gloss with the Biblical reference as he does with most of his references. Gehezi was a servant to the prophet Elisha, whose story appears in Second Kings. Seeing that his master has refused money in curing Naaman of his leprosy, Gehezi slips away and demand payments from the cured man, claiming authority of his master Elisha, then contriving to store the money for himself, or for Elisha's later use. In response, Elisha condemns his behavior and gives the leprosy to Gehazi. Fosset fears that servants will go beyond what is right and reasonable in order to enrich their masters and that their behavior will bring a bad reputation upon the master; even more troubling, this might encourage the master in behaving badly himself. At the very basic level, servants who are, as Abbot calls them, "pickers and stealers" (63) might pose a problem for the master's wealth and reputation. Above all, the servants must pay particular attention to the household's reputation when seeking their masters' and their own prosperity and future security.

These concerns about the servant's behavior create a problem for how to control the servants. Although the conduct books suggest that servants serve cheerfully and

willingly, this proves both in theory and practice difficult to effectively regulate.[12] So, rather than look to regulate the intangible quality – good cheer – conduct book authors look to instead regulate the more tangible quality of servants' speech and behavior, in the context of a good Christian servitude: that is, the servant must obey the master in his or her speech not merely in body, but with an *appearance* of good Christian cheerfulness. The verbal obedience of the servant becomes a special category of anxiety about servants, since servants may have undue sway over the householder's children.[13]

The conduct books expend a great deal of energy on the rightness of the servant's speaking to his or her master, which suggests either that speaking at inappropriate moments was a problem for masters in London or that the complexities of the hierarchy of the family and the social class were so byzantine as to require very specific directions as to when a servant has a right to speak in the presence of the master. Abbot argues that servants

> may not speak in two cases. First, by private mutterings and grumblings against the command of their masters.
>
> Secondly, by open crossing and thwarting them by perverse and snarling words, to provoke them to anger and displeasure. (Abbot 63)

This does not, of course, actually examine the cause for servant's misbehavior or guarantee that servants serve willingly and cheerfully, but it at least presents for the master the façade of right thought in the presence of the householder.

In addition to the servants' language in the presence of their masters, the conduct books – especially Gouge's – examine the servants' language use when they spend time alone together, foregrounding Gouge's general distrust of the servants in the household. The conduct books assume a certain untrustworthiness of the servants when they spend time away from the righteous influence of the master. Gouge writes that

> Contrary to keeping close secrets of masters, is blabbing abroad all such things as seruants know concerning their masters: which is too common a fault: for when seruants of diuers houses men or maids meet together, all their talke for the most part is of their masters and mistresses, whereby it cometh to passe that all the secrets of a house are soone knowne about the whole towne or city. (Gouge 628)

In contrast to the myriad of pamphlets about disgraceful, gossiping wives, Gouge leaves his gossiping servants ungendered, assuming that *all* servants gossip and *all* servants know a great deal of information about their households.[14] In doing this, Gouge implies inherently inferior position of the male servants within the household. He is not suggesting that male servants are necessarily feminine in their demeanor, but rather that servants – both male and female – occupy a lower station in the social strata than the fully participating citizen, the male head of household. Like the leaky wives who gossip in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, the servants represent a potential leakage of household information and reputation, in addition to the financial leakage thriftless or prodigal servants might cause.[15]

The conduct books generally advise servants to bear with their masters' wills, even when those wills would justify a servant's refusal to cooperate. Instead, servants will find themselves better served in heaven, if they choose to bear with their punishment and any questionable behavior towards their persons. Fosset, for example, insists that

> albeit their maisters doe not well to deale hardly and euilly with them, neither can they be excused for so doing, yet if the malice and peruersenes of their maisters be such, they not withstanding being seruants, must not shake off the yoake, set themselues at liberty and depart when they list, first because they haue not power of their owne selues, they couenanted with their maisters, tyed and bound themselues to serue them so long, and in such sort. (Fosset 18-19)

Thus, runaway servants break a contract that they have agreed to, both violating earthly law and sinning against God. Fosset's argues against running away because the servant has no control over his physical body, being "tyed and bound" to serve for a time. This is

a bondage requiring the servant's bodily sacrifice to the master's will. By requiring this type of submission, the conduct books insist that the master's will must subsume any of the servant's agency. Merely submitting to rough punishment from a master, and dutifully submitting to that harsh treatment is undoubtedly less physically painful than the pain of circumcision by their masters. If Abraham's servants can bear that, then certainly any early modern London servant should be able to handle an occasional whipping or moment of embarrassment.

Still, conduct book writers admit that servants might still have some rights within the household and that these rights require a level of responsibility for the householder. Even though the writers tend to agree with Gouge that a "masters sinne is no warrant to make seruants answer sinne with sinne" (626), all admit that a master might treat his servants inappropriately. Abbot insists that it is imperative for masters care for their servants and for masters to attend to the four primary duties:

> 1. To account that servants are of the *same mould*; yea, and partakers of the *same grace* of Christ. They have a common skin, though not a common covering: 2. To hearken to them and *yield to* them when reason, and truth is on their side. 3. To have respect to humane infirmities, as sicknesse, age, and passions. 4. To give well deserving servants more then is due to them by Covenant and bargain. If they be better then servants, it is but equal that we be better than masters. (Abbot 69)

Abbot summarizes those things that all of the conduct books emphasize as the most important duties of the master. Discursively, this retreats from the master's absolute authority of over the servant's body and soul, by insisting on the incredible responsibility for the master in maintaining the household. The master must care for the servants, just as he cares for his wife and children. As the only fully autonomous member of the

household, the master has particular duties to his subordinates, because they too are children of God.

Still, bad mastery can cause bad servitude, and it is ultimately in the master's best financial interest to provide well for his servants. Fosset rehearses this theme about bad mastery:

> One cause that there be now so many bad seruants is, that there be so many bad maisters, which esteeme not, neither make any accompt of their seruants, but only to serue their owne turnes, as men do of their cattell and not for the good of the seruant, but onely for their owne gaine and lucre, nay there bee many men which respect not their seruants so much as they doe their dogges. (Fosset 43)

Many conduct book writers agree that this might occur in the London household, suggesting a perception that servants might occasionally receive poor treatment. Ben Jonson's country house poem, "To Penshurst" emphasizes the need to feed the servants well, because such good treatment of servants is just and will actually engender better service. As the servants wait on Lisle's table, Jonson finds that "Here no man tells my cups; nor standing by, / A waiter doth my gluttony envy; / But gives me what I call, and lets me eat, / He knows, below, he shall find plenty of meat" (67-70). Jonson's awareness that servants do not try to sneak food from own plate suggests that he understood why servants might behave badly, and in turn that the fault lies with the master and not the servants themselves.

Despite the insistence that good mastery will lead to good servitude, the conduct books continue to insist that servants must almost always obey, and on only one point do the conduct writers allow that a servant can disobey his master. Only when the master requests sinful behavior of the servant can the servant disobey. Often this remains in vague terms, assuming that the servant knows good from evil, which results in a great

deal of leverage for the master to insist that his behavior is actually just and the servant simply unknowledgeable. Fosset, however, speaks directly to servants, and explains instances that might fall under a rubric of evil behavior:

> All obedience must bee subordinate vnto the deuine obedience due vnto God. If thy Master bid thee doe euill, hurt thy neighbours cattell, or steale his goods; if hee command thee, or giue thee example to cogge and lie, to steale or vse any fraud or deceipt in buying, or selling, to sell that which is euill for good, to exact more then a thing is worth, to doe any thing which you would not bee content should be done to you. (Fosset 35)

Just as the conduct book authors insist that householders cannot ask their wives or their children to sin, they insist that the master must consider the spiritual well-being of the servants, reinforcing the responsibility of the master to maintain his servants' desire to serve cheerfully. That Fosset addresses the servants directly in this passage acknowledges the servants' ability to recognize the sinful from the holy; and in doing this, he acknowledges that the servants may be capable of good behavior despite the evils of the household in which he lives.

The plays in the sections that follow show a range of masters and servants, though they eschew truly abusive masters like Sir Giles Overreach. Some of the masters attempt to protect their property from the servants (i.e. their daughters); others willingly look the other way when a servant acts in a questionable manner, so long as the master ultimately benefits materially. No matter what the servants do, the masters appreciate their servants anew. In contrast to the conduct books, which perceive an antagonistic relationship between the master and the servant, these plays show a variety of ways that masters eventually indulge their servants. Even those masters who initially disapprove of their servants' behaviors generally appreciate the goings-on under their roofs by play's end.

Servants in plays and the "grocer errant": *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*

Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* offers opportunity to consider the role of the servant in the city comedies because it present two servants, in remarkable contrast to one another, who remain heroic in their own "plays," despite divergences from the conduct book ideals. Each of these servants – and the responses they receive from the citizens sitting upon the stage – demonstrates the difficulty youthful servant's autonomy. Beaumont's play actually contains fact multiple plays, beginning with a prologue for a city comedy called *The London Merchant*, followed by an interruption from two supposed London citizens calling for a new play, and a romance that stars their servant Rafe as an errant grocer-turned-knight. The actors acquiesce to the citizen's request, and the plays go forward, increasingly bumping into one another and conflating the world of the city comedy with the world of the grocer's romance. The play proper, with Rafe, his master and his mistress, suggests small details of the obedient servant's life, and this character contrasts with the servant in the play-within-the-play, titled *The London Merchant*. This play, a city comedy, satirizes the foolish master who is too harsh with his servant, Jasper.[16] Jasper's ability to overcome his former employer through deceit places him in the role of the tricky servant, even as *The London Merchant* places him in the role of the juvenile hero. The response of the London citizens suggests that the uneducated London citizenry will miss the classical references of the play and misunderstand the ways in which the servant has more autonomy than other members of the family.[17] George and Nell are clearly not real individual, nor do they necessarily speak for the actual citizens of London, but their behavior presents one of a range of possibilities for the middle class master toward his servant's assertions of autonomy.

Criticism of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* has traditionally focused on the metatextual nature of the play, with its bumbling citizens comparing a parodied city comedy with their own taste for quixotic chivalric romance, starring their apprentice. Even when the criticism focuses on the social satire of the play, much remains focused on generic aspects, and the collision of the various genres, coded according to class. Initially in the canon of Beaumont and Fletcher's oeuvre as a collaborative play, the play now appears under the single authorship of Beaumont, an ironic decision, Jeffrey Masten suggests, since "it is perhaps the most wildly collaborative play of this period … [because it] exposes … the more broadly collaborative enterprise of the Renaissance English theater" (Masten 348).[18] P. J. Finkelpearl has suggested that in the collision of metatextuality, "it is formally the most innovative play in Jacobean drama," but was rejected by Beaumont's original audience to the point that he "never again wrote anything so aggressively avant-garde" (Finkelpearl, "Francis Beaumont").[19]

Through the combination of forms, critics have argued, Beaumont satirizes both London life and the generic conventions of city comedy, but the satire itself is gentler than the satire of a Middleton play or a Jonson play. The focus on the generic and the attempt to categorize the play has focused on the plot of the play-within-the-play, *The London Merchant*. Identifying this play as within the as a Prodigal Son Play, John Doebler explains that nevertheless, "[t]he … difficulty is that none of the elements are in the right place as far as the [prodigal son] tradition goes" (Doebler "Beaumont's" 333). Beaumont's generic flexibility and virtuosity creates a space where, as Lee Bliss argues, he "blends satire and celebration and offers the theater's defeat, but also the triumph of the dramatic imagination" (Bliss 4). Jeffrey Masten explains that this begins "[f]rom the

moment the Citizen interrupt the actor speaking the prologue in his fourth line and climbs onto the stage" (Masten 348). The play, through the blend of "satire and celebration," overcomes the pointed, sardonic critique found in other city comedies.

Recent materialist criticism has moved from the general discussion of Beaumont's treatment of his social milieu to more concentrated readings of relationships between characters in the play and materialist readings of the "stuff" of the play, thus moving away from concerns of typology of characters, or of the formulaic aspects that Beaumont parodies. Wendy Wall's book *Staging Domesticity* reads the relationship between Nell and her man Rafe, and the young actors, as one where she "brings to light the violence, eroticism, nurturance, and dependency all associated with household practice" (Wall, *Staging* 163). Wall focuses on the ways this relationship – and Nell's medical expertise as housewife – fulfills "cultural fantasies of dependency, familiarity, and nationality" (Wall, *Staging* 162). That is, even from this generically typed character, wish fulfillment for the national character emerges. William Kerwin focuses not on the domestic aspects of physic, but the public anxieties about various – and often new – ailments that Londoners feared during the same period. This leads to a focus on Rafe's adventures as the Knight of the Burning Pestle, with particular attention paid to the Barberoso incident, where "Rafe defeats this fusion of London street life and chivalric romance, [and so] the barber must release his prisoners from captivity, and the poor souls who come stumbling into the light tell their stories. All were made prisoners of a medical regime because of diseases of the skin, including the pox" (Kerwin 108).[20]

Other recent readings have attempted to consider the play in both of these terms: the play is part of the material experience in relation to the generic experimentation of the

play. Janette Dillon argues that the play works in its experimentation to define the city from all that is not the city. Lucy Munro, describing the play as a "self-referential, witty and parodic farrago" (Munro, "*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*" 190), divides it into two genres – city comedy and chivalric romance – and moves away from the typical reading of the play as a city comedy. She suggests, even in this division, that the realities of life seep into the plots, and the play as a whole demonstrates the reality of London life. These attempts to read the play as both a product of genre and as an indication of material London life influence this chapter's reading of the play. Rather than focus on defining the genre of the play, this reading assumes that the conventions of comedy show how the role of the servant in a play and the role of the servant in the household dovetail into an understanding of reasonable permissiveness on the part of the master.

The London Merchant begins by emphasizing the fealty the servant or apprentice owes his master. The Merchant Venturewell enters berating Jasper:

> Sirrah, Il'e make you know you are my prentice,
> And whom my charitable love redeem'd
> Even from the fall of fortune, gave thee heate
> And growth, to be what now thou art, new cast thee,
> Adding the trust of all I have at home,
> In forren Staples, or upon the Sea,
> To thy discretion; ti'de the good opinions
> Both of my selfe and friends to thy endeavors:
> So faire were thy beginnings. (*Knight* 1.1.1-9)

Venturewell indicates the normal trust placed in an apprentice, linking the subordinate's good work and good behavior with the merchant's reputation in the town. He protests that he has taken good care of his servant, providing for the apprentice bodily, as the conduct books insist that he must; Venturewell also clearly trusted Jasper from his "faire beginnings," which suggests the master's surprise about his servant's disobedience.

Jasper acknowledges that he had been treated well and that Venturewell does not exaggerate his perceptions of this treatment, so the play entertains the notion that even good servants might misbehave occasionally. Jasper acknowledges that he is

> Bound, both by love and duty to [Venturewell's] service;
> In which, my labour hath bene all my profit.
> I have not lost in bargaine, nor delighted
> To wear your honest gaines upon my back,
> Nor have I given a pencion to my bloud,
> Or lavishly in play conum'd your stocke. (*Knight* 1.1.17-22)

Like the well-treated servant at Jonson's ideal Penshurst, Jasper has only experienced good treatment, being well fed and well taken care of, and never facing the threat of the whip or illness. Nevertheless, he has done something to enrage his master: the conduct books and the plays face in the master-servant relationship the difficulty of the autonomous youth, who owes allegiance only through a temporal contract. Jasper exemplifies this autonomous youth.

This "play" turns on a point that may occur in a household where the apprentices are confined to space occupied by young women their age: Jasper loves Venturewell's daughter, Luce. Unlike *Eastward Ho's* Golding, considered later in this chapter, Jasper presumes his right to fall in love with his master's daughter. Most importantly for Jasper and much to the chagrin of Venturewell, Luce loves him in return. Venturewell sees this action worthy of dismissal:

> but with these,
> As I remember, you had never charge
> To love your Maisters daughter, and even then,
> When I had found a wealthy husband for her. (*Knight* 1.1.9-12)

Not only must Venturewell contend with his unruly daughter defying him, he must face the fact that his household is doubly out of control, since it is his apprentice who wins her

heart and eventually her hand. Venturewell's outrage does not derive from any concern over status inconsistency (after all, Jasper's lineage is a little ambiguous).[21] The outrage instead stems from the idea that Jasper did something without his master's permission, permission that the conduct books require for all of a servant's actions. The presumption of the apprentice jeopardizes Venturewell's status as the householder.

This insubordination of love certainly concerned the conduct book writers. Gouge, in particular, worries about the relationship between the servants and the other members of the household, especially the children. While servants are ostensibly in a lower household position than the children, the servants wield a great deal of power over the children in their ability to influence the young inmates of the London household. Gouge warns that the that the servants will not only teach the children "to sweare, blaspheme, and use all manner of vncleane speeches," but also "allure them to stage-plaies, to dice houses, and other like places, which are the very bane of youth" (Gouge 631). The flow of power in this statement belies Gouge's concerns with the status inconsistency of the servant within the master's household, and the foreign knowledge the servants may bring into the home. This is an individual raised in another household, with potentially questionable methods. The master cannot completely account for a servant's upbringing, even if, upon initial review or recommendation, the servant appears to have potential as an excellent, even decent, servant. In the relationship between the servant and the master's children lies the mitigating factor of age as well. Depending on the position of the servant, he or she may very well be older and more experienced than the master's children. The servant, like an outside contagion, can contaminate the home, especially the most vulnerable inmates of the house.

Gouge does not limit the damage that a presumptuous servant can do to a household to the contamination of the children's minds. Among the other sins that servants can commit with their master's children is to marry them: Gouge lists this as the final contrary behavior in a list of increasingly alarming behaviors on the part of servants, following the concern that servants will seduce the daughters or sons, and encourage fornication.[22] Gouge calls contrary

> Others that dare not commit this abominable wickednesse, sticke not to doe that which is little better, namely to draw them on to be contracted, yea and married to them often times, and that priuily without consent of their parents: whereby parents affections are oft so alienated from their children, as they will not acknowledge them for children, but cleane cast them off. These are the fruits of this lewd kinde of vnfaithfulnesse in seruants. (Gouge 632)

Gouge places the blame of the parents' eventual wrath squarely on the seducer's shoulders, because should a child fall for the servant's lies, the child will face loss of this familial connection. The text does not call for compassion for the servant, but Gouge is practical in pointing out the danger that when the master cuts this child off, the servant too will be cut out of any future profitability.[23]

Despite such admonitions from the conduct book writers, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* presents the very situation of the servant and the master's daughter, but the spectacle of *The London Merchant* presents the character Jasper as correct in falling in love with the beautiful Luce. Jasper's response to the issue of love does little to please Venturewell, but everything to please the audience and signal his location as the hero of his play. Jasper insists

> for your daughter,
> If there be any love to my deservings,
> Borne by her virtuous self, I cannot stop it!
> Nor, am I able to refraine her wishes. (*Knight* 1.1.25-28)

Jasper's insistence on these typical tropes of romantic comedy – the *senex* position of the father, the love-despite-her father's wishes position of the daughter – points to one of the problems of comedy for the household order. Rather than recognize the standard-issue hero Jasper, the incompetent theatergoers Nell and George complain of Luce's dismissal of Humphrey. Humphrey, they insist, is of gentle birth and, as Nell asks of the boy-player acting this role, "didst thou ever see a prettier child?" (*Knight* 1.1.91).

Even prior to this, the citizen has indicated his frustration with the players, and his frustration with the current trends in theater. The citizen, barging onto the stage at Blackfriars, immediately insists that the choice of plays is inappropriate for this day. He proclaims that "This seven years there hath been playes at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens. And now you call your play *The London Merchant*" (Induction 6-9). Demanding that this title be removed and his own preferences be catered to, this Citizen shows the potentially uneasy relationship between the theaters and the citizens whom they attempt both to satirize and to entertain. Though the title to this imaginary play does not suggest in and of itself that it will satirize a citizen of London, the boy's opening lines that "from all that's great / Within the compass of the city walls, / We now have brought our scene" (Induction 1-3) does resonate with the opening of many clearly satirical city comedies, including Jonson's *The Alchemist*.[24] Thus, the citizen may have a legitimate complaint, even as he embarrasses himself through his lack of knowledge of what is fashionable.

The citizen intends his play preference to ennoble the citizens of London. The Citizen proclaims that he wants his wife's manservant Rafe to play the main character of this new play, insisting "I will have a grocer, and he shall do admirable things"

(Induction 34-34). This and his claim later that he wants his grocer to "do rare things" (Induction 55), underscore the citizen's desire to see the city as the center of the moral sphere, rather than a target for mockery by the stage. Moreover, the citizen has Rafe act not as a mere apprentice, but as a grocer turned knight with a squire and dwarf: Rafe is an apprentice offstage, but becomes the master onstage. The play then, as Wendy Wall explains, makes the "theme … transparently evident … as apprentice Rafe transforms everyday circumstance into mythic adventure, but it saturates the entire play experience as well since the workaday citizens constantly expose the real conditions underwriting dramatic spectacle" (Wall 161). The citizen and his wife create a highly artificial situation based on chivalric romances, but even in this they upend their own complaints about the character Jasper and his penchant for thinking above his servant's station. Rafe enters into a position of imagined authority onstage, even as he continues to take orders from offstage.

When Rafe accepts the challenge of becoming an actor, he reverts to his knowledge of both the city trades and French Romances that influence his story. Rafe suggests that

> Why should not I then pursue this course, both for the credit of my selfe and our Company, for amongst all the worthy books of Atchievements, I doe not call to minde that I yet read of a Grocer Errant. I will be the said knight: have you heard of any that hath wandred unfurnished of his Squire and Dwarfe? my elder prentice, *Tim*, shall be my trusty Squire, and little *George* my Dwarf. Hence my blew Aprone, yet in remembrance of my former Trade, upon my shield shall be purtraide [portrayed] a burning Pestle, and I will be cal'd the *Knight o'th' Burning Pestle*. (*Knight* 1.1.248-256)

Thus, Rafe combines his trade with his new calling as a knight, taking for his heraldic symbol the emblem of his "trade." Rafe is passing as more than an apprentice, and mentions his own imaginary apprentice. These valences of master-servant relationships

complicate the expression of that relationship and underscore the idea that all are ultimately in service to someone else.

Throughout the play, Rafe moves between "master and tradesman" in his acting role and servant and apprentice to George and Nell in his serving role. No matter his position in the moment of the play, he always cares about upholding the "honor of the city and the credit of [his] master" (5.1.66-67). Although Rafe makes these sorts of comments to Nell when he's briefly breaking character to be Rafe the manservant, Rafe blends his role as onstage master and offstage servant. This again indicates the fraught category of the servant in the city. Even as he is to play a character autonomous of the citizen and his wife, Rafe must remember whom he represents in this charade. The wife says to Rafe, "Do it bravely [giving the death speech], Rafe, and think before whom you perform, and what person you represent" (5.1.63-65). If he passes well as the master onstage, Rafe will uphold the good reputation of his master's house, or at least so George and Nell think.

All of these instances suggest that George and Nell are inconsistent in their claims that Jasper is a bad servant, because Rafe engages in similar behaviors. Certainly, this inconsistency stems from their choice of genre, but their lack of understanding of the comedic genre does not allow for this reading entirely. Instead, their desire Rafe's courting of a "royal" lady proves the citizen's desire to elevate the status of the trades in London, which ultimately conflicts with the belief in the subordination of servants. The citizen argues with the boy of the theater that Rafe should be able to court Pomponia, the daughter of the King of Moldavia in Cracovia, and asks the boy, "what was sir *Dagonet*? was not he prentice to a Grocer in *London*? Read the play *The Foure Prentices of*

London, where theye tosse their pikes so" (*Knight* 4.1.45-48). Thus, the citizen is not so much concerned with the status inconsistency in wooing, unless it is a matter of wooing the daughter of a merchant. In response to Jasper's love for Luce, the citizen instead insists to Nell that the "rougue [Jasper] … serv'd him well enough. Love his maisters daughter! By my troth Cunnie if there were a thousand boies, thou wouldst spoile them all with taking their parts" (*Knight* 1.1.371-373). The merchant cannot reconcile the two difficulties, just as he cannot recognize the difference between the imaginary space of the drama and the real space of his own life. The courting of the princess demonstrates his inherent belief in the nobility of the trades, and particularly of grocers.

Even as the play mocks the ambitions of the merchants, it acknowledges the ubiquity of the merchants in London. Rafe cannot help but identify himself as the servant of the two Londoners, even when introducing himself to the nobility of the imagined foreign lands. When speaking to Pomponia, Rafe introduces himself:

> My name is *Rafe*, I am an Englishman,
> As true as steele, a hearty Englishman,
> And prentice to a Grocer in the strond [Strand],
> By deed Indent, of which I have one part. (*Knight* 4.65-68)

Rafe acknowledges his real-life position, slipping from his onstage persona of the Knight of the Burning Pestle back into his place as George's apprentice – the grocer's apprentice. This suggestion does create something of a quandary on who exactly Rafe is. The character list describes him as Nell's man, but he repeatedly mentions that he is an apprentice to a grocer and George is a grocer. Like the servants and apprentices of *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, Rafe enters into an unclear relationship with his master and his master's wife. The play presents – with little solution – the problem of the varying levels of authority in the merchant's household. Rafe eventually decides that rather than court

Pomponia, however, he will return to London and his sweetheart Susan, a servant just like him.

Rafe and Jasper indicate the gamut from which the apprentices and servants in London can come from, and it is this status inconsistency that frequently caused concern that masters would lose control over their servants: it appears even more forcefully in *Eastward Ho*, but it certainly is a problem for the characters both of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and *The London Merchant*. Nell describes Rafe as "a poor fatherless child" (*Knight* Epilogue 4), suggesting that he does not come from a high level of society. He in fact describes himself as one who "by due discent though not ignoble … / Yet far inferior to the Flocke of gratious Grocery" (*Knight* Interlude 4.29-30). Thus, Rafe's charade as a grocer is actually an elevation in status for him. Jasper, on the other hand, comes from a gentle family, even if it is down-and-out. Jasper's mother, Mistress Merrythought reveals in scolding her husband that "you are a Gentleman *Charles* [Jasper's father], and an old man, and a father of two children; and I my selfe (though I say it) by my mother's side neece to a worshipful Gentleman and a Conductor" (*Knight* 3.1.490-493). Even these (perhaps) tenuous claims to gentle status elevate Jasper above the apprentice that Rafe is – at least outside of the merchant class home. Japser's gentle birth, which he does not remind his employer of, ostensibly places him at the same social status as the paternally preferred suitor, the doggerel-spewing Humphrey. At the same time, Venturewell's concern is not with the potential social status of his descendants based on any inherited status, but rather on their monetary well being. Humphrey is a wealthy man, and Venturewell knows it, identifying him only as such in his arguments in favor of that particular suitor. Like the parents in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *A*

New Way to Pay Old Debts, Venturewell desires financial stability for his daughter, rather than personal fulfillment.

This play, then, presents two servants from differing backgrounds behaving differently. Both servants, in ways consistent with their genres, "get the girl" and both ultimately are heroes of their own plays, even if the citizen and his wife do not recognize Jasper's as the hero. Thus the play presents this contrast by toying with the ideas of city comedy and poking fun at the lack of classical learning of the citizens. If the citizens understood Plautus, after all, they should understand that Jasper is to be the hero of the play. Instead, the citizens are wrapped up in their odd notions about romance and chivalry, to the point of absurdity. Their own concerns about the city, about the merchant class, and about the position of servants within it come to the forefront in this lack of classical learning.

The next section will examine the work of a playwright who very much immersed himself in the classical tradition. This section will explore the relationship between Jonson's master and servant in his 1610 play, *The Alchemist*. The actual staging of the relationship is a small part of the play, but it nevertheless merits a mention in order to explore an intentional use of the *dolus serverus* character and the laxity with which the master of the household treats the scheming of his butler.

Ben Jonson's Classical-Renaissance Comedy: *The Alchemist*

Most of Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610) focuses on Face, Subtle and Doll Common, the three tricksters who, posing as an alchemist and his assistants, dupe many in the Blackfriars neighborhood out of money and goods. The play spends its comic

energy lampooning citizens in this fashionable London district, something that Jonson had been doing for some time. Jean Howard suggests that "As early as 1599 Jonson was … imaginatively mapping London as a succession of venues where men of fashion and of business conducted their affairs and displayed themselves before the eyes of others" (Howard, *Theater* 87). Though the play presents little of the relationship between Jeremy Face and his master Lovewit, the specter of the master always hangs over the household, even as though he currently avoids the plague-ridden London.[25] In contrast to Jasper or Rafe's behavior, The mischievousness of Face is focused on himself, on gaining money for himself, and in the end – if for no other reason than being caught – on procuring material and personal gains for his master.

The sources of Ben Jonson's plays in general, and *The Alchemist* in particular, have long been a point of scholarly debate. All of the discussion about the sources has emphasized the tight structure of the play itself. Critics have suggested that the play is Italianate in structure; that the play derives from the Old Comedy of ancient Greece forged by Aristophanes; that it instead derives from the comedy of Terence in ancient Rome; and that it models itself on the morality plays of the middle ages.[26] Critics who engage in this particular discussion often assign moral outcomes based according on their own conception of Jonson's sources. C. G. Thayer suggests a certain type of jaded moralist in the play, because he suggests that "[i]n Aristophanes, Jonson found a comic poet intensely concerned with the representation of great social themes" (Thayer 26). Northrop Frye, finding Jonson's sources to be more frequently the playwrights of the less moralistic Roman New Comedy, describes the play as taking part in the "most ironic phase of comedy [which] is, naturally the one in which a humorous society triumphs or

remains undefeated" (Frye 177).[27] Brian Gibbons describes the play as having an "Italianate complexity of plot" (Gibbons 169).[28] Gibbons also points to the importance of wit in the play, suggesting both a critique of the city and a cynical awareness of the state of early modern London. Thus, for Gibbons, "[t]he vital drive of *The Alchemist* is towards the exposure and ridicule of greedy fools and their fantasies, its outcome reveals that in a state of civil war where man is to man as wolf to wolf, supremacy and security are brief, the way to them nasty, and the qualities required for their attainment basically brutish" (Gibbons 170).

More culturally focused critiques of the play focus on the various objects of Jonson's satire, as well as his representations – and interrogations – of new social structures. The satire focuses on the various London types inhabiting this particular play and especially on the greed exhibited by outwardly upright and decent denizens of the city. Even in the criticism that attends to the satire and the social commentary of the play, the critics have often come back to the idea of the sources of the play and the type of plot that it exhibits. For example, Alexander Leggatt explains that in *The Alchemist* Jonson is "using the intrigue plot as a vehicle for moral commentary" (Leggatt, *Citizen Comedy* 74). Even so, there is room for maneuvering on Jonson's part, because the moral outcome is somewhat murky. As Leggatt also explains "[t]he ending is a precise judgment which includes … a full acknowledgement of the value of wit" (Leggatt, *Citizen* 77). Katherine Eggert, in contrast, discusses the science of the play, and the interest in alchemy in the early modern period, suggesting that "[d]espite the play's adherence to the Aristotelian unities, it largely eschews classical models" (Eggert 200).

Thus the consideration of various aspects of the cultural background frequently return to the issue of Jonson's classical interests.

In an attempt to more closely understand the social milieu of the play, and using the techniques of new historicism, Jonathan Haynes examines the play's representation of the underworld. Haynes argues that the play does not so much replicate the emergent ideas about the underworld of the early modern period, but that it actually manages "to formulate a new conception of criminality" altogether (Haynes 18). Haynes argues for this new understanding in Jonson by linking the play to the new economy emerging in early modern London. Placing these ideas about criminality against the emergent conservative concept of the underworld as an anti-society, Haynes argues that Jonson subverts "the new therapeutic bourgeoisie category of criminal Otherness, which informed the cony-catching pamphlets, and his dramatic practice investigates and reveals, rather than marginalizing crime and then investing this marginal terrain with extraneous concerns" (Haynes 40). Rather, the play points to the ways nascent capitalist society creates and sustains this criminal underworld as a shadow of society, rather than an antithesis to society (Haynes 41). This awareness of crime is certainly important in reading this play about a group of criminals, but it tends to avoid much discussion of the central location of the play: the master's home in Blackfriars. Even if the household lacks a mistress, it is still a household.

The nature of the stock character of the wily servant allows for more flexibility in the discursive identification of the seventeenth-century master-servant relationship.[29] The master of the house, Lovewit is not named in the play until very late, so the theater audience would not have the hint at the permissiveness of this master that the reader

would have. Lovewit's name puns on his appreciation for wittiness and craftiness, and it is not until Lovewit exhibits some of his own craftiness against Epicure Mammon and the Anabaptists that the audience can appreciate just how much Lovewit loves a joke. This pun highlights the lax relationship between the master and the servant, particularly between a bachelor master and the servant left in charge of the house during spells of the plague.

Despite the theater audience's lack of knowledge about the character, the reader does know this. And of course, Jonson intentionally published his works for the benefit of the reading public.[30] In addition to his general use of Roman traditions onstage, Jonson adds elements of the Roman conventions that only work in print. In its printed format, the play opens with an Argument, explaining the situation in a manner suggestive Lovewit's ill household government:

> T he sickness hot, a master quit, for feare,
> H is house in towne: and left one seruant there.
> E ase him corrupted, and gave meanes to know
> A cheater, and his punque; who, now brought low,
> L eauing their narrow practise, were become
> C os'ners at large: and, only wanting some
> H ouse to set up, with him they here contract,
> E ach for a share, and all begin to act.
> M uch company they draw, and much abuse,
> I n casting figures, telling fortunes, news,
> S elling of flies, flat bawdry, with the *stone*:
> T ill it, and they, and all in *fume* are gone. (*Alchemist* The Argument)[31]

This particular acrostic introduces the main character, Jeremy Face, as the servant left to care for the house while the master abandons the city during another round of the plague. This initially suggests, at least to the modern reader, a disregard for the servant's health during a time of plague, but might also suggest a trust on the master's part that this servant is capable of protecting the home – and himself – during the master's absence.

Certainly, Subtle argues that the servant has been left because the master does not care for him. Subtle reminds Face that before they went into business together, Face was merely "the good, / Honest, plaine, liuery-three-pound-thrum" (*Alchemist* 1.1.15-16); in other words, Face held a fairly lowly position in his mater's house. Anthony Ouellette argues that "In other words, before the 'venture tripartate' (line 135), Face was merely a marginalized servant, kept poorly dressed and poorly paid, and only given control of the house during the four vacations between the law terms or when plague ravaged the city" (Ouellette 382). Nevertheless, it is Face who has the obligation to care for the master's home while it would be most vulnerable.

No matter Lovewit's intention in leaving Face during holidays and during the plague, Face should take particular care to protect the household, according to the conduct books. Instead, as the Argument explains, the servant has been corrupted by the ease of his duty and the availability of his master's goods at his disposal. The lack of general duties allowed Face to wander out into the greater London area and become "translated [to a] suburb-Captayne" (*Alchemist* 1.1.19) by the beggarly Subtle and the punkish Doll. On the one hand, this character appears to be simply the menial servant taking advantage of his master. On the other hand, Face is clearly a trickster – and the wily servant – able to manipulate his situation, and even cozen the cozeners. Throughout the play these characters abuse other characters, but for the most part the abused characters are unsympathetic. Thus, the audience, like the master, can appreciate Face's wit and his ability to direct others throughout the play.

Even as Face's plot unravels, it becomes clear that Lovewit is and will always be a permissive master. This stems from the fact that he himself is something of a wit and is

often more shrewd than the householder probably should be. Since Lovewit is, after all, a widower, he has a flawed household. Although the reality of the situation would not require a widower to remarry immediately, conduct book assumptions about the nature of a properly structure household suggest that Lovewit's family "builded by God" lacks some important parts. Lovewit already lives in ways inconsistent with the desires of the conduct books, thus some allowances may be necessary. After the neighbors leave, trying to convince Lovewit that Face has been up to no good, Lovewit reminds Face that "You know that I am an indulgent master: / And therefore, conceale nothing" (*Alchemist* 5.3.77-78). Because Face has been accused by Subtle at the beginning of the play of being poorly paid and poorly dressed, it is unclear whether or not Lovewit is indeed a good householder. Certainly, he left a questionable, or at least gullible, servant in charge while he left town. Even if Face is a good servant while Lovewit is in town, the servant acts outside of his appropriate sphere of authority as the butler in charge of the home. Face speaks quite freely with his master, suggesting an easy relationship, one that may be directly related to the (perhaps) poor housekeeping of his master.

Lovewit pardons Face, as he is amused by the wily servant and thus refuses the punishment that the conduct book writers would insist upon. Through his escapades, Face has increased his master's bounty and provided him with a new, young (albeit a bit dim) wife. Brian Gibbons explains that "Face the comic Machiavel is perfectly adapted to his [urban] environment, acutely aware of its springs of motivation in greed and fear. … Jonson acknowledges the practical possibility that a ruthless materialist and opportunist can go on thriving indefinitely in Jacobean London; men like Face win the

urban civil war" (Gibbons 177). Lovewit willingly overlooks the rumors of various visitors to his house while he is gone, because he finds Face's wit simply that amusing.

Lovewit's final statement in the play suggests the importance of flexibility for the master in the relationship with the servants in the home.

> That master
> That had receiu'd such happiness by a seruant,
> In such a widdow, and with so much wealth,
> Were very vngratefull, if he would not be
> A little indulgent to that seruants wit,
> And helpe his fortune, though with some small straine
> Of his own candor. Therefore, gentlemen,
> And kind Spectators, if I have out-stript
> An old mans grauitie, or strict canon, thinke
> What a young wife, and a good braine may doe:
> Stretch age's truth sometimes, and crack it too. (*Alchemist* 5.5.146-156)

Lovewit acknowledges the advantages that Face provides him through craftiness. Were he inflexible about his servant's behavior, he would not receive the great gifts that greet him at the end: Dame Pliant, removed from her obnoxious brother, and the riches belonging to the laughable Epicure Mammon. Though this ultimately contradicts Fosset's concern with the servant Gehezi, Jonson's play suggests that in what Gibbons calls "the urban civil war" money is more important than good deeds. Unlike Elisha's concern for his holiness and his credibility, Lovewit appreciates the money brought to him, even if through disreputable means. In early modern London reputations are fungible.

The structure of the play allows for a greater recognition of Face's wit and centrality as the main character. Lovewit gives the final lines of the play to him. That Lovewit steps aside further illustrates his willingness to allow autonomy to his servant. Lovewit's acknowledgement that a servant can be the cause of such happiness and a

bringer of such wealth resonates with the concern of the conduct books that the servants be good and look to their masters' prosperity. It is this concern that Jonson puts on trial here, suggesting instead that the servant can look to his own prosperity and perhaps manage to create wealth for the master, while working the system through his wit and even slightly questionable means. That the master prospers, and that the master still remains somewhat above general rumor overturns the belief that servants' behavior will reflect poorly on their masters' households. The other characters find appeasement in the situation, even as the society expels the true criminals Subtle and Doll. The tricks that Face has wrought have even brought Lovewit to feel young again. In the end, Face, the crafty servant within bounds, can open up to the audience and invite them to return to the theater later.

In the next section, this chapter will turn from the corrupting outside influences on servants to the corrupting influence that servants may have on their own household. In *Eastward Ho!*, Jonson, Marston and Chapman present two characters that run the gamut of servitude, from the completely dutiful servant to the rougish, foppish servant, both of whom are duly rewarded in the end. The master wants well-behaved servants, though he willingly recognizes the possibility that wit and trickery may benefit him after all.

Collaborating Servants, Collaborating Playwrights: *Eastward Ho!*

Written as a response to Dekker and Webster's comedy *Westward Ho!*, Jonson, Chapman and Marston's play *Eastward Ho!* contrasts the behaviors of two apprentices from the shop of one Master Touchstone, a goldsmith in Cheapside.[32] The play invites the obvious contrast between the two servants, in their similar names (Golding and

Quicksilver), in their similar genteel status, and in their behaviors in the play's opening.[33] The initial scenes of the play prepare the audience to recognize Quicksilver as the wily servant character, but his early and rapid fall from his position in Touchstone's home suggests a morality condemning that witty servant. In contrast, his fellow apprentice, Golding appears to be a dull but reliable and upright servant. The ending of the play, however, indicates that even with all his uprightness and honesty, Golding enacts mercy on his fellow apprentice and new brother-in-law Sir Petronel Flash, through a sleight of hand. Golding, an upright character throughout finds reward rather than condemnation from his father-in-law, which confirms a permissive allowance for the servant's tricky behavior when that behavior results in the master's good. As in *The Alchemist*, the servant finds reward for not being the worst member of society, and the play, though moral in its intention, lets slip certain pragmatism about the wiliness of servants.

From the outset, *Eastward Ho!* seems to offer a simple moral about the way that hard work and honest dealing will help a man successfully enter into London society. The play appears to suggest, according to Theodore Leinwand, "that apprenticed gentry succeed when they dismiss their gentle origins and concentrate on becoming good citizens" (Leinwand, *The City Staged* 30). The play contrasts two servants with similar backgrounds. The honest servant rises rapidly – though reluctantly – through London society, while the prodigal servant falls just as rapidly. The play, however, is more complicated than merely that. Leinwand acknowledges that his suggested moral may very well have been one that playgoers may have taken away from the play, but he also suggests that the play is itself a highly ironic play in the morally ambiguous zone of a Jonson play.

Typically, discussions of Chapman, Jonson and Marston's play *Eastward Ho!* have centered on its relationship to Dekker and Webster's initial play *Westward Ho!* and their response to the three playwrights' parody, *Northward Ho!* Critics generally agree that the Chapman, Jonson and Marston play is particularly self-aware in its parody of Dekker and Webster's play as well as the conventions of city comedy. Brian Gibbons describes the play as a "splendid parody … [which] emphasise[s] the crudity of [its] targets by ironic iteration of hoary *clichés* in plot and character" (Gibbons 154). More specific in his discussion of the parody, Alexander Leggatt argues that the play is "by far the subtlest and most elaborate parody of the standard prodigal story" (Leggatt 47). Leinwand concurs on this general understanding of the play, remarking that "[t]he playwrights present each character as a bold caricature," rather than a fully realized character (*The City Staged* 63). He further suggests that the "play is at once a straightforward city comedy and a sophisticated send-up of the genre's familiar types" (*The City Staged* 64). Important to all of these discussions is the relationship of this play with the plays of Dekker and Webster, and an implicit dismissal of *Northward* and *Westward* as lesser plays. Jean E. Howard suggests that *Westward* is, in fact "interesting on its own" (Howard, "Women, Foreigners, and Urban Spaces 153). The same is true of *Eastward Ho!*

More recent criticism has paid attention to the relationships of characters within the play, their attempts to form some sort of identity – especially a national one – and the position of the outsider in the city. This criticism has generally accepted the prodigal apprentice, Quicksilver, to be more interesting and likeable than the honest, but staid, Golding.[34] For example, Jean Howard argues that the play "slyly queried dominant

cultural values and highlighted the spectacular cleverness of its bad boy, the ingenious Quicksilver, whose 'credit' depends on his performative skills" (Howard, *Theater of a City* 102). Howard acknowledges the appeal of the prodigal character and argues from a vantage point concerned with credit and value of performance. Alizon Brunning's assess Golding's motivations as recognizing "[h]onest labour … [as] the cornerstone of advancement and moral virtue" (Brunning, " 'In his gold I shine" paragraph 9). This is a typical description of the character, and while Golding certainly maintains a high moral standard for himself and for those around him throughout the play, these readings miss Golding's involvement in the final scenes of the play, where he orchestrates the release of Quicksilver from jail. Although Quicksilver certainly remains the central "bad boy" of the play, he could not perform without the merciful interjections of Golding.

The opening scene sets the servants in sharp contrast, which creates a dichotomy of possible servants and questions apprentices' ability to behave correctly. The lack of control over Francis Quicksilver, however, results not from a lack of trying on the part of the goldsmith Master Touchstone. Touchstone makes speaks first, interrogating the gallantly dressed Quicksilver as to his whereabouts and his "loose action" (*EH* 1.1.1-2). Touchstone reminds him "Sirrah, I tell thee, I am thy maister," using the pejorative address reserved for inferiors (*EH* 1.1.10). While Touchstone chides Quicksilver's sense of entitlement, the responsible Golding works the shop, calling the standard call of London shops "What doe yee lacke, sir? What ist you'le buye Sir?" (*EH* 1.1.66-67). This immediately causes Touchstone to chide Quicksilver by comparing the two servants: "marry Sir, there's a youth of another peece. There's thy fellowe-Prentise, as good a gentleman borne as thou art: nay, and better mean'd" (*EH* 1.1.68-70).

The evolution of Golding and Touchstone's relationship proves a wish fulfillment for the loyal servant. Touchstone first offers marriage with his younger daughter Mildred, who he describes as "not faire, well-fauoured or so, indifferent, which modest measure of beautie, shall not make it thy onely worke to watch her, nor sufficient mischance, to suspect her. Thou art towardly, shee is modest, thou art prouident, she is careful. Shee's now mine: give me thy hand, shee's now thine" (*EH* 1.2.152-157). He later offers Golding his freedom, granting an early end to his indenture. Unlike the horrified master of the conduct books, and unlike Venturewell of *The London Merchant*, Touchstone willingly accepts Golding's status inconsistency. This acceptance, however, is not due to the fact that Golding is himself a gentleman, but is due rather to Golding's good service and behavior as proper apprentice, a trustworthy young man. That is to say, Golding has demonstrated all the qualities that will make him fit to live in the city as a citizen, and as a householder himself.

Despite his advancement in the master's family, and his reward for good work, Golding remains humble and obedient to the householder. When lambasted by Mistress Touchstone for daring "to presume to marry a lady's sister," Golding insists that

> It pleased my master forsooth to embolden me with his fauour: And though I confesse my selfe farre vnworthie so worthy a wife (beeing in part, her seruant, as I am your Prentise) yet (since I may say it without boasting) I am born a Gentleman and, by the Trade I have learned of my Master (which I trust taints not my blood) able with mine owne Industrie and portion to maintaine your daughter, my hope is, heauen will blesse our humble beginning, that in the end I shalbe no disgrace to the grace with which my Master hath bound me his double Prentise. (*EH* 3.2.100-109)

Golding remains humble, true to his role as the servant in the household. He obeys Touchstone now as both an apprentice and as a son, as he explains to his new mother-in-law. Even as his new position increases his status in the household, this position places

him in a position of double fealty to his master. Thus, Golding actually owes his master a debt of gratitude for the early release for his apprenticeship as well as the proper respect due to a father-in-law.

Golding touches on this problem of being both a gentleman and an apprentice in this passage, which highlights the pressing nature of status inconsistency. Although Golding remains humble in his ambitions, and although he is polite about his family ties, he still willingly mentions this information when he must defend himself. This privileges him above other apprentices and reinforces the idea that the gentleman, even one who is an apprentice, still has something to offer a daughter that a mere apprentice does not have. Wendy Wall suggests that for a character like Golding, and even for a character like Quicksilver, "the gentleman-servant's reserve of status (his claim to be his own 'head') made him less incorporable within the household organism. … When the household was imagined as an organism, servants might undermine the body from within" (Wall 205). Golding is not merely "a base Prentise" as sister-in-law Gertrude disparagingly calls him (*EH* 3.2.65-66), he is a gentleman who has learned a trade.[35] This collision of trade and gentle status creates anxiety in a once-stagnant class system; the new merchant driven economy threatens to eliminate the easily discernable class markers and trade might somehow taint upper class blood, as Lovall of *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* insists. Golding remains a non-risk for the household organism because he generally avoids invoking his status as a gentleman, unlike his fellow apprentice. Golding, therefore, is rewarded by a more complete incorporation into the household, and into the city, even as he finds his emancipation from the household.

Even though he is constantly commenting on his status as gentle-born, Quicksilver does not particularly find it a problem to have learned a trade. His only complaint his lack of autonomy. What Quicksilver learned in working for Touchstone will serve him in the future, he thinks: when he and Sir Petronel Flash face poverty, Quicksilver suggests that he hopes that he "haue some tricks, in this braine … shall not let [them] perish" (*EH* 4.1.201-202). Quicksilver – ever insistent on his gentleman status – knows how to counterfeit, from having apprenticed with a goldsmith. Clearly his is not concerned that trade taints his blood, despite the illegality of this new trade. In contrast to Gertrude's insult about Golding, Quicksilver's knowledge of a trade only taints the "gentle" blood when he uses that knowledge for ill purposes. Because Quicksilver is a prodigal, he will use any means necessary to secure his own wealth, whereas Golding will only treat the trade as an ends to gaining citizenship in London.

Even as Golding gradually moves towards full incorporation into the city, his relationship with his master remains one of the great respect owed a father or a master. Golding's birth father exists somewhere outside the world of the play, so Golding's choice to remain loyal to the family with which he covenanted highlights the importance of obedience to the master. Like the servants of Abraham, Golding is willing, but rather than sacrifice a part of his body, he willingly eschews his heritage as a gentleman and submit to the needs and orders of the merchant class family. To that end, Golding seems never to have any higher ambition than being an honest member of this adopted family, though he keeps finding himself rewarded for his hard work and honesty. Golding returns from the Guildhall in act four, and announces news of "an Accident somewhat strange, els it hath litle in it worth the reporting" (*EH* 4.2.35-36): Golding has been

selected a deputy of the alderman. Throughout this scene and the rest of the play, he insists that he "was not ambitious of this, so I couet no higher place" (*EH* 4.2.62-63). If Golding is truly honest the play argues that the city will reward the honest with opportunities to serve. In contrast to Face, he navigates the urban landscape through his honesty and righteousness. This proves a matter of wish fulfillment, both for good servants and for the masters looking to keep them in line.

Golding brings pride to Touchstone's house in this wish fulfillment, but Quicksilver risks nothing but shame for this family. This issue of shaming the master's house emerges twice in the play, but this problem differs from concerns about shaming a husband's or father's house. Early in the play, Golding admonishes a drunken Quicksilver, telling him "for shame go to bed, and sleepe out this immodestie: thou shamest both my master and his house" (*EH* 2.1.98-99). This has little effect on Quicksilver's behavior or attitude, since he considers his gallant behavior no shame to his own status as a gentleman. As before, Quicksilver's knowledge of his status inconsistency enables him to continue arguing that he neither shames his master, nor himself. Nevertheless, his insistence on gentle status threatens the productivity and the reputation of Touchstone's home.

Because of all of this, Touchstone's home is ultimately out of order: the only way for him to reorder and retake control of his house is to expel the offenders. As in many classical comedies, the primary characters expel a scapegoat to maintain order.[36] Touchstone fires Quicksilver after watching Golding admonish the misbehaving servant, telling the rogue "I will no longer dishonest my house, nor endanger my stocke with your license; There sir, there's your Indenture. All you apparel (that I must know) is on your

back; and from this time my door is shut to you" (*EH* 2.1.122-124). This expulsion attempts to save the honor of the house, indicating a concern with Touchstone's reputation around town. Touchstone also expels Quicksilver from the home because the apprentice steals from the family, and this endangers the prosperity of the home.

This concern for reputation is not always consistent for the goldsmith. Touchstone concerns himself less about his reputation in expelling members of the household when he refuses his daughter Gertrude – now "lady-fied" – succor in his house, since she treats everyone rudely. On the one hand, he might prove himself insensitive to the needs of his child; on the other hand, he clearly takes command of his household, since Gertrude has renounced her merchant class origins and has proven herself an inappropriate child through her nastiness. He tells her, in fact, that "here is no roust for such Chickens as you are" (*EH* 4.2.139). Touchstone is more interested in maintaining household order according to his own desires by ridding the home of those things that prevent the house's prosperity. His lack of mercy risks the sort of condemnation heaped up Luke Frugal at the end of *The City Madam*, but Touchstone's concerns stem not specifically from his own greed, but rather his own desire to have a prosperous shop.

At the same time, Touchstone's expulsion of the bad eggs does solve the problem of difficult inmates of the home. His daughter Gertrude, still harping on the idea that her father married her sister to a mere apprentice, declaims "Let him go, let him go, for God's sake: let him make his Prentise, his son, for Gods sake: give away his daughter, for Gods sake: and when they come a-begging to vs for Gods sake, let's laugh at their good husbandry, for Gods sake!" (*EH* 3.2.140-144). Gertrude's response to her father's

decisions in householding present her as an upstart, someone denouncing the merchant class origins. As a result, she ends up duped and cheated out of what she thinks she has coming, and thus is punished for looking beyond her class. This demonstrates the exceedingly pro-merchant argument of the play.

The play would seem to suggest that honesty is the best policy, and that those who are always honest, hard workers will find their reward both on earth and in heaven. That is, this is the best policy until the end of the play. Feeling mercy for his former fellow-apprentice now destined for the gallows, Golding decides that he must trick Touchstone into giving the newly repentant Quicksilver a fair hearing in the prison. Golding demonstrates more loyalty to his fellow apprentices than to his master. He says to Master Wolf, one of the jailers at the Counter, that

> the estate of these gentlemen, for whome you were so late and willing a Sutor, does much affect mee: and because I am desirous to doe them some faire office, and find there is no meanes to make my Father relent, so likely, as to bring him to be a Spectator of their Miseries; I have ventur'd on a deuice, which is, to make my self your prisoner. (*EH* 5.3.104-110)

Golding sympathizes with the plight his imprisoned contemporaries, whom he has called his "brother knight" (his brother-in-law Sir Petronel) and his "fellow Francis" Quicksilver (*EH* 5.2.80). Though his behavior and his subsequent plot to encourage Touchstone's sympathy mark him, Wolf says, as "a true Gentleman" (*EH* 5.2.88), Golding ultimately proves himself to be the clever servant who acts for the master's benefit. Although Touchstone will not find himself enriched and newly remarried as Lovewit did in *The Alchemist*, Golding's actions create a more stable, reunified household under the sway of the master.

Golding's appearance of honesty enables him to execute his only devious work of the play, which renders it all the more effective. Golding sends word to his father-in-law that he has been imprisoned. When first told of this, Touchstone assumes that the prodigals have devised the "Tricks, tricks, confederacie, tricks, I have 'em in my nose, I sent 'hem" (*EH* 5.4.26-27). Touchstone continues to believe that his former apprentice and his son-in-law are incapable of change, so he steels himself to be incapable of mercy. When he arrives at the prison, and listens to Quicksilver's fairly pathetic song, he realizes his mistake and thanks Golding for the deceit: "the deceipt is welcome, especially from thee, whose charitable soule in this hath shewn a high point of wisedom and honesty" (*EH* 5.5.107-109).

Golding further demonstrates his cunning when he arranges to have Francis marry his scorned sweetheart, Sindefy, and for the unscrupulous usurer to "giue her a dower, which shall be all the restitution he shall make of that huge masse, he hath so vnlawfully gotten" (*EH* 5.5.178-179). Touchstone's response to this is to announce "Excellently devised! A good motion!" (*EH* 5.5.168). Touchstone is impressed with Golding's wit and ability to make things work, because he put the household in the right order in the end. Golding, even if he must be slightly dishonest, must enact these things because he is honest. He is not necessarily right because these are the moral things to do (though the marriage of Francis and Sindefy does make her honest woman), but because a comedy must end with a reintegration of the society, which satisfies the paying audience.

Although this reading of Golding makes him more interesting and pivotal to the play than most previous readings, it does not necessarily argue against Howard's argument in *Theater of a City*. Rather, the argument complicates the claims about

Quicksilver's ability to continue to perform in prison. Howard argues that while Quicksilver is in the Counter, "though [he] says he does repent, what the Counter primarily teaches him is the necessity of performing repentance with gusto and a keen eye to the audience if sackcloth and ashes are to lead to forgiveness and, better, to release" (Howard, *Theater* 102). Though this is true of Quicksilver, it is important to note – as Howard does not – the role that Golding plays in this scheme. Not only is Golding invested in his confederates' release and concerned about his fellow apprentices, he is the one who creates the device to lure Touchstone into the Counter to see Quicksilver's performance. Golding's final ambiguity, and Touchstone's welcoming of the stretching of honesty demonstrates that, as with Lovewit and Face, if the servant can be clever and work to the best end of the master, it is admissible occasionally to bend the rules. Thus, the play shows the greater room for flexibility in the relationships between the master and the servant.

The scene in the prison offers a moral, but it is ambiguous in its relationship to the norms of the early modern London merchant's home. Touchstone says about the action that

> Now London, looke about,
> And in this morall, see thy Glasse runne out:
> Behold the carefull father, thrifty sonne,
> The solemne deedes, which each of us haue done,
> The Vsurer punished, and from Fall so steep
> The Prodigall childe reclaimed, and the lost Sheepe. (*EH* 5.5.205-210)

Some of the claims ring utterly false, when considered in terms of the maintenance of the household. It has never been particularly clear that Touchstone has been a "careful father." Certainly, he has one good child, and one good apprentice, but his other daughter and his other apprentice have been out of control. While the play may blame

Mistress Touchstone for the behavior of the nasty Gertrude, the play cannot entirely account for the behavior of Quicksilver, who has been in the family for five years. Touchstone, presumably has not catechized his servant properly; and even if he has, in the basic problem of selecting good servants Touchstone has clearly been a failure. Rather Touchstone must set off a dramatic turn of events to teach his servant properly and Golding actually restores harmony to the Touchstone household, not the householder himself[37]

The other ambiguity in this passage comes from the Biblical references, with unclear referents in the play. Touchstone speaks of the prodigal child and the lost sheep, but he can claim many characters as both lost and prodigal. It seems that he speaks of many of the characters – Gertrude, Sir Petronel and Quicksilver – as his prodigal children. This confirms the treatment of the apprentices in the home as part of the family, as well as the married children of the family. According to some conduct book authors, parents continue to have authority over their children even when the children leave the home. Thus, Touchstone continues to have authority over all members of his household: he has even willingly integrated one member who began as a contracted part of the home into his legal family.

The final statement of the play to the audience seems to further undo the moral of the play. The Epilogue (generally assumed to have been spoken by Quicksilver) remarks to the audience

> O, may you find in this our *Pageant*, here,
> The same contentment, which you came to seeke;
> And as that *Shew* but drawes you once a yeare,
> May this attract you, hether, once a week. (*EH* Epilogue 6-9)

Although the play has supposedly been to teach a certain morality to the apprentices, the play ultimately encourages the apprentices and the others in the audience to come see plays more frequently. While this is certainly something important to one making money through writing and performing plays, he actually asks apprentices to be idle from their work at least once a week, rather than once a year for the more somber pageants in the city. He asks the audience to shirk their afternoon duties, potentially, and come to the playhouse. Thus, while the play seems to suggest that the right way to be an apprentice is to obey and be modest, the play ultimately demands otherwise.

These three plays show but a few of the servants who traipsed across the early modern stage in city comedies. Jasper, Rafe and Golding present a range of servants who engage in mostly good behavior; Face and Quicksilver prove that servants can act their way out of difficult situations, even when looking out for their own best interest. These imagined servants, and their imagined masters, push at the boundaries set by the conduct books. The servants inhabiting all of the plays of this dissertation imagine a more complex world than the world imagined by the conduct book authors. In this imagined space of London, the servants act beyond what is right and what is wrong, imagining more flexible home spaces than the didactic works of the Puritans. Although these servants certainly vary from play to play – some are heroes and some are villains – they all demonstrate the essential point of the complexity of the merchant household. The plays suggest that even in moments of caricature servants have autonomy from their masters. This autonomy, moreover, is no reason for alarm. The very structure of the

place of the servant in the family actually allows for the autonomy and the permissiveness on the part of masters, despite what the conduct books insist.

Notes:

[1] Anderson explains in her preface that she chose to write her book about servants in Shakespeare, because "It is surprising to discover how little attention has been paid to the servants in Shakespeare's plays, although all of his plays feature servants as characters …"The lack of attention paid to the role of servants in literature may stem from several causes. Modern readers, recognizing the contractual model of work for wages as a more 'advanced' form of employer-employee relations, are often uncomfortable with the idea of personal service, which seems to imply 'servitude' and even to verge of slavery. Furthermore, servants in literature often play minor roles, insignificant in terms of the themes and structures of the works they inhabit. Even when servants do play a prominent part in the action, their parts are often stereotyped, as for example, the intriguing slave of Greek and Roman comedy, the villainous tool of Renaissance tragedy, and the comically misspeaking servant of nineteenth-century novels" (Anderson 9).

[2] As my friend, and colleague, Holly Dugan suggests about this passage, "How Would Jesus Smell?"

[3] Christopher Brooks provides statistics on apprentices in London in his article "Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800."

[4] In section two of *The Origins of the English Novel*, "Questions of Virtue," Michael McKeon turns his attention to social categories and the shifting meaning of the word Virtue. He argues that "the gradual discrediting of aristocratic honor, the resolution of its tacit unity into the problematic relation of rank and virtue, birth and worth, was accompanied by the accelerated mobilization of social, intellectual, legal and institutional fictions whose increasingly ostentatious use signaled their incapacity to serve the ideological ends for which they were designed" (133). Under an aristocratic ideology, virtue was associated with noble status. McKeon argues that this notion of honor and nobility shifts from something that is a given for those born of a certain social class to mean something internalized and spiritualized (so that this is something Pamela, the serving girl, might have). In part, this shift results from Protestant teachings; in part, it also relates to the real, historical situation of England. One of McKeon's key points here is the idea of status inconsistency; with social mobility and the rise of the gentry, with the problems of being a younger son with nowhere to go, with the rise of illegitimate births in England in the late 17th century, the understanding of nobility both inward and outward fails to continue in its usefulness or persuasiveness as a social fiction. Even the term "gentry", as McKeon explains, was so inconsistently used that it "reflects the lived complexity of the historical experience, which resists analytic categorization. From this historical situation rose first the progressive ideology, critiquing virtue as an aristocratic function, placing it within the realm of possibility (and probability) of lower classes – virtue becomes a natural feature of people, rather than an assumed feature of the nobles.

Even more, virtue moves from the Machiavellian mode of civic virtue to meaning female chastity. Conservative ideology emerges, critiquing both the aristocratic ideology and the progressive: the two are "linked in their common opposition to aristocratic ideology … [but] acquire an oppositional coherence as rival interpretations of the current crisis of status inconsistency – of its causes as well as its likely remedies" (171). This concern with the term virtue occurs at the same time as a shift in ideology from an absolutist state to a capitalist, a move from feudalism to capitalism. This shift occurs in part, according to McKeon, because of a shift in the nobility themselves – from the *noblesse d'épée* to the *noblesse de robe*. From here, McKeon turns his account to stories of virtue, asking "What kinds of stories did people tell in order to propound most effectively their questions of virtue? How are these stories related to the narrative structures that are most useful in posing questions of truth?" (211). And it is this point that is essential – narrative structure that contributes to the emergence of the novel asks the questions of virtue and truth at the same time. It is a place for the two to come together: they "share a single concern with problems of cultural signification, and the various narrative responses to them follow the fundamental, dialectical pattern of reversal" (267).

[5] Foreigner, in early modern London, meant anyone not of the city itself. Thus, even people from various parts of England are foreigners, not just those immigrants to the city from continental Europe.

[6] This use of the classical forms is well documented, and certainly the selection of plot devices from the ancient plays fit well within the goals for the playwrights. For example, C. G. Thayer argues that Jonson takes parts of his plots from the works of Plautus and Aristophanes, because "In Aristophanes, Jonson found a comic poet intensely concerned with the representation of great social themes" (Thayer 26).

[7] For a full discussion of the character types in Roman New Comedy, see Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*. See in particular his discussion of the character types in comedy on pages 171-176.

[8] I am differentiating here between household servants, such as maids, and apprentices. Both are servants of the household, but both do different things in that household.

[9] In contrast to the modern idea that only the wealthy employ servants, merchant class families in London typically included at least a few household servants in addition to apprentices and journeymen, so that the household consisted of more than biologically related kin. Lawrence Stone suggested that "perhaps two out of every three households contained a resident adolescent who was not of the family" (Stone, *Family Sex and Marriage* 120), which thus contributed to the large number of adolescents in the homes and in London. Many of the popular pamphlets of the time focus on the apprentice riots of the late sixteenth century, suggesting an awareness of, or at least perception of a high population of youthful servants in the capital city. What seems clear from the variety of pamphlets on the topics, as well as a proliferation of references to the riots in the popular literature of the period, is that in some ways citizens of London felt somewhat under siege by the large number of new people to the city. This is particularly true in the case of the young apprentices.

[10] For recent readings of Whitney's work, see Laurie Ellinghausen's "Literary Property and the Single Woman in Isabella Whitney's *A Sweet Nosegay*" and her forthcoming

book on work in the early modern period, Jean Howard's *Theater of the City*, and Crystal Bartolovich's forthcoming work.

[11] This is the potential loss of the organ that so much of male clothing of the time period attempted to emphasize through the codpiece. For a discussion of the way that clothing materially constructed the early modern subject, see *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory* by Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass. (2000)

[12] Abbot, for example, insists that "The servant obeyes as to the Lord, the master rules as the Lord piously. The servant obeyes from the heart willingly; the master rules with a mild and fatherly affection" (Abbot 68).

[13] While this is a concern for the conduct book writers – and the amount of time that Gouge spends on it, and the reactions of the parents that he suggests make it seem as if there is some real situation in the city – it also dovetails with a central trope of classical comedy. Rather than have a young hero, like Orlando in *As You Like It* or even Fenton of *Merry Wives* who is a gentleman faced with an outrageous blocking figure, the city comedies present a servant in the role of the young juvenile lead. This contributes to the comic situation at the expense of the merchant class, but also identifies a reasonable concern for the merchant class, highlighting further their conflicting relationship with the often-impoverished landed gentlemen (or younger brothers) who come to London seeking their fortune (and the merchants' daughters).

[14] See particularly Joy Wiltenberg's *Disorderly women and female power in the street literature of early modern England and Germany* (1992)

[15] For more on the leaky wives of *Chaste Maid*, see Gail Kern Paster's chapter on Middleton's play and Jonson's *Bartholmew Fair* in her seminal work, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*.

[16]Jeffrey Masten suggests that "*The London Merchant* is a … pastiche of genres ('prodigal' plays, romantic comedies, city comedies), and Jasper's appearance as the ghost of himself deploys a revenge-tragedy convention in the service of a marriage-plot" (Masten 349-350)

[17] Janette Dillon contrasts this play to other city comedies, by suggesting that "*The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, first staged at the second Blackfriars Theatre in 1607, takes a step beyond most citizen comedy in deciding to mock shopkeepers and apprentices for their very status rather than for any vices that might be associated with that status" (Dillon 96).

[18] For another article that attempts to separate the one from the other, see Catherine A. Henze's article "Separating Beaumont from Fletcher through Music, Misogyny, and Masque." Jeffrey Knapp questions the current discussions of authorship in his article "What is a Co-author?" The article provides an overview of most of the current books on authorship in the field of early modern drama.

[19] Of course, Beaumont and Fletcher were highly influential to the English Restoration stage. Additionally, this is, of course, Beaumont's play best known to modern audiences. Matthias Bauer argues that Master Merrythought – father of *The London Merchant's* juvenile lead character – is a literary forbearer in his expressions of mirth to later theatrical figures, most notably Doolittle of *Pygmalion* and *My Fair Lady*.

[20] For a discussion of syphilis in early modern England – particularly in *The Faerie Queene* – see Colin Milburn's article "Syphilis in Faerieland: Edmund Spenser and the

Syphilography of Elizabethan England" and Louis F. Qualtiere and William W. E. Slight's article "Contagion and Blame in Early Modern England: the Case of the French Pox."

[21] Mistress Merrythought says to her husband "You are a gentleman, Charles, and an old man, and father of two children; and I myself (though I say it) by my mother's side niece to a worshipful gentleman, and a conductor" (3.493-496)

[22] This list also correlates to the age and maturity of the children.

[23] Even Ophelia recognizes the problem of servants marrying their masters' daughters. She says (though having lost her mind at this point) "It is the false steward that stole his master's daughter" (*Hamlet* 4.5.173).

[24] In " 'A small-beer health to his second day': Playwrights, Prologues, and First Performances in Early Modern Theater," Tiffany Stern suggests that such a prologue as the one the first player attempts to give here indicates that this would be the first performance of *The London Merchant*.

[25] Face explains that "While there dies one, a week, / O the plague, he's safe, from thinking toward London" (1.1.183-184).

[26] See, for example, James E. Savage's *Ben Jonson's Basic Comic Characters and other Essays*, Ian Donaldson's *Jonson's Magic Houses: Essays in Interpretation*, C. G. Thayer's article "Theme and Structure in *The Alchemist*," and Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays*.

[27] Frye suggests, in discussing this form of comedy that "One sometimes gets the impression that the audience of Plautus and Terence would have guffawed uproariously through the Passion" (Frye 178).

[28] Ian Donaldson points out that "The action of *The Alchemist* is played out within strict limits both of time and space… the entire action, apart from the scenes in Act V in the lane outside, takes place within a single room of Lovewit's house" (Donaldson, "Jonson's Magic Houses" 74).

[29] The wily servant character of Jonson's play, *The Alchemist*, does in many ways seems to fit what Frye describes in Roman Comedy as the character who helps the *eiron* (hero) figure achieve a victory. Frye describes this character as "almost always a tricky slave (*dolosus servus*) [who] in Renaissance comedy … becomes the scheming valet who is so frequent in Continental plays" (Frye 173). Frye further explains that "Elizabethan comedy had another type of trickster" ranging from the "light-hearted" Puck or the "malignant" Don John (Frye 173). This character type certainly fits Jeremy Face of *The Alchemist* in that the character ultimately helps his master gain fortune and a new wife. Moreover, Face's attempt to trick his master, is, as Elizabeth Cook notes in her edition of the play, similar to a trick played by Tranio in Plautus's play *Mostellaria*. Face matches with the wily slave characters in Jonson's particular (peculiar) adherence to his classical background.

[30] Paul D. Cannan argues that the commonplace that Jonson initiates the creation of authorship through his publication is overstated. Cannan explains, "That so many of Jonson's contemporaries experimented with prefatory writing suggests that we may still be exaggerating the stigma associated with print during this period" (Cannan 179). For a thorough discussion of the issues of Jonson's assertions of authorship, see Joseph Loewenstein's *Ben Jonson and Possessive Authorship*.

[31] The format of this opening is a clear nod to the Roman comedy: although the acrostics may have been added later to Plautus's plays, presumably Jonson would have been aware of them in the printed format of the Latin comedy. Whether or not this is the case, the fact remains that the acrostic that Jonson uses recalls the acrostic that introduces, for instance, Plautus's *Captivi*. See for example, the Bryn Mawr Latin Commentaries edition of Plautus's *Captivi*, edited by Gail Smith. She mentions that the acrostic that introduces this play is a later addition, but that no one knows who actually wrote it.

[32] Critics generally discount Webster and Dekker's play as something that is not quite city comedy, even though it attempts to be – generally, the agreement seems to be that this play is a piece of "doggerel." My suspicion is that this response to Webster and Dekker's play, which is admittedly over-the-top, comes more out of a sense that Jonson thought the play was horrid, and so all the rest of us should think so too. This is Jonson as tastemaker. Moreover, the importance of the collaboration is important in much of the scholarship. As Jeffrey Masten says "In a scholarly field dominated by the single figure of Shakespeare, it is easily forgotten that collaboration was the Renaissance English theater's dominant mode of textual production" (Masten 339).

[33] Francis Quicksilver's gentility is ultimately called into question in the play, when Sindefy suggests that she was "stolen from [her] friends, which were worshipful and of good account, by a prentice in the habit and disguise of a gentleman" (5.1.8-10).

[34] For a Bahktinian reading, see Alizon Bruning's article about the two apprentices, " 'In his gold I shine': Jacobean Comedy and the art of the mediating trickster."

[35] Many of the playwrights – including obviously Dekker – ennoble the trades by having gentlemen take them up for various purposes. One example of a gentleman taking up a trade out of necessity appears in Heywood's *A Shoemaker, A Gentleman*, which chronicles the experiences of Crispin and Crispianus. The two, of course, are also important in Shakespeare's St. Crispin's day speech in *Henry V* (4.3.18-67).

[36] Northrop Frye explains that "The tendency of comedy is to include as many people as possible in its final society: the blocking characters are more often reconciled or converted than simply repudiated. Comedy often includes a scapegoat ritual which gets rid of some irreconcilable character, but exposure and disgrace make for pathos or even tragedy" (Frye 165).

[37]One episode of Fox's now-cancelled series, "Arrested Development" presents the now-jailed father's tendency to educate his children in ethics by "teaching them lessons" that are scarring. When his sons try to do the same – when Michael tries to teach his son George Michael a lesson, or when GOB tries to teach his brother Michael as lesson – the lessons fail utterly, and the patriarch teaches both sons a lesson. This extreme measure reminds me of Touchstone's attempts to bring out the repentance.

Epilogue

> Riding through the city on my bike all day
> Cause the filth took away my license
> It doesn't get me down and I feel OK
> Cause the sights that I'm seeing are priceless
>
> Everything seems to look as it should
> But I wonder what goes on behind doors …
>
> You might laugh you might frown
> Walkin' round London town
>
> Sun is in the sky oh why oh why ?
> Would I wanna be anywhere else …
> When you look with your eyes
> Everything seems nice
> But if you look twice you can see it's all lies (Lily Allen, "LDN" 2006)

London remains a contradictory city. In "LDN," Lily Allen sings about her observations of a city where at first glance, everything appears wonderful, but on a second look, reveals itself as a repulsive place: a dapper fellow and his girlfriend are really a pimp and his hooker; the young man who appears to help the old lady instead attacks her to steal her valuables. But, as Lily Allen sings, "that's city life." Although city life has changed radically since the seventeenth century, something remains of those complex nexuses of interactions. People see what they will see in their city life.

Even more powerful is the draw of the city itself. Books continue to appear detailing both the past and the present of the city – and this dissertation is no exception. A simple glance at books published in the last few years will reveal a variety of popular histories that detail our fascination with London in any era, such as Peter Ackroyd's *London: The Biography* (2000), Maureen Waller's *1700; Scenes from London Life* (2001), Liza Picard's *Elizabethan London* (2003), Steven Johnson's *The Ghost Map* (2006) and Erik Larson's *Thunderstruck* (2006). Movies and music continually draw us into London as well: Tim Burton will revisit the bloody streets of nineteenth century

London in his adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, due out later this fall. Time and again, we find ourselves drawn into the city, with all of its ugliness revealed alongside its grandeur.

This dissertation has examined three relationships within a very select time and environment within that city. The family in the city of the seventeenth century resided at the intersection of practices heard from the pulpit and of generic forms those listeners might see in the theaters. Upon both of these ideals lie the inevitable valences of authority for the householder. Because the householder's relationship with each member of his family necessitates differing levels of responsibility, the householder likely maintains different expectations for each. Even though I have isolated specific plays and relationships, I want to note that each relationship affects the other relationships, compounding the complex interactions within the home. What happens between the husband and wife affects the children; what happens between the parent and the child affects the servants; what happens between the master and the servant affects the wife. This complex web of relationships is merely one small part of a much larger social web in a vastly growing city. The treatment of the family as society in small, however, allows for a modern interpretation of the city, or at least a vital part of the city for many of its citizens.

At the same time, the range of relationships and responses in these ten plays suggests that this reading does more than merely attempt to understand perceptions of the family in the period. Families most likely resembled neither the Allwits nor the Overreaches, but most families failed to live up to the ideals of the conduct books. Putting the two together allows for a range of possible, socially acceptable behaviors that

stem from both a concern for reputation outside of the home and a desire for concord within the home. These plays make clear the complexity of living in the city household – and thus the complexity of relationships that made up the real part of the city, the people. While ideals might be preferable, the actual relationships in the home require the flexibility that the plays suggest for new inhabitants of the city.

Certainly, this dissertation has omitted large segments of London society and has ignored a variety of plays – and even certain relationships within the plays presented here. A look through other plays by Middleton, for example, opens up a variety of other familial relationships within London: Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and *A Mad World My Masters* include different familial relationships and families of different social status. While all worthy of study, these families experience London differently from the merchant class family. London applies different pressure on the gentry family or on the impoverished family. Even those aspirant merchant families, like the Yellowhammers or the Overreaches, remain grounded in their London merchant roots.

Still, I want this work to be being a larger discussion of the family in London. While much work has been done on the family, as I outlined in chapter one, much remains undiscovered about the London family, no matter the class status. The London family experience is different from the family experience in the country, but much of the work on the family has focused on the country family. By selecting the familial relationships most covered in the conduct books, this dissertation has attempted to begin to move away from the interests of the country household. Although this dissertation has omitted certain segments of the merchant class household, it has begun certain work that has, I think, a promising field of study. For example, maidservants – abundant in the

period – are absent from many of the dramas, but not entirely so. Certainly, a discussion of this position will be necessary to gain an even fuller understanding of the London family. The London family is complex because London itself is complex; no single study of the family will be absolutely exhaustive.

What I hope that I have shown, all in all, is that the generic constructs of the plays are useful in discussing the early modern situation. Certainly, many constructs are completely conventional in western literature. At the same time, certain conventions of western literature were popular, simply because these constructs fit the experience of the audience members of the time. The generic conventions of the plays are important because they reflect the London experience. Looking at those plays through the lens of the conduct books shows a rich, flexible city life that is more complicated than our initial response to those caricatures. That is, after all, city life.

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VITA

Born in Charleston, South Carolina, Emily Ruth Isaacson grew up in Georgetown, South Carolina, Memphis and Minneapolis, eventually graduating from high school in Aurora, Illinois. She earned her bachelor's degree at Augustana College and her Master's degree and Ph.D. at the University of Missouri at Columbia.