

GOING COMMERCIAL: AGENCY IN 17TH CENTURY ENGLISH DRAMA

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation's aim is to reveal how essential economic mechanics were to playwrights when it came to depicting agency. Rising commercialization in the seventeenth century prompted playwrights to appropriate market behaviors in London as a new discourse for agency. Commerce serves as a metaphor for every part of daily life, and a new kind of "commercial" agency evolves that predicated autonomy upon the exchange networks in which a person participates. Initially, this new agency appears as a variation on the trickster. By the end of the century, playwrights have created a new model for autonomy and a new kind of hero to employ it: the entrepreneur. My chapters chart the defining points in the development of commercial agency, each with a representative text or texts. In chapter II, I analyze how the Jacobean gallant, a variation on the trickster, sells himself as a desirable commodity to gain wealth and influence, the conditions he needs to liberate himself and control his own destiny (*Eastward Ho*). Chapter III examines characterizations of businesswomen in seventeenth century drama, one of the primary shifts in tone that accompanied the development of commercial agency as playwrights became more skilled in its portrayal (*Antony and Cleopatra*). Frequently regarded as prostitutes in Elizabethan plays, entrepreneurial women are often seen in later periods as dramatic, even tragic, heroes. When the stage closed during the years of 1642-1659, the

print market was playwrights' main source of income, and it was soon adapted to promote drama and ensure its future production. Chapter IV suggests that the success of William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* was due to how its preface implicated customers of the print edition in its stage production. Chapter V marks the emergence of the entrepreneurial rake as a romantic and comic hero. The chapter argues that the egalitarian haggling that ends *The Man of Mode* and *The Rover*, which is conspicuously absent from *The Country Wife*, is presented as the ideal basis for any loving, successful, and profitable marriage.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth-century playhouse served playwrights as a discursive space in which new kinds of *commercialized* agency and identities were enabled. Many of the characters of seventeenth-century English drama are not defined by what they own or by their pedigree but by their role in commercial transactions. Characters frequently make themselves into commodities to find agency or liberate themselves from others. These “self-commodified” characters craft themselves into the things their prospective buyers long for and will offer almost anything. Even characters that do not self-commodify nonetheless find agency in market mechanisms by turning haggling and the flexible attitude towards cost it entails into self-empowerment.

In this way, these characters display a form of self-fashioning that is largely limited to the seventeenth-century stage. Currently, Stephen Greenblatt’s theory of self-fashioning is generally accepted as a paradigm for the entirety of Renaissance drama, but demonstrations of its axioms have largely been limited to the sixteenth century. Greenblatt’s theory proposes that “the written word is self-consciously embedded in specific communities, life situations, structures of power” (7) that shape the forms which identities and agency will take. One of the goals of this study is to extend our understanding of self-fashioning to the increasingly commercialized society of seventeenth-century England.

More broadly, this study argues that depictions of agency in seventeenth-century drama reflect a greater preoccupation in English drama with how the mechanisms of the market enable and maintain agency and even sustain the dramatic tradition itself through

times of political and religious discord. Commerce serves these playwrights as a metaphor for every part of daily life and becomes a tool by which they imagine a new kind of agency that predicated autonomy upon the exchange networks in which a person participates. Seventeenth-century plays often envision everyday social relations as commercial networks in which the demands from persons wanting the objects, influences, or even the bodies of another bind the population together. Identity and agency are put into relation with the economic principles of supply and demand, pricing and trade, and speculation and investment. By the time the century ends in 1700, playwrights have begun to regard commercialism as a dominant paradigm for power and self-determination, a paradigm that lays the groundwork for eighteenth-century efforts to root British imperial might in the strength of its coin at home and abroad.

* * *

Shakespeare's *A Merchant of Venice* (1597) offers us a chilling statement on the nature of investment: When Bassanio asks Antonio to act as guarantor for a sizable loan from the moneylender Shylock, the young nobleman unwittingly shackles Antonio's wellbeing to a man who is as bloodthirsty as he is ruthless. Shylock famously demands Antonio pay a "pound of flesh" when the latter man does not pay on time. Luckily, Antonio narrowly escapes being cut into pieces due to the timely aid of the witty, if deceptive, Portia, who tricks Shylock into thinking his property and claims forfeit. Though Antonio escapes with his flesh intact, it was a near thing. The play offers at best a pessimistic commentary on the ways that investment and lending obligations can prove disastrous and possibly fatal.

In the late sixteenth century England's economy was beginning to boom and obligations between parties from investment, lending, and other forms of economic activity like the one Shakespeare depicts were beginning to proliferate in London's markets. With the growing economy came increased prices, and the value of certain objects, namely textiles, swiftly grew. So valued were textiles that their theft had its own moniker, "hooker" or "angler", for the long hooks fabric thieves used to pluck clothes out of windows or over fences (Vincent 189). To the Elizabethan mind, clothes were much like Antonio's cargo, investments whose rewards could be lucrative but whose failures could literally destroy a person's body. Shakespeare's Perdita reflects in *The Winter's Tale* (1611), "this robe of mine does change my disposition" (4.4.134), and this was certainly so to many English of the period. Susan Vincent, Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass argue that England's thriving textile market empowered the widespread use of apparel for money, inheritance, investment, gender, and social rank. So intimately connected were clothes to public personality that to appear disheveled among elite peers could be akin to being spiritually or morally disheveled.

Anxieties about the perils of tying one's fate to investments like those that Shakespeare depicts were commonplace in the late Elizabethan period. The booming economy was only just beginning and the culture and its monarch did not yet appear comfortable with the close connections and cause-effect relations that the economy was forming amongst the populace. These fears began to change when England's economy was forced to diversify and expand its trade economy in the face of a declining textile market. Up until the latest years of the sixteenth century, England profited greatly from its robust textile exports to the rest of Europe, and particularly to Antwerp, the trade

center for European textiles throughout much of the sixteenth century (Bruchey 27). In the late 1560s, religious discord arose in the Netherlands and by 1572, the city and its country were at war (Bruchey 27); Antwerp's economy collapsed and England's textile riches with it (Bruchey 28). England did try to redirect its textiles to Russia, but the profits were never as good as when it shipped to Antwerp (Bruchey 28). England's textile boom was over by the early 1600s, but new investments were on the horizon. The early seventeenth century saw diverse trade in all sorts of resources, supplies, and insurance. Joint-stock companies arose, as did a thriving stock market. More than ever before, investors began to consider not just the risk to themselves when allocating funds, but the risk to their allied investors as well. With the turn of the century and the ascension of a new monarch to the throne in 1603, English attitudes about the connections formed by the market began to shift as the populace, and its playwrights in particular, began to combat investment fears brought on by the new economy by mounting a comprehensive dramatic investigation into the causes, conditions, and effects of trade—commerce—on agency and self-expression.

At the center of these efforts was a new, “modern capitalist” conception of the commodity and commerce in general in which “credit rather than commodity money” was the standard unit of exchange (Toporowski 44). Credit value is derived from symbolic markers like bank notes and IOUs that signify an otherwise absent capital, while commodity money manifests its value from the precious metals that make it up; the value of a gold coin is equal to the worth of the metals that compose it, while the value of a Bank of England note is more fluid. A banknote is completely dependent on the trust customers place in the Bank of England's capacity to pay the amount the note represents

and the frequency with which that note is exchanged. High levels of exchanges indicate high trust in the bank notes and greater worth. The move towards a financial system in which trust played such an integral role in value resulted in what Christine Desan calls a “monetary revolution”:

The 17th century opened with the money that the English had used since the Middle Ages. People carried metal coin that had been purchased at the mint and they accepted tallies that anticipated revenues due to the government, passing them on or cashing them in. By the end of the century, the English exchanged new forms of currency. Their cash included coin minted free-of-charge and banknotes. Their public debt took novel shape in interest-bearing instruments that could be traded easily and impersonally (231).

What Desan describes is a paradigmatic shift from material capital, coins, to symbolic, immaterial capital, bank notes, stocks, and other credit (debt) markers. In the new economy, debt was no longer something to be feared for the losses it implied, but welcomed for the profits it could grow. Debt was a commodity to be traded that paid off when the loan it represented was repaid with interest.

Present scholarship has located traces of ambient commercialism throughout much of seventeenth-century drama that frequently places concerns about debt, investment, and, most of all, trade, foremost. Jonathan Walker suggests that early modern plays “represent an unofficial discourse addressing tensions in the period brought about by contradictions and upheavals in political, religious, and economic relations” (5). Bradley Ryner depicts the “Renaissance playhouse as an extra-cranial technology that

afforded diverse ways of conceptualizing economic activity [...] representational techniques available to playwrights could facilitate a more nuanced exploration of economic systems” than tract pamphlets. “Plays” of the seventeenth-century, Ryner continues, “drew attention to the tension between the aspects of the world taken into account by a particular representation of commerce (what that representation ‘internalises’ or ‘frames’) and those aspects it neglects. Helen Higbee’s analysis of *Byrsa Basilica* suggests, “the literary and socio-economic spheres of production interpenetrate [in] the production of knowledge” (153). Plays like *Byrsa Basilica* that feature prominent economic relations, she argues, “familiarized” Londoners “with some of the intricacies of London business life,” and in so doing, “opens up the possibility of a nontraditional [commercial] way in which scholars might serve the commonweal” (154). Valerie Forman more broadly asserts, “plays themselves participated in the shaping and development of economic theory and practices [...] drama participated in developing new economic theories and *enabled* overseas trade and investment” by theorizing them onstage (2).

If seventeenth century plays were truly part of an “unofficial” economic discourse as Walker suggests and playwrights as active participants in theorizing economic models as the others indicate, then it seems reasonable to posit that the century’s playwrights not only drew upon the economic discourses of their times for their plots but also deliberately wove economic considerations into them. Moreover, if these plays truly did “familiarize” Londoners with the values and operations of the city’s “business life” as Higbee argues, then it is not too far-fetched to suggest that playwrights were cognizant of the ways that their drama could enable, and be enabled by, the sale of their works to a paying public.

The crux of self-fashioning is that those who pursue it must inevitably fail to distinguish themselves as “unique,” since whatever identity they construct for themselves must be restricted to only those kinds of personas, “whose range was strictly delineated by the social and ideological systems in force” (Greenblatt 256). This is not necessarily a bad thing for us scholars. Examining how a character strives to be unique, what personas s/he shapes, provides insight into the dominant ideological paradigms of the period and how playwrights positioned the individual in relation to these paradigms and of the past.

The decline of England’s textile trade in the late 1590s and early 1600s opened a void in English society that would soon be filled by trade and investment. A number of studies on the relations between London’s business life and its stage in the early century by Brian Gibbons, Karen Newman, Douglas Canfield, and Theodore Leinwand suggest that the burgeoning English trade economy was a rich source for inspiration and self-expression. The stage that these scholars depict is one in which market operations and market forces like supply and demand became expressions of agency for the oppressed, and the businessman was a force to be reckoned with. The once derided prostitute label is in these plays a buzzword for women who were successful merchants and to the ways those who label them are outmoded by their entrepreneurism. Men with deep pockets find themselves inadvertently funding the very rogues that fleece them of their properties and wives. Heroes who are too big to fail walk the streets with unlimited credit, because they are so greatly in debt to everyone that their failures will collapse everyone’s futures, and, therefore, investors willingly fork over more and more capital.

The demand for one person by another provides many an entrepreneurial character in these plays with an avenue to escape oppression by leveraging the desire for

their persons as an opportunity to leverage their own demands. By the mid-century, the London print market became a means by which citizens could collectively shape a dramatic cultural legacy through their commerce and distribution of its drama amongst each other. Examining England's seventeenth century dramatic tradition with an eye towards its economic themes and motifs reveals playwrights working towards a new model of individual agency that predicates autonomy on the commercial networks in which a person participates. In a commercial economy such as that of London at the turn of the century, agents regularly transact with one another. That is, they exchange goods or favors with one another. Within a transaction, value is often relative to how much the buyer is wishing to pay, and if the seller in a transaction can convince the other that a desired good is rare or in high demand, the seller may be able to get the buyer to offer far more in payment than was originally intended. This "relative" aspect of the economic transaction allows for considerable power on the part of the seller if s/he is good at manipulating value through supply and demand and clever persuasion. Additionally, if a buyer does not have all the information and the seller does, a savvy seller can control the entire transaction by making the value of a good be anything s/he wants it to be.

But, as powerful and dominating as sellers can be, they are not the only characters that find agency in commerce. In plays of the late century, characters transact with lovers as knowledgeable and proficient as themselves. What exchange offers both is an opportunity to articulate their own version of marriage, one that is bound not by the explicit restrictions of a marital contract but by the flexibility afforded a transaction by continual bargaining. Commerce represents a freedom that was hitherto unimagined in English drama before the seventeenth century. Beginning with the Jacobean period

(1603-1625) and proceeding through the stage-ban of the Interregnum (1642-1660) and the sexualized politics of the Restoration (1660-1700), playwrights were fascinated by the ways that economic patterns from the market could be mapped onto everyday life. The characters of the 1660s onward are able to impose their desires upon the world around them through their skillful bargaining and investment. For them, commerce is not just a way to find agency, it is the means by which agency is expressed. By the end of the century, a new kind of hero emerges: the entrepreneur.

* * *

While the prevalence of the market in plays at the turn of and throughout the century attests to a widespread and long-lasting recognition of the market as a part of London daily life, it is not clear exactly why playwrights turned so regularly to business for their dramatic content. Brian Gibbons suggests that playwrights did so to satirically critique the “social and moral corruption and folly” of their age (25), but they also may have been influenced by events outside the economic sphere that regularly destabilized their social and political relations. Though today we view any mode of life premised upon trade and investment as unreliable because of the uncertainty of the stock market, English citizens of the seventeenth century did not necessarily feel the same. Theirs was a century fraught with religious and political discord. The generally understood mechanisms of supply and demand, investment, and return could very well have felt stable by comparison.

England’s seventeenth century was far from simple. Several major events mark the period and establish a wide range of religious and political concerns that destabilized England to a measurable degree. One of the most influential in terms of the political,

religious, and social tensions it sparked, Conrad Russell suggests, was the Bishops' Wars of 1639-1640. The Bishops' Wars concerned the question of what kind of church government should exist in Scotland, the Episcopal (with Bishops) system favored by Charles I or the Presbyterian (no Bishops) system favored by the Scottish parliament (Russell 111). Meanwhile, there were three separate civil rebellions in Ireland, Scotland, and England in which each country intervened in the others' affairs in an attempt to influence the outcome of the conflicts described above, Scotland in the Irish rebellion in 1642 and England in 1640, 1643, 1648, and 1651, and Ireland in England in 1643 (Russell 113).

Adding to the flame were religious concerns. Thomas Wentworth overturned the 1615 Irish articles in an attempt to stamp out Calvinism in 1633 (Staunton 117) and bring that church more in line with Episcopal doctrine. At the same time, Puritanism—many of its followers Calvinists—grew in power within England (Staunton 117). There were other religious issues such as the marriage of Charles I—a Protestant king of a Protestant country—to the Roman Catholic French princess, Henrietta Maria, in 1625 (Cust 252).

Increasing these difficulties was an uneasy relationship between crown and Parliament that was often just short of militant. While previous monarchs, Elizabeth and James I, summoned the two houses of Parliament regularly and thereby provided an opportunity for the houses to air their concerns, Charles I did not care for the governing body (Carlin 103). During the “Eleven year tyranny” from 1629 to 1640, he refused to assemble Parliament at all (Carlin 89). When he finally did so in 1640 to raise funds for a war against Scotland, the two houses took the occasion to tell him of their grievances

(Carlin 96). In response, Charles I immediately dissolved the Parliament. After a failed attempt by the king to arrest members for treason in 1642, Civil War broke out.

Given the prominence of religious concerns in the events leading up to the English Civil War, it perhaps not surprising that the role of Puritan thought must be acknowledged. The rise of Cromwell, himself a Puritan, and the subsequent development of the Commonwealth into a state espousing a very Puritan-like anti-Catholic doctrine suggests a radical departure from the tenets of Charles I, possibly due to lingering associations of his court with Catholic sentiment from the Popish plot that spurred “Londoners” to give “parliament their allegiance” (Lindley 74). Due to a strong Puritan *ethos* social reform became as much a target as religious reform. The most well-known—and relevant to a discussion of English theatre—was an act by the Puritan-led Parliament to ban public plays for lasciviousness:

The distracted Estate of England, threatened with a Cloud of Blood by a Civill War, call for all possible Means to appease and avert the Wrath of God [...] whereas Publike Sports do not well agree with Publike Calamities, nor Publike Stage-playes with the Seasons of Humiliation, this being an Exercise of sad and pious solemnity, and the other being Spectacles of Pleasure, too commonly expressing lascivious Mirth, and Levitie, it is therefore thought fit [...] publike Stage-playes shall cease.¹

In 1648, an additional ordinance put teeth into this ban by making all actors criminals or “rogues”.²

These ordinances were “a calculated attack on a royalist institution” clothed in the religious rhetoric of the times (Kastan 170). Despite a long tradition in scholarship that

attributes the closing of London theaters exclusively to anti-dramatic Puritan sentiments, Butler and Kastan assert that this is unlikely. Puritan sentiment was not unilaterally opposed to theatre during the period (Butler 93). While the Puritan efforts did attempt to displace any lingering Episcopalian and Catholic sentiment in London life with a strict Puritan ethos, their primary effect was to distance London from the habits and dramatic predilections of Charles I. Charles I was a fan of theatre, particularly the lavish court plays known as “masques.” Before coming to the throne, Charles I was already patron for a troupe of actors, “Prince Charles’s Men,” and, after becoming king, he continued the patronage of his father for “The King’s Men,” the troupe that had once included Shakespeare.

The First English Civil War led to the capture of Charles I in 1648 and his execution in 1649. A new government was formed, the Commonwealth, with Oliver Cromwell designated its head in 1653 as “Lord Protector.” However, the Commonwealth was not to last. Richard Cromwell, Oliver’s son and successor, was not a strong leader and was quickly removed. After further failures, the Parliament dissolved itself on March 16, 1660. On April 4th, 1660, England voted to reinstitute the monarchy by placing Charles II on the throne, thereby restoring the Stuart line. The “Restoration” of Charles II heralded a return of public theatre. The king reopened London theatres, but with a crucial stipulation. Women, he ordered, must be allowed to act. Thenceforth, women became a regular and popular feature on the English stage.

The king’s brother, the Catholic James II ascended the throne in 1685 but only lasted three years before he was himself disposed by his Protestant nephew, William of

Orange, in the Glorious Revolution of 1688. William of Orange, now William III, would finish out the century.

* * *

Generally, the century can be conceptualized as having three distinct attitudes that chart an evolving and increasingly integral fascination with entrepreneurial commerce. It moves from being a novelty regarded with suspicion at the beginning of the century to being the requisite factor in creating an equitable and happy marriage by 1700. As playwrights and the English populace became acclimatized to the presence of the market and its concerns in their daily routines, the portrayals of economic mechanisms become more naturalized. In the early century the features of commercial investment like debt and loans often appear. By the mid-century, we have to look at the mechanisms and relationships with which playwrights associate drama to find the economic underpinnings. By the late century, the incorporation of economic forces frequently takes metaphoric expression. That is, in the early century it is easy to recognize lender and borrower, investor and trader, but by the late century playwrights expect us to recognize that social relations resemble those of the market. While the connection between everyday life is perhaps less clear in plays of the late century, the metaphorical dimensions playwrights attach to commerce allows them to express a complex and nuanced commentary on the nature of marital relations that would not otherwise have been able to articulate to audiences of the early years.

At the core of the dramatic use of commerce in the seventeenth century is a consistent concern about the role of agency in a commercialized world. As Shakespeare ably demonstrates in *Merchant of Venice*, commerce can very easily be disempowering.

How does one cope with the loss of material possessions, wealth, property, and freedom of movement when poor investment or trade threatens it? How might commerce empower persons whose means of agency is otherwise curtailed by others who think them trophies of conquest or objects to abuse? Can playwrights draw upon the power of a buying public to spread and garner popularity for their ideas? These questions are what playwrights take up in the construction of a new kind of agency fit for the commercial age of eighteenth-century British imperialism that follows: business.

The first two sections of this text examine plays of the years 1603-1625 during what we commonly refer to as the "Jacobean" period after the reigning monarch, James I. During these years, playwrights were still a little cautious about the growing influence of London's markets and the financial opportunities it offered yet also optimistic, an ambivalent response that spawned two corresponding figurative schemes, the gallant and the prostitute, through which playwrights organized and articulated their analysis of London commercialism. Each of the first two sections takes as its respective focus one of these schemes.

Chapter II focuses on the use of self-commodification by gallants in City Comedy. The City Comedy gallant embodies the commercial ambivalence of his age. While he is as riotous and devoted to a life of leisure as his real world counterpart, he is a kind of vice figure for playwrights who is perfectly willing to cheat and swindle to get ahead in life. He is also a sympathetic hero whose wit cannot help but charm readers. Those he cons are often greedy usurers, misers, or family members whose appetites make them far worse a human being than he will ever be. Typically he is plagued by great debt and operates throughout much of his play as an outsider.

The gallant, Griswold suggests, makes "a social virtue out of an economic necessity" (669, and he does this through a process I term "self-commodification." In chapter II, I explore how gallants make themselves desirable to others, then use that desire to trick said others into offering the gallant exactly what he wants. The gallant is in this way a con artist, with his chief trick being to take on the role of a trade commodity that his creditors greatly desire. The chapter takes as its focus the gallant Quicksilver from Ben Jonson, John Marston, and George Chapman's *Eastward Ho* for its at times explicit depictions of Quicksilver making himself desirable to those he is indebted towards. Quicksilver is not necessarily a true gallant in that he is an apprentice, but he thinks himself one and tries to live accordingly with the expected results. He is deep in debt to a usurer and soon disowned by his goldsmith master, Touchstone, for his irresponsible lifestyle. Throughout the play, Quicksilver employs self-commodification by making himself desirable to first the usurer and then his former master. Quicksilver uses the influence he gains from his status as a valuable commodity to loosen the usurer's hold on the apprentice's agency. Eventually, Quicksilver lands in prison. There he sells himself to his master as a virtuous son, and the master, thoroughly convinced he has purchased a reformed man, frees Quicksilver from prison.

Quicksilver's self-commodification and those of gallants like him are representative of a new commercial awareness that began to recognize that identity or, in Quicksilver's case, a persona, was of value in the market and could be traded on and invested in as a commodity. Quicksilver's exploits show us how playwrights were beginning to explore the new kinds of agency enabled by London's new economy and the benefits and pitfalls of doing so. In the case of Quicksilver and gallants like him,

playwrights encourage us to ask whether an agency that empowers persons to escape the punishments their lifestyle inflicts upon them is truly worthwhile. Quicksilver is indebted to a usurer because he refuses to be an apprentice and because he borrows and spends outrageously. He is a con-artist, after all, and his self-commodification efforts result in deceit for all they do, at one point, make mockery of an immoral usurer. But while deceptive and at times immoral, Quicksilver's efforts also restore moral order to his society. The immoral character is punished and he, the apprentice, is welcomed back by his master.

Chapter III builds upon the conclusions of the first by exploring how playwrights depict self-commodification as agency for women who are oppressed for reasons that often have little to do with their personal choices. Like chapter II, it focuses on self-commodifying characters, but the focus is on women who are labelled and treated as prostitutes by men in Jacobean drama on the whole, and how these women embrace their status as commodities and trick their desirers into freeing the women they seek to buy from their oppressive situations. To the playwrights of this early period, the prostitute was a symbol for an enterprising woman, a woman who was unafraid to trade with men even when the only way men would do so was in regard to her body. Unlike gallant portrayals, the women that are attached to the prostitute scheme receive almost unilaterally positive treatment.

The characters under examination are rarely prostitutes. Most are upper-class women who possess no financial incentive to turn to prostitution. This is not to say the women are well-off. Most are in an oppressive situation of some sort. Maria in John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize* (1611), for instance, would not have any voice in her

marriage if she did not resist. Unlike the gallant, whose financial straits are his own fault, these women rarely have a choice in their situations. Additionally, though men in plays consistently regard these women as prostitutes, the overall portrayals are almost uniformly positive. There are implications that playwrights may have found the question of commerce for women a little more clear cut. Even when a woman depicted is actually a prostitute, such as the character Vittoria in John Webster's *The White Devil* (1612), she is awarded the higher moral ground.

Moreover, what these women "sell" is not their physical bodies in most cases but the idea of their bodies. That is, these women convince men who try to deny them voice or autonomy to provide the women the money, favors, property, and other things they need to liberate themselves from these men's clutches without any intent of ever actually giving themselves to the men. To Jacobean playwrights, the prostitute scheme represents the commercial woman, the skilled entrepreneur who leverages her body, or the idea of it, to great advantage. What the men buy is only a fiction, an illusionary persona of a passive, obedient, bought woman who will capitulate to their desires.

While some of chapter III surveys the many women treated like prostitutes in Jacobean drama, the bulk of the chapter examines a single representative play, Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607). While many plays depict patriarchal attitudes that condemn women as mercenaries who will sell their bodies to the highest bidder, nowhere are these attitudes more apparent than they are in *Antony and Cleopatra* when Caesar repeatedly tries to buy Cleopatra's loyalty away from Antony first with flattery, then by jewels, and last by favors. Because the character of Caesar is so insistent, and Cleopatra so vocal, the play awards us ample opportunity to observe exactly how

Cleopatra bends him and other men to her will by making conditions for her purchase. Though Cleopatra dies, it is her triumphs and the triumphs of women like her in Jacobean drama that we remember, women who find the agency in the market they need to attain the voice and will men seek to oppress. Unfortunately, as was true of the gallant, the associations playwrights draw between feminine agency and prostitution attach to them their suspicions of the market, and we are left with their lingering questions as to whether an economy that encourages men to treat women as prostitutes, even a symbolic prostitute, is ideal.

Chapter IV sets Jacobean attitudes about commerce aside. This pause is a historical necessity, because English dramatic tradition was interrupted by the Interregnum ban on stage plays and was forced to pursue a different avenue towards success: the print market. Playwrights' attitudes toward the commercial dynamics of the print market were more favorable than those of Jacobean playwrights, likely due to the necessity of print to the continued survival of drama in English life. As live audiences became readers, the demand and production of printed versions of older plays from the Jacobean and Caroline periods boomed. Folio editions of established playwrights like Shakespeare and Jonson saw multiple reprints. With the printing boom arose a new acceptance of the printed word as an authoritative standard for tracking the English dramatic tradition. Former playwrights and fans of the stage found in print a way to make their voices heard. Through print, they began articulating a new theory of English drama that associated literary merit with the widespread distribution of printed drama.

Foremost amongst these print playwrights was William Davenant, a former playwright of the Caroline court (1625-1642). Davenant saw in the printed market a way

to get a play around the Commonwealth censors. In 1656, Davenant produced a “play” called *The Siege of Rhodes* (1656). To protect his play from the government, Davenant described it as an opera in "recitative," or spoken music. Rather than merely producing the play and hoping for the best, as it were, Davenant turned to the printed market. He distributed copies of the manuscript in advance of the production. Attached to the playtext was a preface in which Davenant depicted the play as a didactic portrayal of English virtue. As part of this argument, Davenant makes a bold and innovative appeal that illustrates the integral role that print was beginning to play in the English dramatic tradition. Davenant’s preface asks readers to attend his production not for his or even its success but so that the profits might enable better portrayals of English virtue in the future. In making this appeal, Davenant does something hitherto unimagined: he makes readers agents in the English dramatic tradition. Today we might call his behavior crowd sourcing. Davenant offers us a new way of thinking about national drama: a tradition that reflects the values of a nation because they have a say in its final form. Moreover, by inserting his personal opinions into the preface, he asserts control over the work’s interpretation. Because of Davenant, print becomes a vital way for both readers and playwrights to express themselves in the dramatic tradition. His insights would forever change English drama. Once the theaters reopened in 1660, it was rare for a play not to include some sort of statement by the playwright about the work and rarer still for a play not to be printed. Commercial relations were firmly entrenched in the dramatic process.

When English plays returned to the stage in 1660, helped in no small part by Davenant’s success, they continued many of the themes and ideas begun during the Jacobean period with few crucial changes. First, by order of the king, the stage now

included actresses. Second, drama became institutionalized; only two companies, headed respectively by William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew, were allowed to perform.

Third, playhouses began to employ mechanical devices like elaborate moving scenery to add an even greater element of spectacle than had been present before. Last, playwrights no longer portrayed suspicion regarding commercial relations and investment.

This last was fortunate, since when the stage reopened no new plays had been written for many years. Somehow playhouses needed to accommodate the stage to the popular demand in the print market and thereby create a new demand, a new market, for stage plays. Stage managers William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew turned to the collections of Jacobean plays still in circulation due to the printing boom to find drama whose themes would be familiar and appealing to audiences. For the first few years, only older plays were seen. After a few years, new plays were written, and a new style of comedy, called the “Comedy of Manners” swept the stage by storm. The foremost character in the Comedy of Manners was the “rake” and it is to him and his partner/lover that I devote my next chapter.

The rake, as the hero of many a comedy is a highly commercial figure. This statement is admittedly somewhat of a new idea. Traditionally, Restoration comedy has been long been characterized by its rapacious sexuality, disregard for decorum, counter-culture attitudes, and its largely predictable plot structures in which a rake and his witty lover (a wealthy heiress) square off but end in marriage. This description of Restoration comedy is accurate but cuts out a vital part of the comedic structure—social relations—in its almost exclusive focus on characterization. Contemporary scholarship finds in Restoration comedy, particularly in the plays of Aphra Behn, a strong, progressive gender

commentary. I suggest that at the core of the character relations in Restoration comedy and much of its discussions of gender are an economic framework that promotes egalitarian relations by basing them on the dialectical engagement between agents bargaining in a marketplace.

Chapter V proposes that many Restoration comedies depict commerce as a way of life. This is not the world we seen in *City Comedy* in which character roles are those of the market, its investors, moneylenders, prostitutes, and merchants, but a world in which character relations weigh risk with reward and deals between people are struck through bargaining. Marriage is an investment. This is to say that the world and its relations are portrayed in these Restoration plays as being fundamentally economic in nature.

The chapter explores a number of rakes in different plays, including George Etherege's *The Man of Mode* (1676), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), Aphra Behn's *The Rover, Part I* (1677), and William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700). The rake and the heiress he adores are skilled entrepreneurs. By bargaining with each other, they are able to construct a marriage whose basis is not in its contractual terms so much as it is based wholly in the continued consent of both parties. What this means is that both rake and heiress have equal say in the division of duties within their future marriage and have equal say in the marriage on the whole. Through commerce, they construct a situation in which they not only both have the agency to assert their will and express themselves but one that preserves that agency in the future.

The integral role that commercial economics takes in Restoration comedy reflects the fundamental position playwrights assigned the market in everyday life as the century drew to a close. From the market the English dramatic tradition of the seventeenth

century gained much: egalitarian relations, widespread distribution, and maybe even a greater involvement in English commercial relations. But, what English drama gained most from the market was commerce itself, the idea that relations can be conceptualized as an exchange between individuals. In commerce playwrights discovered new kinds of agency that would empower them for years to come.

CHAPTER II

FINDING AGENCY: THE GALLANT'S SELF-COMMODIFICATION IN CITY COMEDY

The emergence of English City Comedy plays such as *Eastward Ho* coincided with seventeenth-century England's first explosion of urbanization, the municipal condition Hope Tisdale describes as "the process of human concentration" into one geographical location (311).³ The most notable change resulting from this process occurred in the city's economy as urbanization fostered the rise of London as a European trade center and the gradual infiltration of the city's busy market into everyday concerns and behaviors (Fisher 37). Everyone and everything became a potential "commodity," an item that can be bought or sold for profit. Scholars such as Brian Gibbons, L. C. Knights, Theodore Leinwand, and Jean Howard find that so deeply did market mannerisms and profit strategies saturate the city's social relations that to watch a City Comedy is to enter into an investigation of how the market was empowering new expressions of cultural identity.⁴ Watching these plays, Jean Howard argues, is to explore "what it meant to be an English Londoner" in an age when the pervasive influence of the market was changing every facet of London life ("Civic" ¶3).

What it meant to be an "English" Londoner in English drama was to conceive of daily life as a version of the market. Jean Christophe-Agnew finds drama at the turn of the seventeenth century to be part of a greater "*problematic* of exchange" in the English population as a whole in which "questions about the nature of social identity, intentionality, accountability, transparency, and reciprocity in commodity transactions" were commonplace (9). Agnew attributes the problem to "the formless, qualityless,

characterless nature of the money form” that encouraged persons to conceive of commodity exchange as a “social abstraction” (9). Increasingly during this period, the objects that were exchanged on the market were intangible ideas such as “authority, legitimacy, and justice” rather than the more tangible clothing and coin that were prevalent in the early to mid sixteenth-century (9). Loans and transactions paid on credit were common, and investment on the rise, a marked contrast to traditional models of financial accumulation that emphasized thrift and savings. As a market for symbolic pleasures itself, as Douglas Bruster argues, London theatre was conscious of these changes and so “came to stage scenarios which represented [...] the market’s extensive cultural implications” by including those concerns that audiences were interested in (10).⁵ Wendy Griswold asserts that everything is for sale on some level in these plays. Griswold explains that in them “the community’s cherished ideals are baubles available to the highest or craftiest bidder” (3). Karen Newman, Shannon Miller, and Garret Sullivan find tangible bodies in particular frequent targets for this phenomenon.⁶ Even people in City Comedy become commodities. Identity, these studies suggest, was not necessarily immune to exchange. It too, I argue, was also something that could be and was exchanged for profit.

City Comedy plays like Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humour* (1598), Thomas Middleton’s *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, and John Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan*, among others, mark the beginning of a century-long intertwining of identity formation with commerce. In City Comedy we can see the beginnings of a fervent effort by English playwrights to interrogate the ways that commerce is infiltrating the discourses surrounding class, gender, and nationalism, and other ideas influencing identity

construction and self-expression. City Comedy sets the stage for a new consciousness in the English dramatic tradition, one in which the status of drama as a purchasable and traded commodity becomes an integral part of its strength and influence.

George Chapman, John Marston, and Ben Jonson's *Eastward Ho* (1605) offers a representative example at the beginning of this process. The play was written in the early years of London's changing market and can be seen as an attempt to accommodate the new market-oriented attitudes about identity to the dramatic tradition that the genre drew upon for its characters. London life in City Comedy is not merely *like* commerce, it *is* commerce.⁷ *Eastward Ho* is saturated with instances of, and references to, the exchange of persons, services, goods, and money that imbue the play with a substantial market presence even in everyday relations between master and apprentice. The protagonist, Francis Quicksilver, manifests the emerging commodification of drama as a market product. Herford and Simpson observe that his speech "overflows with scraps of [popular] plays" from the London theatrical and ballad markets such as *The Spanish Tragedy* and *Hamlet* (34).

Eastward Ho re-imagines themes and characters from older, "Prodigal Son" morality plays.⁸ Like the prodigal son parable of the New Testament, the plot of *Eastward Ho* concerns two "sons," one industrious, Golding, and one idle, Francis Quicksilver. However, in this City Comedy version of the tale, the sons are not actual sons; they are apprentices to a rich, landed Goldsmith, Touchstone. Quicksilver's bad habits soon result in his expulsion out of Touchstone's home and into that of Security, a usurer who allows Quicksilver full license for his bad habits, but who also ultimately controls Quicksilver's purse strings. While there, Quicksilver helps the usurer trick the

knight Sir Petronel, husband to Touchstone's daughter, Gertrude, into selling the usurer his wife's land. Thereafter, the penniless Quicksilver and Petronel embark on a risky shipping venture to America, but are almost immediately shipwrecked when they drunkenly launch in a storm. Upon reaching shore at Wapping, south of London, the apprentice is arrested on charges of fraud from Touchstone. When Touchstone visits Quicksilver in prison, Quicksilver appears to repent of his ways and the Goldsmith, joyous that his "prodigal" son has returned, has the charges dropped.

City Comedy plays like *Eastward Ho* replace what Gibbons terms the "didactic" imperatives of early Elizabethan morality dramas like the prodigal tale with economic concerns (19). In the prodigal drama, the greed of the usurer is a moral failing; in city comedy, it is a commercial failing. From England's medieval period up through the mid-sixteenth century, usury was a moral failing condemned by the Church (Wright 178). The years of the Elizabethan period saw this conception slowly moving towards an economic reconsideration of the usurer's ills (Wright 178), but the figure nonetheless remained condemned for his moral failing, his distinct lack of humanity (178). Marlowe's Barabas goes on a killing spree and Shakespeare's Shylock demands a "pound of flesh" instead of money. By contrast, the problem that Security offers is not so much his inhumanity—Security feeds only on gulls foolish enough to ask him for money—but his lack of commerce. Security's possessive nature drives him to keep everything for himself and withhold his money from circulation in the economy whenever possible.

The prodigal plot affords Chapman, Jonson, and Marston a means to represent older attitudes about the London market in an immediately identifiable form while satirizing them as economically destructive and outdated. Security and villains like him

in City Comedy depict real anxieties about greed and usury in the London market and their capacities to hinder the city's growing commerce, while traditionalists like Touchstone depict anachronistic attitudes that achieve the same effect. Usurers, Craig Muldrew explains, by "making a bargain [profit] in which a fee was charged for a loan" as they commonly did by attaching an interest rate on the loan, was conceived as "adding an extra price" that removed money from the economy (113). "The moneylender," Muldrew continues, "was seen to be taking advantage of inequalities in the system of exchange by charging a fee for its use [...] when it [the money] should have been circulating freely allowing the market to function in a natural way" (113). "City Comedy playwrights", Brian Gibbons explains, turned to moneylending as "a modern manifestation of avarice" (16). The usurer's great wealth became something "to be feared for its power" because the usurer's greed could very easily lead him to destroy a person (Gibbons 30). This was a greed that could be self-destructive and dangerous to society as a whole.

Security's actions foreground a crucial ignorance of commercial relations that places usurer figures in these plays frequently outside what the dramas display as acceptable economic relations.⁹ The possessive greed of usurers makes them into hoarders of illicitly obtained goods. In hoarding their goods, usurers represent an antithetical position to commercial operations; in hoarding, usurers keep goods and money out of circulation, denying the economy the capital it needs to function.

In contrast, Touchstone refuses to depend upon anything but his own labor and gradual savings for wealth.¹⁰ He refuses to be the one "rising by other mens fall" (1.1.44) or by investing in other merchants or trade shipments:

Did I gaine my wealth by Ordinaries? No: by exchanging of gold? No: by keeping of gallants company? No. I hired me a little shop, fought low, tooke small gaine, kept no debt booke, garnished my shop for want of Plate (1.1.45-48).

Touchstone's litany describes himself as a person who refuses to take advantage of others by "Ordinaries," that is, suing in court, or lending at interest to the debt-ridden, spendthrift "gallants", youths of the city stereotyped as being as free with their coin as their vices. Nor will Touchstone pursue any sort of activity that deals only with money such as deducting a fee for the "exchanging of gold." Instead, he "garnishes" his shop before his own needs to ensure that it succeeds.

Eastward Ho's other elements also bear witness to a commercialized version of the prodigal tale. Quicksilver's idleness, for example, is characterized less by wasteful spending than by excessive loans. The apprentice's problem is not that he has no money but that acquiring money deepens his reliance on others. By the end of the play, the lauded virtue of the prodigal drama is transformed into a product of the popular market it purports to reject when Quicksilver expresses his repentance as a salable product, a ballad. Thus, commerce overcomes and transforms tradition and becomes a means of agency for those who desire, like the City Comedy version of the prodigal, to escape their reliance on others for money, clothing, and identity.

Quicksilver's experiences are indicative of the ways that London's increasingly market-like culture transformed ideas about agency in English drama. For him and characters like him, commerce is a form of empowerment. The depictions of figurative commerce in City Comedy plays such as *Eastward Ho* are among the first instances in

English drama in which commercial archetypes such as the prostitute, merchant, and gallant predominantly feature (Leinwand 4-5). But, while scholars, Leinwand in particular, have devoted considerable time to examining the merchant type in *City Comedy*, the gallant, a character type that originates in *City Comedy*, has hitherto received little attention as a commercial figure. This study contends that the gallant is among the most important commercial types in *City Comedy*, because he helps establish a crucial link between commerce and agency in English drama that future playwrights draw upon for depicting the English literary identity throughout the seventeenth century.

This examination will comprise three parts. First, I will explore why Quicksilver has reason to turn toward exchanging figurative concepts like identity instead of more traditional commodities such as clothing. Next, I will detail why *Security's* appetite and *Touchstone's* virtue make them susceptible to Quicksilver's unwitting commerce. Last, I will analyze the play's final repentance scene in-depth as an instance of ballad commerce in which identity is the coin of exchange.

At the heart of the economic criticism Quicksilver offers is his status as a gallant. Historically, the "gallants" of early 1600s London were "disinherited" or "penniless" younger sons from country estates that came to the city for the opportunities it offered (Griswold 672). In the late 1400s and early 1500s the term typically referred to fashionable trendsetters, men and women alike, who were polished in manners in showy dress (*OED* 2,3); by the late 1500s and early 1600s "gallant" acquired pejorative implications in literature. Plays of the period depicted gallants as young men of reckless daring, profligate interests, conspicuous consumption, and boisterous flair. Usually, Wendy Griswold observes, dramatic gallants are tricksters, "foolish yet clever;

irresponsible yet culture heroes [...] greedy, erotic, duplicitous; often unsuccessful yet never wholly defeated” (699). They, she continues, are able to operate “outside the customary hierarchies of power” (699).

Gallants appear frequently in City Comedy. Often they are protagonists and/or tricksters. Thomas Middleton’s *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and *Your Five Gallants*, Ben Jonson’s *Eastward Ho*, *The Five Gallants*, and John Cooke’s *Greene’s Tu QuoQue; or, The City Gallant* all portray gallants in the protagonist role.¹¹ But, even when not protagonists, gallants nonetheless prove essential to the plot in plays such as Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton’s *The Honest Whore*, Ben Jonson’s *Every Man in His Humor*, and John Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan*. Admittedly, not all gallants have such essential roles. Occasionally they are targets of scorn or voices for mockery, such as we see with Quarlous in Ben Jonson’s *Bartholomew Faire* (who both scorns others and is mocked).

While exceptions like Quarlous do exist, the bulk of protagonist gallants serve as a figurative manifestations of the London economy and its commercial operations. The gallant’s unique blend of rogue and entrepreneurship made him into a hero to Jacobean playwrights, albeit a satiric and hypocritical one. To playwrights of the period, the gallant typified the moral complexities of London’s changing economic landscape. He was a figure whose business savvy and chicanery allowed him to shift his once financially bereft state to wealth and estate but whose personal excesses could condemn him as surely as the greed and ambition of those he ridicules.

The dramatic gallant’s primary role, Griswold asserts, was to culturally legitimate “economic acquisition” (677) as a means for distinction for those who, like them, were

bereft of what Hagen calls the “exclusive possession of the economic status symbols” such as clothing and land that were commonly looked to for identity in early modern London (190). To compensate for their lack of these things, gallants propose, as Quicksilver does, to “live by his wit” (2.2.147). The gallant’s decision to “live by his wit” substitutes linguistic entrepreneurship in place of trade and inheritance, whereby he misleads others by selling them lies and half-truths. He dangles on his hook bait for their appetites, nominates himself as the means for the satisfaction of said appetites, and lauds their consent for the cooperation. In doing so, the gallant tricks others into handing over valued commodities that he then trades for the things he wants. These commodities range from typical trade items such as jewelry or land to non-typical trade items such as “virtue,” an idea that proves essential to Quicksilver’s freedom at the end of *Eastward Ho* (Griswold 672).

Gallant heroes like Quicksilver oppose the greed and anachronism of hoarders like Security and Touchstone by taking advantage of their blindness to how commerce implicates buyers, sellers, and products into (sometimes unintended) reciprocal relations. Quicksilver deals in the trade of the new “formless” symbolic commodities—ideas—that were beginning to emerge in English economy. For him, social relations are a transaction in which two figures exchange figurative commodities with each other. Security and Touchstone, by contrast, ignore any concept that resembles commerce, such as the reciprocal relations Quicksilver’s forges.¹² When Quicksilver suggests to Security that the two of them reciprocally “feed” each other’s needs, the usurer blatantly ignores the specific words that convey that reciprocity entirely and ends up with a very different understanding of Quicksilver’s words, seeing Quicksilver as little more than readily

available “food” for his greed (2.2.11-17). Quicksilver exploits this kind of ignorance in Security and Touchstone because he sees what they do not: everything is subject to trade.

The line between right and wrong in business is not always clear. Gallants are not always heroes, and even when they are, many illustrate just how hard it is to succeed without succumbing to at least some vice. The gallant’s almost compulsive need for the possessions Hagens associates with success drives them to borrow and spend lavishly, actions that quickly drop them into mounting debt. Quicksilver, for example, is a consummate borrower whose loans only fuel his own debt, vices, and spendthrift ways. He buys expensive “silks” for his “Trunks” of clothing and pays to keep the courtesan Sindefie as a “Punk” for his sexual pleasures (2.2.30-33).

As a figure of excess, the gallant is thus also a common target for satire whose profligacy, drinking, reckless gambling, and spendthrift ways reveal the temptations lurking in city life. For example, Laxton, the gallant of Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* (1611) is a loud braggart whose self-proclaimed attractiveness to women results in his humbling by Moll, who cares little for his attentions toward her. Nevertheless, even in his defeat, Laxton demonstrates a quality he, Quicksilver, and other gallants like them share, a “principle of anti-structure in that [they] escapes determination by established power relations” (669). Gallants refuse to have their actions or fates determined by others, even if their insistence on self-determination leads them to humiliation.

What makes Quicksilver unique in *Eastward Ho* is that he is not a typical gallant. His desires are almost entirely within the realms of business and finance, a focus that serves to emphasize more clearly than other gallants the economic manipulations that

undergird their portrayals in Jacobean drama. He shares with his dramatic brethren their trickster pedigree, business savvy, reckless and vice but not their aristocratic pedigree and their aristocratic ambitions. He is not, far as we can tell, a member of the country gentry like Mirabel of John Fletcher's *The Wild Goose Chase* (1621) or Laxton from Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611). Nor is he like Witgood in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, for instance, who focuses his efforts on acquiring the land and properties denied them by succession or gambling losses. While nominally a gentleman, Quicksilver's primary status in the play is as a tradesman and businessman. His role as a gentleman in London society is secondary to his role in London's economy; no matter how much Quicksilver proclaims his aristocratic pedigree, we cannot forget that his lavish spending income originates not from privilege but from his (occasionally criminal) commerce. In acting this way, Quicksilver figuratively re-locates the aims of gallantry from those of the country to the business of the city.

Because Quicksilver lacks the inherited capital of most gallants, the transactions underlying gallantry are foregrounded as economic necessity: he must be commercial if he is to have the agency to move freely about the city and to spend coin lavishly on vices. Unfortunately, he is without ready capital to trade or sell. As an apprentice to Touchstone and indebted to Security, Quicksilver has little ability to make money and, as such, must use others' money to make investments or purchase material goods. He has no economic autonomy—means to participate in the London economy—except at their whims.

To understand how this dependency on Touchstone and Security occurs, a short tangent is needed to establish the importance of material items and land for expressing identity in sixteenth-century London. Scholarship by Rosalind Jones, Peter Stallybrass,

and Susan Vincent has established that clothing during England's sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was much more than an expression of identity, it constituted identity.¹³ The difference between a grey flat cap and that same cap with a feather in it could mean the difference between a person being identified as a goldsmith's apprentice (flat cap) or as a gallant (a feather). Moreover, to wear clothes other than those that befit your occupation was a crime that could result in fines. These "sumptuary fines" were primarily an issue during the previous Elizabethan era and not during the Jacobean era; upon James's ascension in 1603, one of the first things he did was repeal the laws restricting nobles' clothing to their rank. However, while James repealed the sumptuary laws pertaining to noble clothing, he left in place those proclamations and statutes that dealt with tradesmen and their apprentices. Additionally, new acts were admitted that further controlled what apprentices could wear.¹⁴

Quicksilver refuses to follow these legal statutes on what he can wear as an apprentice, instead wearing a number of items forbidden to apprentices but allowed to gentlemen: "cloake" (1.1.17), "sword," "pumps [fancy shoes]," and "Racket [for tennis]" (1.1.18).¹⁵ Quicksilver's gallant-like spending is made worse in that he spends Touchstone's money instead of his own: "Five score pound art thou out in the cash," Touchstone admonishes his apprentice, "I will not be gallanted out of my monies", the quandary that emerges because of Quicksilver's dual status as apprentice and gallant (1.1.43-44). Most gallants are held responsible for their debts: Witgood, for example, we learn, was forced to sell his properties to his uncle Lucre to settle his debts. By contrast, in Quicksilver's case, Touchstone, as master, is responsible for his debts. To regain his

money, Touchstone, a creditor, must rely upon an unreliable debtor, Quicksilver, to repay the lost money.

Touchstone's complaint brings to the foreground the financial relationship that debtor and creditor share that gallants like Quicksilver and Witgood exploit. In the gallant Witgood's case, he convinces Lucre, the creditor, that his nephew is going to marry a rich widow. Lucre, eager to profit, willingly hands over money and favors. To Lucre, debt is a financial vector that flows only one way from debtor to creditor. To Witgood and other gallants, the relationship is reciprocal. They recognize that debt encourages further lending from the creditor if the creditor can be convinced that it will ensure greater profits.

By the end of *Eastward Ho*, Quicksilver achieves a similar result with Touchstone though money is not the primary currency. However, first he tricks the usurer Security into committing the same error as Lucre. Under Security's care, Quicksilver runs into the same kind of problem he had as an apprentice. At Security's house, Quicksilver can wear the gallant clothing he desires and, upon first glance, the change from apprentice clothing to gallant silks seems liberating:

Bring forth my bravery.

Now let my trunks shoot forth their silks concealed;

I am now free, and will now justify

My trunks and punks. Avaunt, dull flat cap (2.2.30-33).¹⁶

With the loss of the "flat cap" of his apprenticeship and the addition of "silks," Quicksilver appears to be "now free" of the restrictions he faced as an apprentice. But this freedom comes with its own restrictions: Quicksilver is now heavily reliant on

Security for maintaining his identity. Security's "house is "the Cave, where the young Outlawe hoards [...] his Trunks, and [...] his Punks[courtesans]" (2.2.1-4-8). Though Quicksilver may desire to be a gallant, he can do so only by first turning to Security to have access to both his clothing and even his courtesan, Sindefie. As was the case with Touchstone, Quicksilver's spending money comes with restrictions. The usurer promises to cover all Quicksilver's debts, past and future so that he "shall neuer neede to toile in any trade, a my credit," but only if Quicksilver first brings him Gertrude's lands (2.2.139-140). Hidden in Security's requirement is the privilege the usurer enjoys over Quicksilver: Quicksilver only gets to be a gallant when and if Security chooses to allow it. At any future point, Security could arbitrarily remove the silks and women Quicksilver wants and leverage new requirements. Quicksilver has no more agency with Security than he had with Touchstone.

To break his dependence on them, Quicksilver creates an ironic reversal in which Touchstone and Security, the holders of money and material possessions, become dependent on him for intangible things they do not appear to realize are commodities: financial certainty, virtue, and their own identity. Quicksilver trades financial certainty for authority and virtue and identity for freedom.

* * *

Quicksilver's process takes advantage of market-like assumptions that underlie the acquisitive desires of Security and virtues of Touchstone. Specifically, he leverages assumptions premised on systems of dependence similar to commercial demand. He fashions himself into what Security and Touchstone need to satisfy their appetites (Security's need for land and information) and personal investment in virtue

(Touchstone). Quicksilver then uses their dependence on him to force these individuals to exchange first, authority, and, then, freedom. By doing so, Quicksilver accommodates the older anxieties about the market manifested by Security's vices and the outmoded ideals of hard work manifested by Touchstone's virtues to the market-like culture of early seventeenth-century London.

Quicksilver offers himself up for sale to Security and Touchstone as a commodity in the play's markets. When Quicksilver offers information to Security to feed the latter's need for Gertrude's land, for example, he and Security are participating inside a potential market. Unlike the actual London market, this market deals solely in the exchange of symbolic values, authority, and information and does not exchange physical items such as figs, raisins, or even money, a concept that was new to seventeenth-century London.

At the time of *Eastward Ho's* writing, the term "commodity" was beginning to be used in a new fashion to designate a market product that satisfies "the desires or needs of men"¹⁷ ("commodity" 1a). While the *Oxford English Dictionary* attributes a usage of "commodity" to mean "a kind of thing produced or used for sale" back to the fifteenth century (6a), only at the beginning of the Jacobean period does "commodity" begin to be used figuratively to refer to "anything that one 'trades' or 'deals' in" (6b).¹⁸ The figurative addition expresses the extent that market culture was permeating into London life. Even things that were not literally "for sale" became, in a sense, objects that could be exchanged as if they were objects of sale. It is in this latter figurative sense that Quicksilver sees himself. Whereas the older usage of "commodity" was limited to physical things, Quicksilver and gallants like him recognize that identity is itself a commodity.

Broadly, the play can be broken down into two figurative markets: Quicksilver's commercial encounters with Security and those with Touchstone. These markets are characterized by reciprocal bartering in which both debtor and creditors exchange figurative commodities. Reciprocal relations are the most foundational expression of commerce (Bruni 130). In reciprocal relations, all persons gain something in return for whatever they offer and vice versa. What is key in these operations is that this reciprocity of loss and gain is fundamental to all forms of acquisition; something is always lost to the opposing party. But, while reciprocal, the relations in *Eastward Ho* are not symmetrical. In symmetrical relations, all parties are equally aware of what both sides are exchanging in the transaction. In gallant transactions like those Quicksilver conducts in *Eastward Ho*, the exchanges are asymmetrical; only the gallants are fully aware of what is exchanged. Security's and Touchstone's conceptions of commerce as a tangible trade do not allow them to perceive the underlying reciprocity of their transactions.

Security and Touchstone's assumptions and demands open them to manipulation by Quicksilver. The gallant's trickery is sophisticated; he exploits the two men's intense demand for commodities that only he, Quicksilver, can provide. This is best illustrated by an encounter involving two of the play's other characters, Gertrude and her husband Sir Petronel, so it is to these two characters that I will turn to first before moving onto the targets of my primary analysis, Security and Touchstone.

Gertrude makes her body the object of commerce as part of a ploy to force her husband into doing what she wants. She forces her husband to trade away his authority over her in exchange for satisfying his appetite for sex. Gertrude's act is significant because she forces her husband to contradict his own desires, thereby asserting her

agency through commerce. The moment occurs while Petronel and Gertrude are guests at Security's house. Petronel tries to trick his wife into signing over the land she inherited from her grandmother to Security to fund a voyage to Virginia. Security is eager to get the deal over with and tries to hurry the deal by saying, "*I do hunger and thirst to do you good Sir*" (2.2.388-389).¹⁹ Gertrude pushes forward her own agenda, stating, "Come sweete Knight come, *I do hunger and thirst to be a bed with thee*" (2.2.390-391). Petronel is forced to decide between two products: the funds he needs for his trip to Virginia or sex. In accordance with his carnal appetite, Petronel accedes to his wife's wishes and chooses sex. He and Gertrude go to bed with the land transfer not completed. When Gertrude makes sex the stakes, his desires override his will: has no choice in the matter.

Gertrude markets herself as a commodity to achieve her power over Petronel.²⁰ In doing so, she replicates in marriage the commercial stakes of the prostitute, while mitigating many of the immoral implications of selling her body. Unlike the traditional patriarchal model that placed husband over wife in terms of power, here power comes through one's capacity to set a price on oneself as a commodity and trade upon it. Her marriage to Petronel will not be one in which he commands and she obeys. It will be transactional like the market: a daily exchange of favors, goods, and services. Additionally, Gertrude, as the desired commodity, will be the one in power.

Like Security and Touchstone, Petronel does not appear to realize that his dependence on Gertrude as a sexual commodity makes him subject to her demands. Similarly, although Quicksilver makes overt references to reciprocity, neither Security nor Touchstone acknowledges that they are involved in any sort of mutually beneficial

relationship with Quicksilver. They are not aware that figurative ideas such as authority or virtue can be traded as commodities are in the market. Nor do they seem to be aware that they depend upon Quicksilver.

Security's ignorance of the mutual dependence between himself and Quicksilver is apparent soon after the two meet in the play. Quicksilver describes this codependence the morning after their first meeting:

Come old *Securitie*, thou father of destruction: th' indented sheepskinne is burn'd wherein I was wrapt, and I am now loose, to get more children of perdition into thy usurious Bonds. Thou feed'st my Lecherie, and I thy Couetousnes: Thou art Pander to me for my wench, and I to thee for thy cosenages: K. me, K. thee, runnes through Court and Country²¹ (2.2.11-17).

Quicksilver's meaning is contained within his "K. me, K. thee." These words are an early modern abbreviation of "Ka me, Ka thee," a Suffolk derivation from old Scot that means generally "One good turn deserves another" or "scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" (Farmer and Henley 86). The sentiment is reinforced in each line through repeated "Thou...I" constructions, thus establishing the circularity of the relationship. The usurer "feed'st" the gallant as much as the gallant in turn feeds the usurer. Quicksilver's speech communicates mutual giving and receiving and contextualizes the cycle as that of reciprocal favors.

Though Quicksilver's consistent balancing of "thou" with "I" suggests that he is well aware that he depends on the usurer to feed his needs, Security does not possess this

awareness. His response applies a selective filter to Quicksilver's words that ignores all references to co-dependency between "me" and "thee":

Well said my subtle *Quickesiluer*, these K's ope all the doers to this
worldes felicite: the dullest forehead sees it. Let not mast <er> courtier
thinke hee carries all the knauery on his shoulders: I haue knowne poore
Hob in the countrie, that has [...] as much villanie in's head, as he that
weares gold buttons in's cap (2.2.18-24).

Security's response focuses on the universal presence in court ("courtier") and country ("countrie") of men who, like himself and Quicksilver, do not hesitate to use others for their ends ("villanie"). At no point does Security refer to the "me...thee" that features in Quicksilver's words. Security does use "K," but his usage selectively filters out the "me" and "thee" that accompany "K" and hears only a reference to opening doors. Though written as "K" in the text, Security's words are better understood as, "these keys open all the doors to this world's felicite." The early modern pronunciation of "key" was "kay," and thus identical to the "K" that Quicksilver uses in sound. Security hears "key" but overlooks its associations with co-dependence and, lost in a homophonic pun, misses the point of Quicksilver's words entirely.

Security perceives his and Quicksilver's relations as a one-way consumption in which the usurer depends on the goods and persons the gallant brings into his fold. The cunning Quicksilver represents an opportunity for the usurer to bring new goods and persons into his greedy clutches. In Security's words, this emerges as a "hunger and thirst" in which the usurer will feast on the gallant:

Excellent M. *Francis*; how I long to doe thee good: *How I doe hunger, and thirst to haue the honour to enrich thee?* I, euen to die, that thou mightest inherite my liuing: *euen hunger and thirst*,--for a my Religion, M. Francis (2.2.150-154).

Though Security tries to cloak his motives as a desire to “doe [Quicksilver] good”, the usurer’s need emerges as something akin to a survival instinct. Security’s “hunger and thirst” drips with a predatory intensity that completely surpasses any gestures of goodwill that his proclaimed desire to do “good” may convey. It is clear that Security considers his relations with Quicksilver a food chain with himself at the top; the reciprocity of the gallant’s “K. me ...thee” is lost on him.

Security’s ignorance puts him in the position of Petronel before Gertrude: powerless against Quicksilver’s manipulations. Quicksilver takes advantage of Security’s predatory inclinations (and ignorance), prompting the usurer, “you haue good securitie?” (2.2.130). The gallant invokes the usurer’s myopic, all-consuming desires by prompting him to use Quicksilver to gain what Security wants above all else: financial collateral, that is, land. Land during the early modern period was both commodity and security, a means of alleviating risk by acting as collateral for taking out loans and a commodity that could be sold to mitigate existing debt. Craig Muldrew argues that, during the early modern period, land was a common form of financial “security” and was, in fact, “the primary means [...] to pay off debts²² (4-5). The discrepancy between Security’s name and his lack of security calls attention to his inability to function in the London market except through persons like Quicksilver. Security takes the bait, as it were, and asks the gallant if he knows about “his [Petronel’s] wiues land?” (2.2.140-141).

From this point on, Quicksilver becomes Security's only source of information regarding Gertrude's land and Petronel. Security's actions reveal a pattern of concession in which he unwittingly passes all decision-making power over to the gallant in exchange for the information and opportunities he provides. From Quicksilver, Security learns the value of the land is, "two hundred pounds worth of wood readye to fell" (2.2.146-147), and what he should give to Petronel to facilitate the land sale: "let him haue money [...]" (2.2.162-163). When the conversation turns to the exact timing of the transaction, the authority Quicksilver has as holder of information becomes clear. At first, Security tries to set the time, demanding, "Let his wife seale to day, he shall haue his money to day" (2.2.174-175). "Today," however, is not what Quicksilver wants. By delaying further, he can wrest Sindefie from Security's control by establishing her as Gertrude's maid (2.2.178-185). The gallant therefore refuses Security's time and makes his own declaration: "To morrow she shall, Dad, before she goes into the country" (2.2.176). The transaction cannot occur if Quicksilver refuses. Security must accede to the gallant's wishes.

Security's dependency upon Quicksilver for information makes him subject to whatever conditions the gallant imposes on that information, even when those conditions undermine his own power, such as when Security agrees to instill Sindefie as Gertrude's maid. By the time Quicksilver is done, Security, one of the people who initially restrains Quicksilver's agency, becomes the servant, begging the gallant, "Commaund me Maister *Frances; I doe hunger and thirst to doe thee service*" (2.2.200-201). Quicksilver, as a result of the reciprocal commerce, is now the one in charge.

Touchstone is not like Petronel and Security in that he is not a slave to possessive desires. Touchstone does not “hunger and thirst.” Nevertheless, the goldsmith is a dupe to virtue in much the same manner as Security is a dupe to his appetites. Touchstone invests his own reputation in those of his apprentices. This investment makes him dependent upon their good behavior, meaning that they promote the same virtues as himself: self-sufficiency and moderation. Ironically, Touchstone’s conception of virtue espouses rejecting the London market and its dictums of co-dependency, a rejection that eventually leads to his apprentice’s self-commodification.

Touchstone’s dependencies on others and ignorance of commerce derive from his virtues. He refuses to be “rising by other mens fall” (1.1.44) or depend upon others in any way, whether that dependency arises from lending to “gallants” (1.1.46) or keeping a “debt booke” for credit transactions (1.1.48). In this way, Touchstone’s reputation is contingent upon his apprentices, and ultimately, on Quicksilver’s actions. This “investment” in his apprentice’s good reputations is best seen in Touchstone’s words to the apprentice Golding. Touchstone introduces Golding as a man of “most hopefull Industrie” (1.1.82-83); later, “a Youth of good hope” (1.2.162); and “the anchor of my hopes” (2.1.85). Touchstone’s repetition of “hope” reveals his fixation on Golding’s future as an investment that reflects on what he, Touchstone, puts into it. Golding’s future self will serve as a sign of Touchstone’s character.

Touchstone perceives the reciprocity of these transactions, but only so far as his apprentices’ actions reflect upon himself and not that he is in any sort of commercial relations with them. His investment in his apprentices is an investment in his himself. When Golding is promoted to deputy, for instance, Touchstone cannot help but call

attention to Golding's now lauded reputation as his own. The apprentice has confirmed Touchstone's "hope in him" (4.2.32). Touchstone delivers a self-centered encomium for his apprentice that expresses Golding's new position as the public recognition of the goldsmith's integrity:

Let me kisse thy new worship, & a litle boast mine own happiness in thee:
What a fortune was it (or rather my iudgment indeed) for me, first to see
that in his disposition, which a whole Citty so conspires to second? [...]
Wel, I wil honour M <aister> [Aldermen], for this act, (as becomes me)
[...] for coming after me in the opinion of his desert (4.2.47-58).

The integrity that others see in Golding's "disposition" is a reflection of Touchstone's "judgment." His apprentice's joys are "mine own happiness".

Due to Touchstone's tendency to integrate his own success in that of his apprentices, Quicksilver's failures are a significant blow to his own self-worth. This characteristic is apparent when he castigates Quicksilver for drunkenness the morning after Gertrude's wedding. Quicksilver defends himself by drawing upon the close ties Touchstone feels with his apprentices' actions. He claims to have drunk in order to preserve Touchstone's "credit," or, reputation, with Petronel's men: "The Knights [Petronel's] men be still a their knees at it, (*ump*) & because tis for your credit sir, I wold be loth to flinch" (2.1.27-29).^{23,24} Touchstone finds himself in reluctant agreement, and takes the words as proof of his own inadequacies:

This is for my credit [...] We have stowd more sorts of flesh in our bellies,
then euer *Noahs* Arke received: and for Wine, why my house turns giddie

with it, and more noise in it then at a Conduict; Aye me, euen beasts
condemne our gluttonie (2.1.39-46).

Touchstone's "we" stands in for his household and its dipsomania, noise, and gluttony. While the offender in this situation is Quicksilver, Touchstone refuses to separate Quicksilver's actions from his own, consistently referring to himself through the collective "we" and "our."

The great investment Touchstone feels towards his apprentices requires public performance to be legitimate. Golding is success and, thereby, Touchstone is successful, but only because the "whole Citty so conspires to second" the goldsmith's judgments. Success depends upon others witnessing and approving his apprentices' behaviors. The need for the publicity of his apprentice's good actions is a compulsion similar to the "hunger and thirst" that Security feels. Just as Security thinks as if his life is in danger if he cannot acquire Gertrude's land, Touchstone grows increasingly "desperate" that his apprentices, Quicksilver in particular, will not reward his investments in them (4.2.32-33). "Desperate" is a word that implies, like Security's "hunger and thirst" a sense of despair in which instinct overrides reason. So bound up is Touchstone in Quicksilver and Golding that he instinctively acts to preserve his vision of himself, even against reason.

Golding's success alone is not enough for the goldsmith; he still feels a need—a compulsion—to reform Quicksilver. The damage to Touchstone's reputation that Quicksilver has wrought with idleness still weighs on the goldsmith's thoughts. Though Touchstone appears to condemn Quicksilver to hanging at Tiborne Hill, for example, his attempts at justifying his actions to Quicksilver suggest that he desires, and needs, reformation, not a punitive death. First, Touchstone explains Quicksilver's trip to

“Tiborne” resulting from betrayal. Touchstone warns his former apprentice that the “Gallants, & Gamesters” Quicksilver keeps as friends will soon cry to “hang him”, because he lost their “their piles of perdition” on financial speculation (4.2.295-304). Touchstone then justifies Quicksilver’s eventual hanging as the inevitable consequence of vice: “Of Sloth commeth Pleasure, or Pleasure commeth Riot, of Ryot comes Whoring, or Whoring comes Spending, or Spending comes Want, of Want comes Theft, of Theft comes Hanging; and there my *Quicksiluer* is fixt” (4.2.324-328). Both explanations seem at first to argue in favor of Quicksilver’s death since they derive hanging from Quicksilver’s actions, his financial speculations and sloth. However, Touchstone’s last words suggest otherwise. When Touchstone claims Quicksilver as “my” and then proposes the death as a “fix,” he reveals that his own unwillingness to separate his person from Quicksilver. Touchstone still sees Quicksilver as his apprentice and still desires to reform or “fix” him. The goldsmith’s unwillingness to part with Quicksilver as his apprentice suggests that he is still invested in Quicksilver’s success.

Ironically, though Touchstone’s words suggest he is still invested and, thus, dependent on Quicksilver’s success, the goldsmith’s attitudes about commerce make him ignorant of this dependency. Touchstone is unwilling to acknowledge two features of London commerce that run contrary to his traditional conception of business: first, that he himself is dependent upon anyone else in the market, and second, that figurative concepts such as debt and virtue can be commodities. The first of these features appears in Touchstone’s opening litany on ethical business practice to Quicksilver that was identified earlier in the paper as particularly derivative of Touchstone’s prodigal roots. It

is in this scene that Touchstone expresses his refusal to be “rising by other mens fall,” “gaine my wealth by Ordinaries” or maintain a “debt booke” (1.1.45-48).

Touchstone’s litany conceals a thorough rejection of the mutual dependencies upon which London commercialism relied to operate. His refusal to gain “by other mens fall” appears at first as a laudable refusal to prey upon his fellow man as greedy persons like Security do. A closer examination reveals, however, that these words are predicated on a solipsistic model of financial autonomy in which Touchstone’s business efforts can exist without having any effect on others. That is, Touchstone’s words suggest he can profit without needing to rely on other people.

Ironically, the doctrine of self-sufficiency that Touchstone presents as ideal is outmoded at the time of the play’s production. Touchstone’s doctrine of hard work and “small gaine” indicates an older approach to the market that categorically rejected other kinds of income such as credit that were, in fact, the most common forms of market transactions. Writing on the financial conditions of London around the turn of the seventeenth century, historian Craig Muldrew describes a city full of debt, credit, and debt litigations.²⁵

In addition to his rejection of the commercial dependencies that spark reciprocal financial relations, the goldsmith refuses to acknowledge that intangible and figurative items such as debt, identity, and virtue can function as commodities on the market. Debt, for Touchstone, can only be the absence of money. Debt cannot be an investment, let alone a means of profit. Quicksilver sees otherwise, telling his master, “I lend them monies, good; they spend it, well. But when they are spent, must not they striue to get more? must not their land flye? and to whom?” (1.1.26-31). Quicksilver argues that his

loans to other gallants (of Touchstone's money) are an effort to provide the goldsmith with something he can exchange to make their "land flye" into his possession. The "commoditie" in these lines that Quicksilver obtains for Touchstone is the debt that results when the gallants are "spent." For the gallant, debt has an exchange value: land. Touchstone refuses to see debt as an investment, because it makes him depend upon others. Thus, he keeps "no debt booke" (1.1.48). Just as Touchstone cannot comprehend of debt as a commodity, he is unable to comprehend virtue and identity as commodities as well. These things are intangible, a feature of the commodity that was only then coming into prominence at the time of the play.²⁶

* * *

At the end of *Eastward Ho* Quicksilver is imprisoned on felony charges from Touchstone. He and his companions drunkenly drive their ship aground without ever reaching the ocean and wash ashore near London. The authorities pick them up, because they look like "Masterlesse men" or, vagabonds (4.2.188-189), having lost to the sea the characteristic "doublets and hose" and "Hatte" and "Cloak" that announced their gentlemanly identities in the early years of the seventeenth-century (4.2.89-90). Publically, they are identity-less. Nonetheless, Golding recognizes the party and has them arrested so that Touchstone can charge them. Quicksilver enters prison more bereft of capital than he has ever been in the play before this point. Now he has no clothes of his own, Touchstone's or Security's, by which to identify himself. He has also lost all of his money in the shipwreck. He has little to no agency of any sort except what he can provide through his wits; he needs his unique form of commerce.

In response to this total loss of agency, Quicksilver makes the most overt reference to commerce and commodification in the entire play. Whereas before he exploited market-like assumptions of demand and exchange inherent in appetite, at the prison he exploits an actual market: Quicksilver turns the entire prison into an entrepreneurial site for the marketing of virtue. Quicksilver sells himself to Touchstone as the virtuous apprentice that the goldsmith always wanted him to be. Quicksilver takes the values that Touchstone has always desired for him and packages them for sale as a new identity for himself. The apprentice sells that identity, an identity that is, I will show, a commodified version of virtue itself—to Touchstone in exchange for freedom from prison. In doing so, Quicksilver reveals an underlying commercial motive to gallantry that helps us reconsider the “legitimated economic acquisition” of these City Comedy figures as predicated upon a new conception of identity as a commercial product (Griswold 677).

Quicksilver’s repentance is a parody of the prodigal story presented in the form of a commodity then sold in the London market: the broadside ballad. To witness his repentance, he requests Touchstone’s presence and, with a little help from Golding (5.3.104-116), gains his audience. For inspiration, Quicksilver draws upon a popular ballad and structures his song “in imitation of *Maningtons*,” a ballad about a prisoner who expresses remorse (5.5.44).²⁷ For tune, Quicksilver copies the notes for another ballad, “*I wail in woe, I plunge in pain*” (5.5.47).²⁸ Like the prodigal he is modeled upon, Quicksilver’s remorse largely reiterates the wisdom of his father figure Touchstone. Over the course of the repentance, Quicksilver condemns the “*silkes and sattens gay*” of his gallantry and confesses that he “*scorned my Master, being drunke*” (5.5.62-65).

Additionally, Quicksilver regrets that he “*kept my Gelding, and my Punke [Sindefie]*” (5.5.66). The ballad ends with a warning to “*Prentises all*” to resist the temptation of “*Vsurer’s, Bauds, and dice, and drabs*” (usurer’s, gallants, gambling, and prostitution) (5.5.117). Quicksilver suggests that apprentices instead be content with their means and “*seeke not to goe beyonde your Tether*” as he did by pursuing wealth that was beyond what he could obtain as an apprentice (5.5.119). He ends his song with a moralistic proclamation that assures all listening, “*So shall you thriue by little and little, / Scape Tiborne, Counters, & the Spittle*” (5.5.121-122).

Touchstone appears convinced and welcomes his apprentice back with “the hearty and ioyfull embraces, of a Father, and Friends love” (5.5.129). In “honour” of Quicksilver’s “Repentance” (5.5.128) Touchstone extends charity and forgives him of all “former passages” (5.5.135). To Touchstone, all is as it should be, and he allegorizes the events as those of the prodigal tale in which “the carefull Father” has “from Fall so steepe / the Prodigal child reclaimd” (5.5.207-210).

Quicksilver’s words appear to mimic the rejection of London commercialism that is at the heart of Touchstone’s values. Like Touchstone’s litany early in the play that rejects debt and gallantry and elevates thrift, Quicksilver categorically rejects his former clothing (“silkes”) and usurers and punks, and argues that all should “thriue” only by steady industry. Quicksilver’s “by little and little” parallels Touchstone’s own claim to make only “small gaine” (1.1.47), while the apprentice’s “seeke not...Tether” imitates Touchstone’s advice to “skorne not thy meanes” (1.2.128) by pursuing wealth beyond what can be obtained by “little and little.”

What makes Quicksilver's repentance an artful parody is that while the content of his ballad expresses the "complete change of character" of the prodigal drama by rejecting the commercialism he once coveted (Harris xii), the means by which Quicksilver expresses his redemption are commercial. The correspondence Quicksilver admits between his repentance and the ballad he draws upon for inspiration suggest that his repentance is, like them, a commodity that he is selling in a market. The juxtaposition of these two, the song as a version of the prodigal repentance that rejects commerce and, the song as a commodity, calls attention to the differences between Quicksilver's words and actions. Quicksilver's explicit use of the ballad form encourages audiences to think about the way that his repentance is non-traditional. Ultimately, what he expresses through his parody is a statement about the transformation business has wrought in identity for Londoners at the time: the separation between business and commerce is beginning to dissolve. Things once thought to be separate from the market are now products of commerce that not only be traded but also are, in fact, potentially constituted by commerce.

Critical attitudes on Quicksilver's ballad commodity largely treat it as a representative example of the power of London theatre and only rarely as commodification. Helen Ostovich, for example, argues, "theatricality has succeeded where logic and experience failed" ("Introduction" ix). Jean Howard argues that it is "the performative prowess of Francis Quicksilver" that enables "him and his companions to be released" (102). James Mardock echoes the sentiments of both these scholars, but emphasizes the Touchstone is primarily convinced "because he finds him [Q] satisfying artistically" (64). However, not all scholarship has overlooked the resemblance of

Quicksilver's redemption to the trade of commodities. Peter Lake, for instance, recognizes that Quicksilver offers a "commodified repentance," but focuses on the way that the popular roots of balladic presentation mocks the scholastic moral form of the prodigal drama (406).²⁹ What has received the least attention is the way that Quicksilver not only foregrounds a commodity, the ballad, in his repentance, but makes himself into the commodity that is purchased by selling himself as a ballad.

To understand how this occurs in Quicksilver's repentance, I will examine the final scene under three different perspectives. First, I will explore what Touchstone sees and propose why he extends charity, that is, why he forgives Quicksilver and welcomes the apprentice back to his home. Next, I will investigate the commerce of the scene and how Quicksilver takes advantage of Touchstone's dependencies. Last, I will analyze how the commercial aspects of this scene relate to how identity is constituted in the play.

From Touchstone's perspective, the final scene is an archetypal version of the prodigal son redemption in which "carefull Father" extends charity to his son and welcomes back the "Prodigal child reclaimd" (5.5.207-210). Charity is the most essential aspect of Touchstone's response; if the act is truly charitable then the repentance is not commercial. In Touchstone's paradigm Quicksilver's forgiveness cannot come as the result of a trade in which virtuous identity is exchanged for freedom. For seventeenth-century Londoners, charity meant curtailing problematic excesses. Michael Neill explains that "virtue" in *City Comedy* typically "involves not merely certain positive obligations towards the needy but also significant restraints on the activities of the affluent—on the sharpness of their business practice, the extravagance of their lifestyle, and the reach of their social ambitions" (103). Early modern conceptions of charity resemble financial

investment in which one person provides money (invests) or forgiveness for another “without expectation of repayment” in hopes for remuneration in the future, both financial remuneration on earth and, in the future, spiritual remuneration in heaven (Bayer 51).

Neill’s description of early modern charity is particularly applicable to Touchstone. Touchstone feels obligated—compelled—to reform the extravagant lifestyle and inordinate social ambitions of Quicksilver. This becomes problematic for Touchstone, however, because reforming Quicksilver requires allowing the gallant the possibility of change. That is, Touchstone must allow himself to entertain the possibility that Quicksilver can reform. This possibility is crucial to why Touchstone is convinced; the goldsmith cannot simply assume that Quicksilver is incapable of reform. When Quicksilver does appear to reform, rather than doubt whether such a change is possible, Touchstone must instead judge whether the transformation is authentic. It is in this question, the question of authenticity, that Quicksilver’s scheme is most successful.

To convince Touchstone that the conversion is authentic, Quicksilver deliberately fashions his ballad’s content to mirror the goldsmith’s own expectations for virtue. He derives these expectations from his own earlier conversation with Touchstone and the popular opinion as to what sincere remorse should look like. His contrition, for example, explicitly addresses the problems that Touchstone has with Quicksilver’s lifestyle. Before the final scene, Touchstone explains to Quicksilver exactly what behaviors he values: “requiting al his [Touchstone’s] kindnes with a course and harsh behauior, neuer returning thanks for any one benefit [...] & no Courtesies [...] God doth often punish such pride” (4.2.273-278). Touchstone finishes by describing to Quicksilver a chain of

calamity: “of sloth commeth Pleasure, of Pleasure commeth Riot, or Ryt comes Whoring, of whoring comes Spending, of Spending comes Want, of Want comes Theft, of Theft comes hanging; and there is my *Quicksiluer* fixt” (4.2.324-328). Quicksilver’s remorse touches upon all of this. He invokes Touchstone’s kindness, for instance, by beginning his song, “I had a Master good, and kind” (2.2.51), and his final exhortation against “Vsurers, Bauds, and dice [...] Tiborne, Counters, & the Spittle” closely resembles the chain of calamity that Touchstone described beforehand.

While Quicksilver’s ballad targets Touchstone’s own conception of virtue, this does not in and of itself make Quicksilver’s song authentic. Much of the authenticity comes from the parallels Quicksilver draws between his words and the “Mannington” ballad he draws from. The “Mannington” ballad (see next page) chronicles George Mannington’s words the night before he was hanged in 1576. In this ballad, the speaker regrets seeking pleasures of the flesh and the quick (but illegal) gains of criminal wealth. The speaker appears as a penitent that wishes only to absolve his crimes, legal and spiritual, and give himself completely to God. In “Mannington,” the speaker expresses great remorse at his lifestyle and asks that his punishment serve as an example to all those who live similarly.

While Quicksilver (Q) substitutes his address of “fellow Prentises” for Mannington’s “prisoners poore,” the content of both versions remains roughly the same.³⁰ Both Quicksilver’s confession and the “Mannington” ballad he invokes caution listeners to avoid the “Vsurers, Bauds, and dice” (Q) and “delights” (M) that will result in the speakers’ deaths. Both men tell the apprentices and prisoners (respectively) to live humbly with what they have, and thus, “Seeke not to goe beyond your tether [leash]” (Q)

and “Content yourselfe with your estate” (M). By making his ballad similar to Mannington’s confession, Quicksilver wants Touchstone to see his contrition as similar to George Mannington’s because that version of virtue is what Touchstone reveres.

By paralleling the sentiments of “Mannington” in his own ballad, Quicksilver appropriates some of the authenticity that makes it an authoritative expression of remorse. Meanwhile, the goldsmith’s dependence upon the gallant for his own virtuous status prompts him to drop the charges when Quicksilver appears authentically repentant. If Touchstone were not to extend charity and drop the charges, he would be condemning his own character. Touchstone must acknowledge that Quicksilver’s virtue if he is to confirm it in himself. While Touchstone sees his forgiveness as charity, it is nonetheless the result that Quicksilver deliberately molds his speech to attain.

Ultimately, Touchstone’s act of forgiveness is as much a reciprocal exchange as it is a merciful one. Quicksilver trades a specifically tailored product, his identity as virtuous apprentice, for a deliberately chosen reward, freedom from prison. Neither Quicksilver’s virtuous identity nor his freedom from prison are standard commodities; they are not tangible. Nevertheless, both are clearly commodities in this scene.

Touchstone does not see the exchange because the goldsmith’s conception of virtue requires the rejection of commerce. In fact, as defined in early modern London culture, Touchstone does not acknowledge that ideas like virtue can be traded at all. Like Security’s inability to perceive his own reciprocal relationship to Quicksilver, Touchstone, because of his concept of virtue, unwittingly engages in this new form of commerce. Despite his lack of material possessions, Quicksilver successfully “sells” himself to Touchstone by turning figurative aspects of daily social relations such as

identity into commodities. His strategy reflects the change occurring in London culture and in the word “commodity” itself. While Quicksilver appears to return to his state of little agency as Touchstone’s apprentice following the redemption, this is not so.

Quicksilver retains his freedom through the knowledge that he is never without agency if he can always sell ideas and identity.

However, this success is minor compared to the implications of Quicksilver’s self-commodification. Quicksilver’s deliberate incorporation of the “Mannington” ballad content into his identity makes that identity into not just a product that can be traded as a commodity but a product of commercial trade. The song was popular at the time of *Eastward Ho*’s writing and available in the London market.³¹ In the London market, audiences would have had great difficulty missing Quicksilver’s references to the “Mannington” ballad, a song they themselves have bought and heard in the London market.³²

“Mannington” attaches Quicksilver’s remorse to an iconic representation of commercialism: the broadside ballad. Ballads are sung narratives. Dugaw observes that, in their traditional form, English ballads are an oral poetry that reflects upon the state of the pre-modern world (115). These songs (or chants) are typically tragic in theme (115). However, with the advent of modern printing methods during the 16th century, ballads became commercialized as printed “broadsides” to be sold. The broadside, Dugaw explains, describes “a newsworthy event such as a sensational crime, natural disaster, military conflict, or love scandal” (115). Broadsides expressed popular sentiment at a particular moment in time in printed form. That the sentiment they record is “popular” is shown by how well a given ballad is known. A successful commercial ballad would be

quite widespread in its distribution, implying that the sentiment the ballad expresses is of interest to many, or at least of enough interest for people to buy. Ballads that endure through time are increasingly popular as they continue to be repeated and sold.

The ballad “Mannington” is one such broadside; it is what Quicksilver wishes to become, a commodity whose authority derives from its own distribution—exchange—to others.³³ By linking himself to the ballad, Quicksilver becomes this kind of commodity: he becomes a ballad that Touchstone buys. Yet if “Mannington” derives its sense of authenticity and authority from its popularity, then ultimately what Quicksilver forces Touchstone to consider as virtue in this final scene is authoritative only because of its successful distribution and commerce. Quicksilver’s parody of the prodigal form as balladry takes the traditional virtue that was predicated upon Biblical proverbs and Protestant ethics and represents that virtue as a product whose legitimacy comes from its familiarity and popularity in the London market.

Quicksilver derives virtue from popularity and commerce by expressing it in the ballad. His efforts suggest that the “legitimated economic acquisition” (Griswold 677) that gallantry dramatizes also carries a subtext of identity commodification. Identities predicated upon wealth, land, and clothing, are not set in stone but are instead products that can be traded upon and gained through the market. Witgood, for instance, convinces his creditors that he will be a rich, landed gentleman and, upon that characterization, they extend him jewelry, coin, and an unlimited line of credit (3.1.24-67). Witgood trades an identity of a rich man for the means by which he can become that person. The gallant Laxton from Middleton and Dekker’s *The Roaring Girl* first coerces money from the Gallipots by threatening to spread a fictional rumor that the wife was contracted to him

before her marriage (and thus the marriage to Gallipot was semi-adulterous), but then confesses of his guilt and receives the money anyway from Master Gallipot's charity. Gallants such as Quicksilver, Witgood, and Laxton establish commercialism as an integral expression of agency in English drama.

CHAPTER III

TO CALL A “WHORE”: FEMININE SYMBOLIC COMMERCE IN JACOBAN DRAMA

In my previous chapter, I examined the gallant as representative of the way that playwrights envisioned a new kind of entrepreneurship: the self-commodification of identity. This chapter details a similar kind of behavior in which female characters sell-a representation of themselves, an idea, to male characters who expect to purchase sex. The target for these carnal efforts is labeled a “whore.” The “whore” label is indicative of the changing economy for Jacobean playwrights. London’s urbanization explosion, it should be recalled, coincided with a booming economy, and the emergence of a new kind of symbolic commodity: the trade of intangible ideas on the market in combination with, and instead of, tangible commodities such as gold and clothing.

The shift in London’s economy from physical to symbolic commodities in the wake of its commercial explosion left indelible prints on portrayals of feminine commerce. The prostitute or, the “whore,” was a frequent metaphor of the time for commercial women, and in Elizabethan plays such as *Henry IV, Parts I and II* (1597-98) and *The Jew of Malta* (1590) accusations of whoredom are frequently accurate. Women called “whore” really are prostitutes. However, in Jacobean plays such as John Fletcher’s *A Woman’s Prize* (1611), Thomas Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl* (1610), and William Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* (1606), “whores” are as frequently not prostitutes; rather, they are women with strong business sense and financial independence. Commercial women trade in identities as Quicksilver does rather than selling their physical bodies and are lauded for doing so. They depict a shift in the dramatic

consciousness concerning feminine agency. Symbolic commerce, the portrayals suggest, empowers self-expression and autonomous action. In reading these plays, we see the beginning of a new kind of self-expression, centered on commodification, that lays the groundwork for Ben Jonson's notions of authorship and the print explosion during the Interregnum period.

The Elizabethan and Jacobean periods use the word "whore" and its synonyms to characterize feminine commerce in two distinctive ways. In Elizabethan drama, accusations of whoredom express entrepreneurial women as merchants of physical trade, particularly merchants who sell their own bodies for a fee, with little agency outside that kind of exchange. In Jacobean drama, accusations of whoredom are more complex. Since the women (and a few men) will not sell their bodies, calling them prostitutes illuminates what they will sell, identity, and underscores the subsequent commercial agency that results from these sales. Men who use the label are like Touchstone in *As You Like It*, whose archaic notions of commerce and identity render him susceptible to Quicksilver's symbolic machinations. The use of the "whore" label reveals a simplistic economic model that proves impotent in symbolic commerce. To such men, a woman's only participation in commerce is as a physical commodity: her body. They are swiftly outwitted by the more financially aware women they criticize.

Theories vary as to why playwrights' characterization of the "whore" changed between Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. Angela Ingram suggests that labeling women whores, courtesans, and prostitutes in Jacobean drama functions as part of a social satire that elevates the prostitute as a symbol of London self-indulgence. Any sympathetic praise she evokes is akin to the self-damning indulgence aroused by the medieval vice

(Ingram 6). Ingram argues that the whorelike widow Livia from Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, for example, does not espouse any particular kind of lifestyle or business ethics so much as she forces audiences to realize their own complicity in her power. When Livia offers to be Leantio's lover, Ingram continues, she "exploits and reflects the materialism and speciousness of social custom" and thereby "castigates society" (6). More broadly, Trish Henley argues that the figure of the Jacobean whore allows playwrights of the period to analogize the social ills brought on by London's changing economy. Anne Haselkorn asserts that there is not so much a shift in any widespread view about the whore, but instead, a divergence of the dominant Elizabethan depiction of the whore as a social ill into three dramatic attitudes: the "cavalier" that neither unilaterally condemns the prostitute nor elevates her (20); the "puritanical" attitude that seeks to reform the whore through beatings and repentance (21); and the "liberal" attitude that seeks to reform the whore through marriage (22). Jean Howard sees the rise in the "prostitution plots" of Jacobean drama to be a direct result of London's urbanization explosion; the whore's sympathetic treatment during the later period is indicative of the ways that London's booming economy "destabilized the opposition between the whore and other categories of women or between the practices of the whore and those of other commercial entrepreneurs" (237 n 9).³⁴ The result was that placing a whore beneath other commercial women—and men—became difficult as self-commodification became a commonplace means for economic success. Everyone, and particularly, women, held the potential to be a symbolic whore.

The association of "whore" with successful feminine commerce indicates Jacobean playwrights' deeper engagement in, and acceptance of, symbolic commerce. In

these portrayals, we see the ways that symbolic commerce transformed ideas about identity and the London market. The sale of women in these plays, as bodies and as identities, presents a microcosmic consideration of how London shifted from physical to symbolic economies between the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, as well as how playwrights began to elevate symbolic commerce as a form of agency for those marginalized by society.

Within Elizabethan drama, women who are termed “whore” or “courtesan” are rarely featured in major roles, instead appearing more often as oblique references to actual courtesans or prostitutes. This is not to state that no such women are to be found in greater roles, of course. The Elizabethan Shakespeare corpus includes Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly who both have regular appearances in the *Henry IV* plays, and Mistress Quickly has an additional starring role in *The Merry wives of Windsor*. The courtesan Bellamira has a significant role in Christopher Marlowe’s *The Jew of Malta* and the prostitute Mary is the primary figure in the anonymous play *How to Tell a Good Wife from a Bad*. But, larger roles do not necessarily mean positive portrayals. Depictions of the whore in Elizabethan drama are ambivalent at best (Haselkorn 21). While occasionally sympathetic characters, these women are often associated with criminality, infidelity, and venereal disease. The most important aspect of the prostitute in Elizabethan drama was in the assumed physicality and commerciality of her person. Her physical body could be bought for a fee and thus, served as the object of her commerce. It was her primary and often only form of agency.³⁵

* * *

As Shakespeare remains not only the most well-known of Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights today but also a playwright whose plays were popular and influential in his own day, the aforementioned Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly from *Henry IV* plays (1596-1597) provide a reasonable starting point for delineating how prostitutes appeared on the Elizabethan stage, as well as how their characterization differed on the Jacobean stage.

These women's portrayals exemplify the Elizabethan dramatic courtesan's fundamental physicality. Doll is obviously a prostitute, while Mistress Quickly, Anne Haselkorn asserts, is "a widow who has graduated from prostitute to bawd [madam]" (45). Thus, while not a "whore" at the time of the play, Quickly was so formerly and is subject to the same kinds of treatment in the play as Doll from Falstaff. Doll, Haselkorn observes, is characterized almost entirely by "her most marketable commodity, her body" (47). For instance, to express her thanks to Falstaff for driving away the offensive Pistol, she offers, "I'll canvass thee between a pair of sheets" (Haselkorn 47).³⁶ While there are other ways that Doll could "thank" Pistol—she could promise a favor in the future—the method she chooses to express her gratitude is through sexual congress. Sex is not the only way Doll expresses and asserts herself, but it is a common thread that works its way into nearly every encounter she has with men. When Doll and Mistress Quickly are being dragged off for whipping near the end of *2 Henry 4 (2H4)*, Doll again resorts to her body by claiming to be pregnant by Falstaff.

Doll's headwoman Mistress Quickly is similarly termed "whore" by Falstaff, who characterizes her as little more than a "thing" that he uses to satisfy his appetites and who is otherwise without merit:

“There’s no more faith in thee than a stew’d prune, nor no more faith in thee than in a drawn [chased] fox—and for womanhood, Maid Marian may be the deputy’s wife of the ward to thee. Go, you thing, go!” (*1H4* 3.3.112-116).

Falstaff is not subtle; his description of Mistress Quickly is entirely in terms of her sexual relationship to him and her questionable sexuality outside of those relations. Falstaff’s “stew’d prune” label is an alternate term for a whore. “Stew” was a common term for London’s brothels, and “prune” recalls Quickly’s commodified status as a food for satisfying sexual appetites (“stew” 4). His “Maid Marian” comparison argues that Mistress Quickly is less of a woman than a man in a dress. Given the obvious meta-theatrical implications of Falstaff’s last comment—Quickly’s role was played by a man in a dress—his words become even more damning. By saying that the character of Mistress Quickly has less sexuality than her literal personification onstage, he asserts that she does not even measure up sexually to her role; she is not a real woman. At best, she is a “thing” with no agency that must “go” as he commands.

Doll’s abject physicality, the fashioning of her body as agency, affords Falstaff an opportunity to express unilateral condemnation of the prostitute’s body and, by extension, her commerce, as a vehicle for spreading disease and low moral character. He accuses Doll of spreading disease by sleeping with men and of moral weakness: “you help make the diseases, Doll, we catch of you, Doll, we catch of you; grant that, my poor virtue, grant that [...] you are the weaker vessel” (*2H4* 2.4.42-58). Falstaff’s accusations carry strong implications that marry Doll’s physicality to agency. Her “vessel” is her body and thus the primary site for these diseases. Moreover, rather than accepting any

responsibility for the spread of venereal diseases by sleeping with prostitutes like Doll, Falstaff makes Doll and women like her the ones who “make the diseases.” Thus, while he allows Doll agency in this case, it is a conditional agency. Her agency only exists as an expression of what her body does and carries with it social condemnation.

Doll and Quickly are normative depictions of prostitution on the Elizabethan stage; their physical commerce ensures they never rise above and control the men they tend to. For these women, physical commerce brings only objectification, the social construction of their bodies as a site for disease, and a lack of agency that renders them inhuman, not deserving of sympathy or subjectivity. What selfhood such women have is bound up in the sale of their bodies.

The idea of the whore in Elizabethan culture was a societal safety valve that allowed men to live out their fantasies without repercussions. In works of the period, Julia Davidson explains, we find “the prostitute,”

Is constructed as an object, not a subject [...] no matter how much control the prostitute exercises over the details of each exchange, the essence of the transaction is that the client pays the prostitute to be a person who is not a person. Clients thus get to have sex with a real live, flesh and blood human being, and yet to evade all of the obligations, dependencies and responsibilities which are implied by sexual ‘fusion’ in non-commercial contexts. They get to have sex with a person who is physically alive but socially dead (137).

For the men who label them as whores, commerce with Doll and Quickly, as well as other women so labeled in Elizabethan drama like Bellamira and Mary is a way to escape

the moral quandry of extramarital sexual relations. Prostitutes lack subjectivity and thus are not actual women. As a consequence of this, masculine subjectivity becomes exclusive; men are the sole authorities and bearers of power.

The lack of agency in the Elizabethan theatrical whore because of her fundamental physicality and corresponding commerce is rarely present in Jacobean drama. Nonetheless, prostitution has a regular presence in these plays. For example, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* dedicates considerable time to examining issues surrounding prostitution. But, unlike its use in Elizabethan drama, the word "whore" more commonly targets commercial women who are not prostitutes than it targets actual prostitutes.³⁷ Women such as Livia from Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women*; Bellafront from Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's *The Honest Whore*; Maria from John Fletcher's *A Woman's Prize*; and Cleopatra from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* offer a representative sample of women so labeled.

Unlike Quicksilver, who needs to construct desire for his person in order to trade himself to Security and Touchstone, the women noted above recognize a more basic truth about the burgeoning symbolic market brought on by London's urbanization: all persons are already desired commodities on the market. For women, that desired commodity is their physical body. They use that desire to control the terms of transactions as well as what products, physical or symbolic, are actually exchanged. In doing so, these women exhibit considerable commercial agency and are able to act autonomously. They can and do reject men's attempts to use them as objects while ultimately using their commercial prowess to fashion new identities.

* * *

The later plays of Shakespeare offer some of the best examples of how depictions of the whore changed in response to London's emergent symbolic commerce and sudden rise in urbanization. Whereas Shakespeare's Elizabethan plays tend to correlate the whore label with actual prostitutes such as Mistress Quickly and Doll and depicting them as "things" with little to no agency, his Jacobean plays employ the whore label to call attention to women's commercial agency. Objectifying women as things in his later plays' symbolic economies bestows them with more agency, not less, by making those who call them "whore" susceptible to manipulation.

Within plays such as *A Winter's Tale*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* the female body is used as a means to undermine the authority of men. In *Winter's Tale*, Paulina's exhibition of Hermione as a statue represents the strength of women in a symbolic market; they are able to exist as both nonsubjective things and subjective persons. Hermione's statue mocks the king's earlier accusations of whoredom by providing him with the kind of body he imagined for Hermione: a body that can be bought, sold, and viewed at leisure but, despite illusions of life, does not itself live.³⁸ Yet her statue is continually affirmed as lifelike; we are conscious of Hermione's physical, statuelike nature as only one form she might take; she is also a person playing a statue. Her "thing" status is not only Leontes's reality, it is a ploy that Hermione and Paulina use to compel Leontes's forgiveness. Similarly, the success of the bed-trick in *Measure for Measure* suggests that Angelo is duped because of his simplistic conception of women as physical objects; he cannot tell them apart in the dark. Within *Antony and Cleopatra* assumptions of physicality and the queen's successful manipulation of these assumptions through symbolic commerce is at the core of the play's plot.

The play that best confirms the change, however, is Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1599), a play whose production occurred within the fulcrum period in which attitudes about the whore were changing. The portrayal of agency in *Merry Wives* is a reversal the earlier *Henry IV* plays. In the *Henry* plays Mistress Quickly is a thing ordered about by Falstaff. Her personhood only exists within the narrow confines of her sexual relations with him. In *Merry Wives* she and the other wives order the fat knight about. The plot is as follows: Falstaff arrives in Windsor short on cash and decides to court two wealthy widows, Mistresses Ford and Page, so that they might provide for him.³⁹ Mistress Quickly soon becomes involved when another character, Hugh Evans, enlists her help in wooing Mistress Page's daughter. When Falstaff comes to woo, the three women, Mistress Quickly among them, are in control. They use Falstaff's desires against him by setting comical terms as the price that Falstaff must pay if they are to sleep with him. He must hide in a laundry basket that is then emptied into the river, and he must endure a beating by Mistress Ford's husband while the knight is disguised as a maid's aunt whom the husband loathes, among other things. Meanwhile, Falstaff is held accountable for money that Ford, disguised as Brook, gives him and, as a result, his horses, as the women predicted, are taken as security. As their last trick, they convince Falstaff to rendezvous with them in the forest. Once he is there, they mock the imaginary nature of that sexual encounter by setting upon him children disguised as fairies who pinch and burn him severally. Eventually Hugh provides Falstaff with the solution: if the knight will "leave your desires" the "fairies will not pinse you" (5.5.28-29). Falstaff eventually agrees to leave off his sexual pursuits that, they make clear, is imaginary.

The similarities between the Mistress Quickly and Falstaff of *Merry Wives* and the Mistress Quickly and Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays suggest that these characters are meant dramatically to be taken as the same persons despite the close to one hundred year difference in the plays' settings (Bevington 256-257). While the circa 1599 performance of *Merry Wives* came only a few years after the *Henry* plays and places it within the Elizabethan period, its markedly different characterizations of women and commercial agency make it an ideal starting point for discussing Jacobean women. In *Merry Wives* we see the beginnings of feminine commercial agency just as London begins to experience its urbanization.

The play's finale in the forest marks a critical move for the women. They use the imagined tryst to compel him to treat them as more than objects. However, to reach this point takes some work, as Falstaff is more than a little stubborn. He is unable to conceive of the women as anything other than bodies for sex, and (to his mind) all their actions are reflections of his lust.

Until the forest scene, Falstaff's words characterize the wives' agency as solely a sexual expression of their physical commodification. He explains this bluntly to Pistol and Nym: "I do mean to make love to Ford's wife" (1.3.41-42). Falstaff has difficulty seeing Mistress Ford as anything but a prostitute who avails herself to him in order satisfy sexual needs. He continues, "I spy entertainment in her; she discourses, she carves, she gives the leer of invitation" (1.3.42-43). Moreover, Falstaff thinks he "owns" Mistress Ford because of those characteristics: "the hardest voice of her behavior" is "I am Sir John Falstaff's" (1.3.44-46). The knight describes Mistress Page in similar terms. He tells his companions, "she did so course o'er my exteriors with such a greedy

intention, that the appetite of her eye did seem to scorch me up like a burning-glass!” (1.3.63-65). Falstaff’s descriptions are very much in line with the Elizabethan dramatic attitude concerning prostitutes. When they have agency, it is sexual.

Falstaff’s attitude is swiftly undercut by his prodigious bulk and lack of agency. While Falstaff envisions himself as oozing sexuality through his “good parts,” his corpulence consistently undermines this image by forcing him into humiliating situations (2.2.100). Mistress Page is quick to question, for instance, whether the knight is of “reasonable stature” enough to fit in the laundry basket (3.3.119), with the implied answer being, “of course not!” The wives’ observations call attention to Falstaff’s inability to act the part of the covert lover because his size makes disguise and concealment difficult. He convinces no one of his status as a lover. He is never anything but fat, jolly, Falstaff.

By contrast, the wives are more able to use Falstaff’s conception of their persons—identity—as agency. They recognize that they can force Falstaff to undergo repeated humiliations in exchange for just the potential of sexual contact and riches. Their end goal is that they “be revenged on him” for suggesting they cheat on their husbands (2.1.58). To reach this goal, they plan to “entertain him with hope” (2.1.59-60) and “lead him on with many a fine-baited delay” (2.1.85-86) until he is humiliated enough to admit his error. At no point do their bodies figure into the equation except as imagined representations of what could be. They take what Falstaff desires, their bodies, substitute them with an imagined representation, and he eagerly follows blindly after every carrot they dangle in front of his belly.

Falstaff's lust blinds him to the wives' plans. Since to him all they can offer is their bodies for sex, he perceives the humiliations as temporary delays rather than an end unto themselves. Even when forced to squeeze into a basket, for example, Falstaff keeps his desire to sleep with the women in the forefront of his mind and is unashamed to whisper to Mistress Page, "I love thee, and none but thee" (3.3.130). After he is beaten by Ford, Falstaff confides to Brook (Ford in disguise), "tonight I'll be revenged" (4.6.27). He is speaking of the forest rendezvous and, he thinks, subsequent sexual pleasure. No matter the situation, Falstaff is unable to believe that the wives, and probably women in general, have any other motives than that he himself holds: sex. As a result, he unwittingly stumbles along until he finds himself alone in the forest with horns on his head and pinched by fairies, at everyone's mercy, because he does not realize that his insistence on objectifying women as prostitutes has resulted in them objectifying him.

* * *

Mistresses Ford, Page, and Quickly, as well as a host of other women in the Jacobean period that soon follows *Merry Wives*'s production like Moll, the protagonist of Thomas Middleton and Thomas Rowley's *The Roaring Girl* (1611) and Maria, Petruchio's wife in John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611), have little in common with their "whore" label. They are not "things" nor are they faithless. The juxtaposition of the whore label with these women's virtuous actions encourages audiences to question in what ways these women are, and are not, whores. These women are not objectified "things" nor faithless. But they do offer and market themselves symbolically in a manner reminiscent of the way the dramatic whore of the Elizabethan stage markets her body. The difference is that what these Jacobean women

put up for sale is only an idea. In their hands, commerce is a form of agency that allows them to act autonomously.

When commercial women are termed “whore” in Jacobean drama one cannot help but note that even when this label is accurate, it proves vague at best and in most cases, those who unleash the label are like Falstaff: their own inadequacies and powerlessness in the face of commercial women are exposed. This behavior can best be seen, however, not in the noblewomen that have thus far largely been the focus of this investigation but by their less moral counterparts, the actual prostitutes of Jacobean drama.

If depictions of noble, non-prostitute women like Mistress Quickly illustrate the strength of commercial agency, then depictions of actual prostitutes in Jacobean drama reveal the moral superiority of commercial women compared to their non-commercial counterparts. Like the noblewomen previously discussed, the actual prostitutes of Jacobean drama receive sympathetic treatment from playwrights. Many are titular figures. The courtesan Vittoria is honored by the title of Webster’s *White Devil*, as is the *Dutch Courtesan* Franceschina of John Marston’s play and the sister Annabella by the title of John Ford’s *Tis Pity She’s a Whore*.

Though they do not receive titular credits, the courtesan of Middleton’s *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and Mistress Allwit in Middleton’s *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* are nonetheless powerful women and occupy the morally superior position (relative to other characters) in their plays.⁴⁰ The judge for Vittoria’s “trial”, for example, is far from objective in his rulings. Despite Vittoria’s well-reasoned defense of herself, the judge Monticelso screams at her, “shall I expound whore to you?” (3.2.80). For all Monticelso’s fury, he never actually “expounds”, or defines, “whore.” He gets caught in

the trap of defining the whore by absence and we are left with no better definition after than when he began: he describes the whore by analogies that imply but never specify: “Cold Russian winters” (3.2.85); “flattering bells [with] one tune” (3.2.94); “treasures by extortion fill’d” (3.2.96). Rather than adopt the moral disdain that Monticelso mounts against Vittoria, however, we cannot help but feel, as Laura Bromley observes, that the courtesan’s open acceptance of her lifestyle maintains “an essential integrity” that draws our “sympathy” (64).

These courtesans are as exploitive as the Marias (*A Woman’s Prize*), Orianas (*The Wild-Goose Chase*), Lady Allworths (*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*), Hermiones (*A Winter’s Tale*), and Mistress Quickleys (*Merry Wives*) who are not prostitutes and in much the same fashion.⁴¹ The Dutch courtesan Franceschina leads on her would-be lover, Maheureux, in much the same manner as the wives lead on Falstaff. Franceschina allows Maheureux to think that she will become his lover if he murders Freevil, a former-lover that now spurns her. While Franceschina’s objectives are considerably darker than those of the wives, the commercial manner in which she achieves those objectives is not. She capitalizes on Maheureux’s desire to acquire her by making him think that murder is the price he must pay for ownership. Similarly, the courtesan from *Trick* makes the miser Walkadine Hoard think that she will marry him (Hoard thinks her a rich widow) if he acts more sympathetically towards his nephew (her lover) Witgood.

It is Mistress Allwit from *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* that stands out the most from the prostitutes of Jacobean and Caroline drama, since her great successes are doubled by the play’s “Chaste Maid”, Moll, who has little to no agency throughout the play. Mistress Allwit is not a typical prostitute. She, with her husband’s full approval,

provides her body to Sir Walter Whorehound in exchange for money and property. Whorehound's attentions have resulted in a considerable number of children whose upkeep the knight provides. Moll, by contrast, is virginal (4.2.59-60). Mistress Allwit's prostitution liberates the couple from their Cheapside lodgings and empowers them to live wherever they please, even the well-off Strand district (5.1.168-169). Moll's non-commercial lifestyle is considerably less empowering. Moll's actions are frequently not her own. Her parents pledge her hand to Whorehound. When she tries to run away from the impending marriage, she is chased down and thrown into the Thames as punishment. Moll eventually does escape the premarital arrangements and become pledged to her love, Touchwood Junior, but not through any actions of her own. Whorehound is disinherited and then held to account for his debts and is subsequently imprisoned.

Chaste Maid questions the moral superiority of chaste but noncommercial women like Moll. Had Moll been more open to taking advantage of Whorehound's desires, the play begs, would she have been able to choose her own path like the Allwits did? That is, if Moll had been more commercial, would she have had more agency? Moreover, since it is Moll who gets punished by a dunk in the Thames and the Allwits who are not punished in any fashion for their efforts, who truly is superior? We are forced to admit that Moll is abused exactly because she is seen as chaste. She is a prize for Whorehound, because of the land and wealth she brings as a marriageable daughter. Mistress Allwit, who is not marriageable (and is, in fact, already married) is not desired as a prize but as a product, and therefore, she must be bought. It is this underlying commerciality to her character that enables her great agency.

When one character calls another a “whore” in Jacobean drama there is an inherent struggle between competing models of the prostitute. On the one hand, whore refers to the female body as an object. On the other hand, the “whore” is a metaphoric label for a certain type of behavior, a woman selling herself. Much of the struggle, such as with Shakespeare’s Cleopatra, is that the men of these plays consistently characterize the women in much the way as Falstaff does Mistress Quickly, a “thing” they use for sexual pleasure. Even so, the women ultimately triumph. Through their symbolic commerce, they affirm control of and take back their bodies from the marketplace, thereby signaling the emergence of a new, symbolic economy in which feminine agency is on par with, if not greater than, masculine agency.

* * *

Shakespeare’s *Antony and Cleopatra* melds Jacobean dramatic concerns about feminine commerce with the historicized struggle between Caesar and Cleopatra.⁴² At stake is the shape of the world to come, the modern civilization that will arise from Roman Empire and the place of symbolic commerce in an increasingly intangible world of trade. The play pits the masculinity, self-control, and physical commerce of Rome against the femininity, passion, and symbolic commerce of exotic Egypt. It is commerce that is the most important on both sides. The play’s Romans consistently attempt to gain possession of Cleopatra’s body, revealing their preoccupation with her as a physical commodity. Cleopatra, however, counters only with offers of carefully constructed intangible personas.

Previous scholarship on *Antony and Cleopatra* has generally left the commercial elements of the play unexamined. More common examinations focus on the ways Roman

sensibility seems to decay in the face of Egyptian passion and how Cleopatra's theatricality undermines Caesar's attempts to cast her as a whore.⁴³ However, these elements are also strongly commercial. These are indicative of how Shakespeare uses whore accusations to underscore Cleopatra's sale of personas as means to escape Roman objectification and retain her agency. She encourages the Romans to perceive her personas as her true identity. She deliberately plays up their stereotype of her as a purchasable woman, then uses the ensuing transaction as an opportunity to substitute her own terms and product in place of her body. This symbolic commerce is, for her, agency. Cleopatra's business acumen expands the critique of physical commerce begun in *City Comedy*, into a consideration of symbolic commerce as a superior economic ideology.

The plot of *Antony and Cleopatra* consistently casts Cleopatra as a Roman object of desire, first for Antony and then for Caesar. Cleopatra exploits her position, eventually making Caesar unwittingly provide the means she needs to escape Roman objectification. As the play begins, Caesar and Antony are at odds in part because Antony spends more time with Cleopatra than he does in Rome. The two Romans come together to stop the pirate Pompey, with the stipulation that Antony marry Caesar's sister, Octavia. However, Antony returns to Cleopatra, and Caesar uses this as an excuse to conquer Egypt and take Cleopatra back with him to Rome as a symbol of his power. Antony meets him with the Egyptian navy, but is forced to flee when Cleopatra's barges deserts. To win back Antony after her desertion, Cleopatra arranges for him to think her dead with an unexpected result: Antony commits suicide, living just long enough before dying only to see Cleopatra and declare his love. Cleopatra is soon captured. She convinces Caesar she

will not commit suicide as well, then promptly does so at the first opportunity, thereby frustrating Caesar's attempts to show her off in Rome.

Agency, one of the features of identity, is imprisoned within a masculine framework in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*. Because only men are recognized as persons, women within it have no independent agency. The play's Roman society, Jyotsna Singh observes, is marked by an "ideology of exclusion" that harkens back to Elizabethan stereotypes of women and that Roman women like Octavia conform to and non-Egyptian women like Cleopatra exploit (100). Within this ideology, women and their agency are properties for men to own and control (Singh 100). "Human identity," Singh continues, is "the prerogative of a universalized and coherent male subject, who must resist being seduced and 'feminized' by the possibility of changeable, multiple selves" such as those Cleopatra repeatedly presents (101).⁴⁴ However, Cleopatra is not Roman and thus does not adopt their ideology. She is able to operate outside its narrow restrictions for feminine behavior. It is from this position, outside the Roman conception, that Cleopatra expresses her commercial agency.

Through Cleopatra the play challenges pre-Jacobean assumptions about feminine commerce as represented by the play's Romans. Like other commercial women of Jacobean drama, Cleopatra finds herself faced with men who attempt to objectify her by casting her as a whore whose favor is for sale. Like *Mistresses Ford*, *Quickly*, *Maria*, *Moll Cutpurse*, and others, Cleopatra uses these men's attempts to objectify her against them. What distinguishes Cleopatra from her dramatic sisters is that she has a far greater presence in a far greater play. Hers is a tragedy, a genre revered in Renaissance England as an icon for serious considerations. Cleopatra's play has none of the banter and humor

of the comedies in which the others are found. Moreover, the scope of her trials is epic: she is the heroine in the struggle to define Western European culture. Her actions firmly situate symbolic commerce in the dialogue concerning the future Egypt, and Rome and the English values that both sides represent.

To the Roman mindset, women are subservient objects. Their agency is, at best, an expression of the desires of men who control them. Barbara Jankowski notes that Octavia is particularly indicative of this conception in her role as the model Roman woman. Ironically, what makes Octavia “Roman” is her complete lack of agency since that is reserved for men. Octavia, Jankowski explains, “is virtually her brother’s object to use as he will;” she is the “ideal wife with her ‘holy, cold, and still conversation’ whose portrayal elevates feminine silence (“still conversation”) while suppressing her sexuality as cold (155). What authority she has, Jankowski continues, stems inevitably from her brother so that “the power of Caesar” becomes “his power unto Octavia” (155). In spite of being ideal, her husband, Antony, leaves her at his first opportunity. Octavia, no longer an object of desire, is not able to leverage any terms, such as Mistress Ford does to Falstaff, and fails to acquire economic agency as the latter women do.

Cleopatra is not like Octavia. While Octavia willingly submits to cultural imprisonment, Cleopatra refuses to be either contained or excluded by these ideas. She routinely reaches into the ideas governing Roman culture and pulls out prostitute stereotypes, which she then adopts as personas. She is at times a Roman soldier, an indomitable queen, a page, and a loyal supplicant. In doing so, Cleopatra habitually blurs the Roman divide between genders, appropriating its masculine roles and signs even while maintaining a distinctive feminine presence.

Cleopatra's cross-dressing dream illustrates the ease with which she challenges masculine forms. In the dream, the queen describes herself metaphorically conquering her lover by appropriating his sword, a traditional symbol for masculine virility and strength, for herself:

Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
I wore his sword, Philippa (2.5.21-23).

Here, Antony represents the Roman masculine. Overcome by Cleopatra, Antony is powerless. Cleopatra feminizes him when she fits him with her dress and takes his sword for herself. Ultimately, neither figure is clearly masculine or feminine.

This cross-dressing symbolically dismantles the Roman conception of masculinity sans femininity. Cleopatra's influence over Antony, according to the Roman mindset, weakens and interferes with the normal operations of his manhood. Caesar finds his fellow triumvir, "not more manlike / than Cleopatra, nor the queen of Ptolemy / more womanly than he" (1.4.5-7). In contrast, Cleopatra easily moves between genders and is not weakened by taking on masculine roles. Instead, such roles are an expression of her power. When preparing for war as "president" of her country, for instance, Cleopatra does not hesitate to "appear there for a man" (3.7.17-18). The resemblance gives her strength. She is able to portray herself as possessing a kind of manhood linked to power, in this case, political and military power, while retaining her femininity. Cleopatra makes clear that she will only "appear" as a man.

Despite her appropriation of masculine symbols and roles, Cleopatra remains distinctively un-Roman. Unlike Octavia, the queen is sexually desirable and definitively

feminine. Enobarbus's famous description of her barge metonymically links the queen to a plethora of mythical creatures that personify sexual desire. Further, he describes the queen as "Venus" surrounded by "Cupids," "Nereides," and "mermaids" (210-219). He chooses not to describe the queen in terms of masculine beauty, an Adonis, but instead chooses three female figures associated with beauty and a fourth, Cupid, that, as a child, is also closely associated with the feminine. Enobarbus's words construe Cleopatra as mythic and pointedly female.

Cleopatra's own language consists of double entendres that imbue her words with sexual potency even as they definitively characterize her as feminine. When Cleopatra envisions herself as the "happy horse" that "bear[s] the weight of Antony" (1.5.22), for instance, she employs a common metaphor of the period that substitutes horses for feminine sexuality (Roberts 164).⁴⁵ Later, she is more explicit. She tells the messenger to "ram thou thy fruitful tidings" like a penis into the womb of "mine ears" that for a "long time have been barren" (2.5.24-25). Politically, she uses sexual language as a weapon. She metaphorically denies Caesar the masculinity so vital to his concept of power by terming him a "scarce-bearded" boy, a phrase that condemns him for his youth while suggesting he does not yet possess the facial hair or sexual maturity of a grown man.

Caesar's response to Cleopatra's threat is slander. He characterizes her as a prostitute, and makes her the source of all his problems, even those that stem from Antony. Caesar claims that Antony has given "his empire / up to a whore" (3.6.67-68) and "in his abominations [...] gives his potent regiment to a trull / that noises it against us" (3.6.97-98). "Whore" and "trull" are telling for the way they reveal an underlying commerciality to his view of Cleopatra's sexuality. Thus, while ostensibly the passage

attacks Antony, the actual threat comes from Cleopatra. She is the “whore” who turns the troops against Caesar. Caesar’s challenge is how Cleopatra arouses men’s sexual desire and bends them to her wishes. Caesar does not appear as concerned about his foe gathering for battle as he does that Antony gave his “empire” and “troops” to Cleopatra, a woman he considers a prostitute. That Antony gave his troops to Cleopatra in exchange for sexual favors, Caesar suggests, is the actual “abomination.” But, what about this makes it an abomination? The answer lies in the same discourses that make her sexuality and masculine appropriation so disturbing for Caesar. Cleopatra has the ability to turn men against their Roman natures and, in the case of the “potent regiment,” turn their loyalties against Rome.

Cleopatra’s fluid gender identity and distinctive femininity challenge Caesar’s ideas about discipline and its necessity to Roman identity, the means by which he expresses and articulates his power to others. Caesar lives an ethos that elevates following orders and self-control. While attending Pompey’s dinner party, Caesar refuses to indulge in drink even for a toast in his honor (2.7.99-101). Since he is powerful, he equates self-control with power. When Caesar acquiesces to Antony’s declaration to “be a child o’th’ time” by drinking from his cup, he does so only with a caution for the others present that contrasts self-control and power with drinking: “Possess it, I’ll make answer. / But I had rather fast from all four days / than drink so much in one” (2.7.102-104). With these words, Caesar juxtaposes two ideas, possession of the times and abstention from food, as a single idea. To Caesar, power is a function of a man’s ability to regulate his pleasures.

Cleopatra opposes and weakens Caesar's discipline. Jankowski observes that the play's Romans position themselves dichotomously to Cleopatra. She is pleasure to their duty, luxury to their notions of order, emotion to their reason, and feminine to their masculine (Jankowski 148). Caesar's central complaint about Antony, is his lack of self-control, which allows "pleasure" to rebel from "judgment" (1.4.32-33). Caesar's objection highlights the reason-emotion dichotomy Jankowski lays out; Antony is spending liberally and engaging in pleasure when he should listen instead to reason. The nuance of Caesar's words does not suggest that the two are mutually exclusive, rather that they need to be moderated. Caesar objects to Antony experiencing uncontrolled pleasure. When speaking of Antony's behavior in Egypt, Caesar contrasts the past, powerful Antony who "slew'st / Hirtius and Pansa" (1.4.58-59), who endured "with patience more / than savages could suffer" drinking "the stale of horses" (1.4.60-62), with the present, weaker Antony who desires "the roughest berry on the rudest hedge" for its more robust flavor (1.4.65). The "berry," of course, is Cleopatra.

As an Egyptian woman who freely indulges her passions, Cleopatra is an "Other" in the context of Roman cultural identity. She is a symbol for the *not*-Roman, the *not*-person. This is evident in the way the Romans replace Cleopatra's name in discourse with various whore labels: "strumpet," "queen," "gypsy," among others. Through this label, they seek to contain Cleopatra by condemning her as a manifestation of abnormal sexual appetite, while acknowledging her as a purchasable object of desire. Calling Cleopatra a "whore" mistakenly predisposes the Romans and Caesar in particular to perceive her and their relations to her through a simplistic model of feminine commerce. That is, the

Romans attempt to buy her as if she were the prostitute they depict her as and as if her sole means of agency were through the sale of her body.

In order to recover her agency from this simplistic model, Cleopatra makes Caesar, first through his messenger Thidias and, later, when speaking to the conqueror himself, think she is the whore he thinks her to be, thereby allowing his assumptions to guide his actions and make him vulnerable. Since Caesar expects her to be a whore he can buy, Cleopatra advertises herself by behaving like a courtesan. Cleopatra, like Bellafront, or Mistress Ford realizes that the Roman conception of her as a whore blinds Caesar to the way that she and he trade in identity.

When women have agency under the Roman model, they are whores in that their agency is inseparable from sexual desire. Moreover, their bodies and loyalties can be bought by men who give them money and an outlet for their rampant carnal lusts. This assumption is Cleopatra's advantage. Caesar's actions are caught up in his own characterization of the queen as a whore, so she structures his attempts to "win" her in a like accord. When he gives his messenger Thidias directions on how best to approach Cleopatra, the triumvir's plans focus on using commercial "offers" to target her sexual "want":

Try thy eloquence now, 'tis time. Dispatch.

From Antony win Cleopatra; promise,

And in our name, what she requires; add more,

From thine own invention, offers. Women are not

In their best fortunes strong, but want will perjure

The ne'er-touched vestal (3.12.27-31).

To Caesar, Cleopatra's femininity makes her fundamentally weak. This passage might be taken as a reproduction of the well-worn cliché of a faithless woman easily moved to disloyalty by flattery and desire, not necessarily whoredom. However, the addition of "offers" hints at an underlying commercialism in the pending encounter that allows Cleopatra agency. That Thidias must make such offers to "win" her implies that Cleopatra has the capacity to refuse his request.

Caesar's directives pose several problems that lead him and Thidias astray. First, by telling Thidias to "win" Cleopatra, Caesar implies that there is only one "Cleopatra" identity that can be won, an assumption that will eventually result in Cleopatra's victory over him. Second, Caesar leaves the exact nature of "offers" ambiguous and imposes no limit on what he can agree to. Third, Caesar mistakenly assumes that Cleopatra's only agency is through the commerce that concerns her body; that is, she will agree to whatever satisfies her desires most. Caesar assumes all female want is sexual and all female commerce involves the exchange of her body. In short, Caesar's words suggest that all women are potential whores in the face of desire.

* * *

The encounter between Cleopatra and Thidias foreshadows the way Cleopatra will later fool Caesar. She turns Thidias's preconception about women into a form of self-fashioning. She allows the messenger's desire to see her as a whore to overtake his commercial awareness so that he does not see what he actually gains from the transactions. Thidias's objective is to "win" Cleopatra from Antony, thereby confirming that she, like a whore, is unfaithful to her lovers and driven by more base self-interest. What he obtains instead, as the result of Cleopatra's negotiations, is a faithful woman

who will not part from her lover: the opposite of what he seeks. However, so consumed is he with the idea that Cleopatra is a whore that Thidias cannot comprehend her as any other kind of person. He never realizes that he does not get what he needs from her.

At first, Thidias appears to follow Caesar's instructions. He attempts to purchase Cleopatra under the assumption that she is a whore. The meeting plays out as follows. Thidias arrives at court as Caesar's messenger. There, he suggests to Cleopatra, "of [Caesar's] fortunes you should make a staff" (3.13.71-72). In exchange, he requires she leave Antony "and put yourself under [Caesar's] shroud" (3.13.71). Cleopatra seems to accede to Thidias request, even promising to kiss the hand of the Roman general and to lay her crown at his feet (3.13.79-80). To seal the deal, Thidias asks to kiss her hand, thereby demonstrating his acceptance of her will by reproducing the same gesture that she used to show her acceptance: "Give me grace to lay / my duty on your hand" (3.13.85-86). However, as Thidias is kissing Cleopatra's hand, Antony storms in, enraged. He orders Thidias whipped and the messenger is dragged from court.

The meeting between Cleopatra and Thidias is understood to be a setup on Cleopatra's part to provoke a jealous Antony (Heffner 156). Before meeting Thidias, Cleopatra had already pledged her loyalty to Caesar.⁴⁶ She makes sure he only buys a "Cleopatra" identity who stays faithful to Antony. She provides Thidias with no more promises than he had coming into the negotiation. Looking at the encounter as a transaction reveals how little Cleopatra offers Thidias. Thidias offers "fortune" and flattery and Cleopatra offers only her loyalty to Caesar. "Fortune" in the passage refers to a combination of wealth and security: Cleopatra could depend upon Caesar as a "staff" because of his riches, status, and political and military power (68). Conspicuously absent

from the encounter is the very thing Thidias is supposed to obtain: her separation from Antony, even after Thidias broaches the subject. While the messenger tells Cleopatra that “it would warm [Caesar’s] spirits / to hear from me you had left Antony” (3.13.69-70), at no point does Cleopatra actually reject Antony. Rather, she changes the subject by asking, “What’s your name?” (3.13.72) and never returns to the topic.

Thidias’s mistake is that he sees a single Cleopatra, a courtesan, when he should see at least two, courtesan and queen. Every act Cleopatra carries out is within the contexts of both roles instead of just one. Thus, when Cleopatra proposes to lay her crown at Caesar’s feet, the statement is, as Thidias takes it to be, a promise, and, a verbal substitute for an act that is clearly not being carried out. Words vie with reality. Thidias sees a woman who submits her sexual agency to masculine domination; the change from Antony to Caesar is only a switch between owners. What he does not see is a queen refusing to give up her crown or her lover.

Cleopatra outwits Thidias by concealing her motives and intentions behind the persona, the perceived identity, he expects. Not once does she dispute the whore resemblance that Thidias sees in her; rather, she reinforces his belief by behaving like a submissive courtesan. When she pledges her support to Caesar, for example, she figuratively locates herself at his feet, thereby portraying Caesar in the dominant position. There she promises to “kneel” and kiss his hand as if she were a flirting courtesan (76). That Antony is so enraged when she allows Thidias to kiss her hand suggests that her pose is more than a little successful at appearing as exactly the sort of commodity, a whore, that the messenger desires to purchase.

Meanwhile, Cleopatra remains an authoritative sovereign though Thidias fails to see her as such. The queen is constantly aware of the difference between character and reality. While Cleopatra portrays herself as a submissive, but flirtatious, courtesan, she never actually loses her position of power relative to Thidias. It is she, for example, who begins the encounter by directing Thidias to speak: as the ruling sovereign, Cleopatra has the power to determine who has voice within her court (3.12.50). Moreover, she retains her royal power despite Thidias's beliefs. She holds back the promise he needs and is never taken to task for it. When Thidias kisses her hand, a deferential gesture she proposed, Cleopatra stands as the ruler whose favor is being sought, not the courtesan accepting Thidias's proposal. She, it is clear, holds all the cards in the encounter.

Playing the whore allows Cleopatra to exist within the Roman conception of feminine agency as a commodity without ever actually submitting to its restrictive conditions. Because she plays the commodity Thidias seeks to purchase, Cleopatra has considerable latitude over what she and Thidias do and do not exchange. She makes the exchange into an offer in which she trades a version of herself that is faithful to Antony for a promise of continued loyalty to Caesar. By not agreeing to separate from Antony, she accomplishes a political triumph; she satisfies the messenger while also remaining true to her lover. Ironically, Thidias perceives none of this because his assumptions do not allow the possibility of her agency; her ability to trade him intangible commodities other than what he expects.

It is fair to ask whether Thidias has succeeded in obtaining anything at all. Though Thidias presents Caesar's "fortune" positively to Cleopatra, the word contains a bit of cynical mirth. Thidias's use of the word carries the implication that Caesar is

favored by fate. To Thidias, Caesar's riches, influence, and might are a foregone conclusion, as though the Roman conqueror were destined for greatness. Cleopatra is not convinced. To her, attributing success to destiny implies a loss of will that she refuses to acknowledge. If Caesar is truly fated to be great, she argues, then he himself has no agency and, thus, "Tis paltry to be Caesar / not being Fortune, he's but Fortune's knave, / a minister of her will" (5.2.2-3). In an ironic reversal of Caesar's attitudes about feminine agency, Cleopatra argues that Caesar has no agency of his own but is, instead, at the beck of Fortune's "will." On the one hand, given the commercial atmosphere of the play and the financial implications of the word "fortune," in using the term Cleopatra puts Caesar at the mercy of commerce. Cleopatra, on the other hand, will be slave to neither Fortune nor Caesar's fortunes.

* * *

When Cleopatra encounters Caesar she provides a crucial insight concerning the role of identity in the market: all commodities, even identity, operate as potential futures. That is, the whore identity that Caesar assigns and Cleopatra adopts is subject to multiple forms of commercial redistribution. This insight is particularly important in consideration of Act 5 when Cleopatra commits suicide and prevents once and for all Caesar's efforts to cast her as a whore in Rome.

The scene begins with Cleopatra taken prisoner by Proculeius. Caesar attempts to prevent the queen's suicide by threatening to kill her children if she kills herself and offering wealth if she does not. Cleopatra appears to accede to Caesar's demands, offering him a list of the riches he claims as Egypt's conqueror. However, the list is soon shown to be incomplete, a fact that Cleopatra uses to subtly hint to Caesar a price for her

life. Caesar allows the queen to keep her goods, then exits. Left alone with her maids, Cleopatra dresses in her royal attire and commits suicide. The scene ends with Caesar calling for a grand funeral.

The queen dupes Caesar into extending her the opportunity to construct herself as queen using the same techniques she employed when dealing with Thidias. She deliberately behaves as if she can be bought and relies upon what she does not say to convince Caesar to trade her what she requires. A case in point is seen with the list she presents to him. The list details what he will receive for conquering Egypt; however, its primary function in the scene is not merely to quantify Egypt as a collection of valuables Caesar can acquire, but also to set a price on Cleopatra. This “price” is never included in the document itself; but, rather is implied by what items the queen has chosen to hold back for herself.

The list is the mechanism by which Cleopatra sells herself to Caesar. Ostensibly, the list, she explains, details a complete record of the “money, plate, and jewels / I am possessed of [...] petty things omitted” (5.2.137-138). However, her treasurer, Seleucus, soon reveals otherwise. Claiming he fears Caesar, the treasurer admits that she has left out “enough to purchase what you have made known” (5.2.147). Cleopatra then begs for mercy, arguing that the items are of little worth to anyone except women, despite Seleucus’s claims as to their monetary value:

Some lady trifles have reserved,
Immement toys, things of such dignity
[...] Some nobler token I have kept apart
For Livia and Octavia (5.2.164-168).

Caesar appears convinced and agrees to let Cleopatra keep everything. He tells her, “Caesar’s no merchant, to make prize with you / of things that merchants sold” (5.2.183-184). Yet this is exactly what he does by re-offering the riches back to Cleopatra.

At first, Caesar’s actions appear to be as an act of grace. However, a closer examination reveals that his charity is an unwittingly scripted response in an elaborate commercial scheme of Cleopatra’s in which he thinks he buys, and controls, her actions, by providing her the “trifles” she needs for daily life. The situation is more complicated than the simple purchase of an objectified woman. Rather, Caesar is led to buy Cleopatra because she deliberately fashions herself in accordance with his expectations. Her response to Seleucus contains two layers of meaning. Cleopatra simultaneously argues that feminine agency and identity originate in the exchange and possession of physical commodities and that women are easily swayed by gifts. The message she sends to Caesar is that if he offers her those things she left out of the list, he will control her actions; she will not commit suicide.

Cleopatra tells Caesar that some of the items she has kept back, the “nobler tokens,” are specifically intended for mending relations with Livia and Octavia (5.2.167). Without the gifts, Cleopatra implies, these social relations cannot exist: she will be unable to deal with friends in a culturally acceptable fashion, and she will not be able to resolve her differences with Livia and Octavia. This dependence on material objects results in much the same situation that plagued Quicksilver at the beginning of *Eastward Hoe*. He had little agency because Touchstone and Security controlled his clothing, his means of asserting himself. Cleopatra implies that she has no agency if she does not have access to her “toys” and tokens (5.2.165). Moreover, without these things, she cannot

function in society; she becomes a nonperson. Who she is, Cleopatra's words argue, is a reflection of what goods she can trade.

By insisting on the necessity of tradable goods to personhood, Cleopatra tacitly suggests to Caesar that he can effectively own her will. Just as Security controlled Quicksilver's actions by limiting Quicksilver's access to the things he relied upon to present himself as a gallant, so too can Cleopatra be controlled by limiting her access to the unlisted items she needs for social relations. She makes herself out to be a woman like Octavia, dependent on Caesar for everything, little more than an object for him to use as he desires.

Additionally, Cleopatra imbues her plea with the implication that women, herself included, are easily swayed by gifts. This is most visible in the tokens Cleopatra proposes to give to Livia and Octavia. Cleopatra claims that if she gives the two women items of high quality and/or high cost, the queen can "induce / their mediation" and thereby assuage their anger (5.2.169). That giving gifts should have the power to change disfavor paints women in much the same light as Caesar's earlier claim to Thidias about their easy "perjure" in the face of desire (3.12.30). Cleopatra, by begging Caesar so zealously to retain her trifles and tokens, depicts herself as similarly needy. She implies that if promised these items, she will do anything Caesar requires as a price.

What Caesar actually ends up trading Cleopatra is a symbolic commodity, her freedom to act. This can be best seen in Cleopatra's use of the word "noble" when describing the second collection of objects. Repeatedly in the play, Cleopatra employs the word "noble" synonymously with status and agency. The use of "noble" as status is fully in line with her statement about Livia and Octavia. In reference to the upper classes,

“noble” commonly refers to both a certain level of decorum, rituals that need to be followed in formal and informal settings, and expensive tastes. Thus, to appease Livia and Octavia, the queen must send them expensive gifts, since the giving of gifts is apparently customary and, due to the Roman women’s rank, better items than “trifles” are required.

Cleopatra also implies and acts in accordance with, a second meaning of “noble.” She will use these items to obtain her freedom from Caesar. When she first debates suicide with her ladies in waiting after meeting with Caesar, she conflates nobility with agency, that is, the choosing and the doing of an act. She tells her women, “Good sirs, take heart [...] what’s brave, what’s noble, / Let’s do’t after the high Roman fashion / And make death proud to take us” (4.15.90-93). Later, when the clown brings her the snake, Cleopatra presents “noble” as a prerequisite for freedom, or choosing her own actions: “what poor instrument / may do a noble deed! He brings me liberty” (5.2.237). Nobility is, in Cleopatra’s mind, a quality that requires agency as well as status.

With these meanings in mind, Cleopatra’s request for “nobler” tokens takes on a new light. What she is really asking Caesar for is agency. Caesar, of course, does not realize this because his assumptions preclude the possibility of a feminine agency predicated on anything other than material commodities. As a result, when the conqueror “buys” Cleopatra by giving her the unlisted objects, he also gives her freedom. The act of “buying” Cleopatra’s body and will satisfies Caesar by leading him to think he also successfully purchases her agency. He leaves feeling secure in her loyalty. And, as a result, the queen receives exactly the freedom to act she was looking for.

What Cleopatra does with her freedom is the focus of the scene's next section. For most of the Jacobean women discussed in this chapter, the play ends when they recover their agency from the men who imprison and exclude them. Cleopatra goes one step further. She fashions a legacy by creating the "Cleopatra" identity that will appear as a product on the future market, a legacy that will subject Caesar's glory to her nobility and allow her to escape his control forever.

The moments leading up to Cleopatra's death are marked by her acute awareness of her future as a commodity she does not endorse. The queen tells Iras,

What think'st thou?

Thou an Egyptian puppet shall be shown
In Rome as well as I [...] Saucy lictors
Will catch at us like strumpets, and scald rhymers
Ballad us out o'tune. The quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us and present
Our Alexandrian revels [...] I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I'th' posture of a whore (5.2.206-220).

Cleopatra is afraid that she will be portrayed as a whore and is aware of the ways the world functions like a stage. This meaning of her lines is generally understood. I propose a further detail: she sees herself as part of a burgeoning symbolic market in which identity is sold as a timeless commodity through balladry and the stage, and she is determined to control that commodity. Cleopatra realizes she can control her identity for

all time and thus “fool their preparations and to conquer / their most absurd intents” (5.2.223-225).

Suicide is Cleopatra’s “noble act,” the agency by which she puts her identity beyond Caesar’s control. By dying, Cleopatra stops Caesar’s plans to show her off as a whore, thereby seizing control of her future from his hands. In this way, suicide is “that thing that ends all other deeds, / which shackles accidents and bolts up change” (5.2.6). Caesar, who thinks himself destined by fortune, is made subject to persons like her who determine their own fate.

Cleopatra crafts an identity whose nobility and royal status refute the “posture of a whore” her captivity in Rome would imply. To this end, Cleopatra dresses in her robes of office and crown, and commits suicide by serpent, a well-known symbol for Egyptian royalty. As she dies, the queen declares her transformation as an apotheosis that brings her from physical to symbolic form. She becomes exclusively “fire and air,” elements that have no substance, and leaves her “other elements,” those that do have substance, to “baser life” (5.2.287-288).

When Caesar finds her dead, he is forced to admit that she, “being royal / took her own way” (5.2.334-335). Ever the politician, he elevates her as a tragic figure and thereby incorporates her identity into his:

No grace upon the earth shall clip in it
A pair so famous [as that of Antony and Cleopatra]. High events as these
Strike those that make them, and their story is
No less in pity than his glory which
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall

In solemn show attend this funeral (5.2.357-362).

The “those” stricken by “high events” include not just Antony and Cleopatra but also Caesar. Likewise, “their story” of “pity” is on par, he observes, with the story of “his glory.” Antony and Cleopatra’s story thereby provides the measure of Caesar’s own greatness. Thus, the play ends with the most telling transformation of all. With her commercialism and suicide, Cleopatra not only freed herself from Caesar’s control, she made her life into the tragedy that Caesar needed to give his own ascension meaning. She will be forever part of Caesar: he can never tell his story without accounting for hers. In her hands, “whore” is a tool for subversion and agency.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF PRINT IN CONSTRUCTING AN “ENGLISH” DRAMATIC TRADITION: DRAMA DURING THE INTERREGNUM

The vision Shakespeare’s *Cleopatra* articulated at the advent of her suicide of herself as a widely distributed commodity proved prophetic. In 1623, the First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays was published with thirty-six of the Bard’s plays, *Antony and Cleopatra* among them. The Folio was successful and would be reprinted three more times (1632, 1665, and 1685) before the end of the century.

Print, rather than stage performance, is the focus of this chapter. Specifically, the impact of the print medium on how we understand the English dramatic tradition during the seventeenth century, especially during the English Civil War (1642-1651) and Interregnum when the theaters were closed to stage plays. At the far end of the Interregnum in 1656, William Davenant presented the masque-like opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*. Scholars identify the work as the primary influence for re-opening London theaters in 1660.⁴⁷ The work introduced many stage practices that became standard in Restoration plays, including the use of a proscenium arch (versus a theater in the round), sliding wall scenery, and the first Englishwoman on the public stage: Mrs. Coleman in the role of Ianthe. It was also at the forefront of the print medium. Not only was *Siege* first distributed in the London market in print form, but it draws upon features associated with printed plays to articulate a new kind of English drama, the heroic, that would dominate the Restoration stage for twenty years after.

Previous studies on *Siege* largely focus on its status as an “English” opera. Works by George Nettleton, Ian Spink, Edward Dent, and James Winn, among others, examine

the ways *Siege*'s musical considerations express an original "English" style characterized by operatic themes (a love versus honor plot), mechanics, and spectacle (Clare 186). Dawn Lewcock takes a more literary approach, arguing that many aspects of *Siege*'s stage production derive from those of the Stuart masque. However, overall literary studies of *Siege* are few. Most, like Matthew Birchwood's "Turning to the Turk" and Susan Wiseman's "Opera and Colonialism in the 1650s" focus on the ways the play provides a political response to the British colonial efforts in the period. As a whole, these critical approaches overlook the importance of print to the success of the *Siege* production.

During the Interregnum ban on stage plays, there was a boom in the publishing and purchasing of printed plays. These plays provide a crucial bridge over a period that has traditionally been anathema to dramatic studies of the seventeenth century. Susan Wiseman observes that scholars often break the century into two kinds of national literatures by appointing 1642 the end of the English "Renaissance" and plays from 1660 to 1700 part of the new, "Restoration" period. So deeply set is this problem of continuity, she asserts, that calling these eighteen-years drama-less "*replaces* discussion of the period" (*Drama* 1). This is not to argue that no scholars have tackled the thorny issue of drama during the Interregnum. In addition to the Wiseman study cited above, Dale Randall's *Winter Fruit* presents a comprehensive analysis of the dialectical relations between English interregnum playwrights and their political circumstances. Both studies are extensive, but focus almost exclusively on the influence of the English political climate. Playwrights were also greatly shaped by the new market in which they had need to accommodate themselves for success. Neither considers the period's economic

influences or the ways these influences became incorporated into how playwrights thought about the English dramatic tradition and how they consciously shaped dramas to engage with a paying audience. Examining the role of printed plays during the Interregnum reveals a concerted effort by playwrights and publishers to maintain the stage tradition while adapting it to the demands of the new print market. Playwrights were themselves in the negotiation positions of *Quicksilver* and *Cleopatra*. By manipulating commercial relations, they were able to find the agency they would have otherwise lacked under the Interregnum ban.

Print was a vital part of the English Civil War, because its pervasive presence and the general freedom of expression it offered made it an effective medium for political ideas. Previous to the civil unrest, print in England was under royal oversight. Adam Fox observes that the upheaval of royal restrictions accompanying the Civil War brought to an end to this oversight and opened the doors to an "explosion of journalism" and other printed genres such as pamphlets, newsbooks, and plays and verse (394).⁴⁸ Print became a new mode for spreading political propaganda for both Royalists and Parliamentarians, he explains, as a "multitude of small presses" began to "spring up around the country" (394). Print, he continues, may very well have "superseded manuscript as the primary medium through which written information and polemic were circulated" (395). For many, Susan Wiseman argues, print was an inseparable part of London's "political destiny" ("Adam" 134). The reading of print "awakened [a] qualitative sense of participation" in readers due in no small part to the daily novelty of news that allowed them a sense of inclusion in the goings on ("Adam" 134).

The hold of print on the popular mind was great; historian David Wootton, like many others, is comfortable basing his examination of popular radical sentiment during the period almost entirely on pamphlet literature (17). While, admittedly, any claim for a unified “popular” opinion during this period is a gross generalization, asserting that print was a common means for expressing thoughts on the war is reasonable. Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday classify the “war” as “a time of [linguistic] noise” that saw much of its expression through printing of “ballads [...] and pamphlets (9). Print was a primary means for distributing news. Richard Cust observes that though previous studies have judged that by 1629 “between fifty and seventy-five copies of parliamentary ‘separates’ [official reports] were being produced [...] this looks like a large underestimate” (236). “The numbers of copies made of popular items,” Cust continues, was even larger, “into hundreds, if not thousands” (236). Wiseman sees all publication during this period as inter-related and widespread. It was not uncommon, she argues, for religious tracts to draw upon “the notionally ‘elite’ corpus of political writing found in political pamphlets” (134). Annabel Patterson identifies print as the major means for garnering political support “*before attempting to negotiate them by parliamentary process*” (27).⁴⁹

The new dominance of print did not go unnoticed in London’s stage industry. Ben Jonson’s satirical comedy, *A Staple of News*, takes swipes at London’s fascination with the newspapers. The topic was more than a sign of the times to Jonson, Lynn Meskill argues, “Readings of Jonson’s *Staple* as a satirical or even moral piece on the emerging medium,” she asserts, reveals its clear engagement [...] with the very *idea* of news: its problematic connections to gossip and slander, its status as a product to be bought and sold [...] and its innate tendency to become almost immediately obsolete” (190). Martin

Butler posits that the removal of royal oversight inspired playwrights to merge politics with art and produce a new kind of news-artifact, the pamphlet play. Pamphlet plays adapted political happenings to short dialogues and/or dramas for consumption by reading audiences (237). These plays, he asserts, “mark a transition between stage performance and popular printed prose, suggesting how the energy of theatrical traditions ran into other channels after the closing of the playhouses” (237-238). Unnoted by Butler is the way that these pamphlets helped spread these writers’ work to a vastly wider audience by combining the newsbook and entertainment markets. The market distribution of printed drama was a means to participate in political discourse on a large scale. During the Interregnum the printed medium became a politically safe forum for authors and playwrights to articulate new ideas about drama as literature. Through prefaces, playwrights, authors, and editors argue print’s moral superiority to the stage and for its capacity to act as a curative for whatever ills the stage produces.

The growing influence of print on dramatic tradition began with London’s explosion of urbanization. The rise of commercial practices filtered into the dramatic market, Joseph Loewenstein argues: “at the very end of Elizabeth’s reign, theatrical activity in London slipped into a competitive and mutually stimulating relationship with the book trade” (*Author’s* 82). The most direct result of this relationship, Loewenstein continues, was that “playwrights were caught between the two media,” print and stage (*Author’s* 82). With the exception of those most successful like Shakespeare, who could confidently rely on the stage for a steady income, most playwrights needed to branch out into print (*Author’s* 82). Print was also useful means for playwrights to fund their plays.

Print increased the visibility of a play for potential patrons and stationers, who could, in turn, “reward [playwrights] efforts by paying cash for manuscripts” (*Author’s* 82).

From the beginning of the Jacobean period (1603) onward, plays appear regularly on the London print market, a presence that indicates their favorable popular reception. Francis Johnson’s extensive index, “Notes on English Retail Book-prices, 1550-1640,” lists a variety of dramatic works beginning in the late 1590s that includes everything from court and stage plays, to Folio play collections like those by Jonson and Shakespeare (above), closet dramas, and pageants and processions. So stimulating was the relationship between print and drama that the sale of printed drama continued to flourish during the Interregnum despite the ban on public plays. When the playhouses reopened in 1660, playwrights turned to these printed works for inspiration.

Additionally, by the Restoration in 1660, the esteem of pre-Interregnum playwrights had grown, helped in no small part by the popularity and large-scale distribution of printed plays. It was only in 1663 that John Dryden, London’s first professional playwright—by which, I mean he depended on writing new plays, at least initially, for his livelihood appeared on the scene with *Wild Gallants*.⁵⁰ In 1669 the first female professional playwright, Frances Boothby, appeared with *Marcellia, or the Treacherous Friend* (Cuder-Dominguez 55). To many English, the stage’s reliance on predecessors was not, in fact, wrongful but instead, a boon. In the prologue to his *Wild Gallants*, Dryden laments playwrights who pushed for innovation:

Nature is old, which Poets imitate,
And for Wit, those that boast their own estate,
Forget *Fletcher* and *Ben* before them went,

Their Elder Brothers, and that vastly spent:

So much 'twill hardly be repair'd again (42-46).

Only in print, he suggests, could one find the highest form of drama.

* * *

This chapter proposes that the success of *The Siege of Rhodes* was a result of the work's status as a commodity in London's print economy. A close examination of its preface and playtext reveals an acute consciousness of the power that print offered to the enterprising playwright. These sections reveal how the play was deliberately marketed to the wealthy, nationalistically-minded investors best capable of ensuring the return of plays to the London stage. To convince these investors, Davenant does something clever: he makes nationalism a function of sale. With *Siege*, Davenant shaped a new connection between the financial health of a country and that of its dramatic tradition.

The political and technical intricacies surrounding the publication and production of *The Siege of Rhodes* require the clarification of a few terms. First is the distinction between printed and stage plays, which is an admitted oversimplification since all of the records concerning early modern drama come from print sources (the 1623 Shakespeare Folio, for example). However, the printed edition of a play possesses certain elements such as a preface that do not exist in a stage performance. Additionally, the printed play is a material artifact subject to different networks of distribution and sale than the performance of a play. With these two differences between print and performance in mind, I follow the practice of scholars such as David Bergeron (vii) and Joseph Loewenstein ("Script" 101), among others, by using the adjective "print" when referencing those aspects of a dramatic play text that are unique to its material form: the

title page, preface, and stage directions, as well as the distribution and circulation of material copies in the London market. “Stage” I reserve for onstage performance. “Play” refers to the dramatic text that comprises both print and stage.

Further complicating the issue is the ambiguous status of *Siege* as not only a “play” but also an “opera.” Davenant was a supporter of Charles I and the favored court playwright of the Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, both of which put him at odds with the Puritan, anti-royal English government that arose after Charles I’s execution. Going into the second half of the interregnum, Davenant’s political reputation was uncertain and he was not able to attract patronage or solicit favorable responses to his work from members of London’s elite. Consequently, scholars suggest that Davenant was forced to market his work as a “recitative”, or spoken, opera instead of as a play.⁵¹

The classification of *Siege* as an opera has proven troublesome since it only faintly resembles continental operas of the period, a period in which there were no English operas.⁵² Additionally, while “opera” generally refers to a form of entertainment influential in the French and Italian courts emphasizing prevalent music, dancing, and singing in a grand style, the individual European operas themselves displayed a considerable variety of form that makes deriving an explicit definition for the historical opera difficult, if not impossible.⁵³ Moreover, while *Siege* definitely had many of the above general characteristics in its initial production, its productions from 1661 onwards dropped much of the music and song to become more of what Richard Bevis terms a “musical play” than opera (103).

Additionally, though criticism generally accepts the position that Davenant marketed *The Siege of Rhodes* as an opera, this is not technically true. The work was

entered into the Stationer's Register as a "masque," a lavish form of court entertainment. M. H. Abrams defines the "masque" as a dramatic type "inaugurated in Renaissance Italy and [which] flourished in England during the reigns of Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I" (210). The masque includes several features that reappear in mid-seventeenth-century European operas:

In its full development [the masque] was an elaborate form of court entertainment that combined poetic drama, music, song, dance, splendid costuming, and stage spectacle. A plot—often slight, and mainly mythological and allegorical—served to hold together these diverse elements. The speaking characters, who wore masks (hence the title), were often played by amateurs who belonged to courtly society (Abrams 210).

Persons particularly noted for their ability in writing masques are the Stuart playwrights during the reign of Charles I, Ben Jonson and William Davenant.⁵⁴ The Stuart masque, Stephen Orgel argues, "represents a crucial phase in the development of English theater" because of the influence its device-intensive production would play in later periods from the Restoration to the modern stages (3). Masque is thus a more accurate term than opera to describe *Siege*, Dawn Lewcock observes, insofar as the staging utilizes the same aesthetic design and transformational scenery via wheels and winches that characterize the Stuart masque (2-3).

A major distinguishing feature of the Stuart masque is that it "attempt[s] to breach the barrier between spectators and actors, so that in effect the viewer became part of the spectacle" (Orgel 6). The "amateur" aristocrats Abrams identifies did not often act; instead, they often participated in dances during the masque, for example, as fairies in the

anti-masque portion of Jonson's *Oberon, The Prince of Fairies* (performed 1611, published in 1616) or as the chorus in Thomas Carew's *Coelum Britannicum* (performed 1634, published 1634).⁵⁵ To participate was to be implicated in and potentially transformed by the production: "the end toward which the masque moved was to destroy any sense of theater and to include the whole court in the mimesis—in a sense, what the spectator watched he ultimately became" (Orgel 6-7). This kind of audience participation stands in stark contrast to the theatrical plays discussed in my earlier chapters in which audience members watch but do not directly participate in the drama unfolding before them. I follow Lewcock in referring to *The Siege of Rhodes* as a masque instead of a play because the work's production resembled the court form and because Davenant's marketing efforts have much in common with those of the commercial masque.

Like popular plays, court masques were often distributed in printed form among readers. While the earliest masques were disseminated privately to court readers without any clear commercial intent, by the early Jacobean period masque texts were for sale in London's markets alongside the many quartos and broadside versions of stage plays (Shohet 5). The sale of masque texts had a crucial difference from the playtexts of stage plays in that the primary motive was probably not profit. The London markets made for a vast distribution network that could widely and quickly spread information. A close examination of masque prefaces reveals playwrights employing the market as a means for shaping the popular response to their efforts. Masque themes tended towards reifying or, at least, reinforcing monarchic authority; they, Martin Butler explains, "advertised, authorized, or outlawed values that defined the basis by which [the king] deemed his power to subsist" (60). William Davenant does much the same thing with *The Siege of*

Rhodes in the market and is more overt in his efforts. Davenant uses the print market to advertise and distribute his masque, then uses the commercial links thus forged between paying customers and the product they desire to read to persuade these customers into funding further productions of the masque and its portrayals of English nationalism.

* * *

“Culture,” Robert Hume observes, “is a commodity produced for gain (whether pecuniary or otherwise) and offered for sale to the public” (“Economics” 487). Hume’s conclusion is not, he concedes, strikingly original since this fact “has been widely acknowledged in the last fifty years” (“Economics” 487). Nonetheless, he makes an important point: while the sale of culture through pamphlets, ballads, books, plays, and music expresses the codes of the society and/or individuals that produced them, the “implications” of this awareness “have rarely been pursued” (“Economics” 487). Hume suggests one such “implication” of culture’s sale is the shaping of dramatic traditions. Specifically, I propose that Davenant promoted *The Siege of Rhodes* as a cultural commodity whose purchase and subsequent production shaped a distinctively “English” dramatic tradition hitherto unimagined.

The Siege of Rhodes was deliberately crafted by Davenant to be a printed masque with elements of other kinds of printed dramas. Print was crucial to the success of Davenant’s project. An examination of the *Siege* preface and playtext reveals that the work draws upon the demand for, and elevated status of, printed drama in the London market. The work explicitly calls on readers of the printed masque to assist in shaping its popular interpretation. *Siege* deploys the literary theorizing characteristic of printed Folio collections and the dynamic reader engagement that accompanies the closet drama form.

By marketing his stage production as a printed text Davenant was able to gain the popular support of a literary tradition that remained unfettered by Commonwealth restrictions. That support would ultimately provide the enthusiasm and momentum needed to reopen the London stage to plays. In doing so, Davenant instituted a vital relationship between commercial acumen and dramatic expression that would persist in the Restoration plays that followed *Siege*'s production and that ultimately led to the elevation of the entrepreneur as an iconic English hero.

The three printed forms identified above—closet drama, print masque, and folio collection—are most representative of the techniques Davenant employs in *Siege*. It is to them I now turn to explore more comprehensively what it is Davenant does that makes *Siege* so successful.

Closet drama is the earliest of these three print forms. “Closet dramas” are “written in dramatic form, with dialogue, indicated settings, and stage directions, but [which are] intended by the author to be read rather than performed” (Abrams 94). The most influential practitioner was Mary Sidney, writer of the play *The Tragedy of Antonie* (1592). Merging courtly romance, a chorus, and Christian models for “love,” “faithfulness,” and “virtue,” Sidney’s *Antonie* set produced a new, “neoclassical” style of courtly drama, albeit one structured around the private act of reading rather than the more public performance. Her form of courtly drama had many imitators, among them Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedy of Cleopatra* (1594), Fulke Greville, *The Tragedy of Mustapha* (1609), Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedy of Miriam* (1613), Mary Wroth, *Love’s Victory* (1620), Jane Cavendish and Elizabeth Egerton, *The Concealed Fancies* (written c. 1645), and John Milton, *Samson Agonistes* (1671) whose work ensured closet plays

persisted in the market. In 1642 there was a closet revival marked by the politically influential playwright and writer Margaret Cavendish (Straznicky 5).⁵⁶ This revival was still going strong in the 1650s and persisted well into the 1670s.

What makes *Antonie* so distinctive and what Sidney's many followers imitate is the way the play's chorus compels readers to take an interactive role with the text. *Antonie* is a story of Antony and Cleopatra that portrays Cleopatra as a transgressive figure who defies Roman ideas about marriage even as she flouts her political prowess. Set after Caesar defeats Antony on the waters outside Actium, the play describes many of the events Shakespeare recounts in his version, such as the queen's concealment in her monument, her pretended death, and her suicide by asp. However, the chorus's response to these events is frequently disconnected from the response predicted from readers. An example can be found in the choral response to Antony's lament over Cleopatra's apparent betrayal at Actium (when she and her ships flee). Antony blames himself for losing a life of honor, glory, empire, and love. The 144 lines that make up Antony's regrets overflow with humanistic pathos and invite sympathy from readers.

The choral response provides what Brett Roscoe calls a "cosmic, impersonal perspective [...] at odds with Antony's plight":

The choral ode laments that suffering is the natural state of humans ("When we began to be, / To be began our woe" [177-78]), and it blames this suffering on the mythical figure Prometheus, who brought fire to humans and thus incurred the wrath of gods (215-22). This is not, however, reflective of Antony's complaint [...] While Antony complains

of a good life lost, the chorus sings that a good life does not exist; the chorus laments that life is woe, while Antony laments that love is woe.

(771)

The disparity between hero and chorus consistently hinders a sympathetic response and the result, Roscoe points out, is that the chorus “becomes estranged from the reader” (770).

This “estranged” chorus is found in all of the closet dramas above and its inclusion forces readers to take an active role in negotiating what Karen Raber calls, the “sense of tension between individual experience and the interpretative apparatuses that makes sense of that experience” (62). The choral authority is made into “an unreliable public voice that must be scrutinized by the reader” to make sense of the play’s events (Roscoe 773). The reader’s agency becomes a vital part of the interpretative process. She or he “must test everything” to proceed (Roscoe 786). Closet drama associates a collaborative relationship between readers and plays in which the former are imbued with agency and made an integral part of the interpretative process. The advances of closet drama in this regard furthered pre-existing participatory attitudes within the Stuart masque tradition that continued to be retained even in the printed versions of those court plays, albeit in a different fashion from the choruses of the closet dramas.

Agency is a major element of closet drama; not only does the chorus foster agency on the part of its readers, the print medium of the closet drama is itself a powerful form of agency for its writers. By writing in the closet form, Alison Findlay argues, Mary Sidney was able to express herself within a public forum she might otherwise have been denied because of gender (22). Considering the Renaissance presupposition that women

should concern themselves with virtue, Raber observes that Sidney's closet drama articulates a new authoritative persona for women rooted in domesticity and privacy that does not disturb pre-existing patriarchal assumptions about masculine public power (52-54). Closet drama offered early modern female writers a space "for achieving what was unobtainable in other genres more commonly adopted by women—an authoritative, public presence, and access to powerful commentary on the ideological uses of representation, especially theatrical representation" (Raber 14).⁵⁷ Closet drama is most notable for the number of female playwrights that found agency in the form: Margaret and Jane Cavendish, Elizabeth Cary, Mary Wroth, and Anne Finch, among others.⁵⁸ However, closet playwrights were not exclusively female, nor were its benefits concerning agency limited to that gender. Outlawed from England because of his Royalist sympathies during the First English Civil War, playwright Thomas Killigrew was able to continue his former career in the anti-stage period by writing closet dramas like *Thomaso* (1654).⁵⁹ In this way, print serves as a means for agency, a means for a person to act publicly when social norms might otherwise render him or her unable to do so.

Unlike closet plays, the politics of the Stuart masque made reader agency difficult. Masques routinely blurred the line between fiction and reality. Whereas in closet drama allusive connections between characters and actual court persons is speculative, in the masque, the mythological Neptune of the drama may really be the king, as was true in Samuel Daniel's masque *Tethys' Festival or the Queens Wake* (1610). Though masque performances were often participatory for audiences, the political ramifications of mistakes or of unintentionally presenting an unfavorable portrayal of

royal policy were great. If just a single, influential audience member misinterpreted a playwright's work as anti-court, prison, or worse, could result.

The problem did not end with the performance. Masques were frequently printed and disseminated to readers, each one a potential source of misinterpretation. Moreover, the act of reading pre-supposes an absence of oversight from others; it is a private act. Readers are free to generate whatever interpretations they choose, even if they are anti-court. The marketing of print masques to the public amplified this problem.

During the Elizabethan and early Jacobean eras, masque distribution was likely a private affair among friends and patrons, but by 1615, they had begun to appear regularly in the public market. Lauren Shohet identifies several catalogues from the century that list multiple print masques: Humphrey Dyson's list of purchases from 1610-1630 included a total of seventeen print versions of masques (app 4); there were twenty-eight masques in Edward Archer's 1656 catalogue (app 2); another nine in William London's 1658 catalogue (app 3); and, in the famous bookseller and publisher Francis Kirkman's 1661 and 1671 catalogues, sixty-one masques (app 1). The implied demand demonstrated by Dyson and others' lists spanning the period above suggests that the print masque thrived even when its performed counterpart was banned. It was during that same period that Davenant began to write *The Siege of Rhodes*.

To combat the potential threat that readers in the market offered, masque writers like Samuel Daniels and Ben Jonson began to develop a new kind of commercial preface targeted to specific readers, ones who will interpret the work correctly. In part, playwrights employed the preface as a means for interpretative control. Many prefaces do not merely introduce a work, as they suggest a particular "*reading of the play*" (Lesser 2).

Employing a preface in this manner was not in and of itself anything new at the time. Edmund Spenser's 1579 *Shepherdes Calender* famously includes prefatory materials that are exhaustive and paranoiac in scope given their length and close attention to interpreting the text at a minute level: a long introductory dedication and letter, an explanation of the work's greater argument, an explication of the poem's woodcuts, and a short gloss before each book providing that section's main points. The 1576 edition of George Gascoigne's 1575 Kenilworth masque, *Princely Pleasures* includes a preface by the printer that is more forgiving to readers, but is still careful to assure them, that, "nothing touch[es] the particularity of every commendable action" (2).

For Ben Jonson, the preface affords the opportunity to institute his authority as playwright and retroactively to attach new interpretations to older masques. At the most basic level, he expresses this control as a concerted effort to describe aspects of the masque performance that would not be evident to readers. In *The Masque of Blackness* (1605), *Hymenaei* (1606), *The Masque with the Nuptial Songs* (1608), *The Masque of Queens* (1609), and *Love's Triumph* (1630), Jonson uses the preface to describe such events in great detail.⁶⁰ The opening to *Nuptial*, for example, adds qualitative assessments like "high" and "steepe" that cannot necessarily be inferred from the word "cliff" alone, telling readers, "The Scene to this Masque was a high, steep, red cliffe" (934). He is also careful to tell readers what these things stand for by calling attention to their roots in the court. The *Nuptial* cliff, readers soon learn, is "figuring the place from whence (as I have been not fabulously, informed) the honorable family of the Radcliffes first took their name" (934). With this addition, the cliff becomes a symbol for the Radcliffes.

Jonson's most overt method of exerting control through a preface is the anti-masque form. This device, Abrams explains, features "grotesque and unruly characters" participating in "ludicrous" and sometimes gross humor (210). Its purpose, Jonson explains in the preface to *The Masque of Queens*, is to act as "a foil" to the primary masque event (945). He then extends his control to an earlier masque, *Hymenaei*, and retroactively interprets the dance of Cupid's attendants in the work an "Anti-masque of Boys" before returning to his description of the anti-masque in *Queens* (945). For Jonson, the preface is a means for the control of readers through print; it is a new kind of agency not needed for performance but not unwelcome in print either, because it allows him to set himself up as the authority for interpretation. If readers do not choose to listen to his wise words, then he is content to "smile," he explains in the preface to *Nuptial*, "at their tyrannous ignorance" (934).

Critic Zachary Lesser observes that during the Jacobean period, prefaces took on a new function: printers and playwrights employed the preface "to position the play within a particular niche of the print marketplace, appealing to all customers who [...] might want to buy a commodity marked as witty and elite" (2). Furthermore, "they [the printers and playwrights] understood the play (at least on second thought) as fitting within this niche" (Lesser 2). In short, printers and playwrights began to see their job as not only the publication of comedies, for example, but "to take comedies (as well as tragedies, histories, pastorals, and any of the hybrid genres Polonius can imagine) and change them into commodities" (Lesser 1). So evolved the "commercial" preface.

The commercial preface builds upon the regulatory controls instituted by masque playwrights and printers and applies them more generally to printed drama as a whole.

These prefaces, Lesser explains, are marked by the selectiveness with which they choose some aspects of a play or masque to interpret over others. Lesser argues that the Bonian and Walley preface to the 1609 edition of Shakespeare's *Historie of Troylus and Cresseida*, for example, emphasizes the play's "classical setting [and] sharp, satirical style" as part of an effort to market the play to court wits, who preferred those elements (3). Bonian and Walley's decision to market the play in this manner, he continues, does not so much reflect any timeless content the play might hold as it does the market demands of the times:

This decision makes much more sense in 1609, after the vogue for satirical city comedies had been cultivated, than in 1603, when the play was first entered into the Stationer's Register [...] Bonian and Walley, in other words, seem ultimately to have read *Troilus* itself as a kind of city comedy, a reading far less available in 1603 (3).⁶¹

The selectivity that characterizes the commercial preface presupposes the sort of discerning reader expected of closet dramas, a reader that participates in the interpretative process and makes decisions that shape future purchases. Ben Jonson directs editions of his *Masque of Queenes* to readers attentive to symbols and subtext; he cautions in his preface, "*Poetry* [...] is not for every man" (np). John Fletcher outright begs his readers to respond by asking them in the preface to his *Faithfull Shepheardesse* (1610), "If you be not reasonably assured of your knowledge in this kind of Poeme, lay downe the booke" (1). Passages like these show a strong awareness of the audience as an economic force on the part of the playwright. The goal is to direct these works to those readers who will be most likely to buy them and, perhaps more importantly, continue to buy in the

future. As Lesser notes of the Bonian and Walley preface above, the goal is to find “ever-buyers” far more than “ever-readers” (1).

The commercial preface found its greatest expression in folio editions of playwrights’ collected works. In 1616, Ben Jonson released his *Works*, a compendium that included a substantial number of his poems, masques, plays, and assorted writings. *Works* was innovative. While not the first product to collect an author’s/playwrights labors together in one volume, it was the first to do so on the public market.⁶² Moreover, in titling his collection *Works*, Jonson calls attention to the new status drama enjoyed on the print market: it is something intended to be read like the poems it accompanies, as private entertainment.

The success of *Works* opened the door for what became the regular publication of other Folio collections: including William Shakespeare (1623), William Alexander (1637), Beaumont and Fletcher (1637), Margaret Cavendish (1662), and Thomas Killigrew (1664). The works of Jonson, Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher all saw reprint, with the former two doing so before 1642. The six Folios above, Jonson through Killigrew, by no means a complete list, represent an adequate sample for considering attitudes surrounding print drama. They comprise one hundred thirty-one popular dramatic works, including plays, masques, closet dramas, and the triumphs Jonson labels as “entertainments.” Few are as comprehensive as Jonson’s and most contain only plays, so whether readers regarded plays as equivalent to poetry as Jonson’s title suggests, and accorded plays the same kind of respect, remains an open question.

What is not in dispute is that from 1616 onwards, play collections were not only becoming popular but also swiftly becoming the foundation for an English dramatic

tradition sustained by the sale and distribution of printed plays. Examining the prefatory materials from these play collections reveals how printers, editors, and playwrights carefully shaped a market niche that catered to the literary elite. Their goal was nothing less than the establishment of a printed dramatic tradition morally superior to other forms of literature and based in the sale of its drama.

The first collection to appear on the market following Jonson's *Works* was Jaggard and Blount's 1623 printing of Shakespeare's works, what is known today as the "First Folio". In the dedication and preface we can already see a clear attempt to infer the quality of the plays therein from their salability. The dedication to William and Philip Herbert, written by John Heminge and Henry Condell, follows in Jonson's footsteps by proclaiming the plays literary.

The dedication urges readers not to pass up the plays, because they are "something" of merit (2). But that merit, the preface later explains, is contingent upon the reader buying the folio. Audiences are commanded "to read [...] but buy it first" (4). The primacy of purchase over reading implies that literary merit, without sale, is lessened. To drive this point home, Heminge and Condell repeat their command in the preface: "Judge your fixe-pen'orth, your shillings worth, your five shillings worth [...] but what ever you do, Buy" (4). Additionally, the authorized sale of the first folio purifies and protects the plays in the popular consciousness from being "maimed, and deformed" by the "diverse stolne, and surreptitious copies" written by hacks and actors for quick profits, versions we routinely today call "corrupt" (4). Through their sale, plays are "cur'd" of these malignities (4) and elevated in the English dramatic tradition to the implied "dignity" they deserve (2).

The construction of print as a “cure” for corrupt editions comes to the fore in Interregnum collections such as the 1647 Robinson and Mosley edition of *Beaumont and Fletcher*. Thereafter it would remain as a standard for printed plays that Davenant will draw upon in his own prefaces. Mosley’s “Stationer’s Preface” is similar to that of Heminge and Condell. He details the same relationship between money and literary value and asserts the purity of his product. Shirley’s preface, however, explicitly refers to the ban on stage plays during the period as part of an argument that one should read printed drama to better oneself. Shirley attributes the plays with “the vertues and passions of every noble condition” (4). Drama not only betters the spirit but revives the soul. He continues, “Be as capritious and sick-brained, as ignorance & malice can make thee, here thou art rectified” and made a better person by reading plays (5).

Shirley’s attention to the “vertues” of print drama is likely not a coincidence. The Interregnum ban on public drama for its “lascivious” displays associates stage plays with moral decay. To go to the theater to see a play is to worsen oneself. The 1647 release of the Beaumont and Fletcher Folio comes during the ban on stage-plays, and Shirley is careful to write his preface within its bounds. He explicitly characterizes the “stage” as “Silence” due to it being “much out-acted,” thereby delineating print and stage as separate mediums. Print, he asserts, is timeless and requires readers ponder its meanings. In this way, he suggests, reading drama is the “greatest Benefactor to Englishmen” (5) because it allows readers to consider the “pregnant” concerns the stage shows too briefly in its “conjuring glass” (4). It is interesting to note that Shirley, a former playwright himself, does not actually condemn the stage. Despite the political atmosphere, prefaces like his and that of Heminge and Condell hint that there is still a desire for the dramatic.

Moreover, by elevating the morality of print drama over that of the stage, he helps ensure that there will be a market for him and other playwrights during the ban.

* * *

The popularity of printed plays (closet plays, masques, and otherwise) and Folio texts throughout the Interregnum helped establish a cohesive dramatic tradition in print. The participatory role of the reader and the tendency to measure a work's value by its sale proved vital determinants for whether a work thrived or failed. A case in point is found with regard to the different outcomes of two works by William Davenant, an unfinished epic poem, *Gondibert* (1650) and the masque opera, *The Siege of Rhodes*. Though these works appear to be different genres, one a poem and the other a play, the true dividing line between them is not so clear. Both spring from the same motive: an attempt to create a new, distinctively English heroic mode. Both are modeled on print dramas. The resemblances of *Siege* to plays has already been noted, but *Gondibert* also displays a number of "play" characteristics such as its five-act structure, each with their own corresponding scenes. The primary difference between the two is in their success, or lack thereof, at instituting an "English" heroic mode and sustaining their initial popularity over the long term. Where *Gondibert* fails on both accounts, *The Siege of Rhodes* succeeds. Why *The Siege of Rhodes* succeeds, I submit, has much to do with the participatory framework its preface adopts and the connection between value and funding that Davenant submits as essential to an "English" literary tradition, characteristics absent from *Gondibert*.

Gondibert is best understood as Davenant's first attempt at rendering an English heroic mode. What we have of the work was primarily written while Davenant lived in

Paris as part of the exiled court of Henrietta-Maria during the 1640s (Gavin 27). In Paris he met Thomas Hobbes and persuaded the philosopher to write a prefatory response letter to the playwright's preface to *Gondibert*. The two pieces were then published together in Paris around 1650 (Sharpe 101). Initially slated to be five books long, Davenant published the first two books of the poem and part of the third in London during 1651. A combination of poor popular response and Davenant's long imprisonment prevented further developments and the poem was never completed.

What is most fascinating about *Gondibert* is not its plot, but the substantial theorizing Davenant provides in the preface on the nature of an English heroic mode. When expressed correctly, Davenant asserts, the heroic form "in exact definition is Vertue" (18). What he means by "vertue" is the target of his extensive, if at times scattered, explanation. To him, living virtuously means to practice a hermaphroditic ideal transcending "either Sex" so we can see the "patterns of humane life that are perhaps fit to be followed" (16). This pattern combines valor (masculine) and love/devotion (feminine) in "the cause and preservation of life" (18).

The job of poets, he insists, is "to make great [virtuous] actions credible" (15), possible, without the godly aid or pedigree found in the classical epic. Noticeably, Davenant insists upon this hermaphroditic virtue as an expression of agency: he repeatedly condemns heroes whose greatness comes from "favours of Fortune" (15). What Davenant requires are self-fashioned persons. The heroic, then, is a call to action that demands readers take initiative and re-make themselves after the models in his text.

Davenant further proposes that readers take *Gondibert* as an ideal example of this heroic form because of its close resemblance to a play. A heroic poem, he argues, is

fundamentally dramatic; it is a small step from poem to stage, where the writer can visibly render imagery in performance. Drama, he argues, best allows for the representation of virtue. Through drama, readers can imaginatively witness “the patterns of such as will be fit to be imitated by the most necessary men” (18). Moreover, Davenant proposes that the English population is already well-prepared to make this transformation due to the literary strength of the country’s dramatic tradition. He explains, “I cannot discern [...] that any Nation hath in representment of great actions, either by *Heroicks* or *Dramaticks*, digested Story into so pleasant and instructive a method as the English by their *Drama*” (22).

The connection Davenant makes between drama and poetry in *Gondibert* is interesting because the tradition he seeks to imitate is not staged, as we might typically employ the term “drama” to imply, but printed. Certainly his English readers during the Interregnum would likely be more familiar with drama as a print medium than a stage medium. Moreover, because the English dramatic tradition was printed, it was easy for Davenant to craft his book-length poem, also printed, to correspond with the acts and scenes of a play.

Since Davenant was obviously catering to a large print audience with *Gondibert*, why did the work fail? In part, because of circumstance and its political content. In 1649 he was captured at sea as a royalist and imprisoned in London. *Gondibert*, the product of this time in London, displays clear royalist sympathies. Its plot reflects the “themes of platonic love, sacrifice, and service for the loved one” that Davenant commonly wrote for Henrietta-Maria (Lewcock 16).⁶³ The protagonist King Gondibert must choose between marrying for love by taking the hand of the common Birtha or marrying for duty by

taking the hand of Princess Rhodalind. Parts of the work are clearly allegorical. Kevin Sharp observes, for instance, that Gondibert represents Charles II and Princess Rhodalind Henrietta-Maria (102). Eventually, friends and patrons like Bulstrode Whitelocke eventually gained him parole under license in 1652 (*Gondibert* 24). In 1654, Cromwell issued him a pardon. But the damage to Davenant's reputation in readers' ~~'s~~-minds by the imprisonment and delay in publication was done, and soon his work had other issues with which to contend.

The popular response to Davenant's preface was scathing. In 1653, a series of anonymous verses were released under the title, *Certain Verses Written by Severall of the Authors Friends: to be Re-Printed with the Second Edition of Gondibert*. *Certain Verses* attacks *Gondibert* as an elitist text in which Davenant sets himself above all others.

"Upon the PREFACE" takes issue with Davenant's choice to release the prefaces without the corresponding poem, pondering, "A Preface to no Book, a Porch to no house: / Here is the Mountain but where is the Mouse?" The verse depicts *Gondibert's* high-minded didacticism as pretentious, accusing the playwright of trying to push aside the "Illiads" and "Aeneidos," to "give place to the *Gondiberteiados*" (3-4). The third stanza to "To Sir W. Davenant" finds the prefaces more than a little pushy, complaining that Davenant tries, "so incessantly to ply [*Gondibert*] that "Thy business" has sacrificed "our quiet".

That Davenant was aware of the kinds of claims *Certain Verses* makes about his work is certain. The epilogue finds him despairing of "others who tax me with vanitie, as if the *Preface* argued my good opinion of the Work" (np). Whether it was this popular response or the pressures of imprisonment that led Davenant to stop writing *Gondibert*, we shall never know. However, the kinds of complaints that *Certain Verses* levels have a

firm basis in the dramatic literary audience Davenant aims his preface towards and *Gondibert*'s inability to accommodate the popular mechanisms of those works.

The tone of *Gondibert* feels more than a little pretentious. Absent from the preface and the two-and-a-half books is any semblance of participatory openness that might encourage readers to converse with the text. While Davenant acknowledges reader agency, that agency is only allowed insofar as readers can "imitate" the moral exemplums the text provides (18). The preface speaks of big ideas like "truth" and "vertue" but never anchors them to examples from everyday life. From his tone, one gets the feeling that Davenant thinks he holds an exclusive and singular truth that we can only barely grasp. The text itself continues the high-minded tone. Kevin Sharpe observes that the "conventional" plot feels like a moral fable (102). *Gondibert*'s counsel to others is consistently "didactic", as if, to borrow a teaching analogy from Freire, he fills us with his superior knowledge (Sharpe 102). Rather than inviting readers to piece out the message, Davenant's work bluntly punches its point home.

There is no appeal to readers to buy the text nor implication that such a purchase will enhance its reception, an oversight that could have contributed to the work's small distribution. To Davenant, apparently, readers do not need to buy *Gondibert* to increase its standing. The preface makes clear that the poem is already the best that it can be. While Davenant directs *Gondibert* towards a market niche populated by a literary elite familiar with drama and eager to create an English heroic mode, he overlooks two of the characteristics most vital to commercial success: reader participation, and the relationship of value to sale.

Davenant fixes his mistake with *Gondibert* in *The Siege of Rhodes*. Like *Gondibert*, *Siege* is, at least initially, a print work. Davenant circulates the masque by making it available in the market. Exactly how long the play text was circulated prior to the performance is unknown. The work was entered into the Stationer's register on the 27th of August, 1656. Davenant wrote a letter to Sir Bulstrode Whitelocke on September 3rd asking for his political support of the play's production. William Cummings speculates that the first performance would have been in early 1657, thus allowing the manuscript version some four months in the market (iii). While one purpose of releasing the print version of *Siege* would have been to generate a favorable reception, as Janet Clare suggests (185), the masque's print release, I argue, was an attempt to take advantage of the underlying commerciality of printed drama in the London markets.

The print market afforded Davenant a distribution model that enabled him to reach a large portion of the public. Stage drama still had a politically unfavorable reputation at this time, so the popularity of print allowed him access to audiences wary of stage productions. The distribution of *Siege* in printed form encouraged audiences to see the masque's production as a development of the morally superior print culture rather than as a return to stage drama.

Siege also begins with a preface that proposes a new kind of English heroic verse but holds back from claiming to be an ideal example of that verse. Adopting the value-sale relationship proposed in the dramatic folio collections, Davenant suggests that while the masque is impressive in its current state, it does not yet stand out from similar works in continental Europe. He suggests that if readers collaborate with him in producing the masque by buying printed copies and then paying to see the production, *The Siege of*

Rhodes can manifest the greatness of the English heroic form. Ultimately, Davenant invites readers to join him in producing an English literary identity through their commercial efforts.

The preface markets *Siege* as a cultural commodity to wealthy readers possessed of a burgeoning literary nationalism. For Davenant, gaining an equal standing in the European literary tradition is vital. He rarely speaks of “England” without comparing and contrasting the works of his country to those of the continent. Though *Siege* includes music “by the most transcendental of England,” readers must nevertheless consider that the best of England is only “perhaps not unequal to the best masters abroad,” not definitively unequalled (195). Similarly, he notes that the recitative style of the masque is “of great reputation amongst other nations”, it remains “unpractised here” (195). However, Davenant is careful to insist that England not merely imitate European practices to become great. The repeated references to “England” and “English” emphasize that the art presented must retain its English identity in the European tradition.

Accordingly, the preface calls attention to the unique English staging of the masque. Readers learn, for example, of “the excellency of [the illustrator] Mr. John Webb,” an Englishman, and of “music [that] was composed [...] by the most transcendent of England in that art” (195). Though the work does not often utilize “the usual length of English verse,” the lines are still fundamentally “heroic” and, it is implied, English (196). Readers are left with the impression that English art and cultural is not so much inferior to that of the continent so much as its dramatic art is unexpressed and unrecognized. The lack of greatness in “recitation,” for example, is not due to lack of talent but lack of practice.

To elevate the production so that its “English” merits can be recognized, Davenant needs money. Without court patronage, he turns to a new sponsor: the dramatic stage market, what we might today refer to as “ticket sales.” The current funding for *Siege*, the preface explains, restricts the production to a small playing space, “eleven foot in height, and about fifteen in depth,” that hinders the “splendour” appropriate for the heroic (194). This and other “defects,” the preface continues,

Are chiefly such as you cannot reform but only with your purse: that is, by building us a larger room, a design which we began and shall not be left for you to finish, because we have observed that many who are liberal of their understanding when they would issue it out towards discovery of imperfections, have not always money to expend in things necessary towards the making up of perfection (194).

Siege, the words imply, is at present only a shadow of its potential, a potential which can “reform but only with your purse” (194). Here the word “reform” is not so much a disclaimer for the work’s imperfections as it is call for readers to collaborate in its further improvement. Davenant prints *Siege* for readers in hopes that they will help him realize his model of a new English heroic drama by funding its production.

* * *

The Siege of Rhodes dramatic text complements assertions of the preface by repeatedly referring to its own commercial theatricality. The work includes elements derivative of the masque’s role in the print market. Displays of agency, in which characters decide to act virtuously in the face of certain death, are the central feature of Davenant’s heroic ideal and are rooted in commercial exchanges. Additionally, a meta-

theatrical strain pervades the masque and calls attention to its status as an “English” drama. Readers learn of the quality of English valor relative to that of the rest of Europe and events within the play are subject to metaphorical comparisons with dramatic music and staging. By the end of the masque, readers are convinced it is an “English” commodity and that its content is uniquely heroic. They are also sure as to their own role as financiers.

Siege dramatizes a largely fictional account of the events leading up to, and including, the 1522 assault on Rhodes by the armies of Ottoman Empire. Importantly, the masque focuses almost entirely on the events concerning the section of Rhodes defended by the “English station” even though the plot does not concern any other English. Instead, the plot focuses on three characters, the married Sicilians, Ianthe and Alphonso, and the Turkish Sultan, Solyman. Ianthe is captured returning to Rhodes after selling her jewels for guns and other supplies. She is brought before Solyman, and he is smitten by a combination of her beauty and her devotion to her husband. He agrees to allow her to enter the city with the supplies on the condition she and her husband will flee. The siege begins. Ianthe and Alphonso refuse to leave the city. Alphonso, consumed with thoughts about Solyman and his wife, loses his will to fight. Eager to prove her love to her husband, Ianthe fights at the English station and is wounded but revered by both sides for her valor. Though told the soldiers of the French station will not fight without an example, Alphonso hurries to the English station. There turns the tide with his courage and prowess, and Ianthe is discovered to be only lightly wounded. The opera ends with the two affirming their love to each other.

Like the closet drama form, *Siege* includes several estranging chorus passages that act as foils to foreground characters' agency. Just after Solyman grants Ianthe safe passage into Rhodes, for example, a chorus of women express their desire to "hang up our lutes" and arm for war (3.210). This contrast mocks Solyman's decision to let Ianthe go while calling attention to the fact that it was a choice. Unlike the chorus, the play does not wholeheartedly condemn Solyman's decision; Ianthe tries to keep her word, a decision that is also the subject of chorus mockery. After Ianthe stresses her ability to choose faithfulness to Alphonso over whatever Solyman might offer, a chorus of husbands urge their wives to ignore her agency. They command the wives, "unlearn all ye learnt here of one another" (3.217). The contrast between Ianthe's decision and the men's directive emphasizes Ianthe's agency to act outside the traditional stereotypes for female desire that the chorus represents. Like Cleopatra, she chooses; Ianthe is not led by men or her passions.

The greatest expressions of agency in the play, however, are commercial. Displays of virtue derive from exchanges. In the heroic, it should be recalled, virtue is about agency. The virtuous choose to live, for instance, when faced with "sentences of Death" (*Gondibert* 12) or choose to honor and respect love despite lust or life concerns. Thus, Solyman, the Sultan, acts virtuously when he allows Ianthe to reach Rhodes, because it is the honorable thing to do despite a desire to keep her in his court. Alphonso is likewise virtuous when he refuses to leave Rhodes out of duty to the city for sheltering him. Ianthe acts virtuously upon learning of Alphonso's refusal to leave Rhodes. She stays with her husband to fight despite the almost certain death.

The most overt display of virtue is the Rhodian defense, enabled by the sale of Ianthe's jewels, which she is able to bring to the city because of a second deal she strikes with Solyman. The bargain dominates the *Siege* plot: Solyman, impressed with Ianthe's "virtue," promises not to attack the city until she and Alphonso leave:

Thou didst thy utmost virtue show [...]

Shall straight to Rhodes conducted be [...]

So both may safe return to Sicily (2.172-182).

At first glance, Solyman's bargain has much in common with those of Security (*Eastward Ho*) and Caesar (*Antony and Cleopatra*) in that it imposes a simplistic model of exchange that blinds him to unanticipated outcomes. Such is Solyman's belief in his military skill that he believes he will take Rhodes even if he allows Ianthe to bring relief.

There is a figurative blindness to Solyman's beliefs akin to that of Touchstone's beliefs about exchange in *Eastward Ho*. The Sultan does not seem able to admit the possibility that Ianthe and Alphonso may not want to leave Rhodes. Therefore, he offers to let Ianthe go assuming she will leave with her husband, making it easier for him to take the city without Alphonso's considerable military presence. However, this is not simply a case of Ianthe making an empty promise so she might take advantage of Solyman's blindness like Quicksilver does to Touchstone. She does try to live up to her side of the bargain by attempting to persuade him to leave twice (3.177-179 and 4.47-65).

This last aspect of their agreement, a mutual attempt to live up to terms of the bargain, presents an alternative to the one-sided commercial efforts we see in Quicksilver and Cleopatra at the beginning of the century. Rather than having only one person (Quicksilver, Cleopatra) who is fully aware of the transaction, both parties show an equal

awareness of their roles in the exchange. This sets a precedent that will have its fullest expression some years later in Restoration-plays featuring rakes, a topic I take up in the next chapter. At the time it appears here in *Siege*, the kind of mutual-bargaining depicted between Solyman and Ianthe depict was still novel. Because Solyman and Ianthe try to live up to the terms of their agreement, their bargain provides a clear example of how transactions provide agency, even when deception is not involved. Solyman's offer introduces the same kind of restrictions on behavior that Quicksilver suffers when Security controls his clothing or Caesar pledges to kill Cleopatra's children if Ianthe refuses to make death the alternative to freedom (and leaving Rhodes). However, Ianthe and Alphonso choose a third option. They use the "freight" that Solyman allows Ianthe to bring into the city to mount a stalwart defense of the city. In doing so, they do not break Ianthe's word to Solyman. They simply outwit him. This elevation of wit over commercial opportunism is indicative of the new, moral center Davenant wishes for English drama.

Rhodes' resistance to the Turkish assault is only possible because of Ianthe's initial willingness to use her jewels to pay for guns. When Ianthe arrives in the city, Villerius explains, "Your bounty too has [...] brought wisely down / a troop of virtues to defend the town" (3.87-89). Clare suggests Villerius refers to the guns Ianthe brings when he says "virtues," (213n 94-5), but I propose a second, meta-theatrical meaning for "virtues" in the passage: Villerius's words call attention to the way Ianthe's jewels enable theatrical displays of valor. The basis for this claim is Davenant's explanation in the preface that virtue in the masque appears in "the shapes of valour and conjugal love" (195). The playwright encourages readers to see valor as virtue and some instances of

virtue in the play as valorous (those that are not love). Villerius also refers to the theatrical displays of English valor enabled by the hope the guns evoke. Virtuous—valorous—displays, he knows, are what will save the town, not guns alone: He needs men who will refuse to back down even in the face of death.

Valorous displays promote reform, virtuous and financial. When Alphonso fights, Solyman finds himself admitting that the Sicilian's example proves disastrous for his own men. Solyman mourns, "those who were left alive" from the Turkish assault, "may now, / because their valour is by his reformed, / hope to make others bow" (5.50-51).

Alphonso's valor inspires the men of Rhodes to fight courageously. However, in the context of the preface's plea that audience might "reform" the portrayals of virtue in the masque through their "purse," Alphonso's actions urge readers to consider themselves and ask, "will I reform?" (194).

Readers are encouraged to choose their devotion to their country over their own self-interest by helping to fund the masque production. The reforms Alphonso's actions elicit are not exclusive; rather the masque is host to several meta-theatrical references that prompt readers to consider their place as investors to the masque they are reading. Due to the prevalence of these references, readers are unlikely to miss the connection between paying to see the production and the nationalistic displays it provides.

That the masque is itself a dramatic commodity is not left open to doubt, nor are readers left to sit passively. Lines such as the Admiral's comparison of courage to being "tuned" in a "joyful harmony" (5.197-201), and Alphonso's "draw all the curtains" (5.272) remind readers of the musical and theatrical nature of the show they witness. However, Davenant is not content to trust readers' self-conscious recognition of the work

as theater to enable their pecuniary generosity. Instead, like the masque tradition he draws from, he implicates his readers in the production by reminding them that they have a role to play in the stage production because it is a market product. Unless the masque is well-regarded in the market, it cannot be funded. As their payments equate success, readers are thus the masque's critics and its investors. The audience judges by their purses whether it is a legitimate representation of English virtue.

Characters' remarks remind readers of the preface's directive to act as "auditors" for the masque by calling attention to the way the masque requires reflection and judgment (196). Admiral, for example, suggests that his actions are already part of a story, a story that readers experience by purveying *The Siege of Rhodes*. He, as the Chorus emphasizes, proposes to "give / our story length, though we cannot live" (2.57-58). Audiences for *Siege* are not likely to miss his words as a reminder that they are witnessing a theatrical event subject to later reflection. The story, the Chorus explains, serves as a study of "how we fought" once those who fought are "dead" (2.58-62). The Admiral and chorus argue that the events at Rhodes will, like Alphonso's valor, act as *exempla* that others can learn from upon hearing and seeing their story.

The Turkish general Pirrhus makes a similar meta-theatrical reference when he compares the English Station defense to watching a play. Pirrhus remarks that he and the other Turks are "drawn up to judge, not act, the business of the day, / as Rome, in theatres, saw fencers play" (5.155-157). Like Cleopatra, Pirrhus sees a resemblance between his life and the events of a play. Pirrhus's words undercut the sense of ease, which one might associate with entertainment and substitute a reminder to readers that what they witness is part of a show. Rather than allow readers to sit passively by

watching him as an actor, he engages them by asserting his role as “judge.” Pirrhus words echo Davenant in the preface; readers have a role to play in *Siege*, though not one that requires acting. Instead, they must, to recall the prefatory language, judge whether the performance “deserves approbation” (196).

If the events do deserve approbation (praise), then readers have additional “business” to perform by financially contributing to *Siege*; either by sponsorship or future attendance. The similarity between Pirrhus’s position at the siege and the reader’s position reading *Siege* implies that they, like Pirrhus, are part of the theatrical production. They have a role to play. That role, in the context of Davenant’s preface, is to judge whether the masque’s representations of English virtue merit funding.

Representations of valor in the masque replicate the prefatory elevation of England’s achievements over those of the continent. Specifically, English valor is awarded a privileged position over that of the rest of Europe. The first stage direction justifies the exclusive focus on the events of the English station by deeming that country’s superior “valour,” one of the “shapes” virtue (“Address” 195). The direction informs readers, “*The renown of the English valour made the grand master Villerius to select their station to be most frequently commanded by himself.*” The direction assigns a commanding presence to English valor. This elevation of the England over the other nations helping to defend Rhodes (France, Spain, Germany, Italy, and etc.) invokes Davenant’s proposal in the *Gondibert* preface that “I cannot discern [...] that any Nation hath in representment of great actions[...] as the English by their *Drama*” (p. 29). Villerius, like Davenant, proposes that people will be compelled by the greatness of

English virtue to adopt it as their own. English valor is held up as an example to other Europeans.

The “valour” of the English is portrayed throughout the masque. At the beginning of the fifth entry a stage direction describes, “the greatest fury of the army being discerned at the English station.” Immediately following the stage direction above, the Turkish general Mustapha, calls attention to the work as a play watched by others and is careful to identify it as an English effort. Mustapha tells Solyman, “Those desperate English n’er will fly! [...] As if their mistresses were by / To see and praise them whilst they fight!” (5.41-44). The audience are the “mistresses,” a word used to positively refer to wives, rather than its more pejorative meaning as an illicit lover. Mustapha’s words portray English valor as a theatrical effort evoking “praise” from audiences. The readers are left with little doubt that *Siege* is a portrayal of English valor.

The elevation of English virtue that the Admiral’s and Mustapha’s actions suggest personalizes the masque to its English readers. The nationalistic sentiment combines with the masque’s role as a dramatic commodity to encourage readers to see the work an expression of their own culture whose success is vested in their funding. Readers, by helping fund the play, enable the very displays of English virtue that act as exempla for themselves to then emulate. Davenant makes readers’ national identities part of a process of self-commodification in which the English literary identity is constituted only when readers pay for it.

The Siege of Rhodes is not Davenant’s only heroic play that shapes a nationalistic pride in England’s drama—the same can be said for *The Cruelty of the Spaniards in Peru* (1658), *The History of Sir Francis Drake* (1658), and an adaption of Shakespeare *The*

Tempest with John Dryden, *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* (1670). However, *Siege* was the first to broach the anti-play sentiments of the Commonwealth and thereby re-introduce London to the delights of theater. Its success was dependent on more than a lingering affinity for the stage during the years of Commonwealth strictures. Without tailoring his literature to the demands and expectations of the London market, Davenant's plays could never have been a success, and, in fact, they were not at first. By the late Interregnum, popular opinion of England's economy was shifting. Soon the development of the entrepreneurial hero would emerge in the mainstream cultural consciousness. If not for England's printed dramatic tradition and the groundwork Davenant laid with *The Siege of Rhodes*, Restoration playwrights would have faced an empty stage instead of the full commercial potential they found there.

CHAPTER V

A BARGAIN MARRIAGE: THE RAKE HERO IN RESTORATION DRAMA

As the influence of the marketplace continued to grow in the English consciousness, dramatists became preoccupied with a fundamental aspect of commerce: the dialectical engagement that arises between agents as the result of bargaining, or haggling. In plays of the 1660s and onward we see a new kind of protagonist, the rake, whose successes and (in most cases) subsequent marriages emerge not from his brilliance or entrepreneurship alone, such as we see in the dramatic gallants and noblewomen of the previous ages, but from his interactions and companionship with a playful lover.

The characters most entrepreneurial in their efforts in plays of the previous ages—Quicksilver, Cleopatra, Ianthe—relied upon an “asymmetrical” commerce with foes that did not understand the full extent of the transactions.⁶⁴ In Restoration drama, there is rarely an unwitting party to dupe; instead, both protagonists and their paramours are equally aware of their roles in the transaction. Gone from Restoration drama are the trickery and deception that marked Quicksilver and Cleopatra’s machinations, instead replaced by a high stakes game of calling and raising offers and haggling. Plays like George Etherege’s *The Comical Revenge* and *The Man of Mode*, William Wycherley’s *The Plain Dealer*, John Dryden’s *Sir Martin Mar-all*, Aphra Behn’s *The Rover* and William Congreve’s *The Way of the World* feature dual protagonists eagerly engaged in a witty repartee of partial commitments, half-truths, raised stakes, and careful probing questions. Until the last scene, whether either will commit is an open question. Thus, though this chapter takes the rake as its focus, he cannot be analyzed in isolation like his

forbearers. His brilliance is not so much in what he does by himself alone, but by the reform he undergoes and the companionship he shares.

Examination of the rake must begin with his historical circumstances. In the aftermath of the English Civil Wars, Charles II returned to the throne on May 8th, 1660. His return heralded a number of changes, among them the establishment of a libertine *ethos* at court and revival of London theaters. Drawing upon the popular enthusiasm generated by *The Siege of Rhodes* and the regular demand for print drama, Charles II awarded charters to William Davenant and Thomas Killigrew to found theatrical groups. On August 21st, the English stage reopened to public plays and, like *Siege*, it now included actresses (Owen 2).

The new era that arose out of the Interregnum was one of mixed values. Foremost, Dale Underwood explains, are “two broadly opposing sets of traditions [...] Christianity and Christian humanism [and] philosophic and moral libertinism” (8). The collapse of the Commonwealth and its religious constraints prompted many to embrace its antithesis. Amongst Charles II’s court a new movement known as “libertinism” arose that espoused an ethos of bodily license and the sovereignty of the royalist upper class. “The libertine,” Underwood continues, “rejected the orthodox medieval and Renaissance concept of universal order and of man’s place and purpose therein and embraced the satisfaction of the senses in accordance with [...] one’s ‘natural’ impulses and desires” (13-14). In short, as Jeremy Webster explains, the libertine was “a sexual adventurer and [a] radical questioner of social, political, and moral values” (2).

Many of the court libertines were also playwrights: The Duke of Rochester, John Wilmot, Charles Sedley, George Etherege, William Wycherley, and George Villiers.

Many Restoration comedies, though not all, derive from these individuals. Even those playwrights who were not strictly libertines like Aphra Behn frequently incorporated libertine values into their plays. On the new stage libertine playwrights found considerable freedom to challenge and mock the status quo. The works of George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, Aphra Behn's *The Rover*, and William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, for example, depict rakes who regularly express disdain for the decorum and quiet complacency their upper-class peers value. Yet to argue that playwrights employed drama merely as a mouthpiece for libertinism would be simplistic. Plays that featured rakes also sought to question and re-imagine libertinism.

One of the foremost aspects of libertinism these playwrights addressed was its attitude towards marriage, particularly with regard to its role in English society and the relations between husband and wife. Among the upper classes, a woman's good reputation was essential and could not be tarnished, even if she was pursuing a desired ideological goal like libertinism. A bad reputation discouraged suitors from pursuing marriage, an economic and legal necessity. Marriages among the seventeenth century English elite, Barbara Harris explains, were primarily a form of "financial exchange" that ensured land and wealth stayed within the nobility (44). So integrally connected were upper-class marriages to finance, Harris continues, that period correspondences concerning marriage frequently "used the language of the marketplace to describe the negotiations and exchanges involved in finding husbands for their children" (44). Harris finds examples of ladies referring to their marital contracts as "a bargain" and parents "'selling' their sons' marriages to secure dowries" (44).

As the commercial language of the period indicates, these unions were more often about what Raymond Williams calls, "the steering of the estate into the right hands" than love (53). In English society, marriage was the means for circulating wealth and property from one family to another, and wives were the vehicle by which this was done. Aristocratic women represented considerable wealth and property that, ironically, they were unable to use. A woman's dowry was never actually under her control and she would never be involved directly in the exchange process. It would be agreed to be paid by a prospective bride's father, and then belong "completely to the groom or his father or guardian" it was paid to (Harris 44). Upon marriage, the wife's assets were lost to her husband's control (Staves 191). For this reason, men in Restoration plays frequently pursue landed women to marry.⁶⁵

The importance of reputation and the prominence of marriage in English society put its marital economy at odds with the sexual rapacity of libertinism, but not necessarily, Robert Hume asserts, to the philosophy of libertinism overall, which promoted equality in marriage (142). Though often thought to do so, libertine playwrights rarely rail against marriage, Hume continues. The target was marriages predicated on economic necessity; that is, marriages that prioritize political or economic gain over love (Hume 142). In reading these plays, he argues, we can see libertine playwrights promoting what Stone calls "companionate marriages," a movement arising in the latter part of the seventeenth century that "began to put the prospects of emotional satisfaction before the ambition for increased income or status" (Hume 326). Restoration drama, Hume suggests, shows us what libertine playwrights wanted marriage to be: a "mutually satisfying partnership" in which man and wife share sovereignty and delight in each other

(143). Rather than attack marriage, John Palmer explains, these playwrights uphold it, even so far as to “demonstrate that the promiscuity of the libertine cannot be successful as a way of living” (qtd Hume 142-143).

The marriages of Restoration drama are between commercially savvy individuals and preserve, rather than dissolve agency for both spouses. Their contracts derive from mutual consent and remain open to future revision. Restoration playwrights provide us an egalitarian model of marriage in which husband and wife join for love while still enjoying the economic success of traditional, arranged marriages. In these playwrights’ hands, commerce is a means for liberation and everlasting conjugal bliss.

* * *

In 1664, libertine playwright George Etherege’s *The Comical Revenge; or, Love in a Tub* ushered in a new style of comedy that we today know as the comedy of manners. It emphasized a sexual license and a disregard for civil decorum never before seen in English drama and wedded these characteristics to established elements of classical drama. M. H. Abrams observes that much of what we associate with the comedy of manners comes from “the New Comedy of the Greek Menander,” which “deals with the relations and intrigues of men and women living in a sophisticated upper-class society, and relies for comic effect in large part on the wit and sparkle of the dialogue” (55). Typically, this dialogue is between members of a “gay [witty] couple”: male and female libertine lovers whose mutual desire to be independent leads to a delightful struggle of one-upmanship and erotic wit as the two constantly test and play with each other before finally accepting in marriage their perfectly suited companion (55). The

form achieved its highest marks when it “was given high polish in Restoration Comedy” (Hume 55).⁶⁶

The male of the gay couple is a “rake,” a sexually profligate character often “reformed” through his companion’s efforts. Defining the rake is surprisingly difficult. While a popular kind of character, the varieties of purposes to which playwrights employ the rake differ widely from play to play. Instead of being a consistent characterization, rakes are best considered a form of satirical critique.⁶⁷ Harold Weber associates the rake with the Jacobean gallant (14). The rake, like the gallant, is a “trickster-hero” (14).⁶⁸ The primary difference is in the ends the two kinds of characters pursue. Whereas the Jacobean and Caroline tricksters portray a “general appreciation of the ability to shift shape and confound others” for overall personal gain, he “overlooks the sexual implications of disguise that most concern the rake” (14). The rake’s “most distinctive, and therefore most important, characteristic,” Weber explains, “is his sexuality” (3): He is “the first character type in the history of English literature to derive his definition primarily from his eroticism” with a single-minded pursuit of sexual relations in lieu of everything else (Weber 3).

The rake, as an active “questioner of social, political, and moral values, was used by playwrights to satirically assess their times and, in particular, the libertinism of the court.”⁶⁹ Sometimes the rake is the agent for satire. Wildish, the rake of Charles Sedley’s *Mulberry-Garden*, calls out the over determined nature of court machismo by making the courtiers Estridge and Modish boast of their fictional sexual encounters with Victoria and Olivia while the two ladies are hiding nearby. In other cases, the rake himself is the target of the satire. For example, the titular rake of Thomas Southerne’s *Sir Antony Love* is a

woman (disguised as a man). Her subterfuge challenges assumptions of masculinity in the libertine ethos but ends up invalidating her own identity in the process.⁷⁰ Most targets for the rake's satire were arguments promoting marriage as an economic necessity.

* * *

The culture of late seventeenth-century England was one deeply entrenched in economic concerns. The period saw a revival of the mercantilist writings of the early 1600s that argued for proactive trade regulations. The most influential of these writings was Thomas Mun's *England's Treasure by Forraign Trade*, which was originally written in the 1620s but was published in 1664 to great acclaim. Mun's work, Adam Smith argues, spurred nationalistic pride in English commerce by linking the health of the nation to the condition of its trade (Magnusson 47).

In John Dryden's 1668 "Essay on Dramatic Poesy", commercial trade becomes a schema for the cultural forces at work in English dramatic tradition. "Dramatic Poesy" begins with Dutch and English forces battling for control of trade routes at the mouth of the Thames. Dryden uses the battle as a metaphor for the figurative war between the classical, French, on the one hand, and the "ancients" (The Jacobean playwrights Ben Jonson, William Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, among others) in the English dramatic tradition on the other. That Dryden chooses a trade war to set the scene for his discussions hints at the prevalent influence commerce had in shaping the English literary consciousness. The battle serves as a rhetorical device, an organizing metaphor for the classical, ancient, and French influences within English drama by re-framing them as an ongoing conflict with each other and the then contemporary English dramatic culture. Simultaneously, the battle serves as an analytical tool that calls attention to the symbiotic

relationship between trade and drama in Dryden's age. The English, for example, learn about classical and French traditions by first buying those works from the international marketplace. What Dryden describes is the conflict between dramatic traditions is between ideas and their material manifestations in the market. Controlling trade routes is therefore tantamount to controlling the transmission of literary culture.

The centrality of the trade marketplace in Restoration plays reflects the foundational role economics played in late seventeenth-century English culture. Richard Kroll argues that so influential is trade upon the minds of playwrights that commerce becomes a metaphor for everyday life in which plots "echoed a wider system of circulation played out by objects and bodies in the course of the narrative" (1). The wealth arising from stocks and investment afforded a "new buying power" that, Lowenthal explains, allowed "material items, especially fashions, that signified identities that were, in earlier times, out of reach for ordinary citizens" (24). This availability, Lowenthal continues, "provoked new questions about surfaces and depths, about the representations and their value, between what we see what an object stands for" (24). Within the financial realm, this awareness led to anxieties about "money and its ability to represent changing and unstable values and value" (Lowenthal 24). Even a casual look at Restoration drama reveals the marketplace as a common backdrop. Called variously London's "arcades" and "malls," the city's marketplaces were commercial hubs for distributing the goods of the world to English consumers, and in Restoration plays, they serve as places where ideas are exchanged and debated. Peter Holland observes that the London New Exchange was a familiar analogue for audiences (29). Expressing familiarity or ignorance of the Exchange and its products, Darryll Grantley argues, "was

also used to signal innocence or its opposite [...] in terms of libertinism or sophistication” (9).

It is this ethos of the market that underlies rake behaviors and agency in Restoration comedy. Rakes frequently foreground the economic preoccupations of late seventeenth-century English society and its values concerning marriage. These rakes are not just agents in the market; their identity is subject to it. They can attain wealth and distinction only through their capacities as successful bargainers and salesmen. Scholarship from Hume, Underwood, Canfield, and Owens, among others, acknowledges that the plays tacitly seek to reform the sexual rapacity of the rake by containing his impulses within marriage (Hume 154). However, these studies focus on the political and moral features of this reform. They emphasize that through marriage the rake finally enters into society and spend little attention on how this reform comes about. I argue the rake reforms because he is a product on the market. He sells himself to wealthy heiresses for the financial stability he desires. The rake is as shaped by the forces of supply and demand as much as he appeals to those forces to achieve his own ends.

The rake Dorimant from *The Man of Mode* is one example. What we see in plays like *Mode* are rakes who reform because their feminine counterparts force these rakes to become active participants in the marriage market, a market where their futures, like all agents who invest in a market, become contingent on success or failure in that market. These women reform their rakes by making the rakes choose those strategies that will lead to the most successful and profitable outcome: marriage. Distinguishing the rake from the market becomes a near impossibility by the end of these plays. When we look at who he is and why he is the person he is throughout the play, we can correlate changes in

his personality with changes in his economic position. The protagonists of Restoration drama are aware of the ways in which they are shaped by the market even as they shape its forces for self-expression.

Classical economic theory has long identified the commercial economy as a crucial factor in constructing modern notions of the self.⁷¹ More recent studies of the role of identity in exchange and the process of identity formation suggest that identity construction is, by necessity, a dialectic process between individuals and the economies in which they live. Massey, Allen, and Sarre stress the need for us “to recognize the important elements of [economic] interconnection which go into the construction of any identity” (12). Who we choose to be reflects what rewards we seek from commerce. With this in mind, Akerlof and Kranton posit, the “choice of identity may be the most important ‘economic decision’ people can make” (717). Identity formation is about weighing risk and reward and choosing those things that allow us to adopt our desired identity and to sustain it over time (717).

So deeply intertwined are economic processes in identity construction that how we respond to a transaction has ramifications on future relationships; that is, certain types of economic responses can produce reform (change) in one or both parties. Bowles argues that “one or both parties may have the capacity to structure the relationship” at any moment (78). Everything they say or do, he continues, will by necessity “affect the exchange partner [...] incomplete contracts thus provide both the motivation and the means for preference modification” (78). By “incomplete” Bowles refers to situations in which an exchange is terminated or left uncompleted indefinitely. His argument is that

one of the best means to alter how your partner will respond in the future is to not fulfill an exchange.

What Bowles suggests is the crux of the rake's moral and social reform. The rake cannot reform unless he becomes involved in an economy of exchange such as the marriage market offers. More broadly, rakes demonstrate a greater truth about the role of the economy in constructing Restoration subjectivity. Unlike the Quicksilvers, Cleopatras, and Ianthes of the previous ages who employed economic mechanisms merely to liberate themselves from oppressive situations, Restoration rakes and their lovers inhabit a relationship between commerce and identity that is even more fundamental: they cannot exist outside the economies in which they live.

Rakes not only take part in commerce; they embrace its dictums, particularly with regard to dialectical nature of the bargaining process, or "haggling," through which two or more agents will eventually settle on an acceptable price. T. F. Mitchell and Richard Bauman identify haggling as particularly representative of market-oriented cultures. Price is subjective, open to play. The play afforded by the language of haggling leads Mikhail Bakhtin to associate it with freedom and potentiality.⁷² Robert Shepherd describes how identity in the market emerges as a "shaping" process of "mutual dependency" (19). During the Restoration it is these features of haggling that begin to dominate in plays that feature rakes. A new kind subjectivity emerges that emphasizes a willingness to negotiate and compromise.⁷³ Rake and lover embrace the dialectical encounter that arises from bargaining and make it the cornerstone of their future relationship.

Through the portrayals of rakes and their lovers, Restoration playwrights foreground the late seventeenth-century English fascination with commerce and the

dialectical bargaining sessions that make up trade negotiations. Rakes and lovers haggle. They challenge each other's offers and they compromise. They propose new deals and concede terms as part of a constantly evolving battle of wits and promises. Love emerges out of finding an ideal economic playmate, a person who values the give and take of the commercial negotiations of the marriage market, over the monetary rewards of a promising union. This is not to argue rakes and their lovers reject economics or the financial necessities noble marriages in Restoration England. However, for the rake and lover wealth occupies a secondary position to companionship in love.

They construct a union that haggling imbues with an egalitarianism and regard for the individual agency of both spouses rarely possible in the traditional marriages that "steer the estate into the right hands." Those who got to determine what the "right hands" were in the latter arrangement were rarely the husband and wife and more often their parents or male family members. While women technically had a legal say in who they married and control over their property, in practice, Helen Burke explains, "male family members" regularly acted to override or "negate the property rights of their mothers, wives, and sisters" (93).⁷⁴ Traditional marriages represented a suppression of the individual agency that libertines sought to exercise. Additionally, traditional marriage tended to employ restrictive contracts that set husband over wife, a direct affront to libertine egalitarianism.

To preserve the economic or political goals of the arrangement, parent and male family members typically employed marital contracts. Brian Blum defines a contract as an explicit "exchange relationship created by oral or written agreement between two or more persons, containing at least one promise, and recognized by law as enforceable" (2).

As an exchange, Blum continues, each party must “give up” something to others (4). To contain a “promise” clause, a contract must require “some assumption of liability lasting beyond the instant of agreement” that obliges contractors to take a specific code of action upon the contracts ratification and/or breaking.

The promise clauses required of English marital contracts could, and often did, predicate the health of the political and economic relations the marriages constituted on the perpetuity of the union. Husband and wife were thus pressured to stay married to ensure the health of the networks the marriage established. This was particularly true of the husband, as he gained control of his wife’s assets only so long as he remained married.

The law inevitably favored masculine prerogative over a woman's right to choose. In seventeenth century English marriage contracts, Vivian Davis explains, women “exist [...] as subordinates” (525).⁷⁵ The contracts, she continues, serve as, “an emblem of the confidant alliance between masculinity and the law” (525) whose creation serves as a “means of reasserting control over a [potentially] volatile female subject” that might otherwise seek to dissolve an unhappy marriage (524). Contracts were, Pateman observes, “the means through which modern patriarchy is instituted” (2). Only through a radical redefinition of the marital contract could libertine playwrights hope to achieve the companionate unions they desired.

* * *

The remainder of this chapter uses the dialectical engagement of commercial negotiations as a conceptual model for understanding how playwrights sought to construct the companionate marriages *and* ensure the economic viability of these

arrangements. To make this argument, I consider three representative plays, George Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and Aphra Behn's *The Rover, or the Banish'd Cavaliers*. By gradually bringing their rakes into commercial relations, rakish partners like Harriet in *Man of Mode* and Hellena in *The Rover* provoke a new self-consciousness in these natural entrepreneurs. Rakes become heroes of these plays' economies, victors who not only win their landed brides but who inject a new vibrancy and wealth into their economies. Because they are risk-takers and spenders, their wealth does not remain cloistered but is regularly injected in the economy through investments and purchases. Etherege's *Mode* introduces the process of dialectical engagement that the rake and his lover undergo. We see the rake's reform "in the moment", as it were, as the direct result of his interactions with Harriet. Wycherley's *Country Wife* explores what happens to the rake when he has no single companion and thus, refuses dialectical and contractual engagement with a lover. Finally, Behn's *The Rover* investigates more deeply the haggling mechanics of the dialectical encounter and the kind of subjectivity it promotes in Rake characters and their lovers.

George Etherege's *Man of Mode* is one of the best-known plays of the Restoration period. It depicts the romance and eventual marriage of the philandering rake Dorimant and the equally witty and fun-loving heiress Harriet. The play is steeped in market ethos, and market decisions about investment, risk, and reward lead the play's commercial characters to succeed. *The Man of Mode* depicts a tale of rakish reformation. Dorimant begins the play a "glamorous seducer of society belles" (*Rakish* 161) but ends happily engaged to Harriet. The drama begins with Dorimant in the former role, beset by his lover Loveit, who has begun to curtail his time with his newest love, Belinda. Dorimant

hears about Harriet from a gossiping Orange Woman and resolves to meet her. They meet in a witty explosion of repartee, their zest for the game increasing as the plot advances. Desperate to retain their individual sovereignty, both hint at marriage but neither fully commits. Events come to a head when the clock begins to run out on Harriet. As an heiress, she has been engaged by her mother, Woodvill, to marry Young Bellair, a man who himself desires Emilia, the woman slated to marry his father. As Old Bellair makes preparations for Harriet's marriage papers, Dorimant arrives in time in disguise as "Mr. Courtage." Only when Loveit exposes Dorimant's disguise in an attempt to frustrate the rake's efforts with Harriet does Dorimant finally declare his love publically, as does Harriet immediately after.

Dorimant's reformation occurs as the result of the games he and Harriet play within *Mode's* marriage market. "Game" in this context refers to how Dorimant and Harriet's actions portray *Mode's* marriage market. Richard Schechner describes a game as a "highly structured [event] with clearly marked players playing in/on specified places" (96). Typically, games, Schechner continues, have "established agreed-on rules that guarantee an orderly progression to definite outcomes" (96). The "rules" in Dorimant and Harriet's case are those of the marriage market. Like most landed women, Harriet must pursue marriage if she is to assert any sort of control over her finances, and once either Dorimant or Harriet verbally declare an intent to marry, they will be engaged. Marriage is thus both necessary and threatening to persons like Dorimant and Harriet. Both need a legitimate marriage to secure any sort of financial future, but promising to marry, even out of jest, is to enter into a new power arrangement in which the woman

loses agency. Additionally, by promising to marry, Dorimant, publically acknowledges his exclusive devotion to Harriet, a situation sure to hinder his dating efforts.

Dorimant and Harriet find considerable play in the marriage market despite these restrictions. Schechner argues that “play creates its own (permeable) boundaries and realms: multiple realities that are slippery, porous, and full of creative lying and deceit” (*Ritual* 27).⁷⁶ Within ludic discourse normally strict rules become “slippery”. While Dorimant would be bound if he openly declared his intent to marry Harriet, within their game he can hint through metaphor without committing. Harriet has the same choice. So long as they stick to wordplay and avoid overt statements, the two can debate freely without becoming subject to the rules of the marriage market governing commitment.

Play does have consequences; much of Richard Schechner’s career has been devoted to showing how play-acting can subtly alter the identity of the person playing. In taking on a persona for play, he explains, an actor makes her or his identity subject to the semantic loosening characteristic of ludic discourse. S/he enters a state in which the actor is simultaneously “not me” and “not not me”, an act in which “the hierarchies that usually set off actuality as ‘real’ and fantasy as ‘not real’ are dissolved” in “an unresolved dialectical tension” (*Between* 110,6). For the duration of a play, an actor can imagine possibilities disallowed by his beliefs and reflect upon them, forming new conceptions of the self.

This is how Dorimant reforms. When he and Harriet haggle via gambling, they temporarily liberate themselves from the stringent rules of the marriage market and entertain new models of marriage, models in which patriarchal hierarchies are dismantled

and freedom is preserved. Dorimant and Harriet construct a new reality within their game and find a way to bring that reality to life. Life becomes the game and the game life.

In *Mode*, gambling is not, to borrow from Schechner, a “leisurely” game but a vital economic process of Restoration culture that affirms class structures and agency even as it provides for delight. James Evans’s examination of gambling in Late Stuart culture determines that “high stakes” gambling was in vogue during the Restoration years, particularly at court and widely practiced throughout the city, in “palaces, the groom-porter’s, and private houses” (2). Evans suggests that the 1660s onward saw the use of gambling as what historian Stone calls “conspicuous expenditure,” a way to advertise to others one’s financial independence from even great losses. Gambling became a sign of wealth (Evans 3) and a status symbol as “men and women risked their fortunes to demonstrate their status” (Evans 4). Within Restoration drama, Evans continues, gambling for play instead of profit demonstrates Dorimant’s upper class character as well as his status through his “superiority to the ever more imperious rule of money” (4).

The marriage courtship is a poker-like game for Dorimant and Harriet characterized by maneuvers that resemble the raises, calls, and bluffs of gambling. Their repartee skirts the rules of the marriage market with wordplay while enacting the same kind of choices found in gambling. “In love,” Dorimant observes, “no security [is] to be given for the future” (2.2.193-194). Nonetheless, given the proper motivation, a risk may be worth taking. In Harriet, Dorimant finds a fortune worth the risks of marriage. His estate, we learn is in “ruins,” in need of the “repair” that Harriet can bring (5.2.327-328). He is thus well aware that in marrying Harriet, Dorimant will “wed [...] a good estate”

(4.2.213). The cost of this gamble is high. He must lose “forty days [...] to gain [her] favour,” days he could otherwise spend on other women like Mrs. Loveit and Belinda who do not demand marriage (3.3.99-100). The greatest risk, however, is the loss of his lifestyle as a rake. His gains from Harriet depend upon his fidelity.

Dorimant perceives the world as a game of chance. Loveit is his “*pis aller*,” a term for a move of last resort (1.1.188) and Harriet is a “lottery” (3.3.42), a windfall. He is attracted to risk; the greater the gamble, the more he enjoys himself. An untried “new mistress,” for example, is superior to an older, proven lover (1.1.217), and he is unafraid to court one lover even while another jealous one is present.⁷⁷ In addition, Dorimant prizes wit. When the Orange Woman describes Harriet to Dorimant, he only asks for two details. First, is “she handsome?” (1.1.141) and second, “has she wit?” (1.1.156). Moreover, when Dorimant and Harriet meet, Medley emphasizes Harriet’s “wit” as “better than her face”, a comparison that implies that it is wit, and not beauty, that Dorimant prizes more, since Medley is trying to praise Harriet to him (3.3.667-68). What the rake stands to gain is enticing: a woman who loves to game as much as he does.

Harriet feels constrained and desires to live her life on her own terms. Her movements and agency are curtailed by her mother and the gendered codes of societal decorum. Harriet is never anywhere without her mother nearby. Even at the mall, though Harriet and Young Bellair seem to be left to their own devices, Woodvill is not far away. As 3.3 opens, for example, stage directions describe Harriet pulling Young Bellair through the mall. They soon travel off-stage but quickly reappear, stopping to speak to Dorimant. Their conversation lasts only for the small span of sixty lines before Lady Woodvill appears. When Fopling appears nineteen lines later and reveals Dorimant’s

identity to Woodvill, Harriet's movements are again beyond her control, as her mother pulls her away and out of the scene (3.3.141).⁷⁸

Harriet also desires game and wit. She is quick to call "ten to one" odds on Sir Fopling (4.1.213). Like Dorimant, she is willing to take a gamble and "lay [herself] out all in love" (3.1.75-76). It is she, after all, who tells Dorimant to come to Lady Townley's home as Mr. Courtage. This request suggests that, like him, she finds the risk of speaking with Dorimant in front of her mother stimulating. She likes to play mischievous games to subvert those that attempt to control her, often games that involve playacting. She imitates Dorimant's posture and facial expression when dealing with women (3.3.115-118) and delights in secretly vowing with Young Bellair "That I with you [...] will never marry" (3.1.83-89).

A predilection for play is not enough for either Dorimant or Harriet: the question is whether each has the courage to stay in the game with everything on the line. Dorimant and Harriet's game primarily takes place over the course of three encounters. Broadly, the gambling consists of Harriet raising the stakes while Dorimant offers witty, half-promises in response. There is a steady progression in the betting from both Dorimant and Harriet as the two begin to pick up on each other's subtexts. As the game grows more risky, it also grows more playful.

The initial mall encounter depicts the two probing just how comfortable the other is with high stakes gaming. Hearing Harriet's protestation that women not be allowed to play at love in the market, Dorimant asks, "You were talking of play, madam, pray what be your stint?" (3.3.75-76). The term "stint" means an "upper limit" in gambling; the maximum risk a gamester is willing to wager on a bid. The word requires that Harriet be

familiar with gaming vocabulary (“stint” n 1) and she does not disappoint. She uses Dorimant’s question as an opportunity to show him just how much of a gamester she is. She only cares for games of great risk, but she, at first, claims to enjoy only games of little consequence: “A little harmless discourse in public walks, or at most an appointment in a box barefaced at the playhouse” (3.3.77-79). In comparison with Dorimant’s practice of “masks, and private meetings; where women engage for all that they are worth,” she suggests, her gambles are minor (3.3.79-80). While Harriet may call her actions “harmless,” they are anything but, because she refuses to be private. She makes a special effort to ensure Dorimant knows she prefers “public” walks and will not simply go to the playhouse. She must do it “bare-faced.” Harriet completely upturns Dorimant’s dating world. If he pursues Harriet, it will be public, leaving them no exit. If he continues pursuing her, their social peers will know of their arrangement, making it harder for him to pursue other lovers.

Harriet then raises the stakes with a playful, if irreverent, allusion to Easter that appropriates the religious period for courtship. She asks Dorimant if he could “keep a Lent for a mistress” (3.3.97-98).⁷⁹ Her message is clear, though cloaked in metaphor: she appreciates the sentiment behind Lent and requests Dorimant do the same, but the solemnity surrounding religious doctrine could use a little levity, levity she is inviting the rake to provide. He rises to the occasion: “In expectation of a Happy Easter, [I] think forty days well lost, to gain your favor” (3.3.99-100). The answer he gives is not wholly satisfactory. He specifies only being faithful for “forty days” and makes no claim to longer fidelity. Harriet notices Dorimant’s “particular” concession of only forty days and

therein ends the conversation: if Dorimant will not make a serious investment into playing their game, she suggests, has no interest in him.⁸⁰

Dorimant and Harriet play in earnest at Lady Townley's party, where Dorimant adopts a ruse to test Harriet. Dorimant asserts his patriarchal authority by commanding her to act with less "scorn" and "coldness" (4.1.122) and to "calm [her] frowns" (4.1.128). His words recall those of Old Bellair earlier in the play when he insists Emilia "wear a little more mirth in her face, a dod she's too serious" (2.1.59-60). The words attempt to make Emilia shape her looks in accordance with what Old Bellair wants, not what she desires. But, to read Dorimant's pleas simply as this kind of patriarchal imposition is to ignore the anti-institutional stance rakes like Dorimant characteristically adopt. Rather, the rake adopts the patriarchal codes to see if Harriet will resist, and she passes: "I am sorry my face does not please you as it is, but I shall not be complaisant and change it" (4.1.144-145). Like the libertine code she espouses, she will not submit to patriarchal or masculine privilege.

Dorimant's test is part of a developing love language he and Harriet construct. Despite a relapse into unbridled rakishness for an affair with Belinda, Dorimant has begun to see Hellena as a partner, a companion with whom he can share an intimate, private world of playful give and take with its own subtextual love language. When he returns to Lady Townley's after the affair, we see Dorimant and Harriet wholeheartedly embrace the world of love they have created. Dorimant's words construct a layered message that overtly shapes the rake as an idealized courtly lover, while covertly inviting her in to share in the joke. Throughout the scene, Dorimant's words beg credulity. He begins by forthrightly declaring his love for Harriet. He tells her, "I will open my heart to

receive you where none yet did ever enter” (5.2.132-133) and that he will “persevere and give you marks that are infallible” (5.2.154). He assures her that “there’s no measure to be taken of what I’ll do for you from anything I ever did before” (5.2.168-170). The forthrightness of Dorimant’s words stands in stark contrast to the indirect language he employs in their previous two encounters. When Dorimant pledges to cast away his affairs and “renounce all the joys I have in friendship and in wine, sacrifice to you all the interest I have in other women” (5.2.156-158), the promise is too good to be true.

Harriet’s responses are no less authentic. She asks how far he is willing to go. Will he “neglect these [women] a while and make a journey into the country?” (5.2.160-161). Despite her words, Harriet has no desire to return to the country.⁸¹ Neither one of the pair is serious. They are playing at bluffs that test whether either is as “complaisant” as they pretend, comfortable with ending the game on someone else’s terms instead of their own. Despite their frankness, Dorimant and Harriet employ paradoxical language to communicate a layered message of love. The first, more obvious message is that which emerges in Dorimant’s declarations of love: the excessive affectation that parodies the structures and romantic idealism of the *precieux* lover in the courtly love tradition (Bernard xxxiv), which he and Harriet despise. However, underneath the parody is a hidden message predicated on irony. This is the real message for Harriet. Because Dorimant is clearly caricaturing the affectations of courtly love, he does not actually regard them as valid expressions of love. As Harriet suggests, Dorimant does not actually “speak” his love; he shows it by mocking the conventions that control its expression.

By requiring him to endure the country, Harriet sends a similar dual message testing Dorimant’s love, since she too despises living in Hampshire. While appearing to

play into Dorimant's courtly love scene, Harriet inserts hurdles for him in which she does not actually believe in or require. These false hurdles communicate her shared rejection of convention that Dorimant expresses. When he asks, "Will you not promise me," in accordance with the tradition of a knight asking for some token of affection from his beloved (Burns 8), Harriet cannot help but have a little fun by exclaiming with great histrionics, "I hate to promise!" (5.2.175).

Scholarship has a tendency to take Harriet's words in the scene literally⁸². However, Harriet's later statements indicate otherwise. When Busy urges Harriet to "let him know your mind" (5.2.182) and urges her mistress to seize the "opportunity" before it slips away (5.2.186), Harriet responds with appeals to decorum. First, she claims to reject Dorimant on the grounds of a "sense of modesty" (5.2.184). Then, she claims to detest doing anything "against the rules of decency and honour" (5.2.188-189). Like Dorimant's passionate declarations, Harriet's words are out of character. They are a new game, elements of the love language she and Dorimant share. They are fully committed to each other at this moment.

A large part of what gives Dorimant and Harriet's relationship its vibrancy is the reciprocal manner in which they interact with each other. Because the two meet on equal terms, neither can force the other to provide either the carnal relations and wealth Dorimant demands or the devotion and publicity that Harriet requires. What is left is a commerce where both must lose something they prize; Dorimant must give up his philandering ways and Harriet must stake her reputation. It is a high-risk game that will engage the easily distracted rake but bring her dangerously close to returning husbandless to the country. This idea of reciprocal loss is at the core of Dorimant's reform. Harriet

does not give Dorimant what he desires but, instead, constructs a series of conditions. The rake is forced to reconsider his actions and weigh his effort against his reward. His reform is based on the potential loss of things he prizes if he continues to pursue Harriet. For Dorimant, everything seems to work out for the best. But what would happen if a rake need not give up anything for his lovers? The answer, playwright William Wycherley suggests, is that there would be no game, no delight, no companionship, no reform, and no comic invigoration.

William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* takes up the question of what happens when the rake is set free in a world without constraints from lovers or society. Wycherley provides us with a world in which the rake reigns supreme. Horner, the rake of the play, possesses all the power and all the knowledge. He never develops any sort of companionate love and at no point does any character successfully set conditions on his lovemaking. Horner never engages in reciprocal commerce and he never has to give up anything to his lovers. The results are both laughable and alienating. Horner becomes wildly successful at seducing city wives, sometimes at the behest of their unwittingly husbands. But there is a price to pay for his success. Horner's language possesses none of the zest and figurative play that makes the repartee of Dorimant and Harriet so appealing. His love language is a literal, cutthroat, discourse that leaves no room for bargaining, let alone wagers or play. Ultimately, Horner ends the play alone and unrepentant: he never reforms. What Wycherley offers with *Country Wife* is a critique of a world that attempts to reject commerce and companionship altogether in its pursuit of pleasure. While Horner is triumphant at the end of the play, we cannot help but see his cheer with a healthy dose of cynicism. We are able to see what he himself does not realize: in exchange for his

lovers he has traded his zeal for life, delight in language, the pleasures of partnership, and the comic and economic rewards of reciprocated love. Without companionship, Wycherley suggests, life is lonely indeed.

The play opens with Horner returning from France due to what was likely a forced sojourn.⁸³ Known as a womanizer among his peers prior to his journey, Horner worries that the city's men may be a little too on guard around unmarried ladies. Instead, Horner conceives of a new target: the city's wives. They are an untapped market: though "you can hardly distinguish love from good breeding" among the city's "women of quality," he reasons, they "love the sport" of an illicit affair (1.1.186-189). Moreover, he tells his friend and confidant, Quack, their attention to "honor" is only a façade maintained because they are "chary of their reputations" (1.1.191-192). To seduce the wives, Horner devises a plan that thoroughly destroys his reputation as a womanizer with the city husbands: he has the Quack spread a rumor that he has become impotent due to a botched surgery for venereal disease: an "English-French disaster" (1.1.29). Meanwhile, he pretends now, out of spite, to hate the women he can longer enjoy. The ruse succeeds with both husbands and wives, but for different reasons. The men of the city regard Horner as a eunuch, wholly incapable of having sex with women. They—with the exception of Pinchwife—seek out the rake to keep company with their wives while they go about on business about the city. The wives, Horner leads on in private to think he is merely infertile and fully capable sexually. Horner thus convinces the wives that they can sleep with him without the fear of pregnancy, for them the most consequential and disclosing evidence of an affair. At the play's end, the husbands discover their wives at Horner's apartment, but are so greatly fooled by his deception that they, with the aid of

their wives, ultimately shout down the only man who does not fall for Horner's trick: Pinchwife.

Horner's clear preeminence over the play's husbands and wives has led critics to conclude that among the play's most primary critiques is its satirical representation of sexuality as a measure and exercise of power. Eve Sedgwick maintains that Wycherley asks us to consider the problematic nature of male homosocial relations when they are premised upon heterosexual prowess. Sedgwick points out that the play's husbands are trapped by an anxiety predicated on their self-worth; how well they can prove their dominance over their wives to each other. Sedgwick calls this behavior "routing [their] homosocial desire through women" (49). The men prove their prowess to each other by demonstrating their power over women, their own wives and those of others (49). Horner preys upon this desire even as he is implicated in its dynamics as the cuckolding male. By spreading word of his impotence, Horner diminishes himself as a sexual competitor while depicting himself as an ideal tool for securing women from other men.

Horner's plan is not without its problems. By adopting the same mindset—the desire to prove his superiority over other men by making the husband's possessive jealousy self-defeating—the rake inadvertently reveals his own flaws. Both Horner and the women he pursues are possessed of a singular sexual appetite. Horner's drive to prove "his sexist premise that all women are whores", Kachur asserts, reveals his inability to rise above his own sexual needs (178). Despite the moral superiority Horner displays in using the husbands' overprotective paranoia to fuel his seductions, he is often singled out in studies as a target for Wycherley's criticisms.⁸⁴ Rose Zimbardo argues **THAT** we should see him as a "satiric spokesman" who "draws our attention to the vice and

hypocrisy before us” and “in his own nature as well” (16). Susan Owen points out, “there is little inherent and certainly no moral difference between Pinchwife’s scheme to ensure marital fidelity by marrying a simple wife and Horner’s scheme [...] Horner is animalistic: his intimates frequently refer to him as ‘beast’ and ‘toad’”, labels, she notes, also attributed to Pinchwife, who is “a wild kind of beast” (48).

Horner’s influence over others fuels *Country Wife*’s critique of non-egalitarian relations between men and women. Neither Horner nor any of the play’s other men appear comfortable putting themselves on the same level as women and are therefore unable to achieve the mutual love and happy marriage we see in Dorimant and Harriet, let alone the latter pair’s comic vitality and economic success. Instead of striving for parity, the play’s men compete for sexual dominance in the manner Sedgwick describes (49).⁸⁵ The competitive environment the men create and the anxiety that enables it, result in discourse that routinely collapses the clarity of libertine language into obscured euphemisms. Without a companion and the subsequent dialectical engagement that arises from companionship, Horner fails to re-invigorate his society and never reforms.

Horner provides a satirical commentary on what happens when the rake becomes too preoccupied with economic competition and loses sight of the actual dialectical relations that drive the market. While Horner is unarguably successful in winning over the wives, he remains an outsider. Whereas other rakes re-invigorate their societies by cutting through the obfuscating decorum with wit and finding love with an equal, Horner’s wit only confuses and misleads the women he adores. While funny, Horner is meant to show, John Palmer observes, the problems of libertine “promiscuity” in the long run (qtd Hume 142). It is the old ethical and satirical topic of appetite run unchecked.

In *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England*, Lawrence Stone introduces the early modern idea of companionate marriage as a call for “equalizing relationships between husband and wife” (326). David Shumaway elaborates, adding that companionate marriage has “assumed friendship or affection rather than passion as its basis” (17). This “equality” is what we see between Dorimant and Harriet as neither tries to control the other and readily allows the other to speak. Their witty repartee depends on listening to what the other is saying.

This sort of equality is missing from *The Country Wife* in which all relationships are premised upon models of subservience in which men dictate women’s or each other’s actions. Sir Jaspar Fidget refuses to consider his wife’s initial objections to Horner. When she protests her husband’s choice to “leave us with a filthy man alone in his lodgings” (1.1.139-140), she is overrode by her husband, who deems it “a husband’s prudence to provide innocent diversion for a wife” (1.1.146-147). Jaspar’s substitution of “innocent” for what his wife terms “filthy” reveals his unwillingness to allow his wife an opinion on right and wrong. Horner plays upon this behavior to dupe Jaspar into standing guard outside the bedroom door while the rake sleeps with his wife. So secure is Jaspar in his belief that Horner is innocuous that he gaily brushes off Horner’s threat to “rifle” (4.3.140) Lady Fidget “roughly” (4.3.148), and we are left with the impression that even if Lady Fidget were to cry “rape,” Jaspar would pass it off as a joke.⁸⁶

Horner is by no means exempt from this heterosexual inequality of power. When Lady Fidget tries to bargain with Horner by requiring he “have a care of my dear honour” with her peers (4.3.46), Horner dismisses her request in a display of machismo. “Nay madam,” he declares, if “they shall prejudice your honour, I’ll prejudice theirs, and, to

serve you, I'll lie with 'em all" (4.3.72-74). Rather than concede to Lady Fidget's terms, Horner appeals to his own sexual superiority and resolves simply to "lie" with all of them so that no one can speak without fear of their own affairs becoming public. Horner awards Lady Fidget no equal consideration.

Without equal relations, the wit and vitality of the rake suffer. Horner's metaphorical wit frequently drops into euphemism rather than a coded and invigorating language of compatibility such as that shared by Dorimant and Harriet. This is particularly visible in *The Country Wife*'s famous "china" scene. Lady Fidget passes off a clandestine meeting to her husband as a business venture to "let me see" Horner's china (4.3.120). She then leaps into Horner's room and locks the door as he chases after with Jasper's consent. Jasper thinks it all harmless play on account of Horner's impotence. Lady Fidget emerges from the bedroom to tell her husband that she has been "toying and moyling [haggling], for the / pretti'st piece of China (4.3.207-208), and Squeamish, who has by this point arrived, asks for her own sample: I have never known you deny your China / before now" (4.3.215-216). Throughout, Horner, Lady Fidget, and Squeamish use the word "china" as a substitute for sex that they might speak about the encounter in front of Jasper, without his knowledge.

The scene's "china" discourse provides a representative sample of the play's competitive power relations and the way they undermine egalitarianism between the sexes. Most overtly, "china" symbolizes Horner's triumph over Sir Jasper. Not only does Horner's full knowledge of the word's meaning trump Jasper's naïveté, but the ladies' shared knowledge of the pun suggests that Jasper has been deliberately left out of the loop. He has been pushed aside by Lady Fidget in her desire to sleep with Horner, a

desire that Jaspar, by implication, cannot or will not satisfy. “China” is employed as a means for semantic domination; it becomes a marker of superiority for those who know its true meaning. We also cannot miss the conspicuous absence of typical marital fidelity in the scene.

This is not all that Horner and the ladies’ use of the word “china” tells us. The “china” exchange is premised upon a fiction, and while Lady Fidget delights in this particular fiction, and the power it gives her over her husband it is but one part of the greater ruse that Horner is pulling on Lady fidget and the other ladies. They pursue him only because he offers sex without its progenerative consequences, a premise that is itself false. Were pregnancy a factor, they might be more reluctant. When Horner substitutes china for sex, he does so to further his own deceptive agenda with the ladies. While his use is undeniably figurative, it possesses none of the truth that Dorimant and Harriet imbue their words with. At best, Horner’s “china” is a euphemism. There is no nuance in the rake’s and lady’s china.

The result is a form of asymmetrical commerce in which Horner, like the Jacobean gallants that preceded him, holds all the cards. Horner reveals the problems of the asymmetrical commercial model. Though Horner’s fiction makes him a valuable commodity to the wives, it also removes all bargaining in their encounters. He has only a fiction to lose and they everything. By the time they learn Horner is lying, it will be too late. They will be pregnant out of wedlock and infamous. Without any mutual risk, there can be no egalitarian relations. The women have nothing to leverage against him, which is what Lady Fidget woefully discovers in the previous passage when Horner pledges to sleep with her peers. Worse, since the women believe Horner’s infertility ruse, they think

they have no risk as well. There is nothing to cause the women to pause and re-think the long-term effects of their actions or even question Horner's motives. The rake is unstoppable and he never has need to reconsider his strategies for obtaining women. He never reflects and never reforms.

Wycherley leaves us a bitter commentary on the eventual end state of a society that privileges sexual domination, exploitation, and gratification over commerce. Horner never achieves wealth he might otherwise find with a wealthy heiress, never finds the delight that bargaining with a fiery woman can afford, and never is able to play, by gambling or by language, with a companion. Horner is a poor investor who offers nothing he values to others and it shows, because his investment affords no lasting rewards. Sir Jasper and Pinchwife have lost their wives to Horner, but even these women's affections will likely be temporary. Due to Horner's infamy as a eunuch, their reputations are not at risk if they are found to have spent time with him. Just as Horner will cast off Fidget when the relationship demands more than sex, so too will Fidget eventually gain another lover. She will, as she claims, "employ some other" man and Horner will be left bereft (2.1.652). The play ends without growth, social or economic.

Without risk or dialectical relations, a satirizing stasis and cynicism permeate *The Country Wife*. Without dialectical engagement, male-female relations are strictly hierarchical and non-egalitarian. Women have no agency except in deluding their husbands. There are also no commercial relations, only those in which Horner seizes or takes what he wants, and without them, there is no comic reinvigoration. Though the play ends with a satiric dance in which we laugh at the foolish cuckolds, it may as well end with a whimper.

When a partner is present, even the most transgressive rake can become a successful husband and entrepreneur whose commercial skill will preserve agency for both him and his wife. Willmore, the rake of Aphra Behn's *The Rover, or the Banish'd Cavaliers*, Part I (1677) oversteps decorum to a degree even greater than Horner. David Sullivan calls Willmore "over sexed" (335), a man who is "too free" for the society in which he lives (343). But while Willmore's contempt for decorum through much of the play leads him down rapacious and chaotically violent avenues, he ultimately, unlike Horner, is held in check by his business partner and later wife, Hellena.

The plot of *The Rover* involves several economic elements. There is Pedro's attempt to force his sister Florinda to marry a rich man without regard for her (antithetical) feelings. And there is the prominent courtesan, Angellica, that the play's men compete for. Additionally, many of the play's encounters between Willmore and his heiress love, Pedro's other sister Hellena, are commercial, in both the sense that we see Dorimant and Harriet call and raise each other in *The Man of Mode*, but also IN the ways they regard each other as economic equals and bargain. The play opens in the late 1650s during the citywide carnival masquerade in Spanish Naples. The Spanish Hellena has been slated to become a nun by her father and brother, Pedro. Meanwhile, Pedro tries to force Florinda to marry the rich Antonio instead of the man she actually loves, the penniless English cavalier, Belvile.

The two sisters sneak off to carnival and there encounter Belvile and his English friend Willmore, a Royalist Captain, who are ashore for the festivities. The encounter proves short-lived when Pedro arrives and the women flee. The men then wander out of curiosity over to the house of the expensive courtesan Angellica, who eventually falls

for the rake despite his inability to pay and invites him upstairs for a night of pleasure. Her one condition is that Willmore must promise faithfulness, a promise that he successfully evades with declarations of love.⁸⁷ Willmore, an inveterate rake and wandering rover, cannot be faithful. Except, of course, that he keeps returning to Hellena, which eventually leads to Angellica threatening to kill him with a pistol. Confronted, Willmore finally admits to the courtesan he can never love her and she storms off, leaving him free to pursue Hellena. Willmore finds in Hellena a woman who makes love the target for haggling and dialectical interaction, an ongoing project that they develop over time. With Angellica out of the picture, the two soon agree to marry, albeit with yet another bit of repartee over who takes the greater risk in doing so, and the play ends.

Scholarship finds the play to be about the role of monetary concerns in marriage and while few studies explicitly describe the play as being about commerce, they frequently end up tangentially incorporating ideas of exchange and the market in their discussions. Elin Diamond suggests that *The Rover* “thematizes the marketing of women in marriage and prostitution” (519). Pilar Dominguez argues that Behn’s plots frequently examine the “the way that money and property affect the position of wives and widows in the exchange market” (98). Susan Staves suggests that *The Rover* constantly reminds us that a woman’s status and worth, financially and otherwise, is dependent upon the “exclusivity” of the terms she presents (65). Margarete Rubik offers what is among the most explicit connections between Behn and commerce, observing that her comedies, and *The Rover* in particular, “abound in examples of sexually connoted mercantile terms to a degree that far exceeds their average use in Restoration comedy” (222).

Together these studies suggest that Behn's play engages the commercial interests of her time at a variety of levels thematically (Diamond), structurally (Dominguez), and linguistically (Staves). I suggest examining the play further to investigate the viability of contractual relations in the new commercialized age of England. Behn's play contrasts a contractual, legalistic model of marriage with a commercial version, emphasizing dialectical relations. Angellica tries to woo Willmore with the former and Hellena with the latter. Here, the focus is not on the marital vow since neither Willmore nor Hellena concede to marriage until the end of the play. Rather, it is the contours and dynamics of Willmore's relationship with Hellena which prompts and ensures his reform.

Angellica tries to get Willmore to agree to a contractual relationship similar to marriage but antithetical to the companionate union coming into vogue at the time of Behn's play. The courtesan insists that her and Willmore's relationship be defined by a *quid pro quo* exchange: "The pay, I mean, is but thy Love for mine" (2.2.418). Angellica's words propose a contract because they reduce the relationship to a promise, namely that Willmore will—is, in fact, obligated—to provide her "Love" so long as she does. She treats this exchange as being the status quo, unchanging in perpetuity, a contract. Her central complaint against Willmore is not that he does not love her, such as we might expect if she were simply yearning for his affection, but that he does not reciprocate the gift of her "Eternal rest, / my whole repose, my future joys, my Heart" with his love (4.2.232-233). Though Angellica asks for reciprocity, what she really demands is that Willmore enter into the same kind of static relationship that proves so destructive in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*. She wants a relationship whose rules will not change, and worse, whose rules cannot change. She does not want the dialectical

engagement of agents in a market but the subjection of marital agency to a rigid, inflexible contract as if their affair were a traditional marriage.

Unfortunately, what Angellica does not realize is that Willmore, as a rake, cannot ever be satisfied by such a restrictive and static model of contractual love, and he tells her as much: “If it were possible, I should ever be inclined to marry, it should be to be some kind young Sinner, one that has generosity [to give without reciprocity]” (4.2.450-451). He desires, “one that has Witt enough to Manage an intrigue of Love” and not, as Angellica does, the reduction of love to explicit conditions (4.2.452-453). The love he desires is one whose terms are adaptable and whose practice is labyrinthine. He cares more about the game and risks of love (its “intrigues”) than its certainty, the latter of which is the aspect that occupies Angellica’s mind.

Hellena offers Willmore a commercial union characterized by openness to change and ongoing negotiation. In stark contrast to the contractual relationship Behn renders with Angellica’s proposal, the nature of how the two relate changes from moment to moment and, most significantly with regard to her and Willmore’s sensibilities. It does not threaten to suppress either person’s agency. Hellena is much like Willmore. She, like him, chafes when men claim authority over her person, finances, or future. She is forward and speaks her mind. She delights in play, wit, and the give-and-take of bargaining. She loves a challenge such as that the seemingly faithless but playful Willmore offers.

Hellena is her own agent with her own agenda, and she will not simply give into Willmore unless he is willing to bargain and change. She wants a businessman who pursues his haggling with the same zeal that he pursues his goals. So intent is Hellena on maintaining her freedom that she will not allow any man to act against her wishes. No

matter what romantic promises he makes, she will not sleep with him on anything but her own terms. When he breaks his promises to her, she takes steps to discourage such acts in the future, calling him out on his lies and, on one occasion, even stalking him so that she might disrupt his other affairs. In doing, Hellena ensures that Willmore must continually reassess his strategy to win her. Eventually, the rake proves willing to risk himself and make the ultimate investment, marriage.

Unlike Angellica, Hellena allows Willmore to slight her, that is, break his promises, without serious reprisals. This is not to argue that she lets him break his word without consequences altogether, but she allows him second, third, and fourth chances. Moreover, she is tricky and disingenuous. “We are both of one humour”, she points out to the rake, “I am as inconstant as you” (3.1.165-167). Whereas Angellica is quick to declare her love as a condition for the union between her and the rake, Hellena allows Willmore to reinvest his spent efforts in a renewed pursuit of even greater risk. Willmore has only her demands and no guarantee that she will reciprocate his efforts. She is his match, the woman who accepts his inconstancy as just another risk in the uncertain process of marital investment. This element of constant risk in every encounter with opportunity keeps the rake in the “game” of love (2.1.14).

Hellena’s declaration that she is “as inconstant” as Willmore situates her as a challenge to his usually persuasive seductions and, in the context of the play’s frequently commercial concerns, hints at the economic strategy she employs to reform the rake. She will only be “as” inconstant as he. If Willmore acts devoted and constant, she does as well. If he then proves inconstant, she responds with a mocking quip or some form of inconstant one-upmanship. For example, when Willmore initially promises Hellena to

“keep your heart, and not bestow it between this and that” (1.1.225-226), she is constant and agrees to meet “after Dinner” (1.1.225-226). Yet when he stands her up, and she, in disguise, then spies Willmore leaving Angellica’s the next morning, she amuses herself at his expense (3.1.93).⁸⁸ Knowing that the rake desires to know her identity, Hellena briefly flashes him her face and promises to do so again, provided he admits what he did at the courtesan’s house (3.1.220). Hellena knows Willmore will lie, and he does (3.1.136-137).⁸⁹ She keeps her face hidden and ridicules his pledges of sincerity by repeating the boasts he made to his friends about the night. Each time Hellena meets the rake is a new chance for them to shape their future relations.

The dynamic, uncertain nature of Willmore and Hellena’s relations stands in contrast to the static, predictable relations we find in Wycherley’s *Country Wife*. Whereas Horner purposefully maintained static relations so as to ensure his own superior position, Willmore and Hellena’s mercurial model reflects a desire in both participants to achieve more egalitarian relations. Moreover, Horner’s encounters with Lady Fidget are marked by the imposition of his power over her, while Willmore and Hellena’s meetings are unpredictable and lively. The latter pair finds in their dialectical relations the very vigor that Horner’s entire cohort is unable to achieve.

Dubbed “tit for tat” by theorists today, Hellena’s “carrot and stick” strategy is the basis for effective commerce, because it promotes the dialectical structures characteristic of haggling (Johnson 21n 27). Unlike a contract, which requires that future interactions retain the requirements of the contract, tit for tat allows for future revision. Each new encounter is approached as a new opportunity. Players are allowed the chance to reflect and change strategies or maintain them based upon the failure or success of a previous

round. In short, tit for tat, like haggling, allows for growth, as each iteration brings the players closer to a profitable arrangement. When Willmore is rebuffed by Hellena, he is prompted to re-think his strategy and propose a new, supposedly more viable, offer to her, and he is encouraged to continue being faithful when this makes Hellena more amiable. A brief survey-encounters between the two in the play reveals not only this pattern of give-and-take but, more importantly, a series of distinctive moments that, when sequenced, show the gradual but definite progress Willmore makes as an investor. Over time, he begins to value the long-term gains that marriage with Hellena will provide.

At first, Willmore is cautious, unwilling to risk his future freedom on the uncertainties of a long-term relationship. He, like Dorimant, is unwilling to invest his time and affection in one woman on the gamble she will meet his need for play and wit over the long term. Pursuing one woman is a courtship, a process, it may be recalled from Harriet's comments in *Mode*, which is highly scrutinized by other women, who care little for a rake who pays his favors to others. Willmore tries to avoid such singular relations, and their consequences, by refusing to offer women any personal investment at all. When he first encounters Hellena in her gypsy disguise, Willmore refuses to even give her a coin "for kindness" (1.1.136-137) for his fortune despite earlier stating his desire to "crosse their [the gypsies] hands" with said coin to hear his fortune (1.1.123-124). Instead, he demands she accept his "heart" (1.2.140). Hellena reciprocates Willmore's refusal with one of her own: she belittles the "Inconstant *English* heart" he provides "as little worth stealing as your purse" (1.1.140-141). Hellena's deflection is more than simple refusal. She communicates that if he wishes to earn her love he will need to offer her something of more worth than just his affection: betrothal. The effects of Hellena's

refusal are immediate: Willmore's next words are more cooperative in nature. Instead of demanding, Willmore asks Hellena, "prithee dear Creature to let me know quickly when, and where I shall begin to set a helping hand" (1.1.151-153). While by no means a drastic change in behavior from his previous attitude—Willmore still urges Hellena to answer "quickly"—his evolution has been set in motion.

It takes more than a little convincing. Later in the play, Willmore asks Hellena to "witness" the biblical story of "Jeptha's Daughter" as an exemplum for why she should sleep with him (1.2.167). In the story, Jeptha promises to sacrifice the next thing to come out of his house if God will provide him victory over the Ammonites. He is victorious, but the next thing out his door is his daughter. She requests two months to mourn dying a maid, and she is then sacrificed. Willmore's impatience, however, is contrary to Hellena's insistence on marriage. She therefore appeals to the rake's love of a challenge and trumps his interpretation, conceding, tongue in cheek, that Jeptha makes for "a very good Text", and requests two months to "Console herself" before answering his question (1.2.168-170).

Hellena's response is more than a mere refusal; she is pointing out an unacknowledged truth: a virgin noblewoman who sleeps with him sacrifices her virtue. Yet what is most important here is that she expresses this denial in the language of their game, the witty and allusive language of rakes. Her question solicits an answer and the game continues, allowing him the opportunity to provide a new offer. At first, it appears Willmore is learning nothing. He demands, "I'm impatient.—thy Lodging sweetheart, thy Lodging!" (1.1.185-186). A short time later, something has clearly changed. The play shifts away from their conversation but it is clear the game continues. When again we

hear them speaking, we see a change in Willmore's behavior. He appears more open to her requests: "Still in this habit you say?—and after Dinner at this place" (1.1.223-224). Once he agrees to "keep your heart, and not bestow it between this and that" (1.1.225-226), we learn that Hellena agrees to meet "after Dinner" (1.1.225-226). It is reasonable to speculate that Hellena continued her strategy given that her stubbornness is on par with his. If Willmore is more accepting of her wishes it is likely that he, at some point, alighted on this as a more successful strategy.

Hellena's actions thus begin to foster changes in Willmore's behavior. Her playful shaming of him outside Angellica's residence is a further application of her strategy; coyly leading him on, mixing flirtatious desire with the cold reality that lying will only hurt his chances with her. Later, he and Angellica have a chance encounter in the market, but while Willmore is as charming and flattering as ever, his body language and attitude suggest a change. Stage directions describe him as "impatient to be gone" from her presence. He worries about missing for a second time, "my Assignation with my Gipsie" (4.2.300). When Hellena arrives on the scene dressed as a page and attempts to disrupt the meeting, Willmore ultimately chooses faithfulness to her over Angellica (after a brief interim of play), and even hints at a willingness to marry his witty saboteur. Importantly, Willmore does this with full knowledge that the page beside him is Hellena; he willingly provides Hellena the faithfulness she requires of him, thereby participating in commerce with her without reluctance for the first time in the play. Willmore and Hellena's relations following the rake's rejection of Angellica are very different from their earlier encounters.

The play's final scene finds the two bargaining over the risk and rewards of marriage. Their haggling achieves more than simply coming to acceptable terms of marriage. It transforms their marriage from a static, economic arrangement to a dynamic, evolving investment with continually compounding rewards. The key to this transformation is the role that consent plays in ensuring their marriage contract is perpetually open to revision. With "consent," Willmore allows for something that Horner does not: he allows Hellena the freedom to accede or decline his offers. Unlike earlier in the play when Willmore's efforts were characterized by belligerence, in this final scene he lets Hellena decide, and it makes all the difference. We are left not with an age of declining rewards such as we see in *The Country Wife* but one full of potential and future investment. As the play ends, we cannot help but feel that Willmore and Hellena's wedding will be the first of many investments the pair make. They are investors at heart unafraid to take their futures in their own hands and make a profit.

In the play's final scene, Willmore and Hellena employ the typical wit of the rake and his partner. At first Willmore seems to be reiterating his desire for sex, but there is one crucial difference: he approaches the encounter as an exchange whose terms are negotiable. In an uncharacteristic submission (so far as his previous actions in the play are concerned), Willmore allows Hellena to control the conversation and asks for a monogamous relationship. When Hellena begins by asking him, "Wou'd you be a Faithful Friend, now if a Maid shou'd trust you?" (5.1.390), Willmore answers "yes": "For a *Friend* [emphasis mine] I cannot promise [...] thou art of a form so Excellent a Face and Humour, too good for cold dull Friendship" (5.1.392-393). Even as the rake refuses to "promise" to remain faithful to Hellena as his friend, he subtextually implies

that he will promise, because Hellena is something more (“too good”) than a friend to him. This is what Angellica wanted but was unable to get from him. Unlike Angellica, Hellena bargains. When Hellena tells him she will continue to flaunt decorum and stalk him, “to find out all your haunts, to raile at all that Love you, till I have made you love only me” (5.1.396-398), Willmore makes a second uncharacteristic move: he asks what Hellena will trade him in return his for faithfulness. “Hast thou no better quality, to recommend thyself by?” he asks, to which she curtly responds, “Faith none Captain” (5.1.399-400). What Hellena offers Willmore is, of course, the correct answer. He does not desire a woman who will concede anything. He wants a challenge as much as she, “one I dare [risk] trust upon the wing [like a falcon], that whil’st she’s kind will come to the Lure” (5.1.406-407).

Willmore and Hellena’s final discussion is, like Dorimant and Harriet’s discussion of the country, only a further attempt at play; it is clear that they have already reached a point of agreement. He likes having to risk his “trust” upon Hellena, since he knows that “whil’st she’s kind” she will come back. His promise to be monogamous with her “who is more than a friend” makes his subsequent marital objections somewhat superfluous as it is Hellena’s willingness to debate him that he finds so attractive. He does not further the haggling to win her love, but to enjoy the experience of bargaining with his ideal love. The rake’s declaration, “to have the pleasure of working that great Miracle of making a Maid a Mother” (5.1.427-428) is like Dorimant’s demand for Harriet to smile, a satirical request that deliberately invokes the contractual traditions they both despise. When she objects, he is quick to concede: “I see there’s no way to conquer good

Nature”—“good” because Hellena allows him to retain his freedom—“but by yielding”, by marrying.

The negotiations between Willmore and Hellena in the final scene have received considerable critical attention, most frequently for the degree of autonomy Hellena demonstrates in being able to bargain for herself. Peggy Thompson observes that Hellena’s behavior is historically exceptional since, “most women” of the period “were ill prepared to bargain on their own behalf, either because of ignorance or because of social and religious pressure” (72). Why Hellena is able to argue at all, Anderson asserts, is because her breech role—she is still in the page disguise she uses to waylay Angellica—grants her access to masculine discourse (17). While a page, she can take on the “public agency afforded by the masculine mobility and freedom of voice while avoiding the appearance of being inappropriate” to others (17). Whatever the reason, Hellena is able to control her own destiny by negotiating with Willmore (Arena 399).

Additionally, the playful quality afforded by the dialectical bargaining process functionally allows the two to deliver serious criticisms of marriage while attempting to continue their game of one-upmanship. Because every answer invites a response—a counterbid—the conversation is instilled, Bolam argues, with a “form of plain speaking” not otherwise granted in marriage considerations. Both are able to confront practices typical in traditional marriages that suppress wifely agency to her domestic duties, namely what Hellena eloquently calls, “a cradle full of noise and mischief” (5.1430). At the same time, the ludic, almost flippant attitude Willmore employs is exactly what Hellena finds attractive. He will not be succumb to the static formalities and expectations

typical in contractual marriages and regards the entire process with a healthy dose of cynicism.

Warren Chernaik proposes that Willmore and Hellena's dialectical interactions herald a kind of marriage that "envisages the possibility of a relationship between men and women not based on ownership or domination", i.e. a marriage of companionship (205). I propose Willmore and Hellena also model a new marital relationship based upon an ideal business relationship. In doing so, they articulate a form of love whose expression avoids the statically contracted terms that make up Angellica's arguments and the implicit patriarchal mechanisms of subservience afforded by arranged marriages. For Willmore and Hellena, marriage will not be static and unchanging but ripe with possibility because they recognize that the greatest profits come through entrepreneurship: embracing the risks, haggling, and thrills of the market, not acquisition or setting terms. Willmore is no longer a rake: he embraces Hellena's terms.

When Willmore and Hellena accept each other's hand in marriage, they re-contextualize the demands of their former debate as conditions in a contract. English legal culture during the Restoration did not require a written document for marriage; verbal affirmation was enough. By pledging themselves to each other, the pair became married and the terms they debated as pre-requisites for that marriage took on legal standing and became binding.

Willmore and Hellena's haggling showcases a device (the contract) that would become commonplace in eighteenth-century drama. So influential is the contract on eighteenth-century drama that Lauren Caldwell suggests that plays of the long eighteenth century "wrap the law so densely into their plots that comic resolution is impossible until

a legal solution is negotiated” (186). While the marriage plot remains popular throughout the later century, it is the process of contracting a marriage that inevitably “*is the plot*”, Caldwell continues. At the time of *The Rover*’s production, this movement was just getting started, and Behn’s play and the plays that feature rakes prove a useful means of understanding its commercial origins. However, before returning to *The Rover*, it is beneficial to gain a better understanding of the importance of the contract in comedies of the long eighteenth century and why it is so influential. To gain this understanding, I turn to William Congreve’s play of 1700, *The Way of the World*.

Taking much of its plot from Ben Jonson’s *Epicene* (1609), and appearing onstage during the last gasps of Restoration satirical comedy, Congreve’s play serves as a vital bridge connecting the Renaissance to modern drama. Scholars like Richard Braverman find the play a cavern of delights because “at its deepest level” the play preserves “the sweeping economic and social changes of the seventeenth century” (133). Additionally, *The Way of the World* marks the transition of the English dramatic tradition from the satiric to the sentimental mode (Davis 521). While the rake continues to appear in plays after *Way of the World*, he is no longer the sexually robust and witty ladies’ man that Dorimant and Willmore epitomize. Instead, Julie Peters explains, he becomes “witty ladies tea-table coxcombs” more often the subject of mockery than the mocker (24).

The fourth act of *Way of the World* contains a famous proviso scene in which two lovers, the rake Mirabell and his beloved Millamant, pit their agency against the relentless authority of the legal word.⁹⁰ For cultural critics, the proviso scene marks the turning point when print begins to eclipse drama in the popular mind. While plays like *The Rover* (1677) and the much earlier *Bartholomew Faire* (1614) by Ben Jonson deal

with contracts long before Congreve ever takes up the idea, it is *Way of the World*, Vivian Davis observes, that is among the first to make a contract the primary focus of the play's comic impulse (521). Additionally, portrayal of the marriage contract and the attitudes surrounding it in *Way of the World* was, she continues, to have many imitators in the eighteenth century (521).

The scene depicts Mirabell and Millamant debating the increasingly absurd terms under which either will submit to marriage. Eventually, the two submit to marry but under curious conditions: neither approves of the other's "horrid [...] odious provisos" (4.5.121-122). Of the two sets of conditions, Mirabell's are the most overtly legalistic and excessive. Mirabell prefaces each of his provisos with legal terms like "item", "article", and "*imprimis*". He demands that Millamant be thoroughly submissive and domestic. He demands she must, "restrain yourself to native and simple tea-table drinks [...] on no account you encroach upon the men's prerogative, and presume to drink healths" (4.5.107-113). But Millamant is by no means an easy sell for the rake, J. L. Styan explains,

She submits by hardly seeming to give way at all, speaking an extraordinarily long-drawn-out, hesitant, reluctant, fastidious, and yet sublimely confident, teasing and provoking affirmative, keeping Mirabell on tenterhooks to the last (197).

Though Millamant does agree to marriage, exactly what she agrees to and the authority of the contract she and Mirabell enter into is in doubt.

The intense scrutiny that Congreve unleashes on the marriage contract can be traced back to earlier Restoration drama. J. L. Styan finds its first full expression in John

Dryden's tragicomedy, *Secret Love* (1667), but observes that the form gains considerable development in Restoration comedy (Styan 194). By no means is the marriage contract as commonplace a device in seventeenth-century drama as it becomes in the eighteenth century, but characters do frequently try to enact contract-like conditions on each other with different degrees of success. Harriet does much the same thing to Dorimant in *Mode* that Hellena does to Willmore: impose conditions. Melantha attempts to impose "French" conditions on Palamede in Dryden's *Marriage ala Mode* (1673), and Lady Fidget's central weakness is that she fails to impose conditions on Horner in *The Country Wife*.

When Mirabell and Millamant respond with ambivalence to the idea of a marriage contract, they express the uncertainty of libertine playwrights striving to find a new model for marriage that allows for what Caldwell terms, "a contractual formulization of the erotic relationship" (202). The central problem of contracts, Caldwell explains, is that they rarely can account for "the unpredictability of experience" (198). To provide for future security, they lock down agency and make it subject to the explicit wording of the contract rather than the characters of those involved. Ultimately, a legal contract is a "tool for managing trust"; that is, a contract precludes as faulty the bonds of love and affection that libertinism promotes as an ideal for marriage (Caldwell 202). They want the legal, institutional recognition of love as a basis for marriage, without also evacuating agency to the questionable authority of the written word.

The commercial haggling that Restoration playwrights like Behn depict is a direct response to the problems posed by written contracts. It preserves agency by awarding each participant an equal say in debating and forming the conditions for marriage. In this kind of situation, consent, and not contractual authority, is the most vital concern, since

consent allows no equality of authority between the sexes. Therefore, Behn proposes a new kind of contract whose sole condition is consent. Hellena only truly demands one thing for her marriage: “’Tis but getting my Consent, and the Business is soon done” (5.1.456-457). Willmore demands nothing, choosing instead to “yield” (5.1.480). By limiting their conditions to consent, Willmore and Hellena establish their relationship as one in which authority rests not in the contract itself but in the agency of the participating parties. The contract only exists so long as both members consent to its existence. What terminates the contract is not the betrayal of overly specific provisos but the choice of one or the other persons to no longer consent to be married. Agency is preserved and the state of their marriage remains open for future bargaining.

This is what we see in *The Way of the World*: the contract specifies a business arrangement and ensures its future by providing institutional recognition of marriage and a legal recourse. As was the case with Hellena, Millamant only makes one overarching demand: “I’ll never marry, unless I am first made sure of my will and pleasure” (4.5.25-26). All her other requirements, “to lie abed in a morning as long as I please” (4.5.35-36); “I won’t be called names” (4.5.40); the “liberty to pay and receive visits to and from whom I please” (4.5.57-58), and so on, are only elaborations on the initial condition. Mirabell also makes only a single demand: “that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?” (4.5.73-75).⁹¹ Though Mirabell follows his demand with a number of provisos asking Millamant “admit no sworn confidante” (4.5.78); avoid “all strait-lacing [and] squeezing for a shape” (4.5.103); and, “on no account you encroach upon the men’s prerogative, and presume to drink healths” (4.5.112-113), to name a few. These too only elaborate specifics. What we are left with is

a contract that has only two conditions: 1) Millamant be made sure of her “will and pleasure”, and 2) Mirabell be not “beyond measure enlarged into a husband.”

The core of the contract is Millamant’s demand that she be allowed her will, her consent. Mirabell’s demand, meanwhile, is that he minimize the traditional role of the husband as the arbiter of his wife’s actions. The result is a contract that is predicated upon consent just like that of Hellena and Willmore. The freedom to haggle and revise their marital relationship in the future is preserved. The pair subverts the contractual authority that marriages of convenience rely upon to enforce patriarchal, economic, and class demands.

Way of the World is built on a foundation years in the making. The contracts are indicative of a fundamental shift in the English consciousness at the turn of the eighteenth century. Everyday life began to be viewed as an economy, and relationships as instances of commercial trade. If we are to speak of the Restoration rake, it should be not only of his sexual rapacity and eventual reform, but of his skills in the market and the agency he therein preserves. As the seventeenth century comes to a close and the English dramatic tradition marches forward, it does so with a new, vital commercial aspect: marriage and life are but businesses, and our heroes, entrepreneurs.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The end result of dramatists' commercial efforts over the course of the seventeenth century was a new sovereignty of the individual. Jacob Burckhardt famously identified the Renaissance as the birthplace of the modern individual, a person who remains autonomous, capable of free will, no matter the situation: "In the face of all objective facts, of laws and restraints of whatever kind, he retains his own feelings of sovereignty" (279). This is not to say the sixteenth century individual was necessarily unique. Stephen Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-fashioning* finds an acute anxiety in Renaissance individuals like Sir Thomas More and numerous poetic and dramatic works in which the uniqueness of the individual is depicted as being under attack from external threats to conform. To stave off these perceived threats, individuals enacted a variety of "self-fashioning" efforts, and by the early 1600s, the term "individual" was confirmed as being "distinct" from others (*OED* 4a). The efforts of seventeenth century English dramatists helped further expand the idea of the individual by regarding the status of a person within a system, namely, commerce. Through their efforts, the individual becomes a role to be revered for its power.

Over the course of the seventeenth century, the individual began to be imbued with autonomy and economic control in commercial situations. The concept of the individual became more and more commonly regarded as a personal property—a commodity we privately own—open to commercial efforts. Today, most of us recognize this idea from its philosophical expression in the second of John Locke's 1689 *Two Treatises of Government*. But, as early as *City Comedy*, we already see dramatists

beginning to explore the nuances of the same kinds of ideas that will later prove pivotal in Locke's treatises and the American and French Revolutions they inform. These dramatists' inspiration? London's booming economy.

Dramatists of the seventeenth-century found themselves in a world that was becoming more interconnected as the country's economic boom began to filter outward from its markets and into everyday life. From City Comedy to tragedies like Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, from the tabloidesque drolls of the late Caroline era to Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes* during the Commonwealth, and throughout the many works of the Restoration, playwrights scrutinized the commercial relationships that arose from growing trade, symbolic currencies, and increasingly popular mercantilist ideologies. By no means were their depictions unilaterally positive or negative. More often they were somewhere between laudatory and condemning.

While City Comedy on the whole does examine, as Brian Gibbons suggests, the "aggression, ruthless materialism, aspiration, and anarchy [...] which money unlooses", it awards equal attention to the chains of dependency and obligation that begin to proliferate amongst the London populace as the city continues its growth as a European trade center. In the early stages of London's boom, City Comedy playwrights display a deep suspicion of commercial success, particularly the connections the market forges between agents, sometimes even without their knowledge. These connections are at the heart of popular plays like the "directional" works of Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (1604), Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605); and Dekker and Webster's response, *Northward Ho* (1605), Thomas Middleton's

A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1613), John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611), and Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625).

City Comedy plays like Chapman, Marston, and Jonson's *Eastward Ho*, and Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* display deep suspicions regarding commercial successes that are rooted in the connections the market forms between agents. *Eastward Ho* clearly mocks the paranoia of those who reject England's burgeoning market lifestyle by making the goldsmith Touchstone's moral obligation toward his apprentice the basis for his forgiveness of Quicksilver's debt and subsequent release, actions that unintentionally reward the would-be gallant for his wasteful behavior. The usurer Security inadvertently trades agency for satisfaction when the lender's "hunger" for property leads him to depend upon the gallant. Yet as much as the play ridicules Touchstone and punishes Security, it does not provide its hero with any sort of moral authority. As the play ends, we have no indication that Quicksilver will actually give up his wasteful and riotous lifestyle; more wealth simply means more collateral to secure more loans for gambling and investment.

In Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, England's burgeoning interconnectedness is a cause for contempt and cheer. The overall message is one of moral retribution through commerce, but, as in *Eastward Ho*, the champion(s) turn out to be somewhat less than moral. Though Sir Walter is quick to liken Allwit to a "usurer with forfeited lordships" since the latter preys upon him for his money, the knight does not think unkindly of the links he has forged by paying Allwit to prostitute his wife (1.2.94-95). Allwit has come to depend upon the knight to maintain his house and the growing number of (illegitimate) children he watches over for Sir Walter, a fact that Allwit readily

admits (1.2.12-56). To Sir Walter's mind, Allwit's dependency upon him makes his lover's husband a "slave" to be ordered about (1.2.105). In the context of this study, Sir Walter is much like Security in *Eastwood Ho* in that he behaves as if he thinks that he controls Allwit's agency, because he controls the means of Allwit's livelihood. But this, as we know, is not true, because Sir Walter turns out to depend as much on the Allwits as he thinks they depend upon him; he cannot help but pay the price for Mrs. Allwit and soon he becomes destitute. Sir Walter, the wasteful adulterer, is thrown in debtor's prison and the Allwits, the adulterous entrepreneurs, prepare to leave for a better quality of life in the Strand. Commerce, the play suggests, entraps as much as it empowers.

Tragic Jacobean sentiments in the early century were as ambivalent as those of City Comedy when it came to judging the merits of connectivity through commerce. The figure of the prostitute, real and imagined, was regularly employed by playwrights like William Shakespeare (*Antony and Cleopatra*) and John Webster (*The White Devil*) as an icon of entrepreneurial might. In Jacobean tragedy, noblewomen trick those who think them prostitutes into providing the very conditions the women need to assert their will over themselves, but not without dire consequences. In order to play upon men's transactional preconceptions about women, characters like Cleopatra and Vittoria must first appear to outwardly perform that role. That is, by making the men think the women are dependent upon their buyers, they tacitly bind their fates to that stereotype. Cleopatra dies in her own manner, by her own hand, at a time of her choosing, and even in death appears to transcend her prostitute image, she is still an object, a tool that Caesar employs to craft his legacy. Vittoria presents a spirited and strong defense, but she is still punished as a prostitute by a court who refuses to think of her as anything else.

As England moved beyond its initial economic boom and into the new market for printed drama, its attitudes towards commercial connectivity began to improve. The publication of Ben Jonson's *Workes* created new forms of income for playwrights and their publishers that would come to replace the stage when the Commonwealth ban took effect in 1642. Without the stage, the playwrights of the Interregnum like Thomas Killigrew, James Shirley, and Margaret Cavendish each depended on the printed dramatic market to some degree. Killigrew was a royalist playwright and spent much of the interregnum in Exile despite the popular sales of his works in London. James Shirley's dramatic career was largely during the Caroline era that preceded the ban, but his reputation continued to prosper due to four published sets of collected works in 1646, 1653, 1655, and 1659, and numerous published poems. Margaret Cavendish was well-supplied monetarily and had no need to publish for financial reasons; for her, the print market was a powerful means for agency in a field otherwise dominated by men.

I have shown how playwrights like these three, men and women alike, drew upon the rapport print coalesced between audience, (printed) performance, and play to promote new ideas of English drama. No one drew upon these relationships more than William Davenant and his *The Siege of Rhodes*. In a stark contrast to the commercial ambivalence that characterizes the plays of the early century, Davenant's preface to *Siege* urges readers to yoke themselves even more closely to the stage by investing in his production's success and, in doing so, the quality of the English heroic tradition it would manifest.

Dramatic attitudes concerning commercial interconnectivity found their greatest boost during the Restoration, strongly bolstered by the renewed enthusiasm for the stage

in the wake of *The Siege of Rhodes* and the growing popularity of mercantilism at the national level. To many Restoration minds, commerce was laudable in all its forms exactly because of the relations it engenders. The world of the Restoration playwrights was saturated with ideologies of trade and the necessity of commerce. It is not surprising to find, in this environment, a play like Dryden's *All for Love* whose preface claims to imitate Shakespeare but whose form far more closely resembles the commercially popular closet dramas of Dryden's age, specifically Samuel Daniel's closet play, *The Tragedie of Cleopatra* (1594).

Restoration works frequently display an acute consciousness of the ways that commerce binds people together. John Dryden's oeuvre--his essays, poems, prefaces, and plays--are permeated by commercial terms and references. The dedicatory letter of *All for Love* to the Earl Danby, for instance, finds Dryden urging England to develop its commerce and industry rather than its colonial efforts, "an island being more proper for commerce and for defence, than for extending its dominions on the Continent" (18-20).

All dramatic prefatory and ending material regardless of time period tend to make some plea to audience members for favorable reception, because all plays do depend upon that reception to some degree for success. However, few are as explicit in the underlying reciprocity afforded by these relations as the majority of Restoration playwrights, Dryden and Behn in particular. At the ends of many of Behn's plays, we find references to connectivity in some manner. The printed edition of *Rover* contains an epilogue in which the playwright addresses concerns that her play might be too much like its parent play, Killigrew's *Thomoso*. That Behn feels compelled to respond to these fears in the market reveals her own feelings of dependency on the sales and favorable reception

of her plays by others. The epilogue to her play *The Lucky Chance* (1686) mourns the interdependency of playwright, play, and theater-goer even as it entreats audiences to pay for another show:

When we fail, what will the poets do?

They live by us as we are kept by you:

When we disband, they no more plays will write,

But make lampoons, and libel ye in spite

[...] I hope these weighty considerations will

Move ye to keep us together still

[...] If not, th' aforesaid ills will come, and we must part (3-39).

Behn's epilogue accepts the realities of commercial interrelations with practical, if witty, aplomb. Yes, she openly admits to readers, she and the theater do depend upon their customers to "live," but so do those readers depend upon them. If playwrights cannot be maintained by the stage, they will turn their writing skills to another profitable niche of the market: writing lampoons of customers' private affairs and embarrassments. When sordid affairs do not exist, they may as well make up some to "spite" audience members for not supporting the theater.

What fascinated playwrights in the Restoration most about the interwoven threads of London commerce were the consequences of becoming so interdependent, namely the egalitarianism that arises between agents as a result of a commercial exchange. At the heart of all exchange, it will be recalled, is the fundamental assumption that all parties are allowed an equal opportunity to modify its conditions. It is this egalitarianism that allows commerce to be so liberating for those otherwise oppressed.

To recognize that particular social relations are commercial, as Quicksilver and Cleopatra do, is to level the playing field, so to speak, by enabling a situation—i.e. exchange—in which all parties have the same opportunity to contribute to the final outcome. This is why Quicksilver's commercial actions are so necessary; he has no means otherwise to challenge the dictates of Touchstone, who controls his coin, or of Security, who controls his clothes and courtesan. Only by forcing them to engage with him in commerce can Quicksilver obtain liberation. Similarly, Cleopatra, a woman in a patriarchal culture, a political foe, and a disempowered monarch of a conquered country, must turn to commerce if she is to get Caesar to provide her what she desires.

This is not to argue that Quicksilver and Cleopatra's actions provide in any way a fair approach to commerce. I have already discussed in their respective chapters the extent to which these characters employ asymmetrical trade behaviors. Rather, it is to observe that Touchstone, Security, and Caesar have as much of an opportunity to shape their transactions as those they seek to subject, provided they know they are involved in a commercial situation in the first place. Security and Caesar recognize they are involved in a transaction but not the true extent of what is on the table for trade. Touchstone does not even recognize his situation.

For William Davenant and the Restoration playwrights that come after him, commerce's egalitarian aspects are among its most laudable features. Since Davenant's goal with *The Siege of Rhodes* was to pull the population together in support of a national literary form, commercial relations' tendency to collapse differences between class, politics, and even religion made it a useful means for advancing his goal. Moreover, by presenting *Siege* first to the city's markets, Davenant ensured that his masque was

exposed to a broad spectrum of London's socio-economic strata. As impressive as Davenant's efforts were, it is to Restoration drama and its new model of marriage that we must turn for the century's most thorough embrace of the egalitarianism that commerce enables along with its other effects.

I have argued that Restoration playwrights commonly lauded the entrepreneur, but this, perhaps, does not go far enough. They elevated the commercial situation as an ideal mode of living, a lifestyle in which a people are drawn together and made equal through commerce. The rake's trajectory from outsider to insider (excepting Horner, who remains an outsider) is hard to overlook, and it is the rake's haggling with his equally witty love that is the cause. As much as we are tempted to regard the rake as a freewheeler for his gambling ways, a closer examination of a character like Dorimant reveals that he is as much an investor as he is a gambler. The two ideas are closely related. Gambling is a game and investing is game-like. However, gambling presupposes liquid gains, money and such, whereas investing suggests more permanent capital that will continue to reward the investor. While businessmen value monetary gains from investment, the best gains are things like property or stock value that will continue to provide additional gains in the future. Similarly, when a rake like Dorimant, Mirabell, or Willmore pursues his lover, he does so out of a desire to acquire someone, of worth over the long-term, a woman whose estate and character are worth extended time and effort and that will continue to sustain him for years to come.

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the case of Willmore, who must choose between two lovers, the courtesan Angellica Bianca and the young heiress, Hellena. Each woman provides Willmore a particular kind of gain. Angellica promises the rake love and

ready coin but little wit or resistance. She capitulates almost immediately to Willmore's seductions and we are left to wonder if, in being so ready to provide her all to him, she has anything left to offer him. The stakes of this gamble are not particularly high for Willmore. Angellica makes herself available for free; the rake must make little to no personal investment and he thus has little to lose. His winnings are represented as coin. This coin he readily spends not on investments but pleasure, and it is quickly gone. To Willmore, Angellica seems little more than a night of pleasure, a gamble that, once won, offers him little incentive to repeat the performance.

Hellena offers the rake love, marriage, an estate, and a companion and competitor. She does not capitulate to Willmore's witty tongue, and requires him to labor for her attention. By doing so, Hellena ensures her status as an investment. While the rewards she offers are grand, the conditions Willmore must meet to gain her require him to devote much time and effort, time and effort he cannot spend chasing other women. In the case of Angellica, Willmore would only lose the short span of time he took to convince the courtesan, but with Hellena, that time is far more. Therefore, Hellena will not only reward the rake better than Hellena, her value, measured in time and effort, is far more than that of the courtesan. To lose Hellena means he also never gains back the hours he spends pursuing her. The play has real consequences.

The commercial means that Dorimant and Harriet and Willmore and Hellena employ to find happiness, like haggling and investment, are indicative of the established ideology of the market that, by the Restoration, was the dominant paradigm for individualism in English comedic drama. At the beginning of the century, gallants like Quicksilver, Witgood, and Frolick are lonely outsiders who are brought back into society

through their commercial acts. By the Restoration, this has changed. The rakish couples of the 1660s onward are patriotic insiders (from an economic perspective) that grow and secure wealth within English hands. It is not by chance that all rakes are English and royalist. Though the women they court may at times be from other nations (Hellena, for instance, is Spanish), all wealth and property end under the English control that repaired the turbulence of the Interregnum and that ultimately will become the wheel around which the next century will turn. These rakes are England's champions, individuals who know the worth of themselves and of others, and the way to commercial success.

England's eighteenth century was a time of colonial dissent and prosperity fueled by its great economic engine, the Bank of England. In 1694, William III approved the charter for Bank of England, a lending bank at the national level. Able to raise money and spread debt across its many shareholders, the Bank represented a level of lending security never before seen (Low and Marshall 63). The Bank transformed ideas about international finance and would soon become the primary financial powerhouse of the English empire in the eighteenth century (Low and Marshall 63).

The Bank of England's creation allowed the country to take on a role previously allotted to the individual in commerce; England could, and often did, invest and sell its name to others as a product, literally in some cases. On its banknotes, the Bank took as its symbol the figure of the Roman goddess Britannia, long understood to represent England. The inclusion of Britannia on the farthing demonstrates the growing influence of commerce in constructing English identity. Its close-proximity to the king's visage is indicative of the growing power of commerce slowly displacing the king's primacy as the country's national icon. The complete absence of the king's image on the institution's

banknotes, a form of credit only inaugurated with the Bank's creation, suggests a total displacement, in which the power of the English throne has been eclipsed by the power of English finance. Commerce, it suggests, was England's new identity.

Through these banknotes, England commodified itself, and in so doing, continued the legacy begun almost a hundred years earlier by *City Comedy*. While economics may theorize, calculate, and record financial ideas, it was the stage that most experimented with them in the seventeenth century. In *Witgood*, *Cleopatra*, *Bellafront*, *Mistress Quickly*, *Davenant*, *Ianthe*, *Cavendish*, *Jonson*, *Dorimant*, *Willmore*, *Sir Anthony Love*, the would be apprentice-turned gallant Quicksilver, and all the rest, England embraced the commercialism of the century and held it close to witness from within the alluring pitfalls and glorious achievements of the English entrepreneur.

CHAPTER VII

NOTES

¹ Qtd. in Susan Wiseman, *Drama and Politics in the English Civil War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998).

² C.H. Firth, R.S. Rait (eds), "February 1648: An Ordinance for the utter suppression and abolishing of all Stage-Plays and Interludes, within the Penalties to be inflicted on the Actors and Spectators therein expressed," *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum, 1642-1660*, 1070-1072. *British History Online*.

³ Hope Tisdale, "The Process of Urbanization," *Social Forces* 20.3 (1942): 311-316, Web, *JSTOR*, 27 Jan 2012.

⁴ Brian Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton*, (New York: Methuen, 1968); L. C. Knights, *Drama & Society in the Age of Jonson*, (London: Chatto & Windus, 1937); Theodore Levin, *The City Staged: Jacobean Comedy, 1603-13*, (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986); and Jean Howard, "Civic Institutions and Precarious Masculinity in Dekker's *The Honest Whore*," draft, *Early Modern Culture* (2000): np, web. 9 May 2012.

⁵ See also Jean Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 11. Agnew asserts that the early modern English theaters were "a proxy form of the new and but partly fathomable relations of a nascent market society."

⁶ See Karen Newman, "City Talk: Femininity and Commodification in Jonson's *Epicoene*," *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama*, (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1991), 129-143; Shannon Miller, "Consuming Mothers/Consuming Merchants: The Carnavalesque Economy of Jacobean City Comedy" *Modern Language Studies*, 26.2-3 (1996): 73-97; and Sullivan, Garret A., Jr., "'All Things Come into Commerce': Women, Household Labor, and the Spaces of Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*," *Renaissance Drama* 27 (1996): 19-46.

⁷ Though written sometime before 1605, George Chapman and Ben Jonson were thrown into jail for presumed anti-Scottish sentiments in the play before it rated regular rotation onstage. The play was printed in 1605.

⁸ In the prodigal drama, a "prodigal son" first encounters the city's vices, its avarice, usury, materialism, crime, gambling, and prostitution, and then repents of those vices to embrace virtue and his father's morality. The prodigal drama delivers a moral message to audiences, its primary lesson, Julia Harris explains, is that "'you must be a good student [to your father] if you wish to succeed'" (ix). In *Eastward Ho*, this moral aspect of the prodigal story appears as the dichotomous characters Security, who represents the city's ills, and Touchstone, who plays the part of the stern but ultimately forgiving father.

⁹ A similar situation is seen, for instance, in the character of Harry Dampit in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Dampit's scenes are structurally and dramatically cut off from other characters in the play. Richard Levin observes that Dampit is "completely isolated" from all social relations (143). Moreover, aside from a single greeting with the protagonist Witgood, Dampit has no other encounters with the primary cast. Dampit instead appears in separate scenes and does not influence the primary plot. But, while Dampit clearly shows how usurer's were cut-off from regular social relations, his lack of social relations means that he cannot effectively show his inability to participate in commerce. that aspect of usury is best shown by Security who is not quite as despicable as Dampit and thus still able to interact with society to a small degree.

¹⁰ The goldsmith's advice to his prodigal, Quicksilver, takes the form of Protestant-leaning proverbs that espouse self-sufficient industriousness, thrift, and humility. Representative phrases include such phrases as "keepe thy shop, and thy shop will keepe thee," "Light gaines makes heauy purses" (1.1.50) and "skorne not they meanes" (1.2.128).

¹¹ A case in point can be found in the character of Sir Petronel from *Eastward Ho*. Petronel Flash is in many ways like a gallant—he begins poor, a lover of pleasure, and contrives to trick the usurer Security in handing over what Petronel desires—nonetheless, Petronel does not succeed in the play. He is better understood as a failed gallant.

¹² Reciprocity is particularly indicative of London market relations. See Agnew's reference to "reciprocity" from page 1.

¹³ See Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, (New York: Cambridge UP, 2000), Print. See also Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Berg, 2003), Print.

¹⁴ After James ascension to the throne in 1603 and his subsequent dissolution of sumptuary laws, old rules continued and new ordinances restricting apprentice clothing continued to be written. Amanda Bailey identifies a 1603 ordinance from the Newcastle Merchant Adventurers that limits an apprentice's hair length and prohibits earrings, as well as a 1611 Common Council Act that limits how much apprentices' hats could cost" (34).

¹⁵ A ruling of the Common Council decrees in 1582 what clothes an apprentice is allowed:
No apprentice whatsoever should presume to wear any apparel but what he received from his master [...] wear no hat, nor any thing but a woollen cap, without any silk in or about the same, neither ruffles, cuffs, loose collars, nor any other thing than a ruff at the collar, and that only of a yard and a half long. To wear no doublets but what were made of canvas, fustian, sackcloth, English leather or woollen, without any gold, silver, or silk trimming. To wear no other coloured cloth or kersey in hose or stockings, than white, blue, or russet. To wear no other breeches but what shall be of the same stuff as the doublets, and neither stiched, laced, or bordered. To wear no other than a plain upper coat of leather, without pinching, stitching, edging, or silk about it. To wear no other surtout than a cloth gown or cloak lined or faced with cloth, cotton, or baize, with a fixed round collar, without stitching, guarding, lace, or silk (Percy and Percy 350-351).

¹⁶ The "dull flat cap" is one of the two symbols of his apprenticeship.

¹⁷ See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "Commodity."

¹⁸ Thomas Dekker's 1608 *The Belman* was the first work to clearly use commodity in this sense of the word (1533). While dates for *Eastward Ho* are, at best, sketchy, we do know that the play was first performed sometime around this period.

¹⁹ Security wants to "bring Knight Petronell in[to] my Parchment Toyles" (2.2.137-138). Security's reference to "Parchment Toyles," Harris explains, refers to a practice known as "ferreting," in which individuals like Quicksilver would persuade "young men into the hands of usurers" (124 n 677-8). The "Parchment" in this case is a ledger, presumably within which Security would keep track of who owed him money.

²⁰ I use the word "presumably" here since the scene ends; we never find out if Petronel's lust was sated or not.

²¹ The vocabulary of this speech needs a little clarification before I venture further. Security's "couetousnes" is his appetite. Herford and Simpson note that one quarto (3) continues the line to read "and thy couentines." The last word they identify as "wenches." (542 n 14-15).

²² See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "security" 2a, "Property, etc., deposited or pledged by or on behalf of a person as a guarantee of the payment of a debt, and liable to forfeit in the event of default."

²³ Craig Muldrew explores the issue of early modern credit in-depth in his *the Economy of Obligation*. His assertion is that most early modern references to "credit" invoke a concept closer to "reputation" than the promises of repayment with which we associate the word today. Nonetheless, occasionally the two are inseparable, as is the case when Security promises to allow Quicksilver to subsist "a my Credit." Here, Security is communicating that his reputation for ample wealth is such that Quicksilver can tell anyone that Security will pay his bills.

²⁴ The act of kneeling to which Quicksilver refers, Harris explains, is a reference to an ancient method of toasting²⁴ (116 n 390).

²⁵ Muldrew finds "ample proof of the overwhelming importance of credit in sixteenth and seventeenth century society" (96). "Disputes [over debt and credit]," he later adds, "were extremely common" (199).

²⁶ See my earlier remarks on changes in the "commodity" definition in the *OED*.

²⁷ To maintain consistency with contemporary spellings of George Mannington's name, I will hereafter refer to the ballad by "Mannington" unless I am referring explicitly to Quicksilver's actual words.

²⁸ At some time prior to the play these were two separate ballads. However, the opening to the "Mannington" ballad in the 1584 edition of *A Handefull of plesant delites* nonetheless begins, "I Waile in woe, I plunge in paine." See appendix 1 for a copy of the complete ballad in this edition. Nevertheless, Quicksilver's separate treatment of "I wail in woe" as a tune different from the "Mannington" ballad to suggest that audiences did recognize a separation. One possibility is what I propose in this paper: Quicksilver's invocation of "I wail in woe" refers to the words by Edward White in 1603. This edition would have been in its popular vogue during the writing of the play. See (Chappell xxix) for details.

²⁹ Lucy Munro comes to a similar conclusion in "*Children of the Queen's Revels*." She asserts that the play's conclusion is part of a "parodic strategy" ridiculing the assumptions of authenticity that underlying the overblown sentiments and "artificiality" of the prodigal drama (81).

³⁰ See "Appendix A" for complete lyrics to the Mannington ballad.

³¹ The tune Quicksilver borrows from "Wail in woe" was even more current; the "Wail in woe" tune was most likely a reference to a version popular in 1606 by Edward White and may very likely have still been in its first wave of popularity when the playwrights revised *Eastward* following its authors' imprisonment (Chappell xxix).

³² Audiences familiar with the tune's alternate lyrics could a subtle irony to Quicksilver's words. In 1606, John Rhodes identifies a 1588 version of the Labandalashot ballad that makes several attacks on Protestantism. The title of this ballad is somewhat self-explanatory: "A proper new Ballad wherein are contained Catholike questions to the Protestant" (Brydges 364-365).

³³ Hereafter, in order to keep my references in consistent accordance with the modern spelling of George Mannington's name and naming conventions for ballads, I will refer to the broadside as "Mannington."

³⁴ Here, it should be noted that while Howard is speaking about Jacobean drama though her reference to “London plays,” her own words imply that her conclusions are true of Elizabethan drama as well: she states, “while there are early modern representations of whores and whorehouses that tell moralizing tales [...] a great number of London plays do otherwise” (114). However, Howard’s study only examines plays from 1598 onwards, and thus it does not account for, by way of example, early Shakespeare. The plays her conclusions apply to are almost entirely Jacobean.

³⁵ Even when married, agency continues to be a problem for women in Elizabethan drama portrayed as whores. In what would otherwise be an example of feminine commercial agency in the anonymous play *How to Tell a Good Wife from a Bad* (1602), the courtesan Mary convinces husbands to murder their wives out of their lust for her. The play’s language refuses Mary this agency by assigning the entire blame to her husband’s power to choose;³⁵

He that will chuse
A good wife from a bad, come learne of me
That haue tried both, in wealth and miserie.
A good wife will be carefull of her fame,
Her husband’s credit, and her own good name:
And such art thou [points at his former wife]. A bad wife will respect
Her pride, her lust, and her good name neglect,
And such art thou [points at Mary]. A good wife will be still
Industrious, apt to do her husband’s will.
But a bad wife, crosse, spitefull and madding
[...] Now husbands choose on which hand you will goe (175)

What Young Arthur describes is the standard patriarchal model that places husband over wife. He takes all agency away from wives and doubly so for the whore-figure of Mary. First, Young Arthur depicts Mary (a “bad wife”) as subject to appetite in much the same manner as Petronel to his carnal lusts or Security his avarice within *Eastward Ho*. She is so subject to the demands of her body’s “lust,” Arthur implies, that she cannot prevent herself from satisfying them even to the extent that she would “her good name neglect.” She does not so much choose to act as have her actions dictated by the availability of persons that will satisfy her needs. Second, even if Mary could control her own actions, she still does not have agency; instead, she must defer her actions to what her husband’s “hand” will “chuse.” Young Arthur’s words imply that women’s actions are assigned by their natures; “good” women will be obedient and industrious, and “bad” women will be spiteful and prideful. A “bad” woman does not choose to be bad: she does not have the capacity to “chuse” at all. Instead, “husbands choose.” In addition to this wholesale removal of agency from wives, the courtesan in particular is not even awarded responsibility for encouraging Young Arthur to kill his wife. To punish her would be to tacitly suggest that she chose to act as she did and that it was her agency, not young Arthur’s, that led to the supposed murder. The play ends after the words above, and Mary is never held responsible.

³⁶ See *2H4* 2.4.215. Later, Falstaff echoes a second stereotype of the whore by making Doll the source for venereal disease. He tells her, “You help to make the diseases, Doll: we catch of you, Doll, we catch of you; grant that” (2.4.44-45).

³⁷ Despite the prevalent presence of prostitution in *Measure for Measure*, prostitute characters themselves are rarely present. Jonathan Dollimore observes, “the prostitutes, the most exploited group in the society which the play represents, are absent from it. Virtually everything that happens presupposes them yet they have no voice, no presence. And those who speak for them do so as exploitatively as those who want to eliminate them (85-86).

³⁸ At least, so far as Leontes is aware. Later events do reveal that the supposed “statue” really is Hermione.

³⁹ Admittedly, the Falstaff and Mistress Quickly of *Merry Wives* is not literally the Falstaff of the *Henry IV* plays since the former play is set some 100 years afterward. However, so similar are the characterizations that there is no doubt that Shakespeare intended his identically named characters to be interpreted as the same dramatic figures, regardless of the time gap.

⁴⁰ It should be noted that many of the women that appear to sell themselves off to paying customers carry the title of “courtesan,” a title that Middleton scholar Gary Taylor considers as “distinct from a common whore” (378n 34). A courtesan, he explains, “was a woman who was kept by a [single] man rather than generally available” (378n 34). Nevertheless, a man “kept” a courtesan by paying her a stipend, so the distinction is minor at best.

⁴¹ Beaumont and Fletcher’s *The Wild-Goose Chase* appears in 1621, as does Philip Massinger’s *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

⁴² Antony’s role in the play’s commercial elements is minimal compared to these two.

⁴³ See A. C. Bradley, “Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra,” *Oxford Lectures on Poetry* (London: MacMillan, 1926), 279-305; Ernest Schanzer, “Antony and Cleopatra,” *The Problem Plays of Shakespeare: A Study of Julius Caesar, Measure for Measure, and Antony and Cleopatra* (London: Routledge, 2004), 132-183; George Brandes, *William Shakespeare: A Critical Study*, trans. William Archer, Mary Morison, and Diana White, (London: Kessinger, 1902); Jyotsna Singh, “Renaissance Antitheatricality, Antifeminism, and Shakespeare’s Antony and Cleopatra,” *Essays on Dramatic Traditions: Challenges and Transmissions*, Ed. Mary Beth Rose, (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1990), 99-121; L. T. Fitz, “Egyptian Queens and Male Reviewers: Sexist Attitudes in Antony and Cleopatra Criticism,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 28.3 (1977): 297-316; Frank Kermode, “Antony and Cleopatra,” *Shakespeare’s Language*, (New York: FSC, 2000), 217-230.

⁴⁴ See also Janet Adelman. “The Common Liar: An Essay on *Antony and Cleopatra*” (New Haven: Yale UP, 1973).

⁴⁵ Jeanne Addison Roberts “Horses and Hermaphrodites”: Metamorphoses in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Shakespeare Quarterly* 34.2 (1983): 159-171.

⁴⁶ Caesar’s ambassador tells him, “Cleopatra does confess thy greatness / submits her to thy might” (3.12.16-17).

⁴⁷ See Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002); Matthew Birchwood, “Turning to the Turk: Collaboration and Conversion in William Davenant’s *The Siege of Rhodes*,” *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, Ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic, (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 207-226; Susan Wiseman, “‘History Digested’: Opera and Colonialism in the 1650s,” *Literature and the English Civil War*, Eds., Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 189-204.

⁴⁸ Janet Clare identifies a variety of types on the market during the period including pamphlet plays, that detailed popular news as broadside ballads in the shape of miniature plays (8-9); “closet” plays written to be read in private rather than performed (18-21); printed “interludes” and “drolls,” short plays to be performed during meals, typically a scene in length (21-23); and the various releases of former masques and stage playtexts released separately or bound into Folio.⁴⁸

⁴⁹ Patterson uses William Pym’s publication of the “Grand Remonstrance” in 1642 as a representative example (27).

⁵⁰ Unlike earlier periods in English dramatic history, we have very good records from the Restoration onwards. The first original play on the Restoration stage was Thomas Porter's *The Villian* on October 18th, 1662 (Lewcock 299).

⁵¹ See Matthew Birchwood, "Turning to the Turk: Collaboration and Conversion in William Davenant's *The Siege of Rhodes*," *Remapping the Mediterranean World in Early Modern English Writings*, Ed. Goran V. Stanivukovic, (New York: Palgrave, 2007), 207-226; Janet Clare, *Drama of the English Republic*, (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2002); Edward Dent, *Foundations of English Opera: A Study of Musical Opera During the Seventeenth Century*, (New York: Da Capo, 1965); John Demaray, *Milton's Theatrical Epic: The invention and Design of Paradise Lost*, (Lincoln: iUniverse, 1999), 126n 8; Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama*, (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 158; Susan Wiseman, "'History Digested': Opera and Colonialism in the 1650s," *Literature and the English Civil War*, Eds., Thomas Healy and Jonathan Sawday, (New York: Cambridge UP, 1990), 189-204.

⁵² *The Siege of Rhodes* is considered the first (Clare 186).

⁵³ Robert Hume calls opera "an untidy sub-genre" for just this reason (*Development* 205).

⁵⁴ Ben Jonson is today perhaps better known for his Jacobean works, but nonetheless, he was a popular playwright during the Stuart period as well.

⁵⁵ The play-text for *Coelum Britannicum* lists many well-known figures as its performers such as William Cavendish and George Digby.

⁵⁶ Cavendish's collected plays were not published until 1662; however, she was an active literary figure since her days in the court of Henrietta Maria.

⁵⁷ It is perhaps for closet drama's capacity to critique theatrical representation that Aphra Behn turns to Killigrew's *Thomaso* (1664) for her own critique of gender in *The Rover* (1677).

⁵⁸ Anne Finch is more commonly treated as a poet instead of closet playwright. However, Straznický suggests that Finch's poetry is eminently dramatic in its form (5).

⁵⁹ Aphra Behn will later turn to Killigrew's closet play *Thomaso* as a model for her well-known play, *The Rover* (1677).

⁶⁰ All but *Love's Triumph* appear in the 1616 *Works*. *Love's Triumph* appears in the *The Workes of Ben Jonson, The Second Volume* (1640), what was likely intended as a supplement to the 1616 edition.

⁶¹ Lesser identifies many other instances, and I encourage readers to explore them as needed.

⁶² Jonson's *Works* was not the first such collection; that title belongs to Samuel Daniel's 1601 *Panegyricke*. However, Daniel's *Panegyricke* was intended for private circulation and not sale.

⁶³ Given the Queen's predilections, it is thus not surprising that Davenant produced a play for her titled *Love and Honour* (1633).

⁶⁴ Quicksilver tricks Touchstone into freeing him from prison, because the goldsmith does not realize he is part of an exchange at all. Cleopatra dupes Caesar into granting her an opportunity for suicide by allowing him to see only those things he desired in her, selling a self that did not actually exist. Ianthe's situation is more complicated but can be adequately reduced, for the needs of this example, to forcing the Sultan to bank on the possibility of her leaving Rhodes by mistakenly thinking her exit from the city guaranteed.

⁶⁵ Manly in *Plain Dealer* seeks out the Widow Blackacre for this purpose, as does Cully in *Comical Revenge* seek out the prostitute Grace, thinking her a rich widow. Dorimant of *Mode* expresses the situation in its most blunt form when he admits the audiences that, in part, he pursues Harriet to “wed [...] an estate” (4.2.213).

⁶⁶ The English comedy of manners did not originate during the Restoration—Abrams identifies dramatic cognates in Shakespeare’s *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and *Much Ado About Nothing* (55).

⁶⁷ So distinct are rake portrayals from each other that Robert Hume decides that there is no “single, definable type” (*Rakish* 154). Hume’s insistent search for a unified set of “type” characterizations for rakes results in him classifying them as “polite” (154), “debauchee,” (154), “extravagant” (155), “judicious” (158), and “vicious” (159), but even with these types, Hume admits that all groupings inevitably run afoul of a confirmation bias that seeks out figures “quite atypical of the protagonists of these comedies [as a whole]” (158). Nor do all agree with his particular groups. James Turner, for instance, takes issue with Hume’s association of “Debauchee” with a “sneaking fornicator” (86n 13).

⁶⁸ “The two characters,” Weber argues, “share a love of disguise, a joy in playing with the masks that all people assume in society” (14).

⁶⁹ So distinct are rake portrayals from each other that Robert Hume decides that there is no “single, definable type” (*Rakish* 154). Hume’s insistent search for a unified set of “type” characterizations for rakes results in him classifying them as “polite” (154), “debauchee,” (154), “extravagant” (155), “judicious” (158), and “vicious” (159), Robert Hume separates the rake into several types, with the two largest being the “polite rake” and “debauchee.” The polite rake label originates with C. D. Cecil, who argues that these types attempt to “realize an ideal personality based on some compromise between libertinism and self-control” (qtd *Rakish* 144). These rakes eventually constrain their license through marriage, because “the polite rake knows that the probable alternative to marriage is grotesque—a world of surly old bachelors” (qtd *Rakish* 144). Cecil includes Dorimant under this type, but he could as well have included Courtall and Freeman in *She wou’d if she cou’d*, Wildish in *The Mulberry-Garden*, and Wildblood and Bellamy in *An Evening’s Love*. While at first the polite rake’s libertinism may seem offensive or disruptive to society, Cecil asserts that he must eventually “surrender to [society] or pass outside as a buffoon” (qtd *Rakish* 145).⁶⁹ In contrast to the polite rake is the debauchee. The debauchee is always “contemptible” (Hume 155). The debauchee makes it his mission to sleep with virgins. Examples include Belfond Sr. in *The Squire of Alsatia*, Loveless in *Love’s Last Shift* and Snarl in *The Virtuoso*. These characters are older, rich men, who comically attempt to compel women to sleep with them (Gollapudi 24). In a sharp contrast to the social acceptance the polite rake communicates, debauchees present a staunch unwillingness to accept their age.

⁷⁰ Harold Wheeler observes that when Antony finally dons the disguise of a woman in the play’s finale (i.e. a woman disguised as a man disguising himself as a woman), “the clothes she wears are not her own: her female identity has still not been restored” (171).

⁷¹ Samuel Bowles points out, “Adam Smith as well as Edmund Burke, Alexis de Tocqueville and Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill and Frederick Hayek [have] all celebrated or lamented the effects of markets and other economic institutions on human development (72).

⁷² “Hawkers [...] toy with the objects that they announce, and they include in their free game all the ‘sacred’ and ‘exalted’ topics that they can fit into their oratory” (160). In combining “sacred” and “profane”, Bakhtin’s statement suggests, the sellers (hawkers) deliberately ignore the religious conventions that polarize the two ideas. For this reason, he continues, market language is characterized by “freedom, frankness, and familiarity” (153), because the rules for language use are subject to constant adjustment (154).

⁷³ In the market, traditional models that derive identity from stability break down in favor of models espousing openness and evolution. Shepherd observes that vendor and customer self-descriptions in the market are characterized by the ongoing development of the relations they share with others (134).

⁷⁴ In the absence of a husband, a woman's wealth and property would pass onto her heirs upon her death. Keeping these women single and unmarried is therefore to the advantage of the male family members. This is the problem faced by characters like Hellena (*The Rover*), whose brother seeks to make her a nun and thereby default her fortunes to himself, and the Widow Blackacre (*The Plain Dealer*), whose son seeks to seize her property.

⁷⁵ See also Mary Lyndon Shanley, "Marriage Contract and Social Contract in Seventeenth Century English Political Thought", *The Western Political Quarterly* 32.1 (1979), 79-91.

⁷⁶ Schechner continues, "play is dangerous and, because it is, players need to feel secure in order to begin playing; that the perils of playing are often masked or disguised by saying that play is 'fun,' 'voluntary,' a 'leisure activity,' or 'ephemeral'—when in fact the fun of playing, when there is fun, is in playing with fire, going in over one's head, inverting accepted procedures and hierarchies; that play is performative (*Ritual* 27).

⁷⁷ A case of this can be seen when Dorimant visits Loveit after enraging her with his letter. There, even as he pretends to be jealous of the "loving fop" (2.2.189) he accuses Loveit of spending time with, he is whispering, in the same passage, to Belinda, the directions to their next tryst: "At my Lady Townley's when we go from hence" (2.2.196-197). In consideration that the woman he is deceiving is, in his own words, "violent" (1.1.196), trying to arrange a rendezvous with Belinda while right in front of Loveit is a great risk.

⁷⁸ That Lady Woodvill gets to determine who Harriet will marry makes the daughter feel like she is being made into a commodity for the marriage market delivered "by a covetous parent for a purchase" (3.1.74-75). Harriet despises having her appearance and actions shaped for the public spotlight. "I" she sings to her maid Busy, "'find much aversion in my stubborn mind,' / which / 'Is bred by being promised and designed'" (3.1.59). The "design" Harriet refers to is the affected appearance that decorum demands of her person. She thinks "powdering" and "painting" (3.1.17) on a woman and fashionable clothes on a man (45) are simply a "varnish" (3.1.50) that conceals the fact that the woman is ugly (3.1.15) or the man is a "blockhead" (3.1.51).

⁷⁹ Lent is the forty days leading up to Easter, and, in the Catholic tradition, involves abstaining from a daily habit or practice over those days.

⁸⁰ She tells Young Bellair, "let us walk, 'tis time to leave him, men grow dull when they begin to be so particular" (3.3.101).

⁸¹ Earlier in the play, she reveals to Young Bellair, "I can scarce endure the country in landscape and hangings", let alone, she leaves unsaid, the real thing (3.1.110-112). Bellair picks up on her feelings, sympathizing, "What a dreadful thing 'twould be to be hurried back to Hampshire!" (3.1.113-114).

⁸² For instance, Bernard interprets Harriet's protestation as suggesting the difficulty of Dorimant finding a happy ending (xxxviii), while Berglund finds the scene indicative of a power play between the two where Harriet asserts control.

⁸³ Prior to the rake's trip to France, Pinchwife suggests, Horner was well-known in London as a womanizer (5.4.420-421).

⁸⁴ Thereby making their cuckolding in some manner their own faults.

⁸⁵ See the previous page.

⁸⁶ “Roughly” is Jaspar’s approximation of what Horner will do.

⁸⁷ When Angellica demands, “Will you pay me then the price I ask?”, Willmore deflects her request by accusing her of becoming too prosaic, too business-minded: “Oh why dost thou draw me f rom an awful Worship, / By shewing thou art no Divinity” (2.2.412-414). When she pushes harder to another currency, “thy Love [faithfulness] for mine”, Willmore enthusiastically affirms, but quickly changes the subject to sex after barely giving her request the consideration of a breath: “Intirely—come, let’s withdraw!” (2.2.4418-420). Willmore’s swift recourse to sex suggests that he deliberately misinterprets her “Love” as carnal.

⁸⁸ Hellena: “Here’s fine encouragement to fool on” (3.1.93).

⁸⁹ Hellena: “I can’t be angry with him when he dissembles so heartily” (3.1.136-137).

⁹⁰ Provisos are stipulations added to an agreement, and so the scene is generally understood to depict the formation of a contract as first Millamant and then Mirabell declare their own terms for marriage.

⁹¹ Mirabell’s language here is a little strange. At first glance, his question appears to ask whether he might become a husband since Millamant will become a wife: “Well, have I Liberty to offer Conditions—that when you are dwindled into a Wife, I may not be enlarged into a husband?” (4.5.73-75). However, Mirabell’s “dwindled” and “enlarged” are satirical. If Millamant were to assume the traditional domestic position of wife before husband, her status would be “dwindled” in Mirabell’s mind. Thus, when he asks to be “enlarged,” he is, in fact, asking for the opposite, that he *not* be enlarged into a traditional husband.

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