Promiscuous Generation:
Rogue Sexuality and Social Reproduction in Early Modern England
by
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To Stephanie

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Abstract

This dissertation argues that early modern popular pamphlets, moralist literature, legal statutes, and stage drama consistently represent the criminal underclass – or "rogues," as they were called – in sexualized terms, as a "promiscuous generation" consumed by "sensuall lust." These texts construct a causal connection between the supposed immoderate sexuality of the vagrant poor, the deceitful conman, and the wily prostitute and their alleged prodigious fertility, forging tight links between sexual activity, biological reproduction, and the increase of the criminal poor. While literary and cultural critics have commonly consigned rogues to the margins of early modern culture, where they are thought to mark the boundaries of their society, my dissertation demonstrates that rogue sexuality can be found at the center of stage depictions of the English court, capital, and nation. The first half of my dissertation focuses on the biological threat posed by rogues in a range of popular literatures and in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*. The second half examines the role of rogue sexuality in the performance of masculinity and femininity in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. By tracing the movement of rogue sexuality from a criminal to a more normative register, my project challenges the sharp distinctions that literary critics and historians of sexuality tend to draw between early modern discourses of orderly and disorderly sexuality; instead, it illuminates the often-unstable interplay between licit and illicit

sexuality, thereby redefining the relationship between the normative and the criminal in early modern England. The analytical category of rogue sexuality also provides a new framework for interpreting the cultural logic of sexual reproduction in early modern England. That is, the early modern panic over the reproductive consequences of promiscuous rogue sexuality charts a movement from thinking about individual sexual sin to the social ramifications of reproductive behavior writ large, comprising part of the pre-history of the modern state's interest in human reproductive life that Michel Foucault calls "biopower."

Chapter 1

Introduction: Desire and Increase

Shakespeare's sonnets, published in 1609, open with seventeen poems exhorting a

young gentleman to marry and reproduce. This theme is established immediately, as the

first line of the first poem reads "From fairest creatures we desire increase."[1] "Fair"

appears to mean "beautiful" here, since the next line explains that we desire the

reproduction of fair creatures "that thereby beauty's Rose might never die" (1.2). "Fair"

also means "gentle," however, and like that word, it carries similar connotations of social

difference – fair as opposed to coarse or vulgar.[2] This line thus signals not only a

conservationist approach to beauty, but also a propagandistic promotion of elite

reproduction.[3] Later in the sequence, this position is reinforced with a critique of lower

class reproduction, advising "Let those whom nature hath not made for store,/ Harsh,

featureless, and rude, barrenly perish" (11.9-10). The "ideological force of the imperious

first line," as Margreta de Grazia has described it, thus not only endorses rising elite

reproduction, but as the lines from Sonnet 11 make clear, advocates a reduction in the

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[1] William Shakespeare, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. Stephen Booth (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 1.1. Subsequent references are cited parenthetically.
[2] Margreta de Grazia writes "*Fair* is the distinguishing attribute of the dominant class" (emphasis in the original). See de Grazia, "The Scandal of Shakespeare's Sonnets" *Shakespeare Survey 46* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993), 35-49, esp 45.
[3] Lars Engle stresses the conservational aspect of the sonnets in *Shakespearean Pragmatism: Market of his Time* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993), 27-53.

numbers of the *un*fair, as well.[4] This contrast also implies an inverse relationship

between the two populations: the increase of the fair is as good as the decrease of the

rude. That there are some people from whom we desire decrease is also articulated in the

procreation sonnets' antecedent, Thomas Wilson's translation of Erasmus's "Epistle to

Persuade a Young Gentleman to Marriage" (1553), which advises that those "whose

kyndred is suche that it were better for the commune weale, they were all deade, than that

any of that name shoulde be a lyve" should not marry.[5] Erasmus expresses this

reproductive calculus in ethical terms – the good of the commonwealth is hindered when

evil men reproduce. Shakespeare's "procreation" sonnets, however, reduce the ethics of

reproductive fitness to a question of social status. To be fair is to be reproductively

justified; to be otherwise is not. Moreover, there is a kind of pitilessness in

Shakespeare's description of the "featureless," ideally sterile lower classes. They are to

die as they've lived: barrenly – that is, without prosperity and without issue.

Why do Shakespeare's sonnets equate social status with reproductive fitness,

whereas Erasmus's letter does not? What does such an equation say about the

relationship between early modern English social and sexual identities? In 1552, one

year before Thomas Wilson published his translation of Erasmus's epistle, Gilbert

Walker published his own advice to a young gentleman, a short dialogue entitled *A*

Manifest Detection of the Most Vyle and Detestable Use of Diceplay, in which an

experienced courtier describes Tudor London's supposed criminal underworld to a gentle

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[4] de Grazia, 44.

[5] See Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London, 1553), F2r. Erasmus's "Epistle" was included in Wilson's *Arte*, an educational text used in early modern English schools. For more on the relationship between this text and the sonnets, see T.W. Baldwin, *The Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems and Sonnets* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1950), 183-5; and Katharine M. Wilson, *Shakespeare's Sugared Sonnets* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974), 146-67; and John McKernan, "The Influence of Erasmus on Shakespeare's Marriage Sonnets," in *The Portrayal of Life Stages in English Literature, 1500-1800*, eds. Jeanie Watson & Philip McM. Pittman (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1989).

youth. Walker's quarto is often credited as the prototype of the cheap pamphlets about England's vagrants, highwaymen, con-artists, pickpockets, and prostitutes so popular during Shakespeare's time.[6] In it, the older gentleman warns that the danger posed by "idle misgoverned persons" is intensifying due to a surge in their numbers. This danger is described as a distinctly contemporary development: while in previous generations con-artists were "few in number," today their numbers have so increased that even "of only dicers a man might have half an army."[7] Walker's pamphlet, like those of his imitators, promotes the logical correlative of Sonnet 1's first line: from rude creatures we fear increase.

This dissertation offers a discursive genealogy of the historical and ideological movement from Walker's representation of the criminal underworld as a "demographic" problem to Shakespeare's depiction, sixty years later, of elite sexual reproduction as an unmitigated social blessing. My dissertation tracks this causal connection from sixteenth- and seventeenth-century popular pamphlets, to moralist literature, legal statutes, and, finally, stage drama, demonstrating that these different genres consistently represent the criminal underclass – or "rogues," as they were called – in sexualized terms, as a

[6] Its status as an antecedent is suggested by the appearance of a pirated edition printed shortly after Robert Greene's popular cony-catching pamphlets reignited interest in the literature of crime. See *Mihil Mumchance, his Discoverie of the Art of Cheating in False Dyce* (London, 1597). Walker's is the earliest pamphlet included in Kinney's anthology, but Judges begins his collection with Robert Copland's 1535 poem *The Highway to the Spital-House*. In my research on these works, I have consulted a few of anthologies of early modern rogue literature, particularly *Rogues, Vagabonds & Sturdy Beggars*, ed. Arthur Kinney (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1973); and *The Elizabethan Underworld*, ed. A.V. Judges (London: Routledge, 1930). For an informative introduction to the production and consumption of early modern pamphlet literature, see Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 4-27. On Greene's career see the recent collection *Writing Robert Greene: Essays on England's First Notorious Professional Writer*, eds. Kirk Melnikoff and Edward Gieskes (London: Ashgate, 2008).
[7] Gilbert Walker, *A Manifest Detection of the Most Vyle and Detestable Use of Diceplay* (London: 1552), B2v-B3r. The relationship between representations of rogues and the military will be explored in Chapter 5. Although this is the earliest surviving edition, the pamphlet describes the 1544 siege of Bologne as "news," suggesting the existence of an earlier printing. Throughout the dissertation, I cite original documents or their facsimiles wherever possible. On the dating of Walker's pamphlet, see Kinney, 293.

"promiscuous generation" consumed by "sensuall lust."[8] In discussions of the threat

posed by the vagrant poor, the deceitful con-man, and especially the wily prostitute,

rogues are often described as dangerous not because of their thievery, vagrancy, or deceit,

but because of their sexual delinquency. The rogue pamphlets thus create a profoundly

effective association between rogue *social* identity and sexual behavior, such that the

latter comes to signify and define the former.

I argue that the analytical category of rogue sexuality provides a new framework

for interpreting sexual reproduction in early modern England. That is, the rogue

pamphlets construct a causal connection between the supposed immoderate sexuality of

rogues and their alleged prodigious fertility, forging tight links between sexual activity,

biological reproduction, and the increase of the criminal poor. In addition, my account of

the early modern panic over the reproductive consequences of promiscuous rogue

sexuality charts a movement from thinking about individual sexual sin to the social

ramifications of reproductive behavior writ large, thus comprising part of the pre-history

of the modern state's interest in human reproductive life that Michel Foucault calls

"biopower."[9]

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[8] See John Downame, *The Plea of the Poore* (London, 1616), 38. I use the term "rogue" to refer to the vagabonds, thieves, beggars, prostitutes, vagrants and con-men discussed in these pamphlets not only because it was a term that the period itself used to refer to these different people, but because this dissertation is primarily interested in the way rogue discourse used sexual incontinence to equate each of these with the other, creating a large category of sexually marginal subjects. I am convinced by Patricia Fumerton's argument that the concept of the dangerous rogue was an insult and a threat to poor, mobile laborers who were often assumed to be disreputable because of their participation in what Fumerton calls England's "unsettled economy." When I use the term "rogue" in this dissertation, I am always referring to the discursive fiction that title represents, one which served the purposes of both the producers and consumers of rogue literature. See Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2006), 12-46.

[9] For Michel Foucault's discussions of biopower, see Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume One: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), 135-159; *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 243-276; and *Security, Territory, and Population*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Picador, 2007), 367-384.

The pamphlets' portrayal of rogues as sexually incontinent was extremely

popular; not only were they priced relatively cheaply, but they were cannily written to

appeal to a variety of readers. Most rogue pamphlets sold for four or six pence.

Although four pence was more than most working readers could spare, scholars of early

print have determined that pamphlet literature likely enjoyed a relatively wide audience.

As Joad Raymond argues, "the audience for cheap print was socially diverse, and

extended to those whose involvement in the workplace or religious community allowed

them to hear texts they could not read themselves (and to those who could not afford to

purchase books)."[10] Perhaps because of their popularity, playwrights assiduously

included characters, stories, and language drawn from rogue literature in stage plays,

incorporating topics as various as England's national historical mythology, contemporary

London's fashionable West End, and the imagined coastline of Bohemia. While literary

and cultural critics commonly consign rogues to the margins of early modern culture,

where they are thought to mark the boundaries of their society, my dissertation places

rogue sexuality at the center of stage depictions of the English court, capital, and

nation.[11] William Shakespeare and Ben Jonson in particular use the rhetoric of rogue

sexuality to represent elite local, urban, and national social circles. In their hands, a

rhetoric of rogue sexuality informs the early modern theater's incipient sense of national

and class consciousness, as well as appropriate forms of femininity and masculinity.[12]

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[10] See Raymond, 91. See also Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 264-66.

[11] Thus rogues have often been thought of as society's "other," as in Linda Woodbridge, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2001), 16-17. Compare the title of a recent collection of social science essays about vagrancy, which highlights the extrinsic status of its object of inquiry: *Cast Out: Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective*, eds. A.L. Beier and Paul Robert Ocobock (Athens: Ohio UP, 2008).

[12] My use of the term "class" is informed by David Kastan's description of the term as an "effective heuristic if not a properly historical category to describe and analyze the stratification of social relations" in

By tracing the movement of rogue sexuality from a criminal to a more normative register, my project challenges the sharp distinctions that literary critics and historians tend to draw between early modern discourses of orderly and disorderly sexuality; instead, it illuminates the often-unstable interplay between the licit and illicit, thereby suggesting the need for an analysis of the interweaving of the normative and the criminal.[13]

The illustrations accompanying the rogue pamphlets written by Robert Greene, a prolific poet, pamphleteer, and playwright, in the last decade of the sixteenth century, offer a way into the discursive connections between rogues, sexuality, and social identity that this dissertation reconstructs. These images, I contend, help produce popular literature's depictions of a criminal underclass as threatening in its sexual excess, constructing flexible metaphors of beastly sexuality that described both victims and criminals. In 1591, Greene authored a six-pence pamphlet called *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage*. The pamphlet claims to teach citizens, apprentices and visiting country gentlemen to avoid the perils of the city by revealing the tricks used by London's con-artists to cozen, or cheat, their victims. *A Notable Discovery* was immediately and intensely popular, going through three editions in 1591 and a fourth the next year.[14] Its popularity encouraged Greene to publish two sequels and a number of related titles,[15]

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early modern England. See Kastan, "Is There a Class in This (Shakespearean) Text?" in *Shakespeare After Theory* (London: Routledge, 2001), 149-164, esp. 150.

[13] Although I wish to trouble the distinction between orderly and disorderly sexuality, I am deeply indebted to the vast critical literature on the definition and boundaries of such distinctions, including Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); Amanda Bailey, *Flaunting: Style and the Subversive Male Body in Renaissance England* (Toronto: U of Toronto P, 2007). A more recent study to complicate the boundaries between licit and illicit sexuality is Johnanna Rickman, *Love, Lust, and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex and the Nobility* (London: Ashgate, 2008).

[14] On the price and publication history of *A Notable Discovery*, see Kinney, 300.

[15] One cony-catching title not discussed below is Greene's *The Black Book's Messenger* (London, 1592). It is difficult to tell exactly how many pamphlets were authored by Greene, because the latter died in 1592, during the height of this publishing boom. Many pamphlets published after his death bear his name, including those said to have been authored by his "ghost," but it is difficult to determine whether these were written before his death, or whether publishers simply thought his well-recognized name would

most of which were reprinted at least once, provoking dozens of imitations over the next quarter century both by well-known poets and playwrights like Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker and other lesser known writers.[16] Dekker's first rogue pamphlet, *The Belman of London* (1608), was reprinted three times in its first year, and his sequel, *Lanthorne and Candle-light* (1609), was reprinted at least eight times over the next 39 years.[17]

One reason for the pamphlets' popularity was that their educational efforts were also highly entertaining – readers were likely to buy the pamphlets for amusing tales of wily crooks given to drinking and lechery. Greene's *Discovery* called these con-artists "cony-catchers," cony meaning rabbit, to suggest the helplessness of unsuspecting victims "caught like cunnies in the hay" (A3r). The whimsical alliterative term "cony-catcher" highlights the entertainment value of these stories, reminding readers of beast allegories like *Aesop's Fables*, a connection underscored by the prominent portrait of a cony on the title page. Images of conies proliferate in the pamphlets authored by Greene and his many imitators and, together with the prominence of the term "cony-catching," they suggest that their publishers recognized the power of branding to move merchandise. But what kind of brand were they selling? That is, what were early modern book-buyers supposed to see in these images that would make them want to spend their hard-earned pence on such trifling ephemera?

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increase sales. Works associated with his name include *Greenes Vision Written at the Instant of his Death* (London, 1592), *Greenes Groatsworth of Witte* (London, 1592, reprinted 1596), *Greene's News both from Heaven and Hell* (London, 1593), *Greenes Ghost Haunting Conie-catchers* (London, 1602).

[16] Titles by lesser-known authors include Henry Chettle's *Kind-hart's Dream* (London, 1593); Samuel Rid's *The Art of Juggling* (1612, reprinted in 1614), and *Martin Markall Beadle of Bridewell* (London, 1610); and William Fennor's *The Counter's Commonwealth* (London 1617, reprinted 1619, 1629).

[17] On the publication history of Dekker's rogue pamphlets, including the possible existence of lost editions of *Lant-horne*, see Kinney, 304-5; and Judges, 510-11. Thomas Middleton published *The Black Book* in 1604.

The illustration accompanying Greene's first pamphlet, the *Discovery*, suggests

that the genre was initially marketed to potential victims as a warning against their

vulnerability. The frontispiece features a cony in an open and defenseless stance holding

playing cards and standing in front of a pair of dice: the image depicts a naïve cony

engaged in games of chance that he cannot win. The rabbit thus appears to be a visual

metaphor for the cony-catcher's unsuspecting victim, a cony ripe for catching (See Figure

1). This vulnerability is underlined by the feminization and eroticization of the cony.

The shading on the cony's body bisects its abdomen into two rounded ovals that, together

with the animal's spread limbs, is evocative of female genitalia. This visual association

is underscored by the aural correspondence between the words cony and "cunny,"

meaning vagina. In fact, the words were used interchangeably, as in the above

description of "cunnies in the hay."[18] This feminization and eroticization of the cony

suggests as analogy between conies and cunnies: both are open and vulnerable. The

image therefore implies that reading the pamphlet can help secure both one's purse and

one's masculinity.[19]

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[18] Cf. Phillip Massinger and Thomas Dekker's *A Virgin Martyr* (1622), in which a character complains about prostitutes who never work for free, declaring, "A pox upon your Christian cockatrices! They cry, like poulterers' wives, 'No money, no coney" (2.1.15-17). See Massinger and Dekker, *A Virgin Martyr*, in *The Dramatic Works of Massinger and Ford* ed. Hartley Coleridge (London: Edward Moxon, 1840), 1-25.
[19] The conflation of a man's economic and masculine value was a commonplace in early modern England, as suggested by the double meaning of "purse" as both coin-purse and scrotum. See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, "Purse," n., 7.a.

Notable Difcouery of Coofenage.
Now daily practifed by fundry lewd per-
fons, called Connie-catchers, and
Croffe-byters.

Plainely laying open thofe pernitious fleights that hath brought many igno-
rant men to confufion.

Written for the general benefit of all Gentlemen, Citizens, Aprentifes, Countrey Farmers
and yeomen, that may hap to fall into the company of fuch coofening companions.

With a delightfull difcourfe of the coofnage of Colliers.

Nafcimur pro patria.   By R. Greene, Maifter of Arts

LONDON
Printed by Thomas Scarlet for Thomas Nelson.
1 5 9 2.
G.STEEVENS

Figure 1. Title Page of Robert Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage* (London, 1592).[20]

[20] This image is taken from the fourth edition, but the same illustration is used in all preceding editions.

Yet in the sequel to this pamphlet printed the same year (and reprinted the following year), *The Second Part of Conny-Catching*, the image of the cony in the frontispiece comes not to represent the victim but the perpetrator, that is, the cony-catcher (See Figure 2). Here we have a cony flanked by the ubiquitous dice in the foreground and what looks like a book about dice-play in his paw. In this sense the image is not much different from its predecessor. But this cony is portrayed in the act of trying to pick the lock of a house, clearly the actions of a criminal, not a victim. This striking visual transposition of cony and cony-catcher becomes the norm in most subsequent cony-catching pamphlet illustrations. Another pamphlet published by Greene in 1591, *A Disputation Between a Hee-Conny-Catcher and a Shee-Conny-Catcher*, contains a debate over whether male or female con-artists are most "hurtfull to the commonwealth" (See Figure 3). Like *The Second Part*, its title page represents conies as criminals, as the two rabbits dispute with each other while wearing masculine and feminine attire. Finally, *The Defence of Cony-Catching* (1592), authored under the pseudonym Cuthbert Conycatcher, defends cheating and stealing by arguing that usury and other morally suspect businesses are worse forms of theft (See Figure 4). The criminal cony that appears on its title page is the (gendered) opposite of the cony victim in Greene's *Notable Discovery*. This rabbit is anything but defenseless. Armed with a fierce serrated sword and spiked shield, he is ready to fight for the honor of cony-catchers everywhere. If the cony victim was feminized, this cony criminal is coded hyper-masculine, standing unnaturally erect and depicted in trim, fighting profile.

THE SECOND PART
of Connie-catching.

Figure 2. Frontispiece to Robert Greene's *The Second Part of Connie-catching* (London, 1592).

A DISPVTATION,

Betweene a Hee Conny-catcher, and a

Shee Conny-catcher, whether a Theefe or a Whoore, is
most hurtfull in Cousonage, to the Com-
mon-wealth.

DISCOVERING THE SECRET VILLA-
nies of alluring Strumpets.

With the Conuersion of an English Courtizen, reformed
this present yeare, 1592.

Reade, laugh, and learne.

Nascimur pro patria.

R. G.

Imprinted at London, by A. I. for T. G. and are to be solde at
the Weft ende of Paules. 1592.

Figure 3. Title Page of Robert Greene's *A Disputation Betweene a Hee Conny-Catcher, and a Shee Conny-catcher* (London, 1592).

THE DEFENCE OF
Conny catching.
OR
A CONFVTATION OF THOSE
two iniurious Pamphlets publifhed by *R.G.* againft
the practitioners of many Nimble-witted
and myfticall Sciences.

By Cuthbert Cunny-catcher, Licenciate in Whit-
tington Colledge.

*Qui bene latuit bene vixit, dominatur enim
fraus in omnibus.*

Printed at London by *A. I.* for *Thomas Gubbins*
and are to be fold by *Iohn Busbie,* 1592.

Figure 4. Title Page of *The Defence of Conny Catching* (London, 1592).

Greene coined the term cony-catcher to convey the way guileless criminals are hunted like defenseless conies. How do we account, then, for the sudden visual transposition by which cony-catchers are counter-intuitively portrayed as their own prey? Why did the three different printers who published these three subsequent pamphlets all choose images that confuse the distinction between criminal and victim? My dissertation suggests an explanation for this metaphorical dissonance: it is an effect of the way cony-catchers and other rogues – including pickpockets, prostitutes, and vagabonds – were depicted in popular literature as *beasts*, inhumanly focused on satisfying their passion for sexual and social freedom. Although I will discuss this animalistic connection in some detail in Chapter 2, for now it suffices to note that Greene and others claim that because cony-catchers are "a generation of loose libertines" they are "unworthy of the name of men."[21] Depictions of rabbits acting like criminals – picking locks, playing cards, and disguising themselves by dressing in human clothing – are consistent with how rogue literature represented beastly rogues as blurring, even destroying, the distinction between the animal and the human in early modern England. And one way they repeatedly did so was through their beastly sexuality.

Greene's association of roguery with beastliness can be traced to the work of Thomas Harman, who, in 1566, wrote an influential pamphlet called *A Caveat, or Warning, For Common Cursitors*, which sold for four pence.[22] The pamphlet, like Greene's, claims to educate its readers on the tricks of rogue cozeners, but simultaneously revels in describing a lurid picture of criminal life that is more often than not characterized by the pursuit of animalistic sexual pleasure. Perhaps for both reasons,

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[21] Greene, *Second Part*, A1r; *Notable Discovery*, C2v.
[22] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat, or Warning, For Common Cursitors* (London: 1566, reprinted 1568, 1573, 1592).

the pamphlet was a hit with readers, and was reprinted without attribution after Greene's

pamphlet appeared in 1592 under a new name (*The Groundwork of Cony-Catching*). *A

Caveat* is a kind of criminal taxonomy delineating different "types" of vagabonds with

their individual tendencies and criminal behaviors, yet it describes most rogues in the

same way, as promiscuous beasts. Harman often implies that criminals' sexual acts are

akin to that of animals, as in the description of a rogue called an "Upright Man," whose

sexual couplings are likened to those of "dogge and byche."[23] Another figure, the "Wild

Rogue," conducts his nocturnal sexual exploits in a barn and his sexual partners are

referred to as "makes," which the *Oxford English Dictionary* reminds us could refer to

both human and animal sexual partners. Harman describes the Wild Rogue's "morning

after" in terms that likewise evoke beastly behavior: "When the day doth appear, he

rouses him up and shakes his ears, and away wandering where he may get ought to the

hurt of others."[24]

Rogues thus are represented as animals in the frontispieces because they are

described as animals in the pamphlets themselves. Harman's beastly rogues lay the

foundation both for Greene's claims that rogues are unmanly and for the metaphorical

slippage between cony and cony-catcher in these pamphlets' frontispieces. Moreover,

rabbits were a particularly apt mascot for rogues because both rabbits and rogues were

believed to be exceptionally fertile, and their unchecked reproduction generally was seen

as threatening. In 1586, William Harrison, the great chronicler of Elizabethan England

and author of *The Description of England*, wrote, "As for warrens of conies, I judge them

almost innumerable, and dailie like to increase . . . their great numbers are thought to be

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[23] Ibid., B3r.
[24] Ibid., C3r

verie prejudiciall, and therfore justlie reprooved of many."[25] Similarly, the increasing

population of rogues was something that practically all critics of rogues noted and

deplored. Harman laments that these "these rousey rakehells thus [d]o continue and

dailie increase."[26] Greene metaphorically links cony-catchers' beastliness to their

fertility, writing that "thus we see how the generation of these vipers increase."[27]

Greene's comparison to vipers is not arbitrary. Vipers were known to birth scores of

young at a time, and their young were believed to eat their way out of their mother's

womb.[28] Like vipers, rogues were thought to reproduce prodigiously, threatening to

destroy their mother country in the process.

　　These pamphleteers' views of rogue reproduction were widely held by gentlemen

and administrators in England debating the causes of and solutions to England's social

problems, including poverty and crime. In 1596, just five years after Greene published

his first pamphlet, Edward Hext, Justice of the Peace of Somerset, wrote a letter

complaining of the increase in the number of rogues, singling out their reproduction as a

major threat. "The generacion that daylye spryngeth from them ys like to be most

wicked," he feared.[29] For Hext, as for Harman, one of the most troublesome aspects of

rogues is that their alleged prodigious sexual exploits yield more of them every day. This

is not to say that administrators like Hext thought that the large-scale social problem of

homelessness and poverty was caused solely by rogue reproduction. But the

representation of rogues as sexually promiscuous and prodigiously reproductive beasts

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[25] William Harrison, *The Description of England* in volume 1 of Raphael Holinshead, *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1587), 204, 236.
[26] Harman, A3v.
[27] Greene, *Notable Discovery*, C3r.
[28] Thomas Browne's mid-seventeenth-century *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* mentions these theories of viper births. See Browne, *Pseudodoxia Epidemica* ed. Robin Robbins (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), 220-21.
[29] *Tudor Economic Documents*, vol. 2, eds. R.H. Tawney and Eileen Edna Power (London: Longmans, 1924), 342.

influenced the views of those empowered to help, or to punish, society's most vulnerable members.

This dissertation argues that across a diverse array of early modern discourses – including rogue pamphlets, history chronicles, sermon literature, documents of state, and stage drama – rogue sexual and social illicitness were represented as mutually constitutive. In examining the category of the sexually illicit this dissertation thus contributes to the vibrant critical literature on early modern English sexuality. Beginning with Alan Bray's groundbreaking *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, scholars of early modern sexuality first focused on recovering a history of male homoeroticism in early modern England. They found evidence of such desire in cultural and literary records of sexual transgression, most visible in the legal category of sodomy.[30] In contrast to work that focuses on sodomy, which tends to assume universal condemnation of homoerotic practice, Mario DiGangi introduced the concept of "orderly homoeroticism" to argue that homoeroticism was not condemned in all cultural contexts.[31] Other critics, responding to Alan Bray's work on the similarities between the discourses of friendship and male homoeroticism, have also focused on the way that the early modern discourse of friendship, or *amicitia*, produced orderly, licit homoerotic relationships.[32] This shift of focus in sexuality studies, from disorder to order, has done

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[30] See Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (London: Gay Men's Press, 1982); Gregory Bredbeck, *Sodomy and Interpretation: Marlowe to Milton* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1991); and Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992).

[31] Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern English Drama*. The critical move from disorder to order was implicit in Bray's discussion of cognitive dissonance in *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, but only later became an explicit focus of early modern sexuality studies.

[32] See Jeffrey Masten, *Textual Reproduction: Collaboration, Gender, and Authorship in   Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997); and Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2002). Bray further developed his own work on friendship and homoeroticism in a posthumously published study, *The Friend* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003).

away with a great deal of anachronistic concepts that used to inform even the best work on early modern homoeroticism, and redefined our ideas of early modern sexual attitudes and practices.[33]

Yet, recently, scholars have begun to question whether the divide between orderly and disorderly eroticisms, between licit and illicit sexuality, may present an obstacle to a history of sexuality that is not comprehended by the binary terms of this discursive regulation.[34] As Valerie Traub argues, "because notions of norms and their transgression are structured by a binary of the licit and the illicit, they necessarily are indexed to the dominant social orthodoxy – even when the intention is to uncover the existence of those who would defy it."[35] In moving to uncover the ubiquity and orderliness of homoeroticism, scholarship on early modern sexuality has left untapped the analytical advantage of a deconstructive understanding of the culturally licit and illicit. This dissertation examines the ambiguous line between the sexually licit and illicit by focusing on textual moments when sexual and criminal discourses intersect. It might seem that such a focus on criminal discourses simply leads us back to behaviors that were universally condemned. But I will demonstrate that the rhetoric of rogue sexuality was not confined to descriptions of the culturally illicit. Rather, it circulated in influential stage depictions of the culturally normative within the English nation, capital, and court. The intersection of sexual and criminal discourses therefore provides a useful vantage

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[33] One essay collection in particular that signaled this shift is *Queering the Renaissance*, ed. Jonathan Goldberg (Chapel Hill: Duke UP, 1994).
[34] Critics who have begun to question this divide include Anna Clark, "Twilight Moments," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 14.1&2 (2005): 139-52; and Traub "The Joys of Martha Joyless," in *The Forms of Renaissance Thought: New Essays in Literature and Culture*, eds. Leonard Barkan, Bradin Cormack, and Sean Keilen (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 170-198.
[35] Traub, "Joys," 179.

point from which to scrutinize the mutual imbrications of discourses of the culturally licit and illicit, and to analyze the unstable lines with which they are drawn.

My inquiry is informed throughout by Eve Sedgwick's discussion of this mutual imbrication as the "double bind" of "minoritizing and universalizing discourses" in the history of sexuality.[36] Speaking of the modern homo/heterosexual divide, Sedgwick defines "minoritizing discourses" as those that identify certain traits, like sexual desire, as the unique characteristic of a particular subset of the populace. These discourses, she argues, can and do exist side-by-side and in conceptual tension with "universalizing discourses," which assign the same traits to people in general. Sedgwick explains that modern sexuality functions as both a minoritizing and universalizing discourse. Modern culture, she says,

> holds the minoritizing view that there is a distinct population of persons who 'really are' gay; at the same time, it holds the universalizing views that sexual desire is an unpredictably powerful solvent of stable identities; that apparently heterosexual persons and object choices are strongly marked by same-sex influences and desires; and vice versa for apparently homosexual ones.[37]

The conceptual relations that structure minoritizing/universalizing discourses are as unstable as they are contradictory, but they are potentially powerful because of the flexibility their incoherence affords. As Sedgwick argues, their very instability marks them as sites that are "densely charged with lasting potentials for powerful manipulation – through precisely the mechanisms of self-contradictory definition or, more succinctly,

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[36] See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 9-10.
[37] Ibid., 85.

the double bind."[38] That is, because they are universal, such sites can be used to regulate an entire social spectrum, while at the same time claiming to protect the majority from a minority that is inherently different and dangerous.

The discursive operations of rogue sexuality are marked by a similarly contradictory minoritizing and universalizing dynamic. In early modern England, sexual lust was understood to be common to most, if not all, people. For example, the Elizabethan homilies, from which pastors were legally obligated to read a selection in church every Sunday, included the titles: "An Homily against Disobedience and Wilful Rebellion" and "Against Whoredom and Adultery." The fact that these homilies were prescribed to the whole citizenry suggests that they were thought of as necessary to maintain the country's spiritual health. Yet rogue discourse also distinguishes the rogue as an exceptional figure because he or she embodies these impulses. That is, rogues are constructed as a minority identifiable through their anti-social and sexual desires; yet, at the same time, the urge towards disobedience and lechery was understood to be universal. The same tension between minoritizing and universalizing discourses structures the characterization of rogues as "beastly." Although rogues were singled out in these pamphlets for sexual behavior that linked them to animals, it was thought that all human beings had the potential to descend to beastliness. The potential to become a beast was inherent in every human, and the human "in becoming a beast, remain[ed] – apparently paradoxically – absolutely human."[39] Despite this universalized potential, rogue discourse insists that rogues are distinguishable by, and thus are a minority composed of, beastly behaviors and desires.

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[38] Ibid., 10.
[39] Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2006), 62.

The universal aspect of rogue discourse allows and justifies the discursive policing of the entire English nation through homilies in church every Sunday and through institutional practices of control like the vagrancy laws, which mandated licenses for travel around the country.[40] Rogue discourse's minoritization allows this project of social policing to be cast as targeting only a marginalized population of "rogues," for the good of a majority population of "orderly" people. When Greene voices his hope that justices of the peace will respond to his pamphlets by "rooting this base degree of cooseners out of so peaceable and prosperous a countrey," the literal policing of rogues is portrayed as ensuring others' peacefulness and prosperity.[41] The regulating function of the courts is mystified as pertaining only to rogues, while the benefits accrue to the "country," which is defined in opposition to the rogue population.[42]

Sedgwick's theory of universalizing and minoritizing sexual discourses thus provides a framework by which to understand the crucial role played by the sexually immoderate rogue in the discursive construction of culturally central phenomena such as English proto-nationalism, emergent styles of elite masculinity and femininity, and the rise of London as an early modern cosmopolis. As a minoritizing discourse, rogue sexuality constructed rogues as a socially and sexually disordered "other" against which the nation and the city were defined, and was one of the fundamental discursive materials from which these institutions were constructed. Critics have shown that early modern

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[40] Laws requiring commoners to have passports or letters from elites authorizing their travel originated in the wake of the Black Death, as a means to control the movement of laborers. They were repeatedly reinforced and expanded in new statutes during the Tudor period. For an overview of these laws see A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1985), 152-158.
[41] Greene, *Notable Discovery*, A3v.
[42] In chapter two, I examine how increases in rogue populations are represented as threats to the national commonwealth. Greene often positioned his rogue pamphlets as defenses of England: he commonly uses the Latin motto "*Nascimur Pro Patria*," or "Born for my Country." See Woodbridge, 149-166, on the relationship between English monarchical centralization and the representation of vagrancy.

history plays and London city comedies were instrumental in the construction of English

national identity and London's identity as a distinct socioeconomic locale.[43] These

studies have tended to position London and the nation in opposition to rogues in one of

two ways: either the former are seen as constructed through the suppression of the latter,

or the latter are seen as offering competing social alternatives to the normative ones

embodied by the former.[44] My dissertation argues that history plays and London city

comedies represented English national identity, elite urban socioeconomic circles, and

courtly communities as constructed by means of the rhetoric of rogue sexuality, rather

than against it.

This dissertation is not alone in suggesting a connection between rogue literature

and the early modern theater. Many studies of early modern rogue literature have linked

this genre to the theater, but they have tended to emphasize the overlapping ways in

which rogues and actors were attacked by their critics.[45] Rogues and actors were equated

in both legal and moral discourses. Legal statutes published in 1572 and 1598 identified

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[43] On the relationship between early modern theater and the development of English nationhood, see Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994); Claire McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590-1612* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996); and Jean Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering A Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997). On the role of city comedy in constructing London as a distinctive socioeconomic locale, see Brian Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston, and Middleton* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1968), Theodore Leinwand, *The City Staged: Jacobean City Comedy, 1603-1613* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1986), Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1995), and Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007).

[44] This kind of oppositional class dynamic is at work in much influential new historicist work, including Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980); Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988); and Phyllis Rackin, *Stages of History: Shakespeare's English Chronicles* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990). More recently, Jean Howard has offered a more nuanced take on the relationship between high and low, arguing that early modern debtor's prison narratives offered elite men a performative script which could turn financial ruin into social success. See Howard, 68-113.

[45] William Carroll describes this overlap as the result of anti-theatrical polemicists characterizing the theater as a gathering place for masterless men, while rogue pamphleteers insisted that rogues were playing at being poor. See Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

unlicensed actors as vagabonds punishable by arrest and corporal punishment along with

other masterless men.[46] In moralist literature, rogues were criticized for *seeming* rather

than being poor, and for counterfeiting acquaintance rather than engaging in actual

friendship. Similarly, actors were dogged by charges of deception for playing roles that

were at odds with their real social status.[47] Critics thus have produced a sizeable

literature of insightful studies analyzing the effect of this shared theatricality, asserting,

for example, that actors' social marginality made the theater a space of social struggle, or

that it made roguery a potentially liberating oppositional performative identity.[48]

Recently, Patricia Fumerton has suggested that there is something misleading

about critical accounts that move from rogue literature to the theater. She advises critics

to "resist the push toward theatricality," to avoid following "a line that leads, as if

necessarily, from historical vagrants to rogue pamphlets to drama or theatricality."[49]

Fumerton argues that such readings reinscribe the rogue pamphlets' erasure of the early

modern poors' material need to authentically perform many different kinds of labor in

order to survive. She thus provides an invaluable corrective to analyses that do not

adequately acknowledge how the concept of rogue theatricality made poverty into a kind

of performance indistinguishable from criminal scheming. But I would submit that one

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[46] The legal equation of rogues and vagabonds was not new, but had roots in statutes published as far back as 1531. See Kinney, 43.

[47] See, for example, Louis Montrose's assertion that rogues and actors share a "protean" social identity. Montrose, *The Purpose of Playing: Shakespeare and the Cultural Politics of the Elizabethan Theatre* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 55. Paola Pugliatti goes as far as to claim that beggary and theater were targets of "the same, unspoken, and maybe half-conscious intolerance towards all forms of devious and illicit impersonation." See Pugliatti, *Beggary and Theater in Early Modern England* (London: Ashgate, 2003), 10, and *passim*.

[48] Jean Howard argues that the broader social concerns voiced by anti-theatricalists indicate that the theater was a site of intense ideological struggle. Bryan Reynolds argues that the performativity of rogue identity offered a liberating "transversal" politics to readers of rogue literature. See Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1994); and Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2003).

[49] See Fumerton, 33-4.

need not avoid the theater altogether in order to heed Fumerton's warning. The

theatricality of stage actors is only one aspect of the dense socio-economic and

ideological transactions that occurred in early modern England's public and private

playhouses.[50] This dissertation follows Fumerton's call to look beyond the issue of rogue

"theatricality" not by examining the material history of the poor, but by focusing on the

theater as a site of discursive negotiation, tracking how the rhetorical tropes and

ideological content of rogue literature were appropriated and reshaped by London's

increasingly prominent playwrights.

By analyzing the relationship between rogue literature and the theater, I not only

reconstruct the sexual ideologies that popular literature – printed and staged –

disseminated in early modern England, but also analyze the effects those ideologies had

on the formation of the regulatory discourses of nation and class. Just as Benedict

Anderson focuses on the popularity of newspapers in his discussion of the rise of modern

nation-states, this dissertation examines the ways two wildly popular literary genres –

stage plays and rogue literature – fashioned imagined communities for their audiences.[51]

On the one hand, one would not want to push an analogy between the modern, mass-

produced newspaper and early modern literary genres too far. For one thing, Anderson's

argument about the newspaper's role in community production relies on the newspaper's

daily editions and the sense of continuity over time such daily repetition fosters; most

members of an early modern audience would not have gone to the theater every day, nor

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[50] Indeed, the theater was one of the most influential producers and disseminators of popular culture in
early modern England. The immense popularity of the playhouses is illustrated by Andrew Gurr's
assertion that "on a conservative estimate the playhouses in their seventy-five years probably entertained
their customers with close to 50 million visits." See Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*
(Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003), 69.
[51] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*
(New York: Verso, 1991).

were there enough examples and reprints of rogue literature to rival a daily newspaper

circulation. On the other hand, the analogy is instructive in that rogue literature and stage

plays both occupied an imprecise place between fact and fiction. Playgoers and readers

alike were likely to consider them sources of history and news about relatively esoteric

discourses such as the secret lingo and rituals of criminal subcultures, the history of

English monarchical succession, or the social niceties of the socially and economically

elite.[52] Furthermore, the repetition, reprinting, and production of sequels of these popular

literatures do anticipate Anderson's point about the ability of the newspaper to create a

virtual "novelistic format," in which represented or narrated events take on an

imaginative existence of their own. Anderson even looks at a particular nation-state as a

kind of "character" that "moves along quietly, awaiting its next reappearance in the

plot."[53] The repeated representation of England, or of the middling sort, may have

worked similarly to create a sense of these "imagined communities" in consumers of

early modern popular literary genres.

In the first half of my dissertation, I focus on the way that rogue sexuality

constructs roguery as an enduring and reproducible social threat. In Chapter Two, "'This

Untoward Generation of Loose Libertines': Rogue Literature and Criminal Sexuality," I

argue that popular pamphlets and moralist writings represent rogues as a "socio-sexual"

identity. That is, rogues are rhetorically constructed as a social category by virtue of their

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[52] Barbara Shapiro's *A Culture of Fact: England 1550-1720* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003), a wide-ranging
discussion of history, poetry, travel literature and sensational "news" pamphlets, argues that distinctions
between fact and fiction were not fully set in the early modern period. Speaking specifically of George
Puttenham's category of "Poesie Historical" and Shakespeare's history plays, she writes that "no chasm yet
separated" poetry and history (198). Some of the city-comedies, too, explicitly imply that their audience
might take their dramatic representations at face value. In Francis Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning
Pestle*, for example, fictional merchant audience members object to the treatment of merchants onstage,
suggesting that an audience could view such treatment as factual.
[53] Anderson, 33.

distinctive desire for sexual liberty, a desire that causes them to choose a life of vagrancy in order to satisfy their lust. This rhetoric transforms the social threat posed by the criminal poor, supplementing violence and dishonesty with the unchecked sexual reproduction of unmanageably large numbers of rogues. At the same time, however, roguery becomes a potential discursive site for identification across social differences. Rogue literature affords relatively well-off audiences the pleasure of imagining what it would be like to abandon their own social and sexual discipline, providing a means of performing roguery without experiencing dire socioeconomic consequences.

Chapter Three, "Pressed Men: Biopolitics and Sodomy in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*," argues that the discourse of counterfeit reproduction informs the language of military conscription, incorporating the rhetoric of rogue sexuality into the machinery of state. Rogues and soldiers would seem to be opposites: the first an overwhelming threat, the latter a regulated defense. Yet the two were often viewed as two sides of the same coin. Ex-soldiers were feared as sources of vagrancy and lawlessness, while criminals and vagrants were thought to comprise the bulk of Elizabeth's conscripted armies. Falstaff describes his conscription of poor idle soldiers as a "misuse of the King's press," metaphorically linking rogues with counterfeiting, a crime of illegitimate reproduction that many moralists associated with sodomy. The play thus transforms the dangerously large numbers of criminal poor described in rogue literature into a national resource, folding roguery and sodomy, surprisingly enough, into England's national mythology. Through a discourse of illegitimate rogue reproduction, social difference and national identity are shown to be mutually constituted in Shakespeare's histories.

In the second half, the dissertation turns from the rhetoric of rogue reproduction to the construction of elite social and sexual identities in urban and courtly communities. Chapter Four, "Mastery, Masculinity, and Sexual Cozening in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*," interprets Jonson's depictions of elite London society through the lens of popular tales of urban con-artists and seductresses. I read Sir Dauphine Eugenie and Mistress Epicoene's efforts to rob Dauphine's uncle of his fortune as a cozening strategy that has surprising affinities with the practice of "cross-biting" found in cony-catching pamphlets. This context injects their partnership with the sexual energy and economic competitiveness characteristic of the partnerships between pimps and prostitutes, turning the play into a contest between emergent models of urban masculinity and femininity, one that can be resolved only by revealing that Epicoene is in fact a loyal, cross-dressed male servant. In this way, the sex/gender codes of the debased criminal underclass are transformed, allowing them to participate in the contemporary cultural construction of new forms of elite masculinity and social capital.

Chapter Five, "Barricadoes for Bellies: Sexual Regulation and Communal Reproduction in *The Winter's Tale*," locates a context for the play's prosecution of Hermione on suspicion of adultery, as well as the expulsion of Perdita as a supposed bastard, in two early modern legal institutions that empowered local communities to regulate illegitimate pregnancies: the poor laws and church court. These legal contexts suggest that Leontes's tyranny lies not only in misprizing his wife and defying the Delphic oracle, but in turning the institutional machinery of sexual regulation against the very community entrusted with its operation. In applying these social institutions to royalty, however, the play also encourages its audience to denaturalize the supposedly

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natural sexual purity of the nobility, to see it as part of the same social processes that

communally produced sexual order in England's church courts and local parishes. The

conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*, in which two pairs of royal lovers unite despite all odds,

has often been read as a capitulation to a naturalizing ideology that links noble birth to

sexual purity through a discourse of wonder. Yet, the earlier invocation of the social

institutions that regulate and construct the discourse of reproduction echoes throughout

the play's closing scenes of social and sexual reconciliation, highlighting the *social*

reproduction of biological succession and troubling the play's attempt to reintegrate

Perdita into the natural line of royal succession.

The rhetoric of rogue sexuality thus is appropriated and redeployed in different

ways in the stage genres of history play, London city comedy, and Shakespearean

romance. Beginning with the politics of rogue sexual reproduction and ending with the

gender dynamics of elite sexuality, this dissertation demonstrates that early modern

literature and culture constructed social differences by fashioning femininity and

masculinity through a discourse of classed sexuality. Perhaps most importantly, it shows

that the sexually marginal is not just, as Peter Stallybrass and Allon White asserted

twenty-five years ago, symbolically central, but socially central to early modern

England.[54]

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[54] See Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986).

Chapter 2

"This Untoward Generation of Loose Libertines":
Sexual Crime and Criminal Sexuality in Early Modern English Rogue Literature

In Gilbert Walker's 1552 dialogue, *A Manifest Detection of Diceplay*, M., an experienced gentleman, describes London's prostitutes, thieves, and confidence men to R., a "raw courtier." He begins by teaching R. how to speak "cant," an underworld language, noting that it often uses legal terminology to describe criminal acts:[55]

> M.: Thus give they [to] their owne conveyance the name of cheting law,
>
> [and] so doo they other termes, [such] as sacking law, high law, fygging
>
> law, and such lyke. . .Therefore, note this at the first: that Sackynge Lawe
>
> signifieth horedom, Hyghe law, robbery; figginge law, picke purse craft.
>
> R.: But what is this to the purpose, or what have chetors a do with
>
> hores or theves?
>
> M.: As moch as with their very entere frende, that hold all of one
>
> corporation. (Walker B4v)

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[55] For the way the popular representation of an early modern underworld mirrored and inverted the social structures of contemporary society, see Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz's "Introduction" to their excellent collection of essays, *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004). On how popular culture more generally accomplished this, see Laurence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 77-90. A more general discussion of the trope of inversion in early modern England can be found in Stuart Clark's "Inversion, Misrule, and the Meaning of Witchcraft," *Past & Present* 87.1 (1980) 98-127.

R. questions the relevance of whoredom, robbery and pocket-picking to the subject of

con-men. Referencing the language of friendship ("entere frendes") and the metaphor of

corporeal integration ("corporation"), M. explains that, like friends, the criminals are

considered *alter idem*, "another the same": whores, thieves and cheaters are as closely

related to each other as if they were all of the same spiritual and bodily substance.[56] But

why should this be so? This chapter takes its cue not from M.'s confident

pronouncements, but from R.'s puzzled questioning of this association, and explores the

early modern discourses about crime and sex that made it possible for M. to advance such

an argument.

Paradoxically, R.'s question underscores the pervasiveness of the connection in

the early modern period between crime and sex. R. accepts the idea that "theves" – a

term that stands in for robbers and pocket-pickers – and "hores" are related. He only

questions how, exactly, cheaters are connected to this pairing. To modern ears, the

concepts of cheating and stealing are immediately and easily related, yet to early modern

ears, this seemingly elementary association is less natural than that between robbery and

prostitution. Such is the power of this association between sexual and criminal behaviors

that even a skeptical persona like R. assumes the rightness of this association. Examining

the enormously popular pamphlets often referred to by critics as "rogue literature," this

chapter investigates the terms of this association between criminal and sexual behavior.

The term "rogue," along with the term "vagabond," is frequently used in these pamphlets

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[56] In a formulation that was much in use in early modern England, Cicero defines friends as having one soul
in two bodies. For a discussion of humanist friendship discourse, and the phrase *alter idem* in particular,
see Shannon, *Sovereign Amity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 1-54. The classic study of
male friendship in the period is Laurens J. Mills, *One Soul in Bodies Twain* (Bloomington: Principia Press,
1937), but Alan Bray's *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003) is the most recent
authoritative study.

to describe the poor and unemployed people, often vagrants and beggars, who were stigmatized as thieves, con-men, and prostitutes in pamphlets like Walker's *Manifest Detection*, as well as those of his better-known literary descendants: Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566); Robert Greene's *A Notable Discovery of Cozenage* (1591), *The Second Part of Cony-Catching* (1591), *The Third Part of Cony-Catching* (1592); and Thomas Dekker's *The Belman of London* (1608), *Lantern and Candlelight* (1608) and *O Per Se O* (1612). These and other pamphlets recount the sexual exploits of rogues in great detail, recording when and where they have sex, with whom, and in what manner. More specifically, rogues are often described wholly or in part in terms of their sexuality: they are purported to be lecherous beasts, and popular rogue "taxonomies" define them through their animalistic sexual behaviors.

This chapter asks why it is that rogues are almost never mentioned without reference to their reputed sexual practices. I argue that these repeated sexual characterizations culminate in the representation of rogues as possessing a distinctive desire for sexual liberty, the pursuit of which *causes* them to choose the socially marginal life of roguery. In assigning this motive to rogues, the pamphlets construct a deep connection between disobedience, or the desire for social liberty, and lust, the desire for sexual liberty. This connection is not merely associative, but sequential and causal, with sexual desire positioned as the originary basis for their criminal behavior. The rogue's powerful desire for sexual freedom renders him not simply someone who engages in illicit sexual acts, but someone who evinces a kind of sexual identity. Unlike modern sexual subjectivity, which denotes the truth of the subject's interiority, the literary

rogue's sexual identity becomes the defining characteristic of his subaltern *social*
identity.[57]

The pamphlets elaborate upon this notion of rogue socio-sexual identity by
constructing a rogue counter-culture complete with a social hierarchy and institutions
meant to ensure its reproduction.[58] In assigning responsibility for the (re)production of
rogues to social institutions like rogue apprenticeship, these pamphlets obscure the real
economic and social upheavals that financially devastated an increasingly large segment
of the population, who, contrary to contemporary popular belief, did not choose their
subsequent social abjection.[59] The rogue's sexual identity is thus deployed to justify and
explain his social marginality, identifying him not as an unfortunate victim of structural
economic failure, but as a producer of it – rogues' supposedly prodigious capacity for
sexual reproduction is viewed as potentially overwhelming mainstream society with
increasing numbers of new rogues, with their penurious need and voracious appetites.

In analyzing representations of rogue sexual identity, this chapter intervenes in
discussions of two fields of scholarship: the interpretation of early modern rogue
literature and the history of sexuality in the early modern period. Recent scholars have
argued that rogue pamphlets were a response to the fundamental threat that migratory

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[57] My thinking about the historical construction of sexual identity is indebted to David Halperin's *How to Do the History of Homosexuality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), particularly the chapter entitled, "Forgetting Foucault," 24-47.

[58] I discuss the concept of "socio-sexual identity" in more detail below. The term is borrowed from Theodore Leinwand's "Redeeming Beggary/Buggery in *Michaelmas Term*," *ELH* 61.1 (Spring 1994), 53-70.

[59] In *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 268-72, Linda Woodbridge provides a good summary on the causes of the increase in English poverty during the early modern period. Fumerton, 53-56, rightly points out the "freedom" of the mobile poor was forced on them as a consequence of their inability to find steady employment.

workers posed to the hierarchical structure of early modern society.[60]   Fear of these

"masterless men," and the freedom from social authority they allegedly enjoyed, led

writers of rogue literature to demonize them as dangerous criminals.[61]   Linda

Woodbridge traces the coarse language and tales of merry trickery of rogue pamphlets

back to the literary tradition of the jest book, arguing that in portraying rogues as crude

grasping tricksters the pamphlets deride and dehumanize the poor.[62]   Patricia Fumerton

emphasizes that while rogues are sometimes portrayed as seeking honest work when they

can find it, the pamphlets play down this fact, and as a result "the itinerant laborer

becomes thinly disguised as a deceitful rogue."[63]   This chapter builds upon these insights

regarding the ideological and material conditions of rogues, vagabonds, and beggars, but

argues that they are incomplete to the extent that they do not take into account the

centrality of the rogue's sexual deviance to his or her depiction in these pamphlets.[64]   As

we will see, the pursuit of sexual liberty informs the rogue's reputation as much as social

disobedience does. From Walker's claim that rogues and whores are of the same

"corporation," to Greene and Dekker's later insistence that rogues are "addicted to

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[60] For a description of early modern England as a "nation [that] was regulated by obedience to a hierarchy of superiors leading up to the King," see Lawrence Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 15-21.

[61] A.L. Beier's *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England, 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1985) discusses the early modern concept of masterlessness in 8-13 and *passim.*

[62] Woodbridge, 80-108.

[63] Fumerton, 36.

[64] Others have briefly noted this emphasis on rogue sexual behavior in a more general way. William Carroll discusses rogue women's sexuality in Harman as "aggressive, disorderly and a social threat," but does not see sexuality as defining rogues of both sexes. See *Fat King, Lean Beggar* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 90. Woodbridge notes Harman's "keen interest" in rogue sexuality, and argues that it is characteristic of Harman's tendency to project respectable society's deficiencies onto rogues (Woodbridge 65). In arguing that Harman held conventional views on sexual morality, A.L. Beier observes that Harman's *Caveat* consistently criticizes male and female rogues for their sexual incontinence; Beier, "New Historicism, Historical Context, and the Literature of Roguery," *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, 100-105. Brian Reynolds's *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002) has done the most thorough job of exploring rogue sexuality, but rather than stressing the primacy of the sexual in defining the rogue, he views it as a small component of the larger "liberty" from social strictures rogues allegedly enjoyed. See Reynolds, 55-63.

whores" and "long onelye for horse-flesh," the literature of roguery frequently and

prominently asserts that sexual incontinence is a defining mark of the rogue (*Manifest

Detection*, op. cit.; *Noteable Discovery* B3v; *Belman* D3). This chapter traces the

discursive evolution of the rogue from a figure infamous for sexual incontinence to a

character whose social identity is *determined* by his or her sexual desire.[65]

In arguing for the centrality of sexual transgression to the formation of "the

rogue" as a social identity, this chapter is part of an emerging body of scholarship on the

history of what Melissa Mowry calls "sexually subordinate subjects," such as the

prostitute or the adulterer.[66] Much of this literature is interested in recovering the lives of

such subjects, in examining the representations of adultery or prostitution in order to

figure out what it was like to be an adulterer or prostitute. Some of those who read or

heard about rogues from these pamphlets were probably what we would classify today as

the mobile poor, and they may have identified with the rogue figures described in these

pamphlets. But I am less interested in the processes of appropriation or interpolation

through which such people could have recognized themselves in the discourse of rogue

literature than I am in the relationship between sexuality and "rogueness" that these

pamphlets made available to people who did *not* think of themselves as rogues, but were

invested of thinking of *others* as socially marginal. More specifically, I am concerned

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[65] In looking at the centrality of sexual reputation to the rogue's social identity, my work is similar to much feminist scholarship on the correlation between women's sexual reputation and their social position. My chapter suggests that the pamphlets construct roguery as a sexualized insult to both men and women, suggesting that sexual reputation is just as important to masculine as feminine social identity, and that it overlapped with socio-economic reputation. An important study of gender, sexual reputation, and slander is Laura Gowing's *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Pres, 1996). Studies of sexual reputation have generally excluded the figure of the rogue, dismissing the term "rogue" it as a "non-sexual word" (Gowing 63). For a discussion of indigent women and sexual reputation, see Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998) 295-98.

[66] Melissa Mowry, "Sex and the Archive: Current Work on Subordinate Identities and Early Modern Cultural Formation," *Journal of British Studies* 44.1 (2005), 178-186, esp. 178.

with how the representation of rogue sexual identity in popular rogue pamphlets helped

define how rogues were seen to pose a threat to social order.

It may strike some readers as odd that I examine rogue literature, which is often

racy, prurient, and humorous, to explore the marginalizing and stigmatizing of the early

modern mobile poor. Expressing a sentiment widely shared among readers of these

pamphlets, Paul Slack describes the literary rogue as "in many ways attractive, if not

romantic."[67] I would not disagree – often the rogues are funny, often they criticize and

get the better of their social superiors, often they seem to enjoy "the libertye of ther

wycked lyef [that] ys so sweete unto them," as Edward Hext, justice of the peace in

Somerset, wrote to Lord Burghley in 1596.[68] But it is important to realize that the

entertainment these pamphlets offered, and the subversive impulses the rogue's charm

might have inspired did not prevent these pamphlets from having real and, I would argue,

oppressive effects in the social world of early modern England. There is no evidence that

the charm of the rogue pamphlets contributed to a lessening of the culture's fear and

oppression of the mobile poor, and much evidence that suggests the opposite. In perhaps

the most striking example, Tudor anti-vagrancy laws were directly influenced by the

invective of the literature of roguery – the damning language and descriptions of rogue

life were lifted directly from the pamphlets and used to justify the "Payne and

Punyshment" prescribed in Elizabeth's 1597 anti-vagrancy statute.[69] Even Edward Hext,

apparently sensitive to the "sweete" allure of the rogue's "libertye," only references this

allure in order to argue that harsher punishments and greater vigilance are required in

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[67] Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England*, (New York: Longman, 1988), 105.
[68] *Tudor Economic Documents*, (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1924), 339.
[69] Woodbridge convincingly makes this case in her first chapter. The quote is from 39 Elizabeth, c. 4, qtd. in *Tudor Economic Documents*, 355.

order to control England's rogue population.[70] Attempting to classify and define the margins of society, rogue literature used sexuality as a discursive means of producing and justifying social difference.

The fact remains, however, that the struggle to control sexual lust was understood to be a universal experience among early modern Christians, even and especially among the settled, married, and godly. Affording its relatively well-off audience the pleasure of imagining what it would be like to abandon their social and sexual discipline, the rogue's excessive sexuality functioned as a potential discursive site for identification across social differences. Though it did not lessen the real oppression of the itinerant poor, in some cases the figure of the socio-sexual rogue may have led rogue literature's audience to identification, if not to sympathy.

I. Looking for the Rogue, Finding Sex

The foundation of later depictions of rogue sexual identity appears to be Gilbert Walker's earlier insistence, in *A Manifest Detection*, that rogues and whores engaged in similar forms of disreputable labor. Viewing rogues as the regular social and economic associates of prostitutes, Walker argues that the stratagems of con-men readily utilize the skills of their prostitute associates:

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[70] These pamphlets, particularly those of Robert Greene, explicitly set out to entertain their readers with "merry" tales, even as they moralize about the spiritual and legal consequences of such merriment. Moralists and jurists may have only seen a growing threat, but what of other readers, the ones who consumed these tales as merry entertainments? Craig Dionne suggests that, like the period's courtesy manuals, these pamphlets could work as conduct treatises, training early modern Londoners, in particular, how to behave in the dangerous, exciting, and changing metropolis. This line of argument suggests a similarity between these pamphlets and Dekker's *The Gul's Hornbook*, a satirical guide for urban gallants. Nonetheless, the sexual stigma these pamphlets produced around the concept of roguery provides a necessary context in which to understand the appeal such lurid stories might have had, as well as the material or ideological effects such an appeal may have produced – a question to which I will return at the end of this chapter.

If they [con-men] find that he [the victim] taketh pleasure in the company

of femals, then seke they to strike him at the sacking law. And take this

alwais for a maxime: that all the bauds in a countrey be of the chetor's

familiar acquaintaunce. Therefore, it shal not be hard at al times to

provid for this amorous knight a lewed, lecherous lady to keep him loving

company. Then fal they to banketing, to minstrels, masking, and much

is the cost the sily cozen shall be at in Jewels, apparell, and otherwise. (D1r)

Walker explains that con-men and prostitutes are not only "familiar acquaintaunce[s],"

but also business partners. With the rogue maneuvering the victim over to the prostitute,

both figures share the same social milieu and the same illegal economic enterprise. The

rogue thus functions as a covert pimp, playing a crucial role in the erotic manipulation

central to the prostitute's profession. Robert Greene later elaborates on this trope by

insisting that prostitutes can act like rogues just as skillfully as rogues can abet

prostitution. In *The Second Part of Cony-Catching* (1591), Greene argues that prostitutes

are cozeners, too: "common harlots . . . are alwaies Foists and Pickepockets, and seeke

the spoile of all such as meddle with them" (D2r). Here, Greene deepens the connections

between the two groups by implying that prostitutes are engaged in the same activities as

rogues. This chiasmatic relationship between prostitutes and con-men, in which each is

indicted with the other's crimes, blurs the difference between the two groups.

Rogue discourse elaborates the associations between crime and sex by describing

rogues and prostitutes as sexual partners, as well. In Greene's *Notable Discovery of*

Cozenage (1591), we find that rogues' "meanes [are] as il as their liuing, for they are al

either wedded to whores, or so addicted to whores, that what they get from honest men,

they spend in bawdie houses among harlots" (B3v). Here, Greene argues con-men are

either married to prostitutes or erotically fixated on them. Eventually, Greene combines

the sexual and economic partnership of rogues and prostitutes in the act of "cross-biting."

A cross-biter is a man who interrupts a prostitute's assignations and blackmails her

clients, after which the prostitute and cross-biter share the profits. Pretending that he is a

wronged husband, the cross-biter forces the client to compensate him for "dishonoring"

his wife. Greene's *Notable Discovery*, however, claims that cross-biters, "to maintein

themselues, either marry with some stale whore, or els forsooth keep one as their frend"

(C3r). In describing this criminal-sexual practice, then, Greene transforms the

performance of this fake marriage into a real one. In *A Disputation Between A He-Cony-*

Catcher and a She-Cony-Catcher (1592) Greene concludes that the sexual partnership

between prostitutes and rogues creates an embodied connection, in that the humoral

bodies of prostitutes and rogues are marked by the contaminated residue of their

relationship. He declares that anyone who deals with a prostitute either "must hazard his

soule, blemish his good name, loose his goods, light vppon diseases, or at the least haue

been tyed to the humor of an harlot" (A3r). In suggesting that sexual and economic

relations with prostitutes mark the rogue's humoral body, Greene literalizes Walker's

metaphor of the rogue "corporation."[71]

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[71] Recent studies of the early modern humoral body include Gail Kern Paster's *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993) and *Humoring the Body: Emotions and the Shakespearean Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Michael Schoenfeldt's *Bodies and Selves: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and the two edited collections: *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004) by Paster, Mary Floyd-Wilson and Katherine Rowe; and *Environment and Embodiment in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007) by Floyd-Wilson and Garret Sullivan. For a general discussion of prostitution in the period see Paul Griffiths, "The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London," *Continuity and Change*, 8:1 (1993), 39-63. On the significance of the term "whore," see Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*.

Other rogue pamphlets insist that the rogue's sexual body defines his or her social identity. John Awdeley's *The Fraternity of Vagabonds* (1561) and Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566) create taxonomies of kinds of rogues, identifying the criminal and sexual behaviors that define each one as a type. The rogue's sexual practices are thus a definitive part of the social identities that the taxonomy constructs. Awdeley's *Fraternity* demonstrates its taxonomic claims from the start, with a heading that proclaims its intent to describe "The Fraternitye of Vacabondse, both rufling and beggerly, Men and women, Boys and Gyrles, wyth their proper names and qualities" (A2r). Drawing distinctions among vagabonds according to gender and age differences, as well as whether they are violent (as "rufling" vagabonds were reported to be) or peaceful, the pamphlet promises to anatomize and classify rogue society according to each vagabond type's distinct behavioral and social qualities. Claiming to delineate the "proper names and qualities" that define each type of criminal, it advertises a great deal of precision in its depictions. Many of the behaviors that characterize the various rogue types in the *Fraternity* are ones we might expect: pocket-picking, horse-theft, violence, trickery. There are, of course, some vagabonds who are described as committing no offense other than being homeless and unsettled, a crime itself according to the period's laws against vagrancy. But in reading the pamphlet, one is struck by how often Awdeley seems incapable of defining the criminal without reference to his or her sexual behavior. Many rogue types include some indication of sexual behavior, and in some types sexual behavior is described to the exclusion of other criminal practices.

A prominent example is Awdeley's description of the "Upright Man," the longest entry in his short pamphlet, given here in its entirety:

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An Upright man is one that goeth wyth the trunchion of a staffe, which staffe they

cal a Filtchman. This man is of so much authority, that meeting with any of his

profession, he may cal them to accompt, & commaund a share or snap unto him

selfe, of al that they have gained by their trade in one moneth. And if he doo them

wrong, they haue no remedy agaynst hym, though he beate them, as he useth

commonly to do. He may also commaund any of their women, which they cal

Doxies, to serve his turne. He hath ye chiefe place at any market walke & other

assembles, & is not of any to be controled. (A2v)

Awdeley defines the nature of the Upright Man by describing his rights and status in the

imagined hierarchy of criminals, the tools of his trade, and his customary behaviors. At

first, his criminal behavior seems determined by his ability to control the finances of his

peers: he can call any criminal to "accompt" and "commaund a share" "of al that they

have gained" in the past month. As the passage continues, however, the Upright Man's

powers expand: he can not only call other men to account, but can "doo them wrong,"

"beate them," and "commaund" their women to sleep with him. The description of the

Upright Man's characteristics moves swiftly from robbery to assault to sexual coercion.

Thus, if the Upright Man's propensity for violence and robbery defines him as a criminal

vagabond, so too, Awdeley intimates, does his tendency toward domination and,

presumably, sexual violence. This definitional link between criminal and sexual activity

is underscored by the double use of the word "commaund": the upright man can

"commaund a share" of the criminal's earnings just as he can "commaund any of their

women." The identical language suggests that the criminal and sexual behaviors of the

Upright Man are equally important in defining him as a criminal. The dual behavioral

implications of his rogue identity are signaled by the name "Upright Man," a pun on tumescence that indicates his constant readiness for sexual activity, while simultaneously commenting ironically on his lawlessness.

Awdeley's mid-sixteenth century *Fraternity of Vagabonds* provoked many imitators, including Harman, whose *Caveat* was the most influential rogue pamphlet of the century. Harman continues the tradition of classifying criminals by reference to their sexual behaviors, as in his own more expansive description of Upright Men, which explains that they meet women in "some barne or backe house nere adioining, where they couch comly togither, as it were dogge and byche, and he that is hardyest mays have his choyse" (B3r). In describing "Abraham Men," or those who feign disease, Harman makes sure to tell us that "all wemen that wander, be at their commaundement" (D1r). The telltale sexual behavior is also observed in the "Drunken Tinkers," who, Harman tells us, "never goe without their doxies . . . And full sone will they bee weary of them, and have a new" (E3r). A certain sexual libertinism – a tendency to have sex in public spaces and to change partners frequently – is shared by practically all the rogues in Awdeley and Harman's texts. In the wake of these mid sixteenth-century pamphlets, later writers imagine rogues as a generation defined by their sexuality: in 1591, Robert Greene refers to rogues as "this untoward generation of loose Libertines," while in 1616, the preacher John Downame calls them "a promiscuous generation . . . [who know] no law but their sensuall lust" (*Second Part* A1r, *The Plea of the Poore*, 38).

While male vagabonds are defined in part by their libertine sexual behavior, the female vagabonds described in these tracts are often defined wholly by sexual "looseness." That is, their sexual behavior alone generally defines their place in the

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criminal taxonomy. Consider the description of the "Doxy," mentioned earlier in

Awdeley's entry on the Upright Man. Awdeley writes that male vagabonds call female

vagabonds "Altham if she be hys wyfe, & if she be his harlot, she is called hys Doxy"

(A3r). These women are described exclusively in terms of their sexual behaviors in

relation to men – in this context, the word harlot can mean an unchaste woman or a

prostitute. Whether she is a prostitute or simply unchaste, the Doxy is defined as a

vagabond solely by the fact that she is the sexual partner of a male vagabond: no criminal

behaviors such as theft, trickery or violence are ascribed to her. Instead, criminal

behavior drops out of the discussion altogether, and sexual behavior becomes a metonym

for criminal behavior. Such is also the case in Awdeley's definition of the "Kitchin

Morts": "A Kitchin Mortes is a Gyrle, she is brought at her full age to the Upryght man

to be broken, and so she is called a Doxy, until she come to the honor of an Altham"

(A3r). The Kitchin Morts, on the verge of being "broken" in sexually, is described as a

vagabond not as a result of any sexual *behavior*, but on the basis of her sexual *potential*.

These taxonomical pamphlets thus twin the concepts of sexual and criminal behavior to

the point that, at least in descriptions of female vagabonds, even sexual *capacity* – a

latent, proleptic tendency toward sexual liberty – can act as a metonym for criminality.

Later rogue pamphlets shift this metonymic relation between sex and crime from

the sexual capacity of female rogues to the sexual desire of male rogues, arguing that

sexual desire causes men to choose a life of roguery. In 1608, Thomas Dekker publishes

The Belman of London, which largely plagiarizes Walker, Awdeley, and Harman, as well

as Greene's more contemporary work. The tract was apparently a great success, for he

publishes a more original sequel, entitled *Lantern and Candlelight*, the same year. The

next year a second edition of *Lantern* is published, and three years later comes a third, expanded edition. The added material consists of information allegedly provided by a vagabond who had been employed by Dekker as a servingman. In this pamphlet, Dekker explains that he has discovered the motive that leads rogues to their criminal lifestyle:

> Of him I learned, that the cause why so many of this wicked Generation wander
>
> up and downe this Kingdome is, the free command, and abundant use they have
>
> of Women: for if you note them well, in their marching, not a *Tatterdemalion*
>
> walkes his round, (be hee young, be hee olde) but hee hath his *Mort,* or his *Doxie*
>
> at his heeles, (his Woman, or his Whore). (L3r)

According to Dekker's alleged informant, vagabonds are not just sexual libertines; they are vagabonds *because* they are sexual libertines. Male rogues are described as more than sexually incontinent: in their choice of the rogue lifestyle they are originally motivated not by penury, greed, or laziness, but by sexual desire. Not simply the sum of his sexual misdeeds, the rogue is at bottom defined by an immoderate desire for sexual liberty that leads him to choose a life of roguery. In defining the rogue as possessing a sexual desire which determines his subordinate social identity, these pamphlets produce rogue identity as a kind of sexual identity. Rogue literature's tendency to define, describe and differentiate among rogues thus contributes to its depiction of the rogue as a sexual identity. Here I follow Sarah Salih's argument about the relationship between genre and identity: "Whether a sexual identity comes into visibility [in a particular text] is thus dependent on the particular needs of the genre: whether acts constitute identities depends on whether [a genre] need[s] them to" (125).[72] The formal properties of rogue literature

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[72] See Sarah Salih's "Sexual Identities: A Medieval Perspective," in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 112-130.

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thus produce rogue sexual identity as a discursive effect of the pamphlets' project of social and sexual identification and differentiation.

II. The Beast in the Rogue

Awdeley and Harman's portrayal of rogue sexuality goes beyond assertions of rogues' sexual incontinence to include more detailed descriptions of their sexual behaviors. Most often, these authors rely on a vocabulary of "beastliness" to describe criminal sexuality.[73] According to Awdeley, rogues practice a bizarre form of marriage, wherein they pledge to stay together "untill death depart the maried folke, which is after this sort: When they fronte to a dead Horse or any dead Catell, then they shake hands and so depart every one of them a severall way" (A4r). In rogue marriage, the lives that the betrothed rogues pledge to each other are not their own, but those of animals, referred to as "the maried folke." And like the animals whose corpses undo their marriage, the rogues are portrayed as unable or unwilling to commit to each other for any significant amount of time. In this sense, even as Awdeley grants the rogues a kind of marriage and

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[73] It is important to distinguish between beastliness and bestiality. To conflate beastliness and bestiality is to risk the assumption that acts of bestiality must always result in an identity-effect of dehumanization and bestialization. It is also to replicate the assumption that social groups that have been dehumanized as "beastly" must also practice bestiality. Such a distinction is also useful because beastliness describes a personal characteristic, while bestiality usually describes an isolated act. For example, Harman and Awdeley consistently represent the rogue as beastly, but never describe him or her as practicing zoophilia. It is true that, as many critics have noted, beastliness and bestiality are often linked because bestiality was a crime that threatened the cultural distinction between humans and animals. But the fact that bestiality threatened this distinction does not mean that every act of bestiality was thought to transform a person's status from human to beastly. Acts of bestiality do not always imply a corresponding dehumanization of the persons involved, and, as Harman's pamphlet shows, people can be dehumanized, and marked as beastly, even if they are not thought to engage in zoophilia. The classic historical study of the precarious animal/human divide is Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Allen Lane, 1983). More recent studies include Joyce Salisbury, *The Beast Within: Animals in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1994), Bruce Boeher, *Shakespeare Among the Animals: Nature and Society in the Drama of Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), and Erica Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006). Thomas also writes on the belief in inter-species progeny, but a more recent study of monstrous births is Julie Crawford, *Marvelous Protestantism: Monstrous Births in Post-Reformation England* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

thus a measure of respectability, he simultaneously denies that their marital sexual

behavior has an investment in human social relations, but links it instead to the lives of

animals. If he were simply punning on the way that marriage was supposed to last until

death, Awdeley easily could have said that married rogues separate upon passing a

cemetery; instead, he claims that rogue marriages are sundered by animal deaths.

Harman, too, represents criminals as practicing a style of sexual activity that he calls

"beastly." Again and again, he implies that criminal sexual behavior is akin to that of

animals, as in the description of the Upright Man having sex as if "it were dogge and

byche." Later, Harman informs his readers that Doxies, or as he calls them "these beastly

brybinge [i.e., thieving] breeches, serve many tymes for baudy purposes" (F2r). Harman

not only claims that Doxies are promiscuous, but, to translate, calls them "beastly

thieving pudenda." This description metaphorizes Doxies as beasts and metonymically

substitutes their genitals for their entire person. In making such comparisons, Harman

not only describes criminals' sexual behaviors as animalistic, but often also describes

their motivations as "beastly." Harman claims, for instance, that the Autem Mort, or

church-married female vagabond, is "as chaste as a Cowe I have that gooeth to Bull every

moone, with what Bull she careth not" (G1r). Harman does not simply metaphorize

promiscuous sex as bovine, but suggests that the mentality of the Autem Mort, what she

"careth" about, is comparable to that of a cow.

The barnyard was a familiar context in portrayals of vagabond sexual encounters,

with Harman's description of the Wild Rogue's nightly exploits its fullest expression:

> For this is their custome, that when they meete in barne at night, every one getteth
>
> a make to lye withall, and there chaunce to be twentye in a company, as their is

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sometime more, and sometime lesse: for to one man that goeth abroad, there ar at

the least two women, which never make it straunge when they bee called,

although shee never knew him before. Then when the day doth appeare, hee

rouses him up and shakes his eares, and away wandering where he maye gette

ought to the hurt of others. (C3r)

The passage stages a scene of sexual coupling in a barn, using a number of constructions

that evoke beastly sex. First, the Wild Rogue's female sexual partner is called a "make,"

a word that the *OED* reminds us could refer to both human and animal sexual partners

(*OED*, n.[1], def. 2). Second, the passage states that the women sleep with rogues, and

"neuer make it straunge when they bee called, although shee neuer knew him before."

Such women are eager to turn the strange into the intimate, lacking the social

discrimination characteristic of orderly human sexual relations. In this sense, their lack

of judgment is likened to that of an indiscriminate animal. Finally, the passage ends

when the Wild Rogue awakens and, like a dog, "shakes his eares" before "wandering"

away. After describing the rogue's beastly sexual behavior in detail, only at the end of

this passage does Harman begin to discuss the rogue's particular crimes, the "hurt of

others" he allegedly causes. Embodying the indiscriminate behaviors and mentalities of

an animal, Harman's beastly rogues are defined primarily in terms of their animal sexual

behaviors.

Because of the way early moderns understood the relationship between humans

and animals, once vagabonds were described as satisfiers of beastly lusts – whether these

satisfactions came from wandering, stealing, drinking, or sexual behavior – it was almost

inevitable that their behavior would soon be explained in terms of their *desire* for sensual

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liberty.[74] As Erica Fudge has shown, the difference between humans and animals in this period was largely understood to be based on the way that humans used their faculty of reason to rule their emotions, or "passions," as they were often termed, while animals lacked this ability.[75] This defining distinction between human and animal, however, was far from secure. Humans were constantly in danger of "descending" to the status of animals by allowing themselves to be ruled by their passions.[76] Thomas Wright, in his *Passions of the Minde* (1601), writes that "Passions which reside in the sensitive appetite . . . beasts most desire, yea children and sensuall persons wholly seeke after. . . for pleasure is the polestar of all inordinate passions."[77] Wright argues that beasts were associated with a particular kind of motivation: the motivation for pleasure. "Lust, in particular," writes Keith Thomas, "was synonymous with the animal condition, for the sexual connotations of such terms as 'brute,' 'beastial,' and 'beastly' were much stronger than they are today."[78]   To allow your actions to be guided by the "polestar" of pleasure, then, is to betray a beastly desire. To do so consistently, as rogues were thought to do, is to be a particular type of person, a "sensuall person." In this sense, the accusation of "beastly" fornication used sexual desire as a means to cast doubt on one's claim to humanity, the most basic of social identities.

Associating rogue sexuality with beastliness reinforced the sense that rogues inhabited a sexual identity that was distinct from their more human social superiors. To

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[74] The idea of a distinct rogue sexual desire is implicit in Greene's claim, cited above, that rogues are "*addicted* to whores."

[75] Fudge writes: "Following one's passions is an abandonment of reason and is to live like an animal with only the use of the sensitive soul" (11).

[76] Schoenfeldt observes that in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, "to succumb to the affections is finally to become a beast." Throughout the study, Schoenfeldt uses the terms "affections," "emotions" and "passions" interchangeably, but he is always referring to the embodied emotions known as passions, often quoting from Wright's *Passions of the Minde*.

[77] Qtd. in Fudge, *Brutal Reasoning*, 47.

[78] Thomas, 38.

be a beastly rogue was thus to inhabit an *identity* in Ruth Mazo Karras and David Lorenzo Boyd's sense of being a "certain type of person," as opposed to "a person who did certain things."[79] This is true not only because rogue taxonomies imply that beastly rogues should be understood as social types, but also because rogue pamphlets represent rogues as pre-disposed to sexual crime. Such an understanding is made explicit by Robert Greene, who in defining the cross-biter, identifies him as one of the

> men of the eight laws before rehearsed, either high Lawiers [highwaymen],
> Versers [cheats], Nips [pickpockets], Conny-catchers [con-men], or such of
> the like fraternity. These, when their other trades fail. . . vse the benefite of
> their wiues or friends to the cros-biting of such as lust after their filthie
> enormities. (C3r)

Greene thinks of the rogue as someone who, if his previous criminal employments failed, is equally inclined to the sexual cozening known as cross-biting. Rogues are thus defined as a fraternity not by their disposition toward criminal acts in general (in fact, they each have their own criminal specialty), but by their common capacity to become cross-biters – a capacity that transcends their individual criminal trade. In such portrayals, rogue identity becomes a kind of sexual identity: more than the sum of his or her acts, the criminal's sexual incontinence is an expression of a sexuality that determines his or her social position as a rogue.

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[79] I borrow this language from Karras and Boyd's argument that English medieval prostitution could be considered a "sexual orientation." See "'*Ut Cum Muliere*:' A Male Transvestite Prostitute in Fourteenth-Century London," in *Sexualities in History: A Reader*, eds. Kim M. Phillips and Barry Reay (New York: Routledge, 2002), 90-104, esp. 92-3. See also Karras, "Prostitution and the Question of Sexual Identity in Medieval Europe ," *Journal of Women's History* 11.2 (1999) 159-177. Not all studies accept the idea of an early modern category of sexual identity. See, for example, Michael Jesse Rocke, *Forbidden Friendships: Homosexuality and Male Culture in Renaissance Florence* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996).

Across the pamphlets, the construction of rogue social identity by reference to sexuality occurs in three steps. First, rogues are described as incorrigible fornicators, consumed by incontinent sexual desire. It is this excessive desire that leads them to become rogues, separating them from members of ordered society. If they are masterless men, it is because they *choose* sexual and social liberty over conformity. Second, this disordered sexual desire is threaded through an understanding of rogues as sub-human and beastly. Sexual desire and beastliness are mutually constitutive: rogues are beastly because of their sexual incontinence, and their sexual incontinence signals their beastliness. Third, the rogue's beastly sexual desire implies that he or she is an inherently "sensuall person," and therefore less human than people who can control their sexuality and avoid the dangerous allure of social disorder: the rogue's "sweet liberty." In this sense, the pamphlets construct the rogue not simply as a subaltern social category, but as a socio-sexual identity, whose animalistic desires set them apart from the rest of society. Theodore Leinwand coined the term "socio-sexual" to describe the way that sexual practices accrue social meaning; I use it here to describe the way that social practices accrue sexual meaning, the way that immoderate and ungovernable sexual desires come to define the rogue's social marginality.[80]

III. Reproducing Rogues

To construct rogue identity as a disobedient "other" against which to define ordered society, these pamphlets present rogue sexual identity as a *social* phenomenon, as the identity of a certain class of deviant people defined by their sexual desires and social status. The most obvious way in which the pamphlets do this is by defining rogues as

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[80] Leinwand, "Redeeming Beggary/Buggery in *Michaelmas Term*," 53-4.

embodying a coherent social group that has its own social structure with hierarchically delineated "names and qualities." But in order for rogues to be seen as a consistent threat for multiple generations of English, rogues need to be figured as composing an identity that is capable of reproduction. Rogue identity is constructed as a social phenomenon by virtue of its institutions, history, and biological inheritance. In this, it mirrors the features of other social identities in English society. The English aristocracy, for example, reproduced their superior social status historically by tracing their bloodlines through the ages, biologically through arranged marriages, and institutionally through a discourse of gentility that trained new members in what it meant to occupy the social status of the aristocrat.[81] Further, the guilds of the laboring crafts, which provide a more immediate correlate of the rogue "fraternitye," ensured the reproduction of their social identity by training and reproducing new guild members through the institutional practice of apprenticeship, and created their own history through the construction of guild halls, the beautification of parish and guild churches, and the maintenance of guild records.[82] But as we might expect from the sexualized depictions of rogues, all the institutions that enable the reproduction of rogue identity in these pamphlets are erotically charged.

In Harman's text, the rogue's socio-sexual identity is given an institutional history through an anecdote of sexual libertinism that is presented as an account of the rogue's

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[81] Lawrence Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1965) discusses the challenges early modern aristocrats faced as they sought to hold on to and expand their power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He examines heraldry and bloodlines in 15-36, marriage in 269-302, and traces the institutional shift from training in military matters to humanist education in 303-331.
[82] Guilds often sought to bind their history to the history of the locality in which they were situated by building guildhalls, bridges, statues and decorating churches. In building stained-glass windows in a parish chapel in Ludlow, for example, the Palmers' guild used "the figure of its heavenly patron [to] recall events or themes in the history of the local community." See Gervase Rosser, "Going to the Fraternity Feast," *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994), 430-446, esp. 445. On apprenticeship, see Ilana Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 84-132; Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 100-48; and Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 161-69.

origins. In the introduction to his pamphlet, Harman proposes an investigation of "when [rogues] toke their original and beginning, howe longe they have exercised their execrable wandringe about (A3r). His investigations culminate in the story of a very old servant, who tells Harman of his master's funeral, which occurred long ago and attracted many beggars requiring accommodation. Harman recounts the servant's tale:

> Then was thereto prepared for them a great and a large barne. . . [They] remained all night in the barn, and the same barne being serched with light in the night by this old man and others, they tolde seven score persons of men, every of them having his woman, except it were two wemen that lay alone togyther for some especiall cause. Thus having their makes to make mery withall: the buriall was tourned to bousing and belly cheere, mourning to myrth, fasting to feasting, prayer to pastyme, and pressing of paps and lamenting to lecherye. (A4r)

Obviously, this passage does little to explain how rogues "toke their original and beginning," but it does suggest that, as far back as Harman can tell, the rogue's social deviance has been complemented by sexual deviance. In describing the rogues' origins, then, Harman uses this example not of their crimes – there is no theft, scamming, or trickery here – but of their beastly sexual behavior. Sexual activity takes place in a barnyard setting, and the rogues congregate there by the hundreds, like animals, all having sex with each other at once. The only sexual act explicitly described, "the pressing of paps," can mean milking a dairy animal as well as stroking a human breast. Having established them as beastly and sexually incontinent, Harman offers no further proof of their criminal activity. His account of the rogues' origins only makes sense in

the context of a cultural logic in which the sexual and social identity of rogues are conceptually linked, and follow one after the other.

In rogue literature, the institutional reproduction of rogues was accomplished through a process that mimicked guild apprenticeship. A new rogue looking to be accepted into the brotherhood would be "stalled to the rogue," an initiation process in which the initiate would pawn his most expensive piece of clothing and give the money to an Upright Man, who then welcomed him into the rogue brotherhood by pouring a pot of ale on his head (Harman B4r-v). Dekker sets this ritual at a large rogue meeting, at which an initiate "suffered himself to be stript" before being stalled, while the group that stripped him was "hanging about him for joy, like so many dogges about a beare" (Dekker, *Belman* C2r). Exuding the ravenous joy of canines at a bear-bating, these rogues take pleasure in the naked initiate's vulnerability. Rogue socio-sexual identity's reproductive institutions are charged with sexual energy.

Rogue discourse also suggests that rogue identity can be sexually reproduced. For example, the identity of Harman's Wild Rogue is determined by birth: "A Wild Rogue is he that is *born* a Rogue. He is more subtle and more given by nature to all kind of knavery than the other, as beastly begotten in barn or bushes, and from his infancy traded up in treachery; yea, and before ripeness of years doth permit, wallowing in lewd lechery. . ." (Harman C3r). Beginning by arguing that the Wild Rogue's behavior is a natural tendency – he is "given [to it] by nature" at birth – the passage continues by saying that he is given to knavery, "*as* beastly begotten in barn or bushes." The word "as" here subtly inserts causation into this description of beastly biological reproduction: the Wild Rogue's nature is knavish *because* of the manner of his "beastly" conception.

The knavish nature of the Wild Rogue is a result of the sex-act that "begot" him. The strong alliteration of the phrase "beastly begotten in barn or bushes" reinforces the connection between beastliness and biological reproductive origins. The beastly nature of the Wild rogue means that he is a prodigy of sorts: prematurely "traded up," or trained, from "infancy," and, incredibly, "before ripeness of years doth permit," the Wild Rogue practices the paired crimes of "treachery" and "lechery." The strong rhyme and rhythm of these two words reinforces the connection between them as dual facets of the Wild Rouge's inherent nature. Additionally, the end rhymes of the string of terms infancy, treachery and lechery imply a teleology of sexual and criminal childhood development that is the natural outgrowth of the Wild Rogue's birth.

This is not the only time Harman imagines the criminal/sexual nature of the vagabonds as having a natural origin. In his description of the sexually mature virgin female vagabond called the "Dell," he remarks that the Dell is a

> young wench able for generation and not yet known or broken by the upright
> man. . . These wild dells, being traded up with their monstrous mothers, must of
> necessity be as evil, or worse, than their parents, for neither we gather grapes
> from green briars, neither figs from thistles. But such buds, such blossoms, such
> evil seed sown, well worse for being grown. (F4r)

Dells must be as "evil" as their mothers, since they are biologically derived from them, in the same way that grapes are derived from vines rather than briars and figs from fig trees rather than thistles. Although the passage does not explicitly link the Dell's sexual maturity to her biological origins, it defines a Dell in terms of her sexuality alone, never mentioning any other "evil" activities. Therefore, when the passage discusses the natural

"evil" originally passed down to her by her mother, it is most easily understood as referring to her sexuality. The aphoristic quality of this phrase, again brought out by the rhyming of "sown" with "grown," helps strengthen in the reader's mind the inherent nature of the Dell's criminal sexuality.

The natural quality of criminal sexuality is more explicitly embodied in a later passage in Harman. When describing an "Autem-Mort," or church-married female vagabond, Harman recalls one woman in particular, Alice Milson. Milson "goeth about with a couple of great boys; the youngest of them is fast upon twenty years of age; and these two do lie with her every night, and she lieth in the middest. She saith that they be her children; that betelled be the babes born of such abominable belly" (E4v). The sexual and social determinism of rogue reproduction here is multifaceted. First, Milson's children are criminals just like her, aiding her own criminal exploits. Second, the description of Milson lying "in the middest" of her two adult sons every night allows the interpretation that Milson and her sons engage in orgiastic sex.[83] Third, this orgy is an incestuous one, doubling its transgression. Finally, the passage vividly depicts the bodies in this sexual scene, with Milson "in the middest" of the two "great boys," who engender further rogue "babes" in her "abominable belly." The proliferating "b" sounds of this final sentence create an aural momentum, implying that these babes could not help but be abominable, just like the mother who birthed them.

Yet as Harman's phrase "traded up" suggests, the natural origins of rogue identity are linked to a notion of training and social reproduction. Many passages about the criminal sexuality of vagabond children also stress the efficacy of criminal child-rearing.

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[83] Harman never actually accuses Milson or her sons of doing anything other than sleeping together – this alone is seen as proof of his general accusations of burglary against the Autem-Mort and her children.

Social and natural reproduction exist side by side in rogue discourse – nature, especially the nature of the parents, in large part determines nurture, and nurture reinforces nature. To return to the passage about the Wild Rogue, his knavish "nature" is figured in terms of his natural development – he is lecherous "before ripeness of years doth permit." This is an unnatural nature: his ripeness is premature. But the passage also emphasizes the role of nurture in his prodigious development: he is "traded up in treachery." The same language of rearing or training is found in the description of the Dells, who, "being traded up with their monstrous mothers, must of necessity be as evil, or worse." While the metaphors of vegetal reproduction that follow suggest a genetic inheritance of evil, the phrase "traded up" also implies an apprenticeship, of sorts. We find a similar coupling of child-rearing and nature in the description of the young vagabond girls named "Kinchin Morts": "their mothers. . . brings them up safely, till they grow to be ripe, and proverbially, soon ripe, soon rotten" (F4r). This passage seems to contrast their "safe" upbringing with their seemingly natural inclination to rot as soon as they ripen. Interestingly, the 1573 reprinting of this tract states that the girls are brought up "savagely," not safely, implying that their "savage" upbringing contributes to their inevitable "rotting." With their easy movement along a circular progression from nature to nurture to nature, these passages suggest the opposite of a binary structure. Far from showing that nurture conflicts with nature, natural human development comprehends the nurturing process.[84]

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[84] Greene also depicts a continuum of nature and nurture, in his *A Disputation between a He-Cony-catcher and a She-cony-catcher*. In a section entitled, "The conversion of an English courtesan," the English courtesan says, "I wanted no daily instructions to allure me to that villainy, for I think *nature* had wrought in me a contrary humour, otherwise my bad *nurture*, and conversing with bad company had brought me to it" (F2r). Although here the term "otherwise" suggests an either/or construction, the sense of the passage is clearly that these are not mutually exclusive options.

Such a layered view of nature and behavior also is seen in the last line of the description of Alice Milson: "She saith that they be her children; that betelled be the babes born of such abominable belly." Earlier, I interpreted the line as referring to the children of Milson's incestuous relationship. But the line is a bit more complicated than that. Since the first part of the sentence identifies the "great boys" as Milson's children, the phrase "babes born of such abominable belly" could well refer to them. Furthermore, the word "betelled" creates some interpretive difficulty. The *Oxford English Dictionary*, citing this passage as an example, suggests that it means "to speak ill of, calumniate." If Harman is saying that the "babes" are being slandered, this would suggest that he is giving the lie to Milson's claims about them. This interpretation is supported by Harman's qualification of Milson's maternity: "She saith." But her claim is that they are her children. This would mean that Harman is saying, "She claims they are her children, but she is lying, thus she slanders her own children by claiming they are her children." The logic of this passage collapses in on itself: it produces ambiguity over the maternity of Milson's partners-in-crime, but does so in such a way that circularly preserves the possibility of that very maternity. That is, someone in this passage is a "babe born of" Milson's "abominable belly." The biological basis of criminal/sexual behavior is something this passage cannot do away with. But, in the end, the syntax of this passage fails us, and we are left with the impression that Milson's comrades are her children not only because she says so, but because they *behave* like her children. Ultimately, biological determinism and socialization emerge as equally effective means of reproducing rogue social and sexual identity.

Dekker later echoes this notion of the ambiguously generative "belly" of the female criminal in *Lantern and Candlelight*. In a section called "The Infection of the Suburbs," Dekker writes: "What a wretched womb hath a strumpet, which being, for the most part, barren of Children is not withstanding the only Bed that breeds up these serpents! Upon that one stalk grow all these mischiefs. She is the Cockatrice that hatcheth all these eggs of evils. When the Devil takes the Anatomy of all damnable sins, he looks only upon her body" (D3v). Here, Dekker figures the prostitute as the "mother" of all sins, despite the fact that her womb is "barren of children." But instead of birthing children, she "breeds up these serpents," referring to the list of suburban criminals he gave in the previous paragraph: the murderer, pander, cheater, and harlot. And even though there is no direct discussion of the sex that precedes reproduction, and the strumpet's womb is "for the most part, barren," the fact that this breeding occurs in her bed, along with the way this passage figures her anatomized body as the object of the Devil's gaze, suggests a sexual/erotic component to this description. Even as the strumpet's womb is barren, even as she is denied the capability of reproduction, her body is figured, through the language of the natural philosophy of nature, as the origin of all the suburb's evils. But again, here, we have the language of biological reproduction mingled with the language of rearing or training – Dekker's criminals are "bred up," much like Harman's are "traded up." Rogue identity is thus constructed as overdetermined, multiply reproduced, and as such, a powerful alternative to the social options of ordered society.

In twinning the contributions of nature and nurture to rogue identity, the pamphlets moderate their claims about the centrality of biological inheritance of roguery.

This is perhaps because of the importance they apportion to the role of choice in assuming the life of the rogue. Implied in Dekker's assertions about the rogue's motivating desires for sexual liberty is the notion that rogues actively choose their disreputable life. Such is also the implication of Harman and Greene's descriptions of rogue "idleness." Harman calls rogues "lazy Lozels," while Greene insists they "eat away what others labor for" (Harman G2v; Greene, *Second Part*, 3). As William Carroll succinctly puts it, the pamphlets assume that being a rogue is "an act of will, rather than a consequence of general economic failure."[85] Critics have provided a number of answers to the question of why rogue discourse insists that the mobile poor "chose to be unemployed."[86] Carroll suggests that early modern England "lacked any adequate economic theory to explain the vast changes" that accompanied the shift from feudal to capitalist society.[87] Linda Woodbridge argues that rogues were portrayed as choosing an idle life so as to justify charity given to the more "deserving" poor.[88] Patricia Fumerton proposes that the "middling sort" who made up rogue literature's audience were anxious about their own employment in the context of the "unsettled economy" of the fluctuating London labor market. She claims that rogue discourse thus "disguised" the mobile laboring poor as criminals and vagabonds in order to "assuage fears of displaced labor."[89] All of these arguments help us understand why the mobile poor came to be thought of as choosing vagabondage in early modern England. What remains to be addressed, however, is not *why* rogue discourse portrayed rogues as choosing the life of roguery, but how the construction of rogues' rejection of social order helped ensure that roguery was

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[85] Carroll, 7.
[86] Beier, *Masterless Men*, 86
[87] Carroll, 7.
[88] Woodbridge, 13-16.
[89] Fumerton, 36.

not simply a social category, but a socio-sexual identity. That is, why was the rogue

sexuality represented as necessarily and causally connected to the rejection of social

order?

IV. Marriage and Socio-Sexual Order

Marriage is perhaps the most important context for understanding the construction

of the socio-sexual rogue, because it was the central institution through which early

modern England configured sex and the social order.[90] Prescriptive literature compared

the functioning of the marital home to the functioning of the state, arguing that

patriarchal and political authority were analogous.[91] As Frances Dolan has pointed out,

that a wife who murdered her husband was accused of petty treason suggests that marital

disorder was thought of as a microcosm of larger social unrest.[92] Marriage was also

understood to be materially linked to social order, in that it helped reproduce the

patriarchal social order by securing kinship structures, sexual reproduction and the

inheritance of property.

Rogue discourse rejects the possibility of rogue marriage altogether, or raises the

notion only to mock it as either absurd, debased, or both. As noted above, Awdeley

argues that rogues do marry one another, even going so far as to create a rogue type

called a Patriarch Co., who serves as a priest to rogue weddings. But as soon as Awdeley

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[90] Studies of the centrality of marriage to social order include Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1995), and David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997).

[91] On the related ideologies of home and state, see Susan Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia UP, 1988) and Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994). For the regulation of sexuality in local courts, see Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987).

[92] Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994).

records this fact, he devalues rogue marriage by refusing to consider it part of a human life-cycle, associating it instead with the life-cycle of cattle by absurdly insisting that rogue marriages are dissolved whenever the married couple happens upon an animal carcass. Harman cannot accept even this notion of a debased rogue marriage, and in his expansion and revision of Awdeley, he denies the existence of the Patriarch Co. In a description of the rogue he calls a Patrico, he writes: "Now also there is a Patrico, and not a Patriarch, whiche in their language is a priest that should make mariages till death did depart but they have none such I am well assured. For I put you out of dout that not one amongst a hundreth of them are maried, for they take lechery for no sinne, but naturall felowship and good liking, love" (Harman C1v). Obsessed with the supposed beastly copulations of rogues, Harman cannot imagine that rogues have marriages. This is despite the fact that he admits that rogues have a word for a priest who performs rogue weddings, and even goes so far as to correct what he sees as Awdeley's improper terminology: "there is a Patrico, and not a Patriarch." More importantly, Harman imagines marriage and lechery as opposites, claiming that rogues do not marry because "they take lechery for no sinne." In his revision of Awdeley, Harman feels that in order to make his point about their lechery, he must insist that rogues do not practice the institution of marriage. For Harman, marriage would be evidence against rogue lechery, and in order to make his case about the socio-sexual rogue, he must expunge this evidence from the record. Thus, the rejection of marriage is a crucial part of how Harman comes to define rogues as both socially and sexually disordered.

Harman sprinkles repudiations of rogue marriage throughout his pamphlet, arguing that the Autem Mort, or married rogue, is not married by a Patrico but is in fact

"a wyfe maried at the Church, and they be as chaste as a Cowe I have that gooeth to Bull every moone, with what Bull she careth not. These walke most tymes from their husbands company a moneth and more togither" (F1v). In other words, married rogues, of which "there be but few," are characterized by neither fidelity nor cohabitation (ibid). Harman also dismisses attempts by rogues to insist that they are married, remarking that the rogues called Palliards "have their Morts with them which they cal wives" (C3v). Greene signals a similar suspicion of rogue marriage in describing crossbiters, noting that they "constrayne their wives to yeeld the use of their bodies to other men" (Greene, *Noteable Discovery*, C2v). Greene primarily represents rogue marriage as a means of bawdry. In Dekker's description of the barns in which the rogues he calls "Moonmen" sleep, we find the same dismissal of rogue marriage: "These Barnes are the beds of Incests, Whoredomes Adulteries, & of all other blacke and deadly-damned Impieties; here growes the Cursed Tree of Bastardie, that is so fruitfull" (Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candlelight*, D3v). In suggesting that rogues commit adultery, Dekker raises the specter of marriage only to make rogues seem even more disordered: rogue marriage is conceivable here only in its adulterous transgression. The rogue's sexual disorder thus forecloses the possibility of rogue marriage, and the rogue's social disorder – his rejection of church, religion, and marriage – is motivated by his sexual deviance.

The fact that marriage and the rogue's sexual desire are constructed as incompatible in rogue literature is somewhat surprising, since many historians of the family have argued that marriage was beginning to connote more emotional and sexual intimacy during the time rogue literature was written. Although throughout much of the seventeenth century sexuality continued to be a source of anxiety over the sinful body

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even within marriage, by the end of the century marriage had commonly come to imply a large emotional and sexual investment by both husband and wife.[93] Historians have stressed the social and economic causes that resulted in marriage being evacuated of some of the determining material concerns that characterized it earlier. The rise of capitalism brought with it individual wage labor, which allowed marriages to be more economically self-sufficient, thus lessening the import of dowries and family connections in marriage. Valerie Traub has pushed this argument further, arguing that without the material concerns that originally motivated it, "heterosexual desire was constructed in order for marriage itself to remain socially desirable" (269). Patriarchal marriage needed to ideologically justify its continuation in the face of a changing economy, and it found such a justification in the regime of what Traub calls "domestic heterosexuality," where romantic, sexual, and material desires were consumed.

On the other hand, this version of the history of marriage is heavily dependent upon class. Property and alliance were always less of a concern lower down the social scale, and thus marriage was experienced differently by different social groups in the same time period. The rogue pamphlets depict a world in which marriage itself was relatively less socio-economically advantageous. While the seventeenth century saw the slow decline of marriage as an economic necessity for the upper classes, in the fictional world of rogue literature this was already the case. Imagining sex in a world defined by a lack of private property, rogue literature maintains that sexual desire and its fulfillment is

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[93] Historians who make some version of this argument include Lawrence Stone, *Family, Sex, and Marriage, 1500-1800* (New York: Penguin, 1979), and Fletcher. An influential historical study of marriage and the family that stresses continuity rather than change is Alan McFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1986). For an excellent overview on the debates in and the stakes of the scholarship on the history of marriage, see Traub, *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 260-268.

a counterweight to socio-economically motivated marriage. And when the ideology of

marriage as primarily a socio-economic arrangement begins to falter in earnest later in

the seventeenth century, the notion of sexual desire as an alternative to marriage as

motivated primarily by socio-economic concerns already exists – in rogue literature.

Rogue literature thus may have provided an early admonitory template for how sexual

relations could be organized when marriage was decoupled from material concerns. This

is not to say that rogue literature is the first step in a teleological history of modern

companionate marriage, but it is to suggest that rogue literature provided a view of

society in which cross-gender relationships were determined by lust to the exclusion of

all other factors, including both marriage *and* property.

Such a hypothesis finds some evidence in the work of John Milton, who has

occupied a central place in critical discussions of the shifting and often conflicted

meanings of seventeenth-century marital sexuality. James Grantham Turner has

influentially argued that Milton's view of marriage is characterized by a tension between

the embrace and rejection of sexuality.[94] Milton's marital libertinism is often ascribed to

his religious or political views; less commonly noted, however, is the way his discussions

of marital sexuality define conjugal sexual fulfillment in opposition to an unholy lust

described through the rhetoric of rogue literature.[95] Milton's description of Adam and

Eve's wedding night is an example of his celebration of wedded sexuality, yoking the

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[94] James Grantham Turner, *One Flesh: Paradisal Marriage and Sexual Relations in the Age of Milton* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987).
[95] Jason P. Rosenblatt, for example, ascribes Milton's celebration of martial sexuality to his exposure to Hebraic views of sexuality. See Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in* Paradise Lost (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1994). For a view that traces Milton's stance on marriage to his political "libertarianism," see Diane K. McColley, "Milton and the Sexes," in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Richard Danielson (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 175-192. For a feminist account of the politics of Milton's sexual views, see the edited collection *Milton and the Idea of Woman*, ed. Julia M. Walker (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1988).

couple's "adoration pure/ Which God likes best" with their execution of "the Rites/ Mysterious of connubial Love" (4.737-43).[96] Afterwards, Milton praises this vision of the emotionally and sexually fulfilling marriage:

> Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
>
> Of human offspring, sole propriety
>
> In Paradise of all things common else!
>
> By thee adulterous Lust was driven from men
>
> Among the bestial herds to range.   (4.750-54)

In this passage, marriage and "adulterous lust" are opposites: marriage produces human social relations, while lust is bestial, and only appropriate among beings that "range" or wander about.[97] This passage ostensibly enforces the distinction between marriage and bestial lust, but it does so by appropriating the terms used to stigmatize rogue sexuality – those of bestiality and wandering – in order to create wedded love as its ordered opposite. Arguing that sexual desire has been a part of marriage since man left paradise, Milton takes the rogue's desire for sexual liberty and reads its stigmatization back into the origins of humankind.

Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* also registers this opposition between marriage and society on the one hand, and lechery and roguery on the other. He contrasts a truly religious marriage, based on love and the union of two souls, with a profane marriage, in which only lust holds the union together. He argues that such

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[96] John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *John Milton: The Major Works*, eds. Stephen Orgel and Jonathan Goldberg (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1991).

[97] As Catherine Belsey has shown, during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, lust was thought of as a disobedient and disordering force that stimulated all kinds of appetites, sexual and non-sexual alike. See Belsey, "Love as Trompe-l'oeil: Taxonomies of Desire in *Venus and Adonis*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46.3 (1995), 257-276.

marriages are fit only for "the draffe of men, to whom no liberty is pleasing, but unbridl'd and Vagabond lust without pale or partition."[98] To justify divorce Milton argues here against the Catholic view that marriage saves man from concupiscence. But in Milton's assertion that "the draffe of men" are pleased exclusively by "unbidl'd and Vagabond lust," we see the legacy of rogue literature's attempts to explain the existence of disordered rogues through recourse to their alleged "sensuall lust." This legacy is also present in his insistence that true marriage is defined by a romantic desire that is the opposite of "Vagabond lust."

In marriage, sexuality was socially significant for its crucial role in the maintenance of the patriarchal system of reproduction, lineage, and private property. While rogues have no property to speak of, they are thought to reproduce. As we will see, in creating the rogue as a socio-sexual identity, rogue literature imagined the social threat rogues posed as related to their incontinent sexuality and unbridled capacity for generation. Making literal Dekker's metaphorical "cursed tree of bastardy that is so fruitful," rogue literature promotes the socio-sexual threat of the prodigious and unchecked reproduction of increasingly large numbers of rogues.

V. A Promiscuous Generation

The authors of rogue literature often characterized the prodigiously reproductive rogue as part of a rising "generation," a word that would become shorthand for the threat posed by the rogue's excessive sexuality as the concept spread from popular literature to

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[98] See John Milton, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, in *The Complete Poetry and Essential Prose of John Milton*, ed. William Kerrigan, John Peter Rumrich, and Stephen M. Fallon (New York: Random House, 2007), 859.

moralist and religious writings about poverty and vagabondage. Following Greene's

claim that rogues are an "untoward generation of loose libertines," Dekker refers to

rogues as a "wicked generation" and a "cursed generation." Years earlier, Harman had

also used the term generation, calling Pallyardes, beggars who "mete [their women]

jompe [i.e., closely] at night," as "the wickedst of all this beastly generation" (C4v).

"Generation" refers not only to a set of individuals born around the same time, but also to

"family, breed, race; class, kind, or 'set' of persons" and to the physical act of

reproduction (generation, I.1.a, II.6).[99] Greene, Dekker, and Harman gesture toward both

these meanings. They suggest a possible kinship bond between rogues, thereby

representing them as a durable and reproducible social group, while referencing the

reproductive consequences of their sexual activity. Through this term, these writers

suggest that the "rogue" is a socio-sexual identity that is defined particularly by its

sexually reproductive capacity. It may seem strange that "generation," with its emphasis

on heterosexual reproduction, was used to mark such a sexually disordered group.

Sodomite or buggerer, with their elastic ability to refer to many kinds of sexual and social

transgressions, and which were ubiquitous enough in discussions of social threats like

heretics, traitors, and foreigners, would seem to be more appropriate terms. Rogues seem

likely candidates for the charge of sodomy or buggery, if only because of how often their

sexual behavior is described as "beastly." Yet the pamphlets, for the most part, avoid

labeling rogues sodomites, and Greene explicitly distinguishes rogues from sodomites:

their actions are "as ill as was practised in Gomorrah or Sodom, though not after the same

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[99] *The Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed. 1989, *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, 2000
<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00181778>.

unnatural manner" (*Noteable Discovery* D1r). [100] By referring instead to rogue

"generation," Greene and others could reference the reproductive effect of the sexual act,

something that sodomy typically disallowed. [101] Thus the term "generation" neatly

encapsulates rogues' dual social and sexual disorder. Rogue sexuality was seen as

threatening because it was thought to reproduce, perpetuate, and exacerbate the problems

of masterlessness.

Indeed, one factor that unites the many voices clamoring for the suppression of

vagabonds and rogues was the fear that their population was constantly increasing,

despite all measures enacted to curb its growth. In 1566, Harman wondered at the way

"these rousey rakehells thus [d]o continue and dailie increase" (A3v). Dekker, too,

insists that rogues are a "people so fast increasing" (*Lanthorne* B4r). Thirty years after

Harman's influential pamphlet described the sexual exploits of rogues, and fifteen years

before Dekker reinterpreted this material, Edward Hext argued in his letter to Burghley

that the problem of the increasing rogue population was compounded by the rogue's

fertility. Referencing the language of rogue "generation," he complains that "the

generacion that daylye spryngeth from them ys like to be most wicked."[102] For Hext, as

for Harman, one of the most troublesome aspects of rogues is that their prodigious sexual

exploits yield more of them every day. John Howe, in his first report for the governors of

Christ's Hospital in London, in 1582, echoed this concern, stating that the impetus behind

erecting the houses of correction and relief of the poor in mid-sixteenth-century London

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[100] There is only one moment when rogues are referred to as sodomites, in Dekker's *Belman*. But there is no consistent effort noticeable across the rogue pamphlets to paint them as such.

[101] The one notable exception to the barrenness of sodomy is its metaphorical association with usury and counterfeiting, processes in which money was understood to reproduce itself "unnaturally." See Will Fisher, "Queer Money," *English Literary History* 66.1 (1999), 1-23. I explore the connections between sodomitical and rogue reproduction in Chapter Three.

[102] *Tudor Economic Documents* II, 342.

was that "the number of the poore did so encrease of all sorts that the churches, streates and lanes were fylled daylye with" them.[103] Therefore, plans were enacted "because they shoulde not encrease" further.[104] The concern with rogue generation eventually yielded institutional attempts to incarcerate and educate the children of the poor. Four hospitals were established in London in the sixteenth century: St. Bartholomew's, Bethlehem, St. Thomas' and Christ's. The first three housed the diseased or disabled poor, those who were considered unable to help themselves. The fourth, Christ's Hospital, focused on bringing up "children, which ar the rootes of beggerye."[105] All of these hospitals were united in their approach to social welfare in that they sought to help those whose poverty was considered unavoidable, because of age or infirmity. But the project of Christ's Hospital was unique in that it was the only hospital whose mission was not only to manage the current rogue population, but to prevent the increase of that population, even if it meant going into the homes of the poor and removing children they deemed likely to one day turn vagrant. Both pamphleteers and civic-minded reformers thought that early modern England's problem with "Loathsome Lazars" needed to be pulled out by the roots, and the roots of that problem were the offspring that rogues generated.[106]

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[103] *John Howes' MS, 1582*, eds., William Lempriere, (London, 1904), 6.
[104] Howe, 16.
[105] Howe, 44.
[106] Howe's observation that the numbers of the poor were increasing accords with demographic data, which suggests that England's population nearly doubled from the mid-sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. Even more interesting for my purposes is that the increase in population was not due to decreases in the rate of death, but "resulted from high fertility" (Beier 20). People in early modern England were actually having more babies, and perhaps this reality was part of what was driving writers to call rogues a "promiscuous generation." Combined with the institutional efforts like Christ's Hospital to relieve the deserving poor and Bridewell to reform the undeserving rogues, this increase in the numbers of the poor created an increasingly expensive burden on the non-poor members of society. In this sense, every time a destitute person or a rogue generated another child, the price of maintaining England's burgeoning social welfare system increased. When the Elizabethan poor laws centralized and codified a rate-system for maintaining the poor in every parish in 1597, the awareness of the widespread cost of maintaining the poor population became even more acute. Thus the sexual habits of rogues and the poor in early modern England were indirectly on the minds of reformers and officials who dealt with the related problems of

Radical and mainstream preachers alike were quick to view the rapid sexual

regeneration of rogues as grounds for excluding them from the community of God. The

Puritan preacher John Downame's *Plea of the Poore* (1616) counsels his parishioners that

alms are only due to those that are poor "through necessitie and not of choise." Using the

pamphlets' language of rogue "generation" to describe the rogue problem, Downame

informs his audience that

> there are many sturdie beggers, and vagrant rogues . . . who have nothing
>
> in proprietie, but their liscencious life and lawlesse condition; no knowne
>
> father or mother, wife or children, but a promiscuous generation, who are
>
> all of kin, yet know no kindred, no house or home, no law but their
>
> sensuall lust, or some wicked orders of their owne making, fit to maintaine
>
> them in their inordinate courses; men without religion, Church, baptisme,
>
> faith or God in the world, who like idle drones feede upon the common
>
> spoyle.[107]

In describing the rogue's "choise," Downame explains that they have no family, no

house, and no relationship with God. What they do have is a "promiscuous generation,"

a kind of kinship in their "law" of "sensuall lust." By painting the rogues as followers of

"inordinate courses," Downame avoids having to explain why it is that these rogues, who

supposedly "feede upon the common spoyle," are so ill-fed that they seek alms. Building

off the popular literature's vision of rogues as a sexually incontinent underclass,

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poverty, vagrancy, and roguery. On the history of England's poor laws, see Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, and *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999); Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England 1550-1750* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 2004).
[107] John Downame, *The Plea of the Poore* (London, 1616), 38.

Downname's phrase "promiscuous generation" paints a picture of rogues as a mass of indistinguishable and ever-increasing generators of human flesh.[108] Rogues are a "generation" not only in the sense of being a group of people roughly the same age, but in that they are compelled by the "law [of] their sensuall lust" to continually reproduce themselves. They are promiscuous in their sexual practices, but also in the effects of those practices: their generation produces promiscuous, in the sense of disordering, social effects.

The relationship between their choice of "promiscuous generation" and their alienation from the Church is picked up by John Donne, who, preaching in 1620, four years after Downame publishes his *Plea*, says:

> But certainly, there is a race that have not . . . this outward Baptisme:
> Amongst those herds of vagabonds, and incorrigible rogues, that fill
> porches, and barnes in the Countrey, a very great part of them was never
> baptized: people of *a promiscuous generation*, and of a mischievous
> education: ill brought into the world, and never brought into the church . . .
> neither have these any interest in the houshold of God. And as there are
> sins which we are not bid to pray for, so there are beggers which we are
> not bid to give to.[109]

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[108] Writing four years before Downame, John Davies concludes his description of Irish customs with a short description of what he has left unwritten (in so doing, he obviously does in fact include these customs in his writings): "I omit their common repudiation of their Wives; their promiscuous generation of Children; their neglect of lawfull Matrimony; their uncleannesse in Apparrell, Diet, & Lodging; and their contempt and scorne of all thinges necessary for the Civill life of man" (181). Notice that here, too, the sexual disorder of promiscuous generation is connected to the "neglect" of marriage. It is perhaps this connection in Davies that made Downame think of rogues while reading this passage. See John Davies, *A discouerie of the true causes why Ireland was neuer entirely subdued, nor brought vnder obedience of the crowne of England, vntill the beginning of his Maiesties happie raigne* (London, 1612).

[109] *The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), Volume 9, Sermon 5, 139, emphasis mine.

In the view of these two seventeenth-century preachers, at least, the supposed promiscuity of rogues was taken as a sign of spiritual unsuitability. Just as they reject the "house or home" of "wife or children," the rogues reject the "houshold of God." The rogues' exclusion from ordered society is theologically justified by using sexual incontinence to cast their social abjection as the choice of a corrupt and promiscuous soul. It is also this choice that unites them under the "law of their sensuall lust," and that makes them a credible and growing threat to ordered Christian society.

By the early seventeenth century, sexual promiscuity thus became the decisive factor in the ascription of rogue identity and a primary mechanism by which to discern between social order and disorder. This discursive shift had different unpredictable effects. In making sexual reproduction the central threat of roguery, this discourse transformed a personal decision to pursue lecherous lust into a large-scale social problem of promiscuous generation. And in suggesting that the fulfillment of sexual desire was, for some, an attractive alternative to the socio-economic advantages of marriage, it may have contributed to the redefinition of marriage as domestic heterosexuality. But there were still more ways in which the invention of rogue socio-sexual desire continued to signify in early modern England, ones that emerge from the ideological instability that resulted from making a universally experienced phenomenon such as sexual desire into a mechanism of social discernment.

VI. "Wap for a Win, or Trine for Make?"

By suggesting that the rogue's life was primarily defined not by idleness, but by sexual lust, the rogue pamphleteers introduced a religious component to rogue identity,

marking rogues not only as dangerous and lecherous, but as spiritually flawed. While

moralists and preachers argued that rogue sexual sins were so gargantuan that they had

nothing in common with respectable communal spiritual life, the fact remains that the

struggle to control sexual lust was understood to be a universal experience among early

modern Christians, even and especially among the settled, married, and godly. Because

of the extent to which the control of sexual desire was understood to be a universal

problem, the figure of the sinful socio-sexual rogue may have led its audience not only to

antipathy, but also, in some cases, to identification.

When writers like Harman, Dekker, Downame and Donne claimed sexual lust as

the distinctive feature of rogue life they were using an unstable ideological resource to

demonize rogue life.[110] Humanism had brought with it a revival of the classical

understanding that lust was an internal force which challenged reason for control of the

self. William Baldwin's *Treatise of Moral Phylosophie* (1547), an extremely popular

book that went through twenty-four editions between 1547 and 1640, emphasizes that

lust is at least as likely to control a person as a person is to control it. Combing the

wisdom of classical learning, Baldwin reports that "lust is a lordlye and disobedient

thinge"; that one should "Flye lecherous lustes, as thou wouldest a furyous lorde"; that

"he that vanquysheth his lustes, is a great conquerour"; and that the "luste of lecherous

people, alter theyr bodyes, and make many runne starke mad."[111] In all of these

examples, lust is portrayed as a force that commands obedience, even as the texts warn of

the necessity to resist lust's domination. The last example even suggests that lust,

particularly lecherous lust, can lead a person to madness, the complete loss of reason.

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[110] See Belsey.
[111] William Baldwin, *A Treatise of Morall Phylosophie* (London, 1547), sig. O2, sig. L5, sig. M5, sig. P3

This understanding of lust as a ruler, as a legislating power, is implicit in Downame's claim that vagabonds "know no *law* but their sensuall lust." Making the universally troublesome "lecherous lust," that "furyous lorde," the cause of the vagabond's special social abjection was thus a potential contradiction. If lust was understood to be a universal human condition, this could undermine the sexual rationale for the vagabond's social and spiritual abjection.

Lust's ability to dissolve reason and transgress social dictates was not simply a tenet of received classical wisdom, but was experienced by many people in early modern England, as well, if bridal pregnancy and bastardy statistics are any indication. Such statistics suggest that, depending on the parish, between 10 and 30 per cent of married early modern women conceived children before their marriage, while over 3 per cent more bore bastards – leading Keith Wrightson to conclude that the will to control lust "crumbled with marriage in view."[112] If such a large percentage of people failed to control their lust, we can assume a much greater percentage at least understood the intense struggle required to "vanquish" such "disobedient" desires. Indeed, Wrightson concludes that "popular attitudes . . . were simply more flexible than those of society's professional moralists."[113] Such popular flexibility regarding the role of sexuality in everyday life was not likely to help the effort by moralist texts to use uncontrolled lust as a way to brand rogues as especially deviant. Either from personal experience or the experience of a substantial number of their settled, married neighbors, most early modern people would have understood that lust was difficult to control, and that giving way to lust was not necessarily what most distinguished criminals from the general population.

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[112] Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1982), 85. Cressy, 277-281, also examines premarital sexuality.
[113] Wrightson, *English Society*, 93

Some of the pamphlet literature clearly expected tales of vagabonds' "lecherous loitering" to appeal to their readers, and even, on some occasions, to cause them to identify with rogues. The level of detail in descriptions of the sexual transgressions assigned to rogues suggests that authors were trying to capitalize on the sexual appeal of the rogue's supposedly lecherous life. Indeed, some of these texts consciously anticipate and try to provoke such a response from their audience. In Dekker's *Bel-man of London*, as the Belman recounts witnessing a meeting of lecherous rogues in a country inn, he pauses and says to the reader, "I know you wonder, and have longing thoughts to know what *Generation* this is, that lived in this hospitable familiarity."[114] The Bel-man assumes his audience is "longing" for more information about this promiscuous "*Generation*," and particularly for details about their suggestively-termed "hospitable familiarity." That is, he assumes that the reader is particularly invested in the erotic deeds of the rogues, and he uses this direct address to the reader as a dramatic pause to heighten anticipation before providing all the promised details.

Some pamphlets go further than manipulating readerly investments, and make direct claims about the response of the reading public to these pamphlets. Martin Mark-all, the eponymous narrator of S.R.'s *Martin Mark-all, Beadle of Bridewell* (1608), observes that, due the current popularity of rogue literature, "every jack-boy can say as well as the proudest of that fraternity [of rogues]: "Will you wap for a win, or trine for a make?" (A2r). He suggests that stable boys are as used to speaking this phrase "as well as the proudest" rogue.[115] This cant phrase translates roughly as, "Will you have sex for

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[114] Dekker, *The Belman of London*, (London, 1609), C1r.
[115] Elizabeth Hanson uses this line to discuss the way canting language moved from an object of discovery and investigation to an object of fashion. I am more interested in what its fashionability can tell us about

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a penny, or hang for a half-penny?" The question derives from Dekker's *O Per Se O*, although the line is slightly different there. Describing the rogue's pursuit of sex through the metaphor of the hunt, Dekker explains that "in hunting of their rascal deer this law they hold, when they come to strike a doe, if she will not wap for a win, let her trine for a make" (L3r). In this context, the line has a proverbial character: if the woman will not accept a reasonable sum in return for her sexual favors, let her hang for less. That is, the phrase suggests that rogue men could not care less what happens to a woman if she does not want to sleep with them. According to Mark-all, however, popular audiences appropriated the phrase by changing it into a question and a proposition, a kind of forward yet arch come on. Appropriating the persona of the rogue who will abandon all comforts and risk his very life for the satisfaction of his sexual lusts, the proposition has a certain seductive appeal. It makes the question of sexuality dangerously and dynamically alive through the implication that sex is a matter of life and death – which, at least for some of the sex criminals rogues of rogue literature, it was.[116]

Used as a pick-up line, the question implies that the speaker possesses the sexual vitality and recklessness, perhaps even the beastliness, of a lecherous rogue pursuing his "rascal deer." That stable-boys would enact such a performance suggests that the depiction of rogue sexuality could be so appealing to some readers that they sometimes fashioned their own sexuality in its image, and assumed that it would be attractive to their potential sexual partners. Far from casting rogues as intrinsically different from non-

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what it supposedly discovered. See Hanson, *Discovering the Subject in Renaissance England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1998), 111.

[116] Hanging for the crime of theft is commonly represented as the fate awaiting most rogues. In describing the poor of England, for example, William Harrison writes that the poor "either proove idle beggers, or else continue starke theeves till the gallowes doo eat them up." See Harrison, *The Description of England* in volume 1 of Raphael Holinshead, *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1587), 183.

rogues, in this pamphlet rogue sexuality becomes a point of identification across social difference.

In a culture that understands lust to be a powerful solvent of self-control and a force that fosters points of identification (and disidentification) across social differences, attempts to separate rogues from non-rogues on the grounds of sexuality are far from an easy sell. This is perhaps one of the reasons that an early proponent of this socio-sexual distinction like Harman is driven to bouts of dizzying alliteration and overstatement in making his arguments. In order to turn a common propensity into a distinguishing black mark – in order to minoritize a universalized fact of human behavior – rogue sexuality needs to be as out of control as Harman's alliteration, as frenzied as the couplings of wild beasts. But in an ironic turn of reception history that Harman surely would have found unwelcome, popular audiences, having accepted the portrayal of rogues as socio-sexual deviants, studied the entertaining descriptions of rogue sexuality and, at least some of the time, recognized themselves. This is not to say that the socio-sexual distinctions that were the project of rogue literature did not hold, or were as easily done away with as they were established. It is instead to suggest that the discourse of sexuality could produce and secure social distinctions while also affording, at least imaginatively, the means to transgress them. The sexually deviant rogue, once established as a character type in early modern pamphlet literature, became a role that had cultural currency and that could be and was appropriated, manipulated and played with by stable boys, players, and playwrights.

Chapter 3

Pressed Men: Biopolitics and Sodomy in Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV*

For much of the past twenty years, analyses of early modern history plays have

focused on how, as Patricia Cahill puts it, "fantasies of male parthenogenesis are

connected to fears about the ungovernable sexual desire of women, which is felt to be a

threat to royal bloodlines."[117] Cahill offers a different view of the relationship between

early modern sexual reproduction and politics, arguing that in early modern England

"military and biopolitical power . . . supplement each other."[118] In a reading of *1&2*

Henry IV, Cahill claims that early modern England saw an "emergence of military

professionalism" that made "English common men legible as a kind of proto-national

capital, a kind of wealth that might wisely, or unwisely, be spent."[119] By representing

soldiers through a normalizing standard of military "sufficiency," the Henry plays thus

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[117] See Patricia Cahill, *Unto the Breach: Martial Formations, Historical Trauma, and the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 106. As exemplars of this kind of analysis, Cahill cites Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997) and Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays* (London: Routledge, 1992) . Another influential example is Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London: Routledge, 1992), 50-71. Traub's analysis, however, stresses the inherent ungovernability of all forms of sexual desire.
[118] Cahill, 103.
[119] Cahill, 80. In a discussion of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* and Shakespeare's *Henry V*, Nina Taunton examines the development in early modern Europe of a military strategy that viewed an army's size as a key to victory. See Nina Taunton, *1590's Drama and Militarism: Portrayals of War in Marlowe, Chapman, and Shakespeare's* Henry V (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 125-31. See Cahill, 24-70, for an extended discussion of the "abstract" mathematical dimension of this military emphasis on the larger armies staged in *Tamburlaine*.

participate in this reconceptualization of humanity as national resource. In Cahill's

reading, sexuality has little role in the plays' construction of biopolitical power, since the

latter is driven by a commodifying discourse of military professionalism, rather than the

state's interest in reproductive life.[120] This chapter builds upon Cahill's insight into the

understanding of persons as military commodities, but argues that the play represents the

reproduction of soldiers as inextricable from reproductive sexuality. It thus emphasizes

Michel Foucault's term "biopolitics" as one that names the historical development of the

state's interest in its people as "a global mass that is affected by overall processes

characteristic of birth, death, production, illness."[121] That is, biopower reflects not only

the regulation and commodification of human life, but also describes the conceptual

abstraction of human life as a mode of reproduction. Drawing upon earlier work on the

place of sexuality in the play, my analysis of *1 Henry IV* suggests that the play casts

Lancastrian biopower as the material and figurative manipulation of England's

reproductive capacities.

Foucault locates the origin of the state's interest in biopolitical power in the

eighteenth century, but debates about the relationship between the nation's population,

economic welfare, and military capacities were very much alive in Elizabethan

England.[122] Discussions of the relations among these three phenomena were mediated

through the figure of the rogue, the outlaws that were thought to comprise the bulk of

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[120] Cahill's reading places the martial management of "manpower" at the center of the play's interest in soldiery and population. This argument does not address the links between sexuality, reproduction and the military in the plays, arguing instead that the plays' representation of manpower is more concerned with the "production of expendable men" than with sexual reproduction. See Cahill, 71-101, esp. 75 and 101.

[121] Michel Foucault, *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 242-43.

[122] According to the OED, the term "population," meaning the "the collective inhabitants of a country," was first use by Francis Bacon in 1612. Although this meaning of the term may not have been in circulation at the time, the subject it names was discussed in early modern England.

Elizabeth's armies. Combined with their reputation as criminals and soldiers, rogues'

alleged capacity for sexual reproduction helped produce a theory of political economy

that tied together the fates of the commonwealth, the military, and the nation's populace.

To analyze how this theory was elaborated in early modern England, the first part of this

chapter examines the writings of the early modern historian William Harrison and

militarist Barnabe Rich, both of whom saw rogues and soldiers as two sides of the same

coin, though they complained that England had too many of the first and not enough of

the latter. It then demonstrates that while *1 Henry IV* addresses the link between human

resources and war, it emphatically does not portray large numbers of English soldiers as

an unmitigated national blessing.

The second part of the chapter moves from the material to the figural, showing

that the play represents military conscription and roguery through sexualized economic

metaphors. More particularly, soldiers and rogues are represented through the language

of usury and counterfeiting, both illegitimate forms of economic reproduction often

associated with sodomy.[123] Commonly defined as a non-reproductive sex act, sodomy's

reputation as a fake and unnatural form of heterosexual sex also produced a metaphorical

language for the monstrous reproduction of money through usury and counterfeiting.[124]

Despite their promiscuous sexuality, rogues are almost never referred to as sodomitical in

popular literature, a charge leveled at many other perceived sources of social disorder,

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[123] See Will Fisher, "Queer Money," *English Literary History*, 66.1 (1999), 1-23. On usury, patronage, and sodomy, see Jody Greene, "You Must Eat Men: The Sodomitic Economy of Renaissance Patronage," *GLQ* 1.2 (1994), 163-197.

[124] Valerie Traub points out that Shakespeare's homoerotic procreation sonnets rhetorically position themselves (and the eros they portray) as non-sodomitical by making male-male love a spur to marital procreation. See Traub, "Sex Without Issue: Sodomy, Reproduction, and Signification in Shakespeare's Sonnets," *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 1999), 431-452.

such as heretics, foreigners, and traitors.[125] As a term for specifically non-procreative

sexual acts, sodomy was an unlikely sin for the monstrously reproductive criminals of

rogue literature. But the metaphorical language of economic sodomy, characterized by

unnaturally prodigious reproduction, is a perfect figure for both the promiscuous

generation of society's outcasts and the reproduction of large numbers of soldiers. In

representing Falstaff's poor conscripted soldiers as produced through counterfeiting, *1

Henry IV* connects rogue and sodomitical reproduction, folding them into England's

national mythology and thereby mutually constituting social difference and national

identity in the process. At the play's end, King Henry and Prince Hal's military triumphs

are implicated in the sexualized crime of counterfeiting, linking the proper management

of the polity to a sodomitical economy that threatens to delegitimize the monarchical

order.

I. "A More Copious Procreation of Human Issue"

William Harrison's *Description of England*, included in the second edition of

Raphael Holinshead's *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), is an

acknowledged influence on Shakespeare's second tetralogy.[126] Harrison's *Description*

represents the reproduction of the English population as both a military necessity and a

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[125] On the broad application of sodomy in English culture, see Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1992). Goldberg analyzes the role of sodomy in the formation of Hal's masculinity in *1 Henry IV*. Goldberg is interested in how sodomy signifies in the broad network of what he calls the play's "ego-erotics" (152), but he does not explore the intersections between the play's economic and sexual sodomy. See Goldberg, 145-75. For a discussion of Hal and Falstaff's relationship in the context of pederasty and sodomy, see Heather Findlay, "Renaissance Pederasty and Pedagogy: The 'Case' of Shakespeare's Falstaff," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 3 (1989), 229-38.

[126] Andrew Gurr notes, for example, that Shakespeare "made use of the 'Description' for its account of English dogs." See the appendix titled "Historical Sources," in William Shakespeare, *Henry V* ed. Andrew Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 239-43, esp. 239.

social threat. Harrison points to the reduction in England's population as one of enclosure's disastrous effects, arguing that "England was never lesse furnished with people than at this present."[127] Harrison criticizes greedy landlords for

> not sparing the verie commons wherupon manie towneships now and then
> doo live, affirming that we have alreadie too great store of people in
> England; and that youth by marrieng too soone doo nothing profit the
> countrie, but fill it full of beggars, to the hurt and utter undooing (they
> saie) of the common wealth. . . How manie families also these great and
> small games (for so most keepers call them) have eaten up and are likelie
> hereafter to devoure. (205)

Echoing Thomas More's famous criticism of enclosure as producing "man-eating sheep," Harrison insists that the practice preposterously places animals above humans.[128] Harrison goes further than More, however, in connecting the debates over enclosure directly to the question of England's population density. According to Harrison, defenders of enclosure insisted that their cultivation of the land effected a kind of eugenics policy controlling the sexual reproduction – and thus the population – of the poor. Harrison vehemently rejects the notion that England is too populous, advocating instead that England return to older methods of land management that produced "a more copious procreation of humane issue, whereby the realme was alwaies better furnished with able men to serve the prince in his affaires" (205). Harrison thus directly connects the size of England's population to the fortunes of the monarch and the nation.

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[127] William Harrison, *The Description of England* in volume 1 of Raphael Holinshead, *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London, 1587), 205. Subsequent quotes will be cited parenthetically.
[128] More writes that because of enclosure sheep have "developed a raging appetite, and turned into man-eaters." See Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Paul Turner (London: Penguin Books, 1965), 46.

Although Harrison speaks of increasing the overall number of Englishmen, he seems particularly concerned with raising the numbers of "able men" to serve the prince. This passage thus seems consistent with the strain of early modern thought analyzed by David Glimp that connected the discourse of biological reproduction to the social reproduction of the kind of men who could serve the state in particular ways.[129] In other words, it seems to be more about producing courtiers, secretaries, and ambassadors, than the kind of raw manpower required by the military. Yet, in the next passage, Harrison gives a historical example that describes the benefits of population growth in terms of the increased availability of human soldiers.

> King Henrie the eight. . . lamented oft that he was constreined to hire forren aid, for want of competent store of souldiors here at home perceiving (as it is indeed) that such supplies are oftentimes more hurtfull than profitable unto those that interteine them. . . He would oft marvell in private talke, how that when seaven or eight princes ruled here at once, one of them could lead thirtie or fortie thousand men to the field against another, or two of them 100000 against the third, and those taken out onelie of their owne dominions. (205)

In Harrison's anecdote, Henry VIII lacks "competent store of souldiors," not courtiers. It is worth emphasizing that it is the *number* of soldiers that is insufficient, not the quality of soldiers. Harrison's concern is thus less that the soldiers be properly trained, than that there be sufficient numbers available to the king in the first place. Harrison suggests that the lack of soldiers is a double threat to England: not only does the nation lack the men to defend itself, but as a result it must "interteine" potentially dangerous foreign soldiers on

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[129] David Glimp, *Increase and Multiply: Governing Cultural Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).

its soil. The decline of England's former "copious procreation" is most lamentable

because it starves the state of the human resources needed to outfit a "competent store of

souldiors."

Though it was thought to lack soldiers, England was often construed as having its

own excess human resources: the able-bodied unemployed, commonly referred to as

rogues. Harrison notes that some landowners believed that England "has too great store

of people, [that] fill it full of beggars, to the hurt and utter undooing (they saie) of the

common wealth" (205). The suggestion that the commonwealth was threatened by

increasing numbers of the poor is familiar from the early modern rogue pamphlets and

moralist tracts I discussed in Chapter One, which, in the words of Robert Greene, insisted

that rogues were "pestilent vipers of the commonwealth."[130] It is also a language used by

Harrison himself to describe the "idle" poor, of whom he says "they are all theeves and

caterpillers in the commonwealth" (183). Although Harrison cautions against

diminishing the already modest store of potential soldiers in early modern England, he

also insists that the large numbers of poor are indeed a threat, saying that "it were verie

good therefore that the superfluous heapes of them were in part diminished. . . no nation

cherisheth such store of them as we doo here in England" (164).[131]

Harrison's suggestion that the poor are too much with him is not a new complaint,

but it may have seemed more urgent at this time because of the relatively new

Elizabethan poor laws, which instituted a parish tax based on the number of poor living in

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[130] Robert Greene, *A Notable Discovery of Coosenage* (London, 1591), A3r.
[131] Harrison is specifically speaking of unemployed former "serving men" here, but the language of
idleness, whoredom, and thievery he uses makes it clear that sees them as no different than other rogues
that refuse to "be brought to labor" (164).

a given community.[132] If, as Cahill argues, the new military science instructed captains

and generals on how soldiers could be best employed, and thus metaphorically "spent" in

war, the early modern poor laws actually turned people into debits and credits on a

parish's balance sheet. This kind of math was encouraged by the anonymously-authored

An Ease for Overseers of the Poor (1601), a kind of how-to manual for potential

administrators of the poor law providing advice on the nature of the position, the proper

manner to conduct oneself, and the best way to set parish taxation rates. *An Ease* also

contains a model chart by which local administrators are advised to keep track of the

number and kinds of poor seeking assistance in the parish (See Figure 5). This chart,

entitled "A readie forme for a speedie inspection of the poore," is not just an account

book. It provides no systemic way for officials to keep track of money taken in against

money given out.[133] Instead, it exhorts its readers to identify and classify the parish poor

according to various categories: location in the parish, family size, age, employment

status, "defects," income, allowance, and license to beg in the parish. The chart isolates

each family, in effect removing the poor from their social relations and turning them into

commodities defined by the cost of their allowance.[134] This process takes special note of

the poor's reproductive sexuality: families with children too young to work merit their

own category, "Such as keepe orphans or others," apparently because the upkeep of such

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[132] On the poor laws, see Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England 1550-1750* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 2004); and Paul Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999).
[133] *An Ease for Overseers of the Poor* (Cambridge, 1601), 4. Woodbridge, 23-24, mentions this chart briefly to note its interest in categorizing mental and physical disability.
[134] The chart does not completely commodify the poor. For example, although the chart largely isolates the poor from the conditions of their production and from social relations more generally, it includes a column in which to record former employers. Nevertheless, to the extent that the chart does remove the poor from their social relations and evaluate them based on monetary, that is, exchange value, it does render them in terms similar to that of Marx's commodity fetish. On the commodity fetish, see Karl Marx, *Capital, Volume One*, in *Selected Writings* ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 230-244.

children was a particular strain on parish finances. The form also specifies whether the children in question are "base," or illegitimate, or "orphans." Presumably, this is because each category had a different monetary value – base children could potentially be palmed off on an absent or unwilling father, whereas orphans were a sunk cost. This quantification of the cost of children results in a political economic theory of reproduction: "hereof it is that the world growes so populous and poore; for commonly the poore do most of all multiply children."[135] In this way, the sexual lives of the parish inhabitants are indeed brought into the calculations of the parish finances, with the local population figured through the getting and spending of capital.

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[135] *An Ease for Overseers*, 26.

A note of such poore as be charge-
able and burdenous in the parish of Wo: in the Countie of Suffolke.

A readie forme for a speedie inspection of the poore.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Wards	Names and Families.	years	Defects	vsuall workes	weekely gettings	of whom they haue worke.	who want worke	Such as be fit for Apprentices and seruice.	Such as keepe orphans and others	weekely allowance	Beggers licensed in the parish.
East	Father Got 71 his wife 69 Ioane 19 Richard 15		palsie ideot	knitte	viii.d.	W.True.		Iohn Gott.		x.d.	Rich. Got
West	mother Ter 67 Marie 20 Iohn 15 Alice 9		lame deafe	spinne	x.d.	Iohn Mart.		Alice Terre:	mother Terre keepeth W.Ren. Io.Ren. ⎫ base.	ii.s.	
North	Widow Fit 51 William 16 Richard 1 Iohn 8 Henrie 6		diseased dumme	weaueth	xii.d.	H.Till.	R. Fitt. H.Fitt.	Richard Fitt.		viii.d.	Iohn Fit.
South	Thomas Fig 43 Susan 34 Raph 14 Leonard 9 Rose 5 Henrie 3 Thomas 2		bedred blinde lame	labourer	ii.s.	of diuers men.	RaphFig	Raph Fig.	Thomas Figge keepeth Ro.Segge. Th.Rere. Hen.Tod. ⎫ orphans.	iii.s.	Rose Fig.
persons 20.			diseased 9	workers 4			idle 3	Apprentices. 4	orphans and other 5	Allow. 6.s. 6.d.	Beggers. 3

This Table may be extracted to a greater or lesser number according to the multiplicitie of the poore.

In distribution of this money their must be respect of the ⎰ persons ⎱ ⎰ seasons ⎱ by their ⎰ Impediments ⎱ ⎰ Temperature ⎱

That they may haue a proportionall allowance according to the continuance and measure of their maladies and miseries.

That somewhat be reteined and reserued in sommer, that their reliefe may be more liberall in winter.

Figure 5. "A readie forme for a speedie inspection of the poore," from *An Ease for Overseers of the Poore* (London, 1601).

Poor unemployed rogues were therefore the socioeconomic and biopolitical opposite of the soldiers Harrison hoped that an excess population would create. As we saw in Chapter One, rogues were thought of as a promiscuous generation whose sexuality was threatening in part because of its reproductive consequences. They were considered a naturally occurring and inexorably increasing drain on the commonwealth. Soldiers, on the other hand, present the opposite problem: sent away to die, they cannot fully replenish England's store of men. And yet soldiers and rogues were also seen as drawn from largely overlapping social groups. The soldiers that did return home from battle were commonly believed to become rogues, increasing the ratio of rogues to soldiers.[136] The self-styled rogue expert Thomas Harman creates a special category of rogue veterans called "Rufflers," who "be so much ashamed and disdain to beg or ask charity, that rather they will as desperately fight for to live and maintain themselves as manfully as, and valiantly, they ventured themselves in the Prince's quarrel."[137] Harrison is of the same mind, insisting that rogues increase after

> warres, which are a great occasion of their breed (for it is the custome of
> the more idle sort, having once served or but seene the other side of the
> sea under colour of service to shake hand with labour, for ever, thinking it
> a disgrace for himselfe to returne unto his former trade). (186)

Like Harman, Harrison sees returning soldiers as unwilling to labor in a trade, and likely to turn instead to the idleness of roguery. Thus war not only kills soldiers, it also increases the numbers of rogues (in this context, the use of the term "breed" is also

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[136] For a discussion of the relationship between rogues and veterans in early modern England, see Linda Bradley Salamon, "Vagabond Veterans: The Roguish Company of Martin Guerre and *Henry V*," in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture*, eds. Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Ann Arbor: U of M Press, 2004), 261-293, which argues that all veterans, and thus all soldiers, were considered potential rogues.
[137] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (London, 1568), B2r.

suggestive of rogue promiscuous generation). In this zero-sum calculus, each converted

veteran is a double loss: one added to the rogue column is one taken away from the

soldier column. Rogues thus corrupt the army and the nation from within. As the

Somerset justice Edward Hext wrote, rogues "are so mych strength unto the enemie."[138]

Not only were ex-soldiers considered likely to become rogues, but conscripted

soldiers were often taken from the ranks of the unemployed and dispossessed. Barnabe

Rich describes the manner in which soldiers are impressed in his *Allarme to England*

(1578):

> Our maner of appointing of souldiers, is. . . some odde fellowe muste be
>
> picked out that doth least good in the parish. . . In London when they set
>
> foorth souldiers, either they scoure their prisons of theeves, or their
>
> streates of roges and vagabondes, for he that is bound to find a man, will
>
> seeke suche a one as were better lost then found: but they care not, so they
>
> may have them good cheape, what he is, nor from whence he comes, they
>
> put him in a sute of blew, and bring him before maister warden of their
>
> companie.[139]

Rich complains that rogues and vagabonds are specifically chosen as soldiers because

they will not be missed (they do "the least good in the parish"), and are not expensive to

hire. This view helps explain why veterans were thought to become rogues upon their

return home: because they were considered to be rogues before they left for war.

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[138] *Tudor Economic Documents*, vol. 2, eds. R.H. Tawney and Eileen Edna Power (London: Longmans, 1924), 344.

[139] Barnabe Rich's disdain for rogue recruits derives from his interest in military training. He published numerous pamphlets exhorting Elizabeth to invest in teaching soldiers battle skills, and to remunerate captains based on their experience rather than the raw numbers of troops they could muster. See Barnabe Rich, *Allarme to England* (London, 1578), B3r-v.

Critics often note that veterans were considered rogues because they were trained to fight, equipped with weapons, accustomed to violence, and had no employment between wars.[140] But it is important to recognize that early modern writers like Rich did not view war as turning respectable, law-abiding laborers into rogues so much as they feared that it would intensify the danger posed by the able-bodied unemployed, who were already considered a threat. Ironically, to feed the country's need for soldiers, England needed to take its allegedly most dangerous countrymen and make them even more dangerous. Early modern discussions of soldiers and rogues thus engendered a kind of paranoia by which the means of defense were also feared as a means of destruction. For all the ways in which rogues and soldiers are opposites, they are also two sides of the same coin. Mustering rogue soldiers, in Rich and Harrison's texts, is a self-defeating proposition that collapses distinctions between enemy and friend and, in Harrison's terms, invites the caterpillars to feast on the commonwealth.

II. "Civil Butchery"

1 Henry IV reflects Harrison and Rich's intertwining of rogues, soldiers, and the nation's population, representing soldiers as rogues and consistently quantifying the two groups. But the play differs from them both by refracting the problem of England's population through the lens of civil war. Civil war changes the discussion of rogue and soldier populations by recalibrating their ratio. That is, when England's rogue soldiers are pitted against one another, it becomes more evident that their collective numbers must either go up or down, and more difficult to sustain the illusion that one grows at the expense of the other. Falstaff's roguish regiment is one ramification of this logic: if the

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[140] See Salamon, 270-75.

King requires soldiers, he must have rogues. Although civil war creates a demand for Falstaff's soldiers, it also provides a neat, if chilling solution to the concomitant problem of increasing rogues, as Falstaff's rogue soldiers are fatally transformed into "food for powder" (4.2.59). The play thus uses civil war to collapse the parallax view that allows Harrison and Rich to describe rogues and soldiers as both similar and different, offering instead a political economy of civil butchery that consumes rogues and soldiers in equal measures.

The self-defeating economy of roguery and soldiery is similar to the way *1 Henry IV* represents civil war: a dangerous subdivision of a single substance. The mathematics of human generation and national degeneracy are embedded in Henry's opening speech, in which he cancels his intended crusade in order to keep the peace at home. Henry describes civil war as threatening in that it forces Englishmen to kill one another: "those opposed eyes . . . of one substance bred,/ Did lately meet in the intestine shock/ And furious close of civil butchery" (1.1.9-12). These lines frame civil war deaths as perverse math, the opposing subdivision of "one substance bred." They also represent the English army as the concentrated product (one substance) of a national project of breeding. Henry mentions that he came by his military "power" because they were "bred" for war, being "molded in their mother's womb" to fight (1.1.22-23). This passage ties the English army's numerical size – "power" also means a large number – to the reproductive capacity of Englishwomen.[141] Combined with Henry's reference to being "impressed" to fight (1.1.21), these lines foreshadow the play's later representation of military conscription, a process that, in early modern English military records, was always

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[141] The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives examples of "power" meaning "large number, quantity, or amount" in both the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See "Power," n.1, 10.

discussed in terms of the exact numbers of soldiers impressed.[142] Furthermore, since, as

Henry points out, civil war threatens not simply soldiers but "acquaintance, kindred, and

allies," the passage implies that reproductive sexuality writ large is a crucial

socioeconomic, not just military, resource (1.1.16). Henry's depiction of the nation at

war as a vulnerable pool of human resources echoes Harrsion's description of the

connection between population and military strength. Furthermore, like Harrison,

Henry's view of reproduction as a matter of national interest seems influenced by the

kind of quantitative reproductive logic encouraged by the poor laws (which tied tax rates

to the numbers of poor living in the parish), connecting biopolitical and military power to

sexual reproduction.

The commodification of human reproduction brought on by the butchery of civil

war is also present in the rumor-mongering of the rogues of Eastcheap, although there it

is filtered through a certain sexual braggadocio. Discussing the prospects of open

rebellion, a fearful Falstaff concludes that conflict must be at hand, since Henry is selling

land to raise money for an army, observing that "you may buy land now as cheap as

stinking mackerel" (2.5.329). Picking up on the meaning of mackerel as bawd, and

perhaps the meaning of fish as prostitute, Hal tries to cheer up his friend by pointing out

that the market for maidenheads will be similarly affected by the war: "we shall buy

maidenheads as they buy hobnails, by the hundreds" (2.5.331-2). Hal does not supply the

logic behind this economic calculation, but he implies that civil war will drive down the

demand for women by killing off most of the sexually available young men, allowing

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[142] See Taunton, 128, n. 99.

him and Falstaff to buy a store of virgins at wholesale rates.[143] This exchange highlights the importance of sexual reproduction to the war effort by pointing out the scarcity in male sexual resources created by prolonged civil war. That it does so in the language of the market – a language emphasized by Falstaff's winking reply, "it is like we shall have good trading that way," underscores the fact that male and female reproductive resources are relentlessly quantified in this play (2.5.333-4). These lines represent sexual reproduction as crucial to the English army and its economy, highlighting Harrison's point about the necessary relationship between the nation's biopolitical and military resources.

There is an important contrast, however, between the incipient notions of political economy put forth by Harrison and those represented by Shakespeare. Harrison locates England's fecund past in the chronicles of its history of civil wars. According to Harrison, Henry VIII's military difficulties led him to wistfully imagine the numbers of English soldiers available to the several princes of old war-torn England. In *1 Henry IV*, on the other hand, civil war is the ultimate threat to England's population; thus population and war are in a negative relationship. Yet despite this representation of civil war, the play faithfully reproduces the chronicle histories' accounts of England's massive armies. There is a certain historical cognitive dissonance here: on the one hand, the play's depiction of civil war seems to reinforce contemporary fears about England's insufficient store of men. On the other hand, Shakespeare offers a reassuring picture of England as swarming with ready soldiers; the rebels have tens of thousands of men at their disposal, and Henry seems to have even more.   Nina Taunton, pointing to the

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[143] Hal's joke is also a reference to female camp followers, often figured as prostitutes, who accompanied early modern military camps. For a discussion of the gender dynamics of military camps, See Taunton, 202-217.

difficulty Elizabeth faced in trying to marshal forces of this scope, calls the stage

representation of these massive armies a "wish-fulfillment fantasy," seemingly a good

description of Harrison's account of Henry VIII.[144] But when Shakespeare sought to

dramatize this period, he presents not a lost age of fecundity but a busy abattoir of "civil

butchery."

This difference appears to stem from *1 Henry IV*'s consideration of rogues and

soldiers as indistinct social categories. The play addresses the social contradiction

inherent in defending the nation with an army of rogues by refusing to romanticize its

armed masses. After all, the most prominent non-aristocratic portion of Henry's army,

the soldiers at Falstaff's command, are poor rogues. Like the captains in Rich's *Alarme*,

Falstaff finds his soldiers as cheaply as possible, claiming that "the most of them [were

gotten] out of prison" (4.2.36-7). When Hal criticizes Falstaff's "pitiful" soldiers,

Falstaff responds by insisting that they are as useful as any other men: "good enough to

toss; food for powder, food for powder. They'll fit a pit as well as better" (4.2.58-9).

These men are literally cannon-fodder, a role that poor rogues can play as well as better

men. As in earlier descriptions of civil war in the play, here war is depicted as a game of

numbers, a battle of attrition won by the last army standing.

Falstaff's comments also suggest that rogues can be resources – as long as they

are spent before the war ends. In the midst of the battle, Falstaff informs the audience "I

have led my ragamuffins where they are peppered; there's not three of my hundred and

fifty left alive, and they are for the town's end, to beg during life" (5.3.35-7). These

soldiers are almost all dead, and Falstaff implies that the few survivors, permanently

disabled, will be consigned to the gates of the city to beg for a living as the opposite end

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[144] Taunton, 130.

of the rogue continuum: the deserving poor. The complete decimation of Falstaff's

ragged regiment functions as a critique of the disproportionate cost exacted by civil war

from the lower orders of soldiers. But it also serves as a neat solution to England's rogue

problem by turning dangerous rogues into dead soldiers. In Shakespeare's play,

translating rogues into soldiers doesn't make them more dangerous; it simply helps

reduce the "superfluous heapes" of the unemployed. Rich and Harrison feared the social

calculus by which each rogue meant one fewer soldier. In *1 Henry IV*, it appears that

each soldier means one fewer rogue.

Whether the "civil butchery" of civil war is a waste of scarce resources or a

reduction of superfluous heaps thus depends upon how you view the soldiers doing the

butchering. *1 Henry IV* moves from viewing sexually-reproduced soldiers as a scarce

national resource to representing soldiers as poor rogues, in such a way as to imply that

the civil wars, and their death tolls, are net gains for the country. Not only are Falstaff's

soldiers characterized in this way, but the rebels are, as well. At Shrewsbury, Henry

describes the efforts of the rebels to stir up "insurrection," saying the latter is supported

by "moody beggars, starving for a time/ Of pell-mell havoc and confusion" (5.1.81-82).

Rebellion itself is metaphorically compared to a company of rogues by Westmorland in *2

Henry IV*, who tells the Archbishop of York that rebellion consists of "base and abject

routs,/ Led on by bloody youth, guarded with rags,/ And countenanced by boys and

beggary" (4.1.32-5). The representation of rebellion as roguery dovetails neatly with the

notion that rogues are as much a threat as they are a defense. In this way, casualties on

both sides add up to a victory for the commonwealth. Although *1 Henry IV* begins with

Henry lamenting the inevitable losses caused by civil war, it ends by suggesting that the

warring nation gives up precisely that which it can spare: the moody beggars and bloody youth otherwise known as rogues.

The roguery of the Lancastrian army thus is crucial to its representation as an endlessly reproducible and uniquely profitable resource. The play's interest in the production and reproduction of its soldier population is informed by the discourses of poor relief, enclosure, and population surrounding the regulation and quantification of rogues. But importing the discourse of rogue population into the representation of soldiery is not always a winning strategy, for it also destabilizes the play's economic language of human resources, whereby the Lancastrians seek to establish political legitimacy.

III. Misusing the King's Press

Critics have long noted *1 Henry IV*'s consistent use of economic language. Henry, Hal, Percy, and other aristocrats all speak of credit, debt, and payment, while other characters, particularly Falstaff, make punning reference to coinage and counterfeiting.[145] Opinions have differed about the exact nature of the economy portrayed in the plays, but most agree that the language of credit is a reflection of the development of a market economy in Shakespeare's own time, and that the virtuosity of the Lancastrians in deploying this language signifies their mastery of social and political

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[145] For a discussion of the relationship between the representation of coinage in the play and Elizabethan practices of coining, see Jesse M Lander, "'Crack'd Crowns' and Counterfeit Sovereigns: The Crisis of Value in *1 Henry IV*," *Shakespeare Studies* 30 (2002), 137-161; and Stephen Deng "'So Pale, So Lame, So Lean, So Ruinous': The Circulation of Foreign Coins in Early Modern England," in *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, ed. Jyotsna Singh (Malden: Blackwell, 2009), 262-278.

relations in the play.[146] Moreover, the language of coining and counterfeiting is thought

to underscore the process by which Hal distinguishes his true fitness for rule from his

fake performance of idleness.[147] But investment and coining were overdetermined

concepts in early modern England, as was the emerging capitalist economy itself.[148]

While credit was often understood as the economic mortar of society, it was also feared

as the sinful material of usury.[149] Similarly, a coin's precious metal and royal stamp

were at once guarantors of value and, because of debasement and counterfeiting, the sign

of value's vulnerability.[150] Yet, perhaps because of the critical impulse to account for the

play's celebration of Lancastrian dominance on the battlefield, analyses of the economies

of *1 Henry IV* too often gloss over the conflicted nature of the economic language the

play invokes. The language of counterfeiting in the play reveals that Lancastrian

chivalric valor, like its military, is informed by the discourse of illegitimate rogue

reproduction. This is because counterfeiting is entwined with the economic language of

sodomy, which proliferates on the battlefield at Shrewsbury. The battle becomes less a

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[146] For discussions of the language of the market, credit, and debt in the play, see Nina Levine, "Extending Credit in the *Henry IV* Plays," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 51.4 (2000), 403-431; Jean E. Howard and Phyllis Rackin, *Engendering a Nation: A Feminist Account of Shakespeare's English Histories* (London: Routledge, 1997), 160-185; Lars Engle, *Shakespearean Pragmatism: Market of His Time* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1993), 107-28; Sandra K. Fischer, "'He means to pay': Value and Metaphor in the Lancastrian Tetralogy," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 40.2 (1989), 149-164; and E. Rubinstein, "*1 Henry IV*: The Metaphor of Liability," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10.2 (1970), 287-295.

[147] This is Lander's view of Hal. His larger argument is more complicated, insisting that the play uses the language of counterfeiting to examine the process through which value is created.

[148] On England's emerging market economy, see David Baker, *On Demand: Writing for the Market in Early Modern England* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010); Theodore B. Leinwand, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999); Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambride UP, 1992); Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986).

[149] On the interconnectedness fostered by credit, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

[150] The debasement of Tudor coins is treated at length in J.D. Gould, *The Great Debasement: Currency and the Economy in Mid-Tudor England,* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970). For a fuller discussion of coinage and monetary policy throughout the Tudor period, see C.E. Challis, *The Tudor Coinage*, (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1978). For a general overview of British coinage, see Peter Seaby, *The Story of British Coinage* (London: B.A. Seaby, 1985).

proving ground for Hal's singular honor than a sodomitical exchange in which he is implicated alongside his foils – in particular, his father and Falstaff.

In the past decade, a critical consensus has emerged around the relationship in early modern England between the sexual crime of sodomy to the economic crimes of counterfeiting and usury. This connection has been particularly influential on studies of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and *The Merchant of Venice*, each of which insistently figure financial exchange as a sexual transaction, and vice versa.[151] Will Fisher has argued that this connection is motivated by the rationale for sodomy's proscription as an unnatural form of heterosexual reproductive sex. Both usury and counterfeiting were considered unnatural forms of economic reproduction, although the cultural logic for each association was different. Aristotelian tradition held that usury was an unnatural growth of money, which existed to be exchanged, rather than lent at interest. As Fisher explains, "The usurer's attempt to make barren money breed is the equivalent of the sodomite's attempts to make a non-reproductive sexual object or orifice breed. The usurer and the sodomite thus commit the same crime in different forms."[152] The link between sodomy and counterfeiting, Fisher argues, was based on the analogy between the counterfeiting as the imitation of real money and sodomy as the simulation of reproductive sex. The sodomitical aspect of usury thus derives from the miscategorization of money, while that of counterfeiting derives from the falsification of it. Nevertheless, the two economic crimes are related in that they both have to do with the reproduction of money beyond ordinary measure. Sodomitical economies are thus not merely false, but monstrously

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[151] See Fisher; Jody Greene; Peter C. Herman, "What's the Use? Or, the Problematic of Economy in Shaeksepeare's Procreation Sonnets," in Schiffer, 263-83; David Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace* (London: Palgrave McMillan, 2001), 95-114; Marc Shell, *Money, Language, Thought* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1982), 47-83.
[152] Fisher, 11.

reproductive, providing an apposite rhetorical figure for the promiscuous generation of rogues and soldiers.

Perhaps because they have focused on Falstaff's homoerotic relationship with Hal, analyses of sodomy in *1 Henry IV* have not considered the sodomitical economic language that surrounds Falstaff's military career.[153] The play's depiction of Falstaff as sodomitical is most glaring in the fat knight's description of his ragged regiment. Falstaff declares, "I have misused the King's press damnably. I have got, in exchange of a hundred and fifty soldiers, three hundred and odd pounds" (4.2.12-14). Falstaff is speaking of the commission Hal secured him to impress troops for battle, which he has "misused" by doubly enriching himself: first, by drafting men who could afford to bribe him to take poor men instead; and second, by outfitting the poor men so cheaply that he could keep most of the money meant to furnish them for battle for himself. But the term "King's press" is a pun, meaning both the power to impress soldiers and the power to coin currency.[154] We have been primed for this second sense just a couple of lines earlier in an exchange between Bardolph and Falstaff. Bardolph asks Falstaff to repay him for the wine he has purchased for him, saying, "this bottle makes an angel" (4.2.6). Pretending that Bardolph means that the bottle can actually mint angel coins, Falstaff responds, "if it do, take it for thy labour, an if it make twenty, take them all; I'll answer the coinage" (4.2.7-9). In the context of this joke about illegal coining, Falstaff's claim to have "abused the King's press" by the exchange of counterfeit (because poor, ragged, and untrained) soldiers for real silver represents Falstaff's abuse as a kind of

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[153] See Goldberg; Findlay.
[154] Sandra K. Fischer notes the overlap between these two meanings of "press." See Fischer, *Econolingua: A Glossary of Coins and Economic Language in Renaissance Drama* (Newark: Associated University Presses, 1985), 108.

counterfeiting. Falstaff's abuse of the king's power marks him as an illegitimate substitute for Henry in Hal's drama of legitimacy.

Falstaff's paternal illegitimacy is also expressed in sexual terms: to press also meant to have sexual intercourse, a pun that activates associations between counterfeiting and sodomy.[155] The sodomical overtones of this passage are brought out by at least two other factors. First, Hal's previous use of the word "press" to describe Falstaff as a sexually repulsive "bed-presser" (2.4.224) is part of the way the play constructs Falstaff's body as sodomical.[156] Second, Falstaff's 200% return on his exchange of 150 men for 300 pounds is evocative of a usurious, which is to say sodomical, loan. This sexualized language of counterfeiting and usury, combined with Falstaff's pun on sexual pressing, imparts the specter of sodomy over Falstaff's generation of rogue soldiers. In representing rogue soldiers as prodigiously and unnaturally reproduced, the passage appropriates the trope of the endlessly reproductive rogue and translates it into the economic language of sodomy. Hal reacts to Falstaff's efforts with disgust, mocking his men and later berating Falstaff for carrying a bottle of sack in his holster in place of a pistol. Linked to a counterfeit press before the battle, the bottle becomes a counterfeit weapon on the battlefield. By rejecting the fake pistol, Hal reenacts his distaste for Falstaff's counterfeit soldiers, establishing himself as a leader of true soldiers.

The play prefigures Hal's Shrewsbury rejection of Falstaff as a coward in his reaction to Falstaff's description of fighting off a rogue ambush at Gadshill. Describing

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[155] For the sexual valence of "pressing," see Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London: Routledge, 2001), 215; and Gordon Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sexual Language* (London: Athlone, 1997), 78, 244-5.

[156] See Goldberg, 173-74. For the semiotic connections between material, textual, and sexual pressing, see Margreta de Grazia, "Imprints: Shakespeare, Gutenberg, and Descartes," in *Alternative Shakespeares*, Vol. 2, ed. Terrence Hawkes (London: Routledge, 1996), 63-94.

the attack, Falstaff first claims to have killed two would-be thieves: "Two I am sure I have paid – two rogues in buckram suits," only to insist a few lines later that "Four rogues in buckram let drive at me" (2.5.176-80). Hal mockingly responds, "What four? Thou saidst but two even now" (2.5.181). Falstaff responds by further multiplying his attackers: "These four came all afront, and mainly thrust at me. I made no more ado, but took all their *seven* points in my target thus . . . These *nine* in buckram that I told thee of [retreated]. . . I followed me close. . . and with a thought, seven of the *eleven* I paid (2.5.184-202, my emphasis). Like a usurious debt, Falstaff's rogue attackers seem to reproduce themselves unnaturally, despite his claims to have "paid" them. After Falstaff's final exaggeration, Hal picks up on the unnatural connotations of Falstaff's exaggerations, exclaiming, "O monstrous! Eleven buckram men grown out of two! [. . .] These lies are like their father that begets them – gross as a mountain, open, palpable" (2.5.203-9). Hal's response paints Falstaff as the monstrous begetter of an unnatural "growth" of men, responsible for a kind of usurious reproduction of rogues in language. This is not to say that Falstaff or Hal are represented as sodomites. But to the extent that Falstaff and Hal's relationship is coded as homoerotic, it is in part due to the economic language of sodomy that surrounds their activities, including and especially the activity of warfare.

The parallel between the scenes of Falstaff's usurious proliferation of fighting rogues and his counterfeit exchange of rogue soldiers deepens the play's thematic emphasis on the importance of raw manpower in war. The play's economic language of sodomy seems to suggest that if war is a game of numbers, then inflationary pressure is inevitable. This is perhaps one reason that the economy of war is persistently and

ubiquitously figured as counterfeit and sodomitical in the play. Even Percy, chivalric to a fault, proclaims: "we must have bloody noses and cracked crowns,/ And pass them *current*, too" (2.4.85-6, my emphasis). Punning on the double meaning of crown as a skull and a monetary unit, Percy thus implies that wounded soldiers are a kind of counterfeit currency which royalty pass as current to their own advantage on the battlefield.[157] These lines foreshadow the way that the battlefield at Shrewsbury is littered with acts of counterfeiting: Falstaff makes himself a "counterfeit" casualty (5.4.113), then gives Percy's corpse a counterfeit leg wound (5.4.124-25), just as earlier he "hacked" his sword to provide counterfeit evidence of his valiance at Gasdhill (2.5.241). Hal then agrees to "gild" Falstaff's lie, following Percy's edict to allow counterfeit wounds to pass as current (5.4.151). Henry himself becomes a counterfeiter by the play's end in reproducing fake kings, having "many marching in his coats," like Falstaff's imaginary men in buckram (5.3.25). The battlefield is less a touchstone for true mettle, as countless critics have argued, than a level playing field in which all the contestants, royal and rogue alike, prove false.[158]

David Kastan has argued persuasively that this proliferation of the signs of kingship on the battlefield undermines Henry's efforts to portray the monarchy as essentially real and irreproducible.[159] The extent to which this is true is due not only to the destabilizing play of "differánce" cited by Kastan, by which every performance of the

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[157] To pass "cracked crowns" could also refer to the practice of purposely damaging or clipping coins, which was done in order to amass enough large quantities of small slivers of precious metal over time. See Fisher, 1, 15.

[158] See Howard and Rackin, 175; and James Calderwood, *Shakespeare and the Denial of Death* (Amherst: U of Massachusetts P, 1987), 27-29. On the battle of Agincourt in Shakespeare's *Henry V* as a test of English mettle, see Mary Floyd-Wilson, "English Mettle," in *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, eds. Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2004).

[159] David Scott Kastan, "The King Hath Many Marching in His Coats, or Daddy, What Did You Do in the War?" in *Shakespeare After Theory* (London: Routledge, 1999), 129-147.

monarchy's singularity only underlines the gap between the thing and its representation, but also because of the intimations of sodomy that surround counterfeiting and reproduction in the play. Before the final battle, Henry is implicated in structures of sodomitical reproduction by his enemies, who describe his ingratitude upon his return from exile as follows:

> And being fed by us, you used us so
>
> As that ungentle gull, the cuckoo's bird,
>
> Useth the sparrow; did oppress our nest,
>
> Grew by our feeding to so great a bulk
>
> That even our love durst not come near your sight
>
> For fear of swallowing; but with nimble wing
>
> We were enforced, for safety's sake, to fly. . . (5.1.59-65)

Worcester complains that Henry is an ingrate: they supported him when he deposed Richard II, but, once king, he refused to give them the favor they felt he owed them in return. But Henry is a particular kind of ingrate. Henry's alleged betrayal is like the cuckoo's practice of leaving its eggs in another bird's nest (in this case the sparrow), tricking the unwitting bird to hatch and nourish the cuckoo's offspring. If Henry is like the cuckoo, he does not simply refuse to pay back his creditors; he destroys their legitimate interests by using them and then giving them false recompense for their labors.

A link is established here between counterfeiting and the cuckoo in two ways: First, the cuckoo literally passes counterfeit eggs for the real ones. Second, Worcester's description of the cuckoo focuses on the cuckoo's "ungentle" method of reproduction – what could be more unnatural than for a king to be ungentle? Like a cuckoo's counterfeit

unnatural reproduction, Henry counterfeits gentility. This description of Henry is evocative of Falstaff, the only character in the play who has actually "fed to so great a bulk." In its description of parasitism these lines also suggest the common trope of rogues as caterpillars on the commonwealth. Ultimately, the rebels accuse Henry of arriving in someone else's territory and preying on their kindness, like a wandering rogue. Henry then proves his accusers correct by monstrously reproducing himself across the battlefield, like rogues spreading across the English countryside.

Where Henry is proven multiple, Hal proves himself singular. Against this backdrop of dead soldiers – some in rags and some in robes – Hal saves his father's life and defeats Percy in single combat, distinguishing himself as a true English king. Hal's secret desire that his "reformation" as a princely soldier be set off by the "foil" of his base companions is ultimately continuous with the chivalric conduct of war, in which great numbers of men from places like Eastcheap die so that the military exploits of the nobility can live forever.[160] By representing war in this way, Shakespeare resolves a contradiction that Taunton has pointed out. The new military strategy that emphasized strength in numbers conflicts with traditional chivalric values that valorized military skill.[161] If all an army needs is a mathematical advantage, this diminishes the importance of highly trained aristocratic warriors. In *1 Henry IV*, however, Shakespeare uses the numbers of bare soldiers as a backdrop for the military glory of Hal at Shrewsbury. In this way, the play produces and secures social differences and biopolitical power through the deaths of large numbers of English rogues.

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[160] This theme is reiterated in the battle of Agincourt in *Henry V*, with its discussion about the relative value of common soldier's lives and those of the nobility.
[161] Taunton, 130.

Ultimately the play doesn't except Hal from sodomitical discourse. Like his two dads, Hal is implicated in counterfeiting when he tells Falstaff that he will "gild" his fake battlefield heroics – Falstaff's claim to have killed Percy – "with the happiest terms" (5.5.151). This can and has been read as the culminating moment of Hal's reformation in the play, in which he acts the role of the generous monarch who is above petty glories of personal victory.[162] This moment also confirms Kastan's assertion that this monarchical performance is still a performance – if Hal proves himself "a true piece of gold" in the play, it is because he can counterfeit, too (2.5.449).[163] But even as this scene underscores familiar arguments about Hal's mastery of the linguistic techniques of Eastcheap, or embrace of the performativity of power, it also suggests something about the nature of his monarchical authority.[164] Hal is represented as an eminently successful king to the extent that he is capable of participating in the same sodomitical structures that produce Lancastrian military and political dominance. Just as *1 Henry IV* makes monstrously reproductive rogues a national resource, it also insists that the language of sexual and economic illegitimacy can be harnessed to produce political legitimacy. In other words, the play's surprising implication is that for a monarch whose nation depends upon the endless reproduction of its population, sodomy may be the best policy.

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[162] A similar argument is found in Lander, 155.
[163] Kastan, 141-145.
[164] On Hal's use of Eastcheap language as a tool of power, see Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1988), 21-65; and Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988), 60-87.

Chapter 4

Mastery, Masculinity, and Sexual Cozening in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*

> The name of Conicatchers is so odious, that now a dayes it is had up, and
>
> used for an opprobrious name for everie one that sheweth the least
>
> occasion of deceit.[165]

> And cheating and crosse-biting Great ones may
>
> In great things use, as Little ones at play.[166]

Robert Greene's cony-catching pamphlets, which vividly depict London's

criminals and prostitutes, are acknowledged to have been a profound influence on the

plays Ben Jonson wrote both immediately before and after *Epicoene*: *Volpone* and *The*

Alchemist.[167] Compared to these two plays, *Epicoene, or The Silent Woman* (1609), with

its focus on London's fashionable West End, seems blessedly free from Jonson's

preoccupation with urban criminals. The play is instead often seen as an incisive

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[165]Samuel Rowlands, *Greenes Ghost Haunting Conie-catchers* (London, 1602), A2r.

[166] Thomas Scot, *Philomythie* (London, 1622), C7v.

[167] Jonathan Haynes analyzes *The Alchemist* as a "representation of the underworld," in *The Social Relations of Jonson's Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992), pp. 99-118. Ronald Broude discusses the relationship of *Volpone* to Greene's work in "Volpone and the Triumph of Truth: Some Antecedents and Analogues of the Main Plot in '*Volpone*,'" *Studies in Philology* 77.3 (Summer, 1980), 227-246.

exploration of the gender and class politics of London's emerging proto-bourgeois society.[168] The emphasis on gender is famously reflected in the play's title: the word "epicene," having to do with both genders, highlights the title character's subversion of female gender norms while simultaneously gesturing to the play's gender-bending conclusion, in which the supposedly unruly gentlewoman is revealed to be a cross-dressed servant boy. Yet the title also suggests that *Epicoene* is indebted to the same cony-catching sources that inform the plays written before and after it. Jonson's addition of an "o" after the "c" in *Epicoene* points to the word's etymology from the Greek word ἐπίκοινος, or epikoinos.[169] To honor Jonson's classical spelling with its proper Greek pronunciation, the title could be pronounced Eh-pi-ko-eh-nee, or perhaps Epi-cony. A Grecian pronunciation of the title of the play thus makes available an aural pun on the period's popular cony-catching pamphlets, signaling an intertextual relationship between the two. Taking a cue from the title's pun, this chapter examines the critical consequences of reading the ostensibly female Mistress Epicoene – and the knight

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[168] Studies of gender in *Epicoene* include Phyllis Rackin, "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage," *PMLA* 102.1 (Jan 1987), 29-41; Steve Brown, "The Boyhood of Shakespeare's Heroines: Notes on Gender Ambiguity in the Sixteenth Century," *SEL* 30.2 (Spring 1990), 243-263; Jean Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 93-128; Richmond Barbour, "'When I Acted Young Antinous': Boy Actors and the Erotics of Jonsonian Theater," *PMLA* 110.5 (1995), 1006-1022; and Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama*, (Cambridge, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 65-99. Studies of the economics of the play include Karen Newman, "City Talk: Women and Commodification in Jonson's *Epicoene*," *ELH* 56.3 (1989), 503-41; Adam Zucker, "The Social Logic of Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*," *RenD* 33 (2005), 37-62; Marjorie Swann, "Refashioning Society in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*," *SEL* 38.2 (1998), 297–315.

[169] Richard Harp's 2001 edition of the play keeps Jonson's Grecian "o," in apparent solidarity with the intention of the author, but Richard Dutton's 2003 edition removes the "o," providing the following explanatory note: "This is the appropriate form in a modern-spelling edition. Jonson favoured the old form, 'Epicoene' because of its closeness to the Greek/Latin, from which it derived (*epicoenus*/ἐπίκοινος); cf. his spelling of 'comoedy.'" See *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques*, Ed. Richard Harp (New York: W.W. Norton, 2001), and *Epicene, or The Silent Woman*, Ed. Richard Dutton (Manchester: Manchester Univ. Press, 2003), 109. Subsequent parenthetical line citations are taken from Harp's volume.

Dauphine – as sexual cozeners in the tradition of a cony-catching scheme known as cross-biting.[170]

Cross-biting, a term that first appears in Greene's *A Noteable Discovery of Coosenage* (1591), refers to a scheme in which a man and a woman partner to gain another man's trust in order to relieve him of his purse. One of the two insinuates himself or herself into the good graces of the targeted man, who is then cheated, blackmailed, or robbed outright by the other cross-biter. Whereas the precise techniques of theft and seduction that define cross-biting may vary, the genders of the actors do not – cross-biting always involves a partnership between a man and a woman to seduce and cozen another man. Cross-biting thus bears strong similarities to the main plot of *Epicoene*, in which the impoverished Dauphine under false pretenses brokers the marriage of Mistress Epicoene to his rich uncle Morose – a service she has agreed repay him for with a piece of her new husband's estate. This similarity is further signaled by the play's facetious endorsement of *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte*, a cross-biting narrative thinly disguised as Greene's autobiography, as "a very cheap cure" for madness (4.4.97).[171]

The cross-biting context injects Dauphine and Mistress Epicoene's partnership with the sexual energy and economic competitiveness of the partnerships between pimps and prostitutes found in Greene's works, adding dramatic tension to the largely

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[170] Dauphine's scheme is also indebted to the classical plot of legacy-hunting, or *captatio*, found in Horace, Petronius, Lucian, and Juvenal. Thomas L. Cooksey discusses legacy-hunting in "Jonson's *Volpone*: A Double Source in Petronius' *Satyricon*," *N&Q* 245 (2000), 103–4. James Mardock connects Dauphine's plot to legacy-hunting in "Hermaphroditical Authority in Jonson's City Comedies," *Ben Jonson Journal* 9 (2002), 69-86.
[171] There are a number of putative autobiographies of Robert Greene that seem to have been intended to capitalize on the popularity of Greene's cony-catching literature by retelling many of the same kinds of lively trickster tales as though they had happened to Greene himself. *Greene's Groatsworth*, and its role in *Epicoene*, is examined more fully below.

unchallenged schemes of Dauphine and his entourage. More importantly, it allows us to

see the play as a contest between the emergent models of urban masculinity and

femininity embodied by Dauphine and Mistress Epicoene, respectively. Jean Howard's

Theater of a City has argued that early modern drama staged various modes of

masculinity and femininity that competed with the patriarchal norms prescribed for men

and women in the more orthodox conduct literature. In particular, she suggests that city

comedy explores the effects of London's new market economy on gender performance by

staging a model of femininity, patterned on prostitution, that celebrates a woman's use of

her sexuality to produce material gains and a model of masculinity, patterned on the

improvisations of destitute men, that emphasizes a man's performative prowess as a

means to reestablish social and cultural authority. These modes of femininity and

masculinity originate in stories about the brothel and debtors prison, but eventually are

staged as effective social poses in the (more or less) respectable urban shop and

household.[172] In this way, the sex/gender codes of debased, lower-class spaces become

strangely transformed into effective social capital in stagings of middling and elite

society. But, I argue, the class origins of these sex/gender codes cannot be completely

effaced through such a process of dramatic alchemy, even in a play celebrated by John

Dryden for its faithful representation of gentle conduct and conversation.[173] The question

posed by *Epicoene* is whether these styles of masculinity and femininity, forged in the

competitive fire of London's new market economy, can productively coexist within

fashionable London society. *Epicoene*'s rewriting of the cross-biting narrative in the

West End imagines what happens when the new urban man meets the new urban woman

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[172] Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp. 68-161.
[173] John Dryden, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, Ed. Thomas Arnold (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1909), pp. 74-75.

– staging a cross-gender partnership that implodes with spectacular results. Tellingly, the character of Mistress Epicoene does not survive this implosion, yet Dauphine's social victory – and the play's reassertion of patriarchal authority – is curiously hollow because of her absence.[174]

The first part of this chapter examines the gender dynamics of Greene's cross-biting schemes, particularly how the male cross-biter is often portrayed as hostage to the whims of his female partner, placing his masculinity in a precarious position. Male cross-biters are often seen as lacking the courage for more dangerous criminal endeavors, a lack mirrored in their inability to master and humiliate other men without the aid of female cross-biters. The second part of the chapter turns to *Epicoene*, arguing that Jonson both builds on and alters the cross-biting narrative in order to play with audience expectations about the equanimity of the partnership that exists between Dauphine and Mistress Epicoene. The revelation of Epicoene's male gender has led critics to read the play backwards, to find the hidden work of gender denaturalization (or ideological demystification) that Epicoene's sly performance of femininity retrospectively enacts.[175] As one recent critic of the play puts it, after the revelation of Epicoene's male gender the play has "begun again," its audience rethinking the reality of the events it has just witnessed.[176] What has been overlooked in these readings, however, is an analysis of the play *before* it begins again, of the gender dynamics between the apparently female

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[174] Throughout the chapter, "Mistress Epicoene" refers to the female character performed by Dauphine's servant, while "Epicoene" refers to the character of the servant, himself.

[175] Barbour argues that "with Jonson, durations and closures are dialectically intervolved, and it is a mistake to assume that he is more present in his endings than in his meantimes," p. 1006. Barbour's argument concerns *Epicoene*'s retrospective meaning, as informed by its conclusion, while I focus here on the meaning of the middle of the play as it occurs in real theatrical time.

[176] J.A. Jackson, "'On forfeit of your selves, think nothing true': Self-Deception in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*," *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10.1 (May, 2004) 2.1-28 <URL: http://purl.oclc.org/emls/10-1/jackjons.htm>.

Mistress Epicoene and her male partner that animate most of the play and, in my view, build inexorably to the play's ending. Reading the relationship between Dauphine and Mistress Epicoene as a heavily gendered conflict requires a reassessment of the gender implications of the play's replacement of the impressive Mistress Epicoene with the obedient servant-boy Epicoene.

I. The Art of Cross-biting

Tales of cross-biting were a mainstay of cony-catching literature, featuring prominently in Greene's cony-catching pamphlets *A Noteable Discovery*, *The Thirde and Last part of Conny-catching* (1592), and *A Disputation Between a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-Catcher* (1592), and those of his many imitators, including Thomas Dekker. *A Noteable Discovery* defines cross-biting as a "dishonourable Art, when a base roague, eyther keepeth a whore as his friend, or marries one to be his maintainer, and with her not only cros-bites men of good calling but especially poore ignorant countrey farmers, who God wotte be by them led like sheepe to the slaughter."[177] In Greene's view, cross-biters enjoy God-like mastery over their prey, who are swindled as willingly and peacefully as the proverbial sheep to the slaughter. These pamphlets provide many examples of cross-biting schemes, including one in which a prostitute lures a client into a tryst, only to have her partner, pretending to be her husband, interrupt the assignation, demanding compensation for the use of his wife.[178] A third case has the female cross-biter pretending to seek legal advice from a gentleman lawyer. Pretending to mistakenly believe himself the lawyer's friend, the male cross-biter interrupts the conversation,

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[177] Greene, *A Noteable Discovery of Coosenage* (London, 1592), A4v.
[178] Ibid., C3r.

distracting the lawyer while the woman picks his purse.[179]

The cross-biting narrative is retold so often in these works that a new name is sometimes trotted out in an attempt to justify each pamphlet's claim of new "discoveries." The frontispiece to Greene's *Thirde and last Part of Conny-catching*, depicting the "art of fool-taking," exemplifies the practice of clothing cross-biting in new rhetorical garb (Figure 6). The image of "foole-taking," with its cony-catching prostitute, implication of sexual intercourse, and a fool ripe for cozening identify this as a depiction of cross-biting.

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[179] Greene, *The Thirde and Last Parte of Conny-catching*, C2v.

THE
Third and laſt part of Conny-catching.

With the new deuiſed knauiſh arte of Foole-taking.

The like coofnages and villanies neuer before diſcouered.

By R. G.

Printed by *T. Scarlet* for *C. Burby*, and are to be ſolde at his ſhop vnder S. Mildreds Church in the Poultrie.   1592.

Figure 6. Woodcut of Cross-biting, here called Fool-taking, title page to Robert Greene's *The Thirde and Last Part of Conny-Catching* (London, 1592).

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In the middleground, a man in fool's garb simultaneously embraces and gestures at the genitals of a woman cony-catcher, who hides a tell-tale dead rabbit behind her back. Between the two figures floats a "three of spades," pointing from the fool's genitals to the woman's, suggesting sexual intercourse. In the background is a door to a bar, identified by the goblet placed over its mantle, and in the foreground are the tools of the cony-catcher's trade: a small knife to cut purse strings, a hook to pick locks, and a deck of cards. The new name Greene gives this practice indicates that he viewed his audience's thirst for novelty as balanced with a strong desire for the familiar tales of sexual and economic intrigue found in his previous tales of cross-biting. The term "foole-taking" probably derives from Greene's initial introduction of cross-biting in *A Notable Discovery* which, in calling the victims of cross-biting "simplers," emphasizes their naiveté and defenselessness.[180] The stigmatization of the victim as a motley-colored fool highlights the humiliation of the cross-bitten man.

Yet, despite their mastery over their foolish victims, Greene's male cross-biters are characterized by a tension between masculine authority and unmanliness. Their mastery is notably tempered by their dependence upon their female partners – their "maintainers," as Greene puts it – whom they either must befriend or marry in order to carry off their schemes. Greene specifically paints practitioners of this confidence job as unmanly: "these villanous vipers, *unworthy the name of men*, base roagues, (yet why doe I tearme them so well) being outcasts from God, vipers of the world, and an excremental reversion of sin, doth consent, nay constrayne their wives to yeeld the use of their bodies to other men."[181] Here, the cross-biters' "constraint" of their wives' sexuality ironically

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[180] Greene, *Noteable Discovery*, C2r.
[181] Ibid., C2v.

makes them "unworthy the name of men." Unlike the patriarchs of early modern prescriptive literature, male cross-biters' control of their wives' sexuality marks them as *less* than manly.[182] The trickery and sexual mastery gained over his victims comes at a price to the cony-catcher's masculinity – just as he forfeits his economic independence in relying on his wife's labor, he loses his masculine authority by directing his wife or partner to sleep with another.

Greene's contribution to the *querelle des femmes*, *A disputation Between a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-Catcher, whether a Theefe or a Whoore is most hurtfull in Cousonage* (1592) uses the tension between masculinity and mastery to explore the gender dynamics of cross-biting partnerships. In this pamphlet, a woman named Nan debates with and ultimately convinces her friend Laurence that "strumpets are more subtill, more dangerous, in the common-wealth, and more full of wyles to get crownes."[183] This is a pyrrhic victory for the women of early modern England, since winning the debate reinforces their position as the less reputable and therefore "inferior" gender. But the pamphlet also marks the underworld as a space dominated by the labor of women's sexual bodies, as in Nan's comparison of her rogue husband's skills to her own:

> Did I get no more by mine own wit, then I reap by his purchase, I might
> both go bare & penilesse the whole yere . . . Laurence beleeve mee, you   men
> are but fooles, your gettings is uncertaine. . . whereas, as we mad wenches have
> our tennants (for so I call everie simple letcher and amorous Fox) as wel out

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[182] Like the Earl of Castlehaven, whose was accused of constraining his wife, the Countess, to sleep with his servants, married male cross-biters are portrayed as unmanly not despite, but because they manipulated their wives sexuality outside of marriage. On the accusations against the Earl regarding the Countess, see Cynthia Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 43-48.

[183] Greene, *A Disputation Between a Hee Conny-catcher and a Shee Conny-catcher* (London, 1592), A4v.

of Tearme as in Tearm to bring us our rentes, alas, were not my wits and my

wanton pranks more profitable then my husbands foysting, we might often go to

bed supperlesse for want of surfetting.[184]

Nan boasts of a woman's ability to bring in a steady income with her body, comparing

her consistent earning power to that of a landlord. Con-men, she argues, are too often

dependent on the waves of gullible out-of-towners that populate London during the busy

periods of the legal calendar known as term-time, while female cony-catchers can find

clients willing to rent their sexual services year-round. Furthermore, she emphasizes the

superiority of her "wit" and "wanton pranks," qualities necessary for the sexual schemes

of cross-biting. Later, Nan mentions cross-biting as another example of the supremacy of

female cross-biters:

> you cannot crosbite without the helpe of a woman, which crosbiting now adaies is
>
> growne to a marvellous profitable exercise, for some cowardly knaves that for
>
> feare of the gallowes, leave nipping and foysting, become Crosbites . . . Ah
>
> Lawrence how lyke you of this geare, in Crosbyting wee put you downe."[185]

Here again male cross-biters are portrayed as "cowardly knaves," "put down" by women

cross-biters. Pointing out both the male cross-biter's economic dependence on his female

partner, and his unmanliness, here signaled by his cowardice, Nan uses the tension

inherent in cross-biting masculinity to portray female cross-biters as smarter and more

resourceful than their male counterparts.

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[184] Ibid., A4r-v.
[185] Ibid., C1v.

The title of a later reprinting of this pamphlet, *Theeves Falling Out*, reflects the expectation of disharmony prompted by cross-biting partnerships.[186] Yet Nan seems content with her criminal husband, never suggesting that women would be better off without their male partners. Although the power asymmetry between male and female cross-biters might be expected to cause some amount of gender friction between them, generally this is not the case. One noteworthy exception to this trend is *Greene's Groatsworth of Witte* (1592), in which an enterprising prostitute uses her considerable leverage to betray her male partner. Unlike most other depictions of cross-biting schemes, however, the *Groatsworth* features not simply a cross-gender partnership, but a cross-class partnership as well. This pamphlet's tragic hero is Robert Greene's alter-ego, Roberto, "a Scholler, and married to a proper Gentlewoman," whose social status is threatened when his father leaves the family estate to his other son, Luciano, leaving Roberto only one groat with which he "wish[es] him to buy a groatsworth of wit."[187] Consequently rejecting his studies, Roberto becomes obsessed with recovering his inheritance: "[Roberto] grew into an inward contempt of his fathers unequall legacie, and determinate resolution to work Luciano al possible injurie, hereupon thus converting the sweetness of his studdye to the sharpe thirst of revenge."[188] He hires a prostitute named Lamilia, who seduces and cozens his brother only to double-cross him and keep the money for herself. Denying Roberto's request to share the profits, Lamilia says:

Reasonlesse *Roberto*, that having but a brokers place, askest a lenders reward.

Faithles *Roberto*, that hast attempted to betray thy brother, irreligiously forsaken

[186] Robert Greene, *Theeves Falling Out, True men come by their goods* (London, 1621).
[187] *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit, Bought with a Million of Repentance*, Ed. D. Allen Carroll (Binghamton: Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1994), B1r-B2v.
[188] Ibid., B4r.

thy Wife, deservedly been in thy fathers eie an abject: thinkst thou *Lamilia* so

loose, to consort with one so lewd. No, hypocrite, the sweet Gentleman thy

brother, I till death love, and thee while I live, loath. This share *Lamilia* gives

thee, other getst thou none.[189]

The enterprising Lamilia jettisons Roberto at the first convenient moment, repeatedly

insulting him and declaring him so "lewd" as to be beneath her. She denies him a stake

in their business dealings, pointing out that he is not a lender – neither she nor his brother

are his property – but a broker, whose fee she also denies him.[190] Lamilia goes on to

marry Luciano and then abandon him after ruining his fortune with her prodigal

spending. Although Luciano is ruined in the aftermath, Lamilia keeps the expensive

goods she purchased with his money, and Roberto later sees her "flaunting by, garnished

with the jewels whereof she had beguiled him."[191] The female cross-biter, confidently in

charge of her sexuality, proves too much for the gentleman Roberto, or his brother, to

handle.

In Greene's earlier pamphlets, where male cross-biters are lowly pimps and con-

men, cross-biting partnerships maintain them even as they effeminize them. In the

Groatsworth, a gentle scholar's partnership with a female prostitute leads to bankruptcy.

In this pamphlet, class seems to make a determining difference in the ability of male

cross-biters to achieve criminal success. In fact, Roberto, with his spectacular downfall,

is portrayed less as a partner than as a typical "victim" or client of prostitution. Thomas

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[189] Ibid., D3r-v.

[190] Lamilia's dismissal of Roberto's claims uses the vocabulary of a money-lending businesswoman, whose ubiquity in early modern England caused much anxiety among anti-usury polemicists. See Natasha Korda, "Dame Usury: Gender, Credit, and (Ac)counting in the Sonnets and the *The Merchant of Venice*," *SQ* 60.2 (Summer 2009), 129-153.

[191] Greene, *Greene's Groatsworth*, E1v.

Lodge's *Wits Miserie, and the Worlds Madnesse* (1596), in a passage decrying the dangers of prostitution, emphasizes that scholars are particularly vulnerable: "Of all men let a scholler beware of this infecting spirit, for if a man of good parts be bewitched with this beastlinesse, no man will waxe more deformed then he, especially let him flie dishonest and filthy women, that are able to infect nature by their societie."[192] Both Roberto's hapless cross-biting efforts and his brother Luciano's luckless lovesickness are consistent with this line of thought: partnering with a prostitute – either sexually or economically – is far more dangerous to "men of good parts" than it is to male cony-catchers. In *Greene's Groatsworth*, prostitution's threat to patriarchal authority is embodied in the financial ruin of the scholar Roberto and his gentleman brother. Ironically, Greene's lesson to aspiring gallants is indistinguishable from the advice of the moralists whose conventions he apes: for a man of good parts, sexual and economic partnership with a female prostitute is destined to end in ruin, and hardly likely to survive the length of a pamphlet, or a play.

II. Mastering Mistress Epicoene

As the title of Greene's *Noteable Discovery* indicates, publishers and authors of cony-catching pamphlets framed them as investigative texts that undermined the stratagems of criminals by exposing them to view. Comparing these pamphlets to the period's prescriptive courtesy manuals, Craig Dionne has argued that they functioned in a similarly didactic way, educating wealthy citizens and the middling sort to avoid being

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[192] Thomas Lodge, *Wits Miserie, and the Worlds Madnesse Discouering the Deuils Incarnat of This Age* (London, 1596), 90.

gulled at the hands of London's prostitutes and con-men.[193] Indeed, it is difficult to

imagine anyone familiar with the work of Robert Greene acting as rashly as Morose does

in agreeing to marry a woman without looking into her family and connections himself.

In this sense, Morose's gullibility is the enabling condition of Dauphine's plot, making

cony-catching an important context for *Epicoene*. Although the group of texts commonly

referred to as Greene's cony-catching pamphlets are not mentioned in the play, the

latter's supposed autobiography, *Greenes Groats-worth of Witte,* does make a cameo

appearance. The pamphlet advertises itself as a work of moral instruction describing and

apologizing for what one of Green's contemporaries called "his loose life [which] was

odious to God and offensive to men."[194] But the subtitle signals a similarity to Greene's

other cony-catching pamphlets, with its descriptions of "the falsehood of makeshifte

flatterers, the miserie of the negligent, and the mischiefes of deceiving Courtezans."[195]

Like a cony-catching pamphlet, the *Groats-worth* means to entertain readers with tales of

sinners and fools while teaching them to avoid a similar fate.

When *Greenes Groats-worth of Witte* is mentioned in *Epicoene*, however, its

potential for moral instruction and mental edification is emphasized over its value as

entertainment. Lady Haughty, one of the Collegiate Ladies – a group of independent

women that "live far from their husbands" and exercise "masculine or hermaphroditical

authority" (1.1.68-71) – relates that her servant's parents were each cured of madness by

a particular book read to them: "And one of 'hem (I know not which) was cur'd with the

Sick-mans Salve; and the other with GREENES *groates-worth of wit*" (4.4.95-97). The

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[193] Craig Dionne, "Fashioning Outlaws: The Early Modern Rogue and Urban Culture," in *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 33-62.
[194] *The Repentance of Robert Greene Maister of Artes* (London, 1592), A2r.
[195] Greene, *Greene's Groatsworth*, A2r.

passage equates two texts that seem well-suited for spiritual correction: dramatizing

deathbed enlightenment, they each advocate devotional engagement as more important

than any "cure" for physical ailments. But the reputation of these works' authors could

not be more different. Unlike the notorious Robert Greene, Thomas Becon was a

respected divine, associated with some of the most powerful churchmen of his day, and

his *Sickman's Salve* (1558) was a best-selling *ars moriendi*, or spiritual guide to the art of

dying.[196] The equation of the two texts seems to be a joke referencing Greene's well-

known reputation as a scoundrel and chronicler of London's criminal underworld.

But this is also a typically Jonsonian joke about unsophisticated reading practices,

painting those who read Greene's pamphlet for moral instruction as poor and witless

readers. In other words, the joke is on readers like Mistress Haughty who, despite her

collegiate pretensions, does not recognize the pretense in Greene's moralizing, and Sir

Amorous LaFoole who, in offering to lend the book to Mistress Epicoene, reveals himself

to be in the same boat. Haughty, LaFoole, and Morose all suffer at the hands of

Dauphine and his witty friends, Truewit and Clerimont, who seem to have read the cony-

catching books correctly and applied them to their quest for cultural and social mastery

over their rivals. Like cross-biters, Jonson's male wits perform skillful acts of false

friendship and underhanded business dealings. Dauphine is accused by LaFoole of

cheating at cards (4.4.150-51), while Truewit flatters and manipulates men and women

alike into believing he is their friend, only to double-cross them later. To pay someone

back with betrayal, "to bite the biter," was another meaning of cross-biting in the period,

and such betrayal is a theme running throughout *Epicoene* – Morose tries to betray his

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[196] On Thomas Becon as a spiritual authority see Mary Hampson Patterson, *Domesticating the Reformation* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 2007), pp. 79-156.

nephew; Truewit betrays the fools and the Collegiate Ladies; Daw and LaFoole betray

Mistress Epicoene; and the latter and Cutbeard, Morose's trusted barber, both betray

Morose.[197]

Dauphine's cozening partnership with Mistress Epicoene is particularly evocative

of cross-biting's blend of sexual commerce and financial cozening. Although she is

never described as a prostitute, Mistress Epicoene, as a visiting gentlewoman looking to

entertain suitors, strikes a pose that was often employed as a pretext by private prostitutes

(those not attached to brothels) in order to set up shop in the city. In *Northward Ho*

(1605-6), performed three or four years before *Epicoene*, the prostitute Mistress Doll

plans to "take a faire house in the City [and] . . . It shall then be given out, that I'me a

Gentlewoman of such a birth, such a wealth, have had such a breeding . . . and of such a

carriage and such qualities."[198] Like Mistress Doll, Mistress Epicoene is "given out" to

be a gentlewoman newly resident in London, whose birth, breeding, carriage, and

qualities are being publicized throughout the city. When Dauphine reveals early in the

play that he is her financial backer and is paying her rent in return for part of Morose's

estate, audiences familiar with the popular cony-catching stories may well have noticed

the way cross-biting mirrors the arrangement between Dauphine and Mistress Epicoene.

As Dauphine states, "This gentlewoman was lodged here by me o' purpose, and, to be put

upon my uncle, hath professed this obstinate silence for my sake, being my entire friend

and one that for requital of such a fortune as to marry him, would have made me very

ample conditions" (2.4.35-40). By calling Mistress Epicoene his "entire friend,"

Dauphine references the classical model of perfect friendship between men derived from

[197] "Cross-bite," Def. 1, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Ed., 1989.
[198] *Northward Ho*, 1.2.85-90, in Thomas Dekker, *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, Ed. Fredson Bowers. Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1955).

Aristotle and Cicero. In early modern England, this language of perfect friendship

between men was "couched in terms of love," and often "such relationships came to hold

an 'erotic charge.'"[199] The phrase could signal an illicit sexual relationship when used in

reference to a woman, as in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629-1633), where the

evil Vasques, trying to discover the identity of Annabella's lover, asks her maid, "Sure

'twas some near and entire friend?"[200] Dauphine's use of this phrase invites audience

speculation about whether he and Mistress Epicoene are lovers, a conclusion supported

by Mistress Epicoene's role in Dauphine's plot, the counterfeit performance of feminine

modesty. In a culture that equated dishonesty and sexual looseness with prostitution, it

would not be much of a leap to connect this pair's sexual and economic scheming to the

popular cony-catching literature's depictions of cozening pimps and whores.

The phrase "entire friends" also resonates with the way the cony-catching

pamphlets described friendships between criminals as the perverse inversion of classical

friendship. In describing the relationship between whores, con-men and thieves, *A

Manifest Detection of Diceplay* (1552), an influential cony-catching pamphlet reprinted

in 1597 (when Jonson began writing for the stage), comments that "some will question

what have Cheators to doe with whores and theeves; to whom I must answer, as much as

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[199] On the classical resonance of the phrase "entire friends," and its multivalent signification in early
modern England, see Alexandra Shephard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford:
Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), pp. 123-24. There are many excellent analyses of the erotics of male friendship
in early modern England, but three particular influences on my thinking have been Jeffrey Masten's
Textual Intercourse: Collaboration, Authorship, and Sexualities in Renaissance Drama (Cambridge:
Cambridge Univ. Press, 1997), Laurie Shannon's *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in
Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago P, 2002), and Alan Bray's *The Friend* (Chicago:
Univ. of Chicago Press, 2006).
[200] *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, 4.3.200, in John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays*, Ed. Marion
Lomax (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999).

with their intire friends, for they hold all of one corporation."[201] The corporeal language

of classical friendship, of friends that are one soul in bodies twain, is paired here with the

language of financial corporation, of friends united in economic purpose.[202] The allusion

to classical friendship, both here and in *Epicoene*, is ironic: Ciceronian friendship is a

form of mutual kindness meant to enrich the polis as a whole, whereas, according to

Walker, the friendship between whores and con-men is the opposite: they come together

only "idly to live by spoile, devouring the fruite of other mens labours."[203] Dauphine's

object with Mistress Epicoene is precisely the "devouring" of the fruits of his uncle's

labors, an "ample" portion of Morose's estate.

Early modern audiences familiar with Greene's popular cony-catching pamphlets

and unaware of the play's surprise ending may have found Dauphine's cross-biting

partnership with Mistress Epicoene to be a key source of pleasurable dramatic tension.

Such dramatic tension is built into the presentation of Dauphine's plans early in the play,

where they are made to seem quite precarious. When Truewit, ignorant of Dauphine's

scheme, announces that he has convinced Morose not to marry, Dauphine exclaims "'For

heaven, you have undone me. That which I have plotted for and been maturing now

these four months, you have blasted in a minute. Now I am lost" (2.4.33-35). The fact

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[201] Walker is not credited as author in the 1597 reprint, which was given a new title: *Mihil Mumchance, His Discoverie of the Art of Cheating in False Dyce-play*. The reprinting was likely an attempt to capitalize on the market for crime literature created by the wild popularity of Robert Greene's recent cony-catching pamphlets. See *Mihil Mumchance, His Discoverie of the Art of Cheating in False Dyce-play* (London: 1597), B2v.

[202] Henry S. Turner examines how classical friendship involved the promise of mutual profit for the common good in "The Problem of the More-than-One: Friendship, Calculation, and Political Association in *The Merchant of Venice*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 57. 4 (Winter 2006): 413-442. Turner analyzes the emerging early modern definition of a corporation as a group of persons united in a financial enterprise in "Toward an Analysis of the Corporate Ego: The Case of Richard Hakluyt," *differences* 20.2/3 (Summer-Fall 2009): 103-47. My understanding of Ciceronian friendship is also indebted to Jacques Derrida's *The Politics of Friendship* (London: Verso, 1997).

[203] Ibid. In a sense, the friendship between cross-biters is related to the mercenary self-interest that always shadows early modern friendship discourse. Bray examines the latter throughout *The Friend*, but particularly at 196-199.

that the scheme appears to collapse before it can commence sets up a dramatic sense of

unpredictability and instability that permeates the audience's experience of Dauphine's

plot for the rest of the play.

Though the plot survives Truewit's actions, it remains in potential peril as long as

Dauphine is completely dependent upon Mistress Epicoene. What is to stop her from

acting like Lamilia and double-crossing Dauphine once she is a rich man's wife? Indeed,

once married, Mistress Epicoene abandons her adherence to traditional modes of

feminine modesty, most notably reticence, as she herself explains. In response to

Morose's shock at her capacity to "speak out," she counters that her speech "doth bate

[that is, diminish] somewhat of the modesty I had, when I writ simply maid; but I hope I

shall make it a stock still competent to the estate and dignity of your wife" (3.4.34-44).

In assuming the prerogatives of a city wife, Mistress Epicoene sees herself as her

husband's superior, intending to form "a family where I govern" (3.4.50-51). There is

every reason to wonder whether Mistress Epicoene's newfound sense of entitlement will

lead her to betray Dauphine.

In this way, the cross-biting plot meant to prove Dauphine the cultural and social

better of his uncle Morose, and thus the proper master of his estate, threatens to

undermine his masculine authority by placing him at the mercy of a dishonest woman

sympathetic to the allure of female mastery. But just as Mistress Epicoene seems poised

to ape the false Lamilia, Dauphine and his friends all assume she will act like the faithful

Nan, never doubting that she will follow her "instructions" to the letter (2.4.81). The

audience, however, may indeed doubt her continuing fidelity when Truewit reports that

the Ladies are "instructing her in the college grammar" (4.1.28). This grammar includes

lessons in feminine authority, as Mistress Epicoene is urged to "manage" Morose in order

to "open the gate to [her] fame" (4.3.180-25). Although it is not explicitly addressed, the

tension over Mistress Epicoene's trustworthiness registers in Jonson's sudden rerouting

of Dauphine's quest for mastery, a digression from the main plot that conspicuously

begins immediately after the audience learns of Mistress Epicoene's "college" education.

Instead of monitoring the progress of his plot, Dauphine agrees to participate in a scheme

to make all the Ladies Collegiates fall in love with him, which Truewit believes will

prove that "a man should not doubt to overcome any woman" (4.1.67). Ironically, the

theme of Truewit's plot thus highlights the fact that Mistress Epicoene's loyalty to

Dauphine is an open question. After an elaborate hoax in which Daw and La Foole

voluntarily submit to beatings by Truewit and Dauphine, the latter does indeed become

the object of affection of all the Ladies. By the end of this plan, Dauphine has

demonstrated his mastery over everyone in the play except the one person whose

subservience is most crucial to his plot: Mistress Epicoene.[204] Indeed, the implication of

Dauphine's performance spells trouble for his hopes of mastering his female partner: the

mastery of the Ladies is accomplished through the mastery of other men, yet the

formidable Mistress Epicoene does not figure to be so easily impressed. Almost too good

at what she does, Mistress Epicoene's virtuoso performance first as a demure maid and

then as an independently-minded wife leaves the audience to ponder the unspoken

question of whether she needs Dauphine, whose plan remains precarious until the play's

final scene.

In the absence of any knowledge of Dauphine's master plan, audience members

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[204] Though Mistress Epicoene plays a part in this scheme to elevate Dauphine over the fools, she does so by
betraying Daw for the second time, underscoring her capacity for double-dealing.

may take Mistress Epicoene's formidable performance of feminine authority as the reason Dauphine suddenly and without explanation abandons his cross-biting plot. This change of heart occurs immediately after a series of challenges that Morose brings to the validity of his marriage have all failed, and therefore at a point when the marriage seems most secure. It thus appears that Dauphine's leverage over his partner is at its lowest ebb when he changes tactics, offering to "free you [Morose] of this unhappy match absolutely and instantly" in exchange for "but five hundred during life, and assure the rest [of the estate] upon me after [death]" (5.4.148-65). Dauphine's betrayal of Mistress Epicoene complicates our understanding of his masculinity: he seems both an ineffectual man whose apparent mastery of Mistress Epicoene is so unstable that he must betray her, and a brilliant performer whose last-minute improvisation confirms his masculinity and urban fitness. Cross-biting seems to have failed to win Dauphine the estate he seeks, as it did Roberto. But unlike Roberto, he has proven himself able to rise to the occasion of deceit. Dauphine's double-crossing is woven into the dramatic climax of the play through Mistress Epicoene's response to his betrayal, her pleas that he "have some compassion," for her, the "most unfortunate, wretched gentlewoman" (5.4.174-76). These pleas remind the audience that Dauphine's annulment of Morose's marriage is also the apparent dissolution of the partnership between himself and Mistress Epicoene, the violation of their "entire" friendship. The gendered language of her lament underscores the fact that Dauphine's attempt to annul her marriage is the result of the seemingly inescapable tension in their cross-gender cozening partnership.

The gender dynamics of cross-biting, particularly the male partner's anxiety over his dependence on female fidelity, produces the play's ending in which Dauphine must

literally undo Mistress Epicoene's feminine gender in order to effect his victory, revealing his mastery over her, insofar as she is a woman, as so much male fantasy. Though Jonson establishes Dauphine as the alpha male of the elite play-world, it is a remarkable comment on the gender dynamics of the play that this victory cannot be won at the expense of Mistress Epicoene, but only through her erasure. Dauphine's masculine authority thus is produced through the carefully orchestrated absence of female power, not its subversion.

If the play punctures the patriarchal fantasy of control over women, it appears to compensate by substituting the equally fantasmatic ideal of the perfectly mastered servant, who is revealed to have been disguised as Mistress Epicoene.[205] But the relationship between Dauphine and Epicoene is somewhat more complicated than acknowledged by recent criticism, which has tended to see their interests as completely allied. In a careful analysis of the homoerotics of the play, Mario DiGangi has characterized Dauphine's relationship with Epicoene as "orderly because of its economic outcome – reestablishing his proper inheritance – and its maintenance of social hierarchy – Epicoene's faithful subordination to Dauphine."[206] But the notion that Morose's estate properly belongs to Dauphine is far from clear. Insofar as the ill-tempered Morose derives from Roman New Comedy's *senex iratus* figures, those representatives of the old guard that improperly meddle in the natural reproduction of the social order, he is generically unfit to control the fate of his own estate.[207] But insofar as the character of Dauphine is derived from the cony-catching pamphlets' cross-biters, his cozening victory

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[205] Michael Neill argues that early modern England saw service as an unstable "social institution subject to disconcerting local and historical pressures." See his *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2002), 1-49, 19.
[206] DiGangi, p. 74.
[207] Morose is specifically referred to as "*senex*" by his servant Cutbeard (2.6.12).

over Morose is profoundly illegitimate. Revising DiGangi's formulation, one could say

that Dauphine's relationship with Epicoene is *disorderly* because of its economic

outcome – the nightmare of every property-holder in early modern London – and its

corruption of the social hierarchy – the use of servants to infiltrate and exploit another

man's affections.

Epicoene's male gender means that he and Dauphine are actually not cross-biters,

but this does not mean that cony-catching is irrelevant to their characterization. A model

for the kind of cozening in which they engage – the seduction and swindling of older men

by cross-dressed boys – can be found in verse satires written at the turn of the century by

Thomas Middleton and William Rankins. In *Microcynicon: Six Snarling Satires* (1599),

Middleton describes a character named "Ingling Pyander" in terms that seem equally

suited to Epicoene:

> Sometimes he jets it like a gentleman,
>
> Otherwhiles much like a wanton courtesan.
>
> But truth to tell a man or woman whether,
>
> I cannot say, she's excellent in either.
>
> But if report may certify a truth,
>
> She's neither of either, but a cheating youth.[208]

Like Epicoene, who performs the roles of modest gentlewoman, faithless wife, dishonest

lover, cross-biting cony-catcher, and faithful boy servant, Pyander turns a profit by

blurring distinctions between male and female, courtier and courtesan, lover and betrayer.

Theatrical audiences attuned to the period's satire thus may have added deceitful ingle to

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[208] *Microcynicon: Six Snarling Satires*, Ed. Wendy Wall, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, Eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2007), 1970-1984, 5.25-30.

the long list of roles Epicoene undertakes in this play. This is especially true of readers

of Rankins's *Seven Satires* (1598), which contains further parallels between the figure of

the cozening cross-dressed boy and the character of Epicoene. In a poem entitled

"Satyrus Peregrinans" or "The Wandering Satire," a rich man's servant describes a time

when his master was "inamour'd of a players boy."[209] Under the guidance of "certain

sharkers," or cozeners, the boy seduces his mark dresssed in "womans quaint attire."

"Have her he must or die," the loyal servant recounts: "it almost made the fool my master

mad." Rankins's "players boy" bears striking similarities to Epicoene: he uses his

theatrical skills to seduce and deceive a rich man, even to the point of marriage, under the

direction of those who instruct him in cross-dressing for their own profit. Moreover, as a

theatrical apprentice, the player's boy implicates the professional theater in the particular

form of prostitution known as ingling, the early modern equivalent of "rent boys" and

"boy toys." The play's ending ingeniously dissolves the boundaries between the meta-

dramatic reality of the boy actor's professional performance, and the dramatic fiction of

Epicoene's performance as Dauphine's trusted servant. The collapse of these boundaries

means that Epicoene's character is *not* completely insulated from a larger network of

social knowledge beyond the play, in which cross-dressing boy players were suspected

by some to seduce and cozen foolish men of their money at the behest of greedy

"sharkers," or cozeners, that were little different from cross-biting pimps.[210] And since

the audience's shock at the male body beneath Epicoene's female clothes is tied to their

recognition of the body of the boy actor who embodies the character, Epicoene's ingling

of Morose may have been interpreted by some as a knowing reference to boy actors'

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[209] William Rankins, *Seven Satires, Applyed to the week* (London, 1598), pp. 30-31.
[210] Jonson uses the word "shark" to mean "cheat" in *The Alchemist*, when Face promises to "prove today, who shall shark best" (1.1.159).

alleged extra-dramatic ingling.

This is not to say that Jonson's allusion to ingling is meant as a critique of the professional theater. Rather, Jonson plays off the meta-theatrical effect of having hybrid London gentlemen-cony-catchers performed by hybrid social creatures like actors, who could be considered urban tricksters (in the satires), wandering vagabonds (in anti-theatrical writings), or servants of the court (as in the King's Men), depending on the context.[211] Jonson thus ends the play with an irresolvable question: is Epicoene, as Dauphine claims, an upper-class servant and gentleman's son, or the professional cozener whose tricks he employs, or the actor playing him, sometimes jetting it as a gentleman, otherwhiles like a wanton courtesan?[212] Epicoene's indeterminacy is not simply the product of his age and elusive gender status; it is also a symptom of the same vicissitudes of urban identity that also complicates our understanding of his master, Dauphine.

The transformation of urban gentleman into idle rogues was much remarked upon in early modern London. Having recently moved to London from Coventry, the Anglican clergyman Thomas Cooper concludes his 1615 complaint against "swarmes of sturdy roagues, and Idle beggers" by lamenting:

> Is it not now a fashion to live in idlenesse? My high borne younger-Brothers,
> because they have no lands, therefore they have nothing to doe what they should;
> they cannot dig, to beg they are ashamed: meet the enemy they dare not, and

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[211] Mimi Yiu has recently argued that Dauphine "deploys theatrical techniques to break open Morose's household," exposing it as part of the social world "haunted by suspicions of performance and artificial humanity." See her "Choric and Choral Cities in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene; or, The Silent Woman*," *PMLA* 122.1 (2007), 72-88, esp. 81-82.

[212] For an argument about the body of the boy actor as a privileged site of gender indeterminacy, see Peter Stallybrass, "Transvestism and the 'Body Beneath': Speculating on the Boy Actor," in *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, Ed. Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992), 64-83.

therefore they will be meet [i.e., remain even] with their friend, if they can, by

cheating.[213]

Cooper bemoans the inability and unwillingness of younger gentleman to engage in their

traditional roles of agriculture and soldiering. Instead, he finds young gentlemen

following London fashions, living without occupation and getting by through trickery and

deceit. The cony-catching pamphlets warn their readers about the dangers of cony-

catching sexual criminals, but, as Cooper's observation attests, they also teach their

readers to perform these tricks. *Epicoene* dramatizes how these tricks could be used to

get ahead in the competitive social world that was early modern London's west end. The

sexual crimes which marked the poor and the criminal as deserving social opprobrium

and juridical discipline become in Jonson's play the sophisticated stratagems of London's

new fashionable gentlemen.

Aligning its gallant wits with insurgent masculine values of urban savvy and

economic ruthlessness – against traditional aristocratic values like temperance and

honesty – the play participates in contemporary struggles over how to define respectable

manhood.[214] Dauphine avoids Roberto's fate because he is a different kind of man.

While Roberto wishes to displace his brother as the head of a newly-gentle family line,

Dauphine is not and does not want to be a traditional patriarchal householder: he

considers and then rejects asking for Morose's estate and its attendant responsibilities,

content instead with 500 pounds a year until Morose's death. Dauphine desires the kind

of masculine stature that can only be earned through the performance of wit. Through

Dauphine, *Epicoene* dramatizes the victory of the new performative masculinity that was

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[213] Thomas Cooper, *The Art of Giving, Describing the true nature, and right use of liberality* (London, 1615), 101.

[214] On the cultural struggle over "alternatives to patriarchal codes" of manhood see Shephard, pp. 93-126.

often staged as conflicting with older forms of masculinity focused on financial sobriety and traditional patriarchal values. This chapter's epigraphs observe that cross-biting and cony-catching pervade the social world of early seventeenth-century London, an observation which informs and was perhaps informed by the plot of *Epicoene*, written and performed in the years between the publication of those texts. Like *Epicoene*, these texts maintain that the techniques of cony-catching, like cross-biting, had "practical use-value" in London's socio-economic world.[215] This is not to say that cony-catching tricks were themselves seen as an effective set of get-rich-quick schemes; rather, the performative élan of cony-catchers and cross-biters was a useful skill for early modern Londoners on the make, and one that took a certain perspective to recognize and exploit. Dauphine and his friends win the day by embracing this perspective, proving themselves capable of differentiating, among other things, between *Greene's Groatsworth* and *The Sickman's Salve*. If Jonson's play offers its audience a commentary on the fashionable West End world it portrays and in which it was staged, then it would seem to be that in order to get ahead you have to get the joke.[216]

The spectacular erasure of Mistress Epicoene, however, reminds us of the precarious nature of this new model of masculinity. Her disappearance not only leaves unresolved the question of whether Dauphine could have mastered her, it also opens the question of whether his preternaturally sneaky servant-boy can be trusted. Although he seems to have done all that has been asked of him, Epicoene remains inscrutably silent after his true gender is revealed. Promising the Ladies that the boy will come visit them

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[215] Dionne, p. 54, describes the cony-catching manual as a "handbook for the urban pedestrian."

[216] There is thus more than a little irony in the fact that *Epicoene* was, by all indications, not a great success on stage. On the relationship between the social world of the play and the playhouse in which it was staged, see Mary Bly, "Playing the Tourist in Early Modern London: Selling the Liberties Onstage," *PMLA* 122.1 (2007), 61-71.

again "within this twelvemonth," Truewit concludes the play by telling them to "take heed of such *insectae* hereafter" (5.4.223-226). The word "insect" derives from the Latin word *insecare*, meaning segmented, an etymology highlighted by Jonson's latinate diction.[217] Calling the boy an insect references his recent metamorphosis, but it is also a warning that Epicoene, made of different parts, lacks integrity. Given Epicoene's privileged place in Dauphine's house, Truewit's warning is one the gallants themselves would do well to remember. Like the cony-catchers of Greene's pamphlets, they too may be headed for a comeuppance: their young protégé may one day – perhaps in a twelvemonth – be more than they safely can handle.

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[217] "Insect," Def. 1, *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd Ed., 1989.

Chapter 5

Barricadoes for Bellies:
Sexual Regulation and Communal Reproduction in *The Winter's Tale*

Analyses of *The Winter's Tale* commonly position Leontes and Hermione as

archetypal husband and wife, diagnosing the couple's struggle over paternal anxiety and

marital fidelity from either anthropological or psychoanalytic perspectives.[218] The

predominance of this critical approach may well be a result of Leontes's assertion that his

marital troubles stem from a structural flaw in the reproduction of patriarchal power: "No

barricado for a belly" (1.2.205).[219]   But while this is a seductively powerful axiom about

the impossibility of controlling female sexuality, it is a less than completely reliable

guide to the workings of patriarchy in the play. Indeed, the play frequently indicates that

Leontes is blind to the communal regulation of marriage and paternity in Sicilia. Camillo

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[218] Leontes and Hermione are read as archetypes in many influential treatments of *The Winter's Tale*,
especially analyses of gender and sexuality. See Peter B. Erickson, "Patriarchal Structures in *The Winter's
Tale*," *PMLA* 97.5 (1982), 819-829; Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in
Shakespeare's Plays* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 193-238; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed:
Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), 260-280;
Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (London:
Routledge, 1992), 25-49; and Robert W. Reeder, "Siring the Grandchild in *The Winter's Tale* and *The
Fawn*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 48.2 (Spring 2008), 349-371. Not surprisingly, recent
work on Catholic typology in the play also invokes archetypal readings. See Ruth Vanita, "Mariological
Memory in *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry VIII*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 40.2 (Spring
2000), 311-337; Phebe Jensen, "Singing Psalms to Horn-pipes: Festivity, Iconoclasm, and Catholicism in
The Winter's Tale," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55.3 (2004) 279-306; and Frances Dolan, "Hermione's Ghost:
Catholicism, the Feminine, and the Undead," in *The Impact of Feminism*, ed. Dympna Callaghan (New
York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007), 213-237.
[219] All quotations of Shakespeare's works are from *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David
Bevington (New York: Pearson Longman, 2004).

warns Leontes, for example, that public expression of his jealousy threatens the reputations of his wife and son with "the injury of tongues in courts and kingdoms" (1.2.340). Leontes at first agrees – "I'll give no blemish to her honor," he says (1.2.343) – but later denies his community any role or stake in his marriage: "Why, what need we / Commune with you of this?" Leontes asks his concerned courtiers, "The matter, / The loss, the gain, the ordering on't, is all/ Properly ours" (2.1.163-72). Leontes's insistence on the complete separation between marriage and community is one way the play signals his increasing irrationality, suggesting the extent to which critical accounts that underestimate the significance of this communal dynamic also misrepresent the play's portrayal of patriarchal crisis.[220]

In fact, in Leontes's Sicilia, as in early modern England, there were a number of social and cultural "barricadoes" meant to secure the female womb and assure husbands of their paternity. Both of the play's decisive moments of paternal angst – Hermione's prosecution for adultery and Perdita's abandonment as a supposed bastard – evoke early modern legal institutions dependent on community participation: the prosecution of sexual immorality by ecclesiastical courts, and the communal monitoring of illegitimate reproduction encouraged by the poor laws.[221] Hermione's adultery trial is called a "purgation" (3.2.7), suggesting the legal procedure of the same name employed by

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[220] Such a reading is inherent in analyses of the play that focus on Leontes as a tyrant whose sexual jealousy is framed as a rejection of political and social norms. See Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1994), 159-170; and Constance Jordan, *Shakespeare's Monarchies: Ruler and Subject in the Romances* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), 107-146. An early example of this tradition is Paul N. Siegel, "Leontes a Jealous Tyrant," *The Review of English Studies* 1.4 (Oct. 1950), 302-307.

[221] On the advent of communal participation in early modern criminal proceedings, and its effects on early modern drama, see Lorna Hutson, *The Invention of Suspicion* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007). While Hutson focuses on the increasingly participatory nature of secular justice, my argument primarily concerns the mechanisms of ecclesiastical justice, which had a longer history of communal involvement. On the ecclesiastical courts in early modern England, see Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987); and Ralph Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation, 1520-1770* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979).

church courts in cases of sexual incontinence, including adultery and bastardy, while

Perdita's expulsion recalls the local practice of expelling bastards so as to avoid raising

parish poor rates.[222] These legal contexts suggest that Leontes's tyranny lies not only in

misprizing his wife and defying the Delphic oracle, but in turning the institutional

machinery of sexual regulation against the very community entrusted with its operation.

In applying these social institutions to royalty, however, the play also encourages its

audience to denaturalize the supposedly "natural" sexual purity of the nobility, to see it as

part of the same communal processes that produced sexual order in England's church

courts and local parishes.

Yet even as these social contexts demystify the superiority of nobility, the play

surrounds Hermione and Perdita with an aura of natural sexual and social purity, which

differentiates them from the lower social orders. The tension between these impulses is

nowhere more evident than in the abandonment and discovery of Perdita: as an exposed

infant, the purity of her noble blood is effectively erased, and the Shepherd immediately

takes her for the bastard of a servant girl. But even before finding the royal treasure

abandoned alongside Perdita, the Shepherd assumes her to be not just any bastard, but the

daughter of an elite "waiting-gentlewoman" (3.3.70). Here the play simultaneously

suggests that nobility is a social construction – coexistent with contextual cues like royal

gold – while also insisting that royal blood will out.

Perdita's brush with exposure, a crime associated with poverty and sexual shame,

and Hermione's public trial, more appropriate to a commoner than a queen, evince a

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[222] The way bastardy was treated in early modern England's law courts suggests that economic issues were a paramount concern: most early modern paternity suits and fornication proceedings focused on "the daily costs of maintenance" of illegitimate pregnancies. See Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 2003), 181.

connection in the play between sexuality, crime, and social difference that this chapter

seeks to recover.[223]   To do so, I first explore how the legal discourse of bastard-bearing

positions Hermione as a poor, illegitimately pregnant woman, and her daughter as a

fatherless bastard. I then turn to the figure of Autolycus, whose criminal persona appears

just after the play saves Perdita from a similar social fate. Autolycus is drawn from the

pages of the period's cony-catching literature, which presented the rogue's desire for

"sweet liberty" as both the innate tendency of a disreputable minority and an alluring

temptation to all.[224] With Autolycus, the play extends the exploration of the relationship

between social difference and sexual crime that Perdita's discovery and adoption might

seem to foreclose.[225]   Indeed, I argue, the play draws conspicuous parallels between the

princess and the rogue, so that the former is not so much Perdita's opposite as her dark

shadow.[226] This similarity suggests that the Bohemian countryside is not, as countless

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[223] On the representation of bastards in early modern drama see Alison Findlay, *Illegitimate Power: Bastards in Renaissance Drama* (New York: Manchester UP, 1994); and Michael Neill, *Putting History to the Question: Power, Politics, and Society in English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Columbia UP, 2000), 127-166. On the representation of rogues in early modern England, see Linda Woodbridge, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Urbana: U of Illinois P, 2001); and William Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1996). On rogue sexuality, see Brian Reynolds, *Becoming Criminal: Transversal Performance and Cultural Dissidence in Early Modern England* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2002), 55-63.

[224] Edward Hext, justice of the peace in Somerset, wrote to Lord Burghley in 1596 that rogues enjoy "the libertye of ther wycked lyef [that] ys so sweete unto them." See Edward Hext, "Letter to Burghley on the Increase of Rogues and Vagabonds," *Tudor Economic Documents* II, eds. Eileen Power and R. H. Tawney (Longman: London, 1963), 339. On Autolycus and Robert Greene, see Barbara Mowat, "Rogues, Shepherds, and the Counterfeit Distressed: Texts and Infracontexts of *The Winter's Tale* 4.3," *Shakespeare Studies* 22 (1994): 58-76.

[225] Steve Mentz argues that Autolycus signals the play's debt to the generic structure of Robert Greene's romances, a category he argues should include Greene's cony-cathcing pamphlets. While Mentz focuses on the play's appropriation of the romance narrative of repentance and redemption, my chapter places the play's depiction of sexuality and bastardy in dialogue with that of rogue literature. See Mentz, "Wearing Greene: Autolycus, Robert Greene, and the Structure of Romance in *The Winter's Tale*," *Renaissance Drama* 30 (2001), 73-92.

[226] The doubling of Perdita and Autolycus is rarely commented on in criticism of this play. Critics have tended to focus on the more prominent doublings of the royal fathers, Polixenes and Leontes, the royal children, Perdita and Florizel, and the courtly advisors, Paulina and Camillo. The only critic to argue for a doubling relationship between Perdita and Autolycus is David Kaula, who argues that Autolycus is a "counterpart to Perdita," in the sense that Perdita signifies Protestant spirituality and chastity, while Autolycus embodies a supposedly Catholic tendency toward materialism and promiscuity. See Kaula,

critics have portrayed it, "a place of healing," but a site haunted by the sexual accusations made in Sicilia.[227]   In addition to linking her with Autolycus, the play connects Perdita's romance with Florizel to the shame of her birth by making her the object of sexual scandal. This chapter does not dismiss the sexual suspicion cast on Perdita in Bohemia as dramatic irony meant simply to underscore her purity, but takes seriously the play's investment in portraying the princess as both naturally, manifestly chaste, and utterly subject to quite different communal assumptions about the meaning of her sexuality. Perdita's evident purity is not a comic counterpoint to Hermione's tragic prosecution, but a doubling down on the play's interest in the communal construction of sexual meaning and social difference. The conclusion of *The Winter's Tale*, in which two pairs of royal lovers unite despite all odds, has often been read as a capitulation to a naturalizing ideology that links noble birth to sexual purity.[228]   Yet, the earlier invocation of the social institutions that regulate and construct the discourse of reproduction in early modern England finds an echo in the play's closing scenes of social and sexual reconciliation,

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"Autolycus' Trumpery," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 16.2 (1976), 287-303, esp. 293. Aaron Kitch sees the play's representation of illegitimate paternity and illegitimate printing as related, causing him to consider Perdita and Mamillius's alleged bastardy in the context of Autolycus's cheap ballads. See Kitch, "Bastards and Broadsides in *The Winter's Tale*," *Renaissance Drama* 30 (2001): 43-72. On Autolycus's relationship to the Bohemian court, see Carroll, 168-179. In thinking through the connection between Perdita and Autolycus, I have been influenced by Carroll's analysis of "Shakespeare's interest throughout the play in whether a 'gentleman' is 'born' or made" (174).

[227] The introduction to the play in *The Norton Shakespeare* states, "Although Bohemia is a place of healing, it is not a paradise." See Jean E. Howard, "*The Winter's Tale*," *The Norton Shakespeare*, eds. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean Howard, and Katherine Maus (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), 2873-2881, esp. 2879. The interpretation of Bohemia as a healing "green world" originates in Northrop Frye's *A Natural Perspective: The Development of Shakespearean Comedy and Romance* (New York: Columbia UP, 1965), 141-145. Though some critics have modified Frye's characterization, Bohemia's restorative properties are endorsed in much recent criticism. Examples include Anne Sutherland, "Mapping Regeneration in *The Winter's Tale*," in *Science, Literature, and Rhetoric in Early Modern England*, eds. Juliet Cummins and David Burchell (London: Ashgate, 2007), 37-52; Amy L. Tigner, "*The Winter's Tale*: Gardens and the Marvels of Transformation," *English Literary Renaissance* 36.1 (2006), 114-134; and David N. Beauregard, "Shakespeare against the Skeptics: Nature and Grace in *The Winter's Tale*," in *Shakespeare's Last Plays: Essays in Literature and Politics*, eds. Stephen W. Smith and Travis Curtright (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002), 53-72.

[228]   Cf. Tigner's argument that "by the end of the play . . . the garden has become a microcosmic representation of the larger geo-political state, and all is regenerated." See Tigner, 134.

highlighting the social reproduction of biological succession and troubling the play's

attempt to reintegrate Perdita into the natural line of royal succession.[229]

I. Hermione's Purgation and Leontes's "Female Bastard"

In the face of mounting court criticism over his accusations against Hermione,

Leontes consents to a public trial for his wife despite his insistence that it will prove "no

more than what I know" (2.1.190-91). Not surprisingly, the overwrought Leontes takes

this gesture to an extreme, "so openly/ proceeding in justice" with a trial whose publicity,

it seems, is more appropriate for a commoner than a queen (3.2.5-6). The social

incongruity of the trial is foregrounded by Hermione's complaint that Leontes has forced

"a great king's daughter . . . To prate and talk for life and honour, 'fore/ Who please to

come and hear" (3.2.37-40).[230] In early modern England, a private trial before a queen's

aristocratic peers would have been more legally and culturally appropriate, as in Anne

Boleyn's trial for adultery and treason. Shakespeare's source-text, Robert Greene's

Pandosto, has the accused Queen specifically ask for a jury of her peers, emphasizing the

injustice of the denial of this privilege: "for seeing shee was a Prince shee ought to be

tryed by her Peers."[231] In adding a trial scene to his adaptation of *Pandosto*, however,

Shakespeare retains the jealous king's unjust refusal of his queen's royal prerogative, but

refashions it so that the trial evokes the communal context and participatory procedures

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[229] This view of the importance of the play's penultimate scene thus runs counter to the common critical impulse to see the penultimate scene as merely "preparation" for the reanimation of Hermione. For an example of this view, see Jeffrey Johnson, "'Which 'longs to women of all fashion': Churching and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*," *Early Theatre* 7.2 (2004), 75-85, esp. 79. Richard Meek questions this teleological reading of the play in "Ekphrasis in *The Rape of Lucrece* and *The Winter's Tale*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 46.2 (Spring 2006), 389-414.

[230] This is the second time Hermione objects to the public nature of Leontes's accusations. Earlier, when first confronted by her husband, she warns him, "How will this grieve you/ When you shall come to clearer knowledge, that/ You thus have published me" (2.1.98-100).

[231] *Three Elizabethan Romance Stories*, ed. James Winny (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1957), 83.

of English ecclesiastical justice. Significantly, ecclesiastical courts were crucial to the

regulation of bastardy and reproduction, crimes that were especially threatening when

perpetrated by the poor, whose offspring were likely to drive up parish poor rates. The

play's evocation of laws regulating adultery, bastardy, and parish poor rates both

foregrounds the communal construction of sexuality and social difference in Sicilia and

foreshadows its later thematic exploration in Bohemia.

Ecclesiastical courts were the most common public venue for sexual crimes in

early modern England. Unlike secular courts, church court proceedings revolved not

around argumentation and deliberative juries, but relied upon the oaths of the accused and

their neighbors. If a defendant maintained her innocence, she was often compelled to

undergo an ecclesiastical procedure known as purgation, in which she swore an oath of

innocence before the court.[232] Usually this was accompanied by a complementary

procedure called compurgation, forcing her to gather community members, termed

compurgators, to swear confirmatory oaths. Purgation and compurgation procedures

were employed in cases with much circumstantial evidence but little proof of guilt, and

thus were especially relevant in presentments of sexually suspect married women whose

marriage afforded them an alibi for pregnancy, the most commonly cited proof of female

sexual incontinence. It therefore is not surprising that a majority of convictions for

adultery were obtained through the failure of the accused to muster the required number

of compurgators.[233] Compurgation was a way of displacing responsibility for questions

over marital fidelity and the related question of the next generation's paternity from

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[232]On compurgation in the ecclesiastical courts, see Ingram, 51-52, 240-258, and 331-334.
[233] Ingram, 250.

wives and midwives to the broader community.[234] By filtering women's testimony

through communal testimony, husbands did not have to rely solely on their wives'

honesty for reassurance that their children were their own. The public nature of these

compurgation trials thus was crucial: the community was pressed not just to observe but

to participate in establishing a socially-sanctioned judgment on the paternity of

potentially illegitimate children.

When Leontes opens his trial of Hermione for adultery and treason, he claims to

"[p]roceed in justice, which shall have due course/ Even to the guilt or the *purgation*"

(3.2.6-7, my emphasis).[235] The scene justifies this appellation when Hermione swears

her innocence, claiming that on "her honor, which [she] would free," it would be "rigor

and not law" were she to be "condemned" (3.2.107-11). Furthermore, two courtiers,

Cleomenes and Dion, act the part of compurgators and "swear upon this sword of justice"

that they have brought from Delphos the "sealed up oracle" that confirms Hermione's

purgative oath (3.2.121-27). It is significant that the two courtiers do not simply deliver

the oracle's pronouncement, but instead participate in the trial proceedings through an

elaborate testimonial ritual in which a sword is produced for them to swear upon. With

these oaths, the oracle, often seen as extrinsic to early modern practice, becomes

integrated into a communal compurgation procedure.[236] At least one seventeenth-century

reader seems to have interpreted these lines this way, noting in the margins of this scene

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[234] On the role of midwives in establishing the paternity of illegitimate children, see Gowing, 177-203, as well as Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 301-306.

[235] Michael Schoenfeldt's "'Give Sorrow Words': Emotional Loss and the Articulation of Temperament in Early Modern England" examines grief and purgation in *The Winter's Tale* through the lens of contemporary theories of Galenic physiology. See *Dead Lovers: Erotic Bonds and the Study of Premodern Europe*, eds. Basil Dufallo and Peggy McCracken (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2007), 143-164.

[236] Julia Reinhardt Lupton analyzes the relationship between the oracle and early modern understandings of both Hebraic and Christian religious traditions in *Afterlives of Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature* (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 175-220.

that the "oracle *purges* the Queen and condemes the king" (my emphasis).[237] Its

rejection by Leontes is not only counter to the gods, but, crucially, counter to the

communal processes through which divine justice is made manifest in Sicilia. The tragic

culmination of Leontes's tyrannical rule thus is not only that he substitutes his irrational

jealousy for the wisdom of the oracle, but also that he destroys the communal structures

of justice inherent in the ecclesiastical procedures of purgation and compurgation.[238]

Hermione's purgation trial, and the lower legal social strata to which it belongs, is

in a sense an extension of Leontes's insistence that his infant daughter be treated like any

other unwanted "female bastard" (2.3.175). The abandonment of Perdita in Bohemia, her

reputed father Polixenes's kingdom, implicitly echoes the practice of palming off

illegitimate children onto another man in a different parish, so as not to have to raise the

parish rates to pay for them.[239] It is suggestive that Leontes decides Perdita will be

"returned" to Bohemia at the same time that he singles out her "rearing" as an unjust

burden (2.3.182-193). Perdita's expulsion deviates from earlier Shakespearian

representations of aristocratic bastardy, in which elite men father illegitimate sons who

prove either unnaturally deviant, as does Edmund in *King Lear*, or naturally courageous,

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[237] See *The First Folio of Shakespeare: A Transcript of Contemporary Marginalia*, ed. Akihiro Yamada (Tokyo: Yushodo, 1998), 89.

[238] My argument thus differs from that of Michelle Ephraim, who argues that the play validates Leontes's paternal insecurity. See Ephraim, "Hermione's Suspicious Body: Adultery and Superfetation in *The Winter's Tale*," *Performing Maternity in Early Modern England*, eds. Kathryn McPherson and Kathryn Moncrief (London: Ashgate, 2007), 45-58.

[239] Critics have differed in their interpretations of the cultural resonance of this expulsion. Paster argues that it is a reflection of anxieties surrounding the early modern practice of wet-nursing. Dolan argues that the exposure of the baby in the wilderness of Bohemia is derived from contemporary popular pamphlet tales describing notorious cases of infanticide. See Paster and Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars*. More recently, in an analysis of the play's thematic emphasis on economic redemption and the value of loss, Valerie Forman reads Perdita as "the embodiment of expenditure sent out either to prosper or to become naught." See Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern Stage* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2008), 85-109, esp. 94. I argue here that an underappreciated aspect of this expulsion is perhaps its most obvious cultural context: the social marginalization of children born out of wedlock.

as does the Bastard in *King John*.[240] Leontes entertains the possibility of raising Perdita

as a royal bastard, only to dismiss it:

> Shall I live on to see this bastard kneel
>
> And call me father? Better burn it now
>
> Than curse it then. But be it; let it live.
>
> It shall not neither. (2.3.155-8)

The Winter's Tale may follow a different path than earlier plays because the alleged

bastard in question is the mother's child, not the father's.[241] The financial burden of

single mothers and their illegitimate children was the greatest fear of local authorities

concerned with holding down the cost of the poor rate.[242] Leontes's familiar reaction to

cuckoldry - "No, I'll not rear/ Another's issue" – takes on a specific socio-economic

meaning when read against the material context of the poor laws.[243] Expelling a

perceived bastard, Leontes creates the possibility that the royal child will grow up to be a

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[240] Findlay discusses the dramatic representation of bastards as unnaturally evil in her chapter "Bastardy and Evil," and as naturally good in "Heroic Bastards." See Findlay, 45-84, and 170-212. Michael Neill analyzes the dramatic representation of bastards as monstrous and counterfeit at 127-166.

[241] Perdita's predicament thus evokes contemporary city comedies that dramatize the social consequences of unmarried women's illegitimate pregnancies. Fiona McNeill analyzes city comedies like Thomas Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* (1604), Nathan Field's *A Woman's a Weather-Cocke* (1609-1610), and Thomas Middleton's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621), arguing that, in addition to the figure of the male aristocratic stage bastard, there is another, almost opposite, widespread trope of stage bastardy which features the illegitimate pregnancies of poor single women. While aristocratic stage bastards often clash with their fathers, poor pregnant single women have trouble establishing the paternity of their children. See "Pregnant Maids and the New Bastardy Laws," in *Poor Women in Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 80-114.

[242] In such a case, parish authorities would often attempt to shift the responsibility onto a neighboring parish by claiming the child was fathered elsewhere, or that the father resided somewhere else. Illegitimate children could and did easily become pawns in these local disputes, to the extent that bastards were sometimes shifted from one parish to another in the middle of the night, to be left on their reputed father's doorstep. G.R. Quaife, *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England* (London: Groom Helm, 1979), 202-242, documents multiple instances in which illegitimate children were shifted about by parishes unwilling to accept financial responsibility for them.

[243] On the relationship between the poor laws, marriage and the sexuality of the poor, see Steve Hindle, *On the Parish?: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550-1750* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004), 337-360.

pauper – unwittingly threatening to "mannerly distinguishment leave out/ Betwixt the prince and beggar," which is the very thing that he fears will result from Hermione's supposed infidelity and subsequent pregnancy (2.1.87-88).

Given Leontes's efforts to isolate Hermione and Perdita from their courtly community, it is not surprising that the language used to describe their situation parallels that used to depict bastard-bearers and their illegitimate children. Leontes explicitly connects Perdita's expulsion to her alleged bastardy, telling Hermione: "You had a bastard . . . Thy brat hath been cast out, like to itself" (3.2.80-5). Yet Leontes goes further than this, using language that references the larger cultural connection between the social marginality of bastards and rogues. The expulsion and abandonment of bastards was closely associated with roguery in early modern England, and as far as the characters onstage or the spectators in the audience know, if she survives exposure, Perdita could easily end up a poor vagrant.[244] Indeed, the dramatic function of Perdita's exile, after all, is not to kill her – this could be accomplished by burning her, which Leontes considers and rejects – but to keep her social fate uncertain, to allow her to grow up as the bastard her father believes her to be. Leontes's language of "casting out" also may have signaled to early modern audiences a connection to Cain, the biblical exemplar of vagabondage. The Bishop's Bible (1568) renders Cain's lament at his enforced wandering in language similar to that of Leontes's orders: "Beholde, thou hast *cast me out* this day from the upper face of the earth, & from thy face shall I be hyd, fugitive also

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[244] This argument is supported by the fact that there actually was a practice of binding unwanted bastards on the backs of passing rogues, as well as the commonly held belief that bands of rogues stole children to use them to gain sympathy and charity. Robert Allen claimed that rogues "cary about the base-born, to hide them in farre remoued places, or to leade them about, as their owne naturall children!" See *A treatise of christian beneficence* (London: Iohn Harison, 1600), A2v. Bastard-binding and kidnapping is discussed in Keith Wrightson, "Infanticide in Earlier Seventeenth-century England," *Local Population Studies*, 15 (1975), 10-22. On vagrants' use of young children as props to gain sympathy, see A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London: Methuen, 1987), 57-58.

and a *vacabounde* shall I be in the earth: and it shall come to passe, that every one that fyndeth me shal slay me" (my emphasis).[245] The earlier Coverdale Bible (1538) and the subsequent Geneva Bible (1576) both use the same language, with Cain referring to himself in both texts as an "outcast" and a "vagabunde" who fears that he will be at the mercy of whomever "fyndeth" him.[246]

This biblical language of exile resonated in contemporary popular depictions of rogues and vagabonds, such as Robert Greene's *A Noteable Discovery of Cosenage*, which warns against "base rogues. . . being outcasts from God . . . and an excremental reversion of sin."[247] Cain's representation of vagabond rogues as hostages to fortune was also popular in early modern England, as the poor symbolized the extreme cruelties of fortune, in contrast to the King, whose fortune was considered the best.[248] *The Winter's Tale* references this linkage of roguery and fortune when Autolycus claims he is a dishonest rogue because "Fortune would not suffer" it otherwise (4.4.767). Perdita's "casting out" thus begins the process of connecting her to Autolycus. The rogue's reliance on fortune is a trait shared by the infant Perdita, of whom Leontes remarks "As by strange fortune it came to us," so it should be brought to "some place where chance may nurse or end it" (2.3.179-183).[249] Like Autolycus, Perdita is portrayed as a child of fortune, who is to survive only "if fortune please[s]" (3.3.47).

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[245] *The holie Bible conteynyng the olde Testament and the newe* (London, 1568), Gen. 4:14.
[246] *Biblia the Bbyble, that is, the holy Scrypture of the Olde and New Testament, faithfully translated in to Englyshe* (London, 1535), Gen. 4:B; and *The Bible that is, the Holy Scriptures contained in the Olde and Newe Testament* (London, 1576), Gen. 4:14.
[247] Robert Greene, *A Noteable Discovery of Coosenage* (London, 1592), Sig. C2v.
[248] Carroll, 14-15, discusses the representation of king and beggar on opposite ends of the symbolic wheel of fortune.
[249] John Donne ruminates on the connection between bastards and fortune in the essay "Why Have Bastards Best Fortune?" See John Donne, *Paradoxes and Problems*, ed. Helen Peters (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980), 31-33.

But there is an even stronger cultural link that is set up by this particular

representation of Perdita, one which has ramifications for the subsequent representation

of her own sexuality in Bohemia. *The Winter's Tale*'s representation of illicit sexuality

and social marginality springs from a cultural terrain that understood bastardy, roguery

and poverty as inextricably linked. In his treatise on charity, written in 1616, the

preacher John Downame warns his readers that vagrant rogues are "a promiscuous

generation," practicing "a licentious life and lawless condition, [with] no knowne father

or mother, wife or children. [They] are all kin yet know no kindred . . . no law but their

sensuall lust."[250] Downame envisions the supposed social disorder practiced by rogues

(their lawlessness and lack of social organization) as inextricably linked to their supposed

sexual disorder (their sensual lust and refusal of marriage). The idea that the vagrant

poor composed a "promiscuous generation" is an outgrowth of a theological association

between idleness, sensuality, and poverty that early moderns traced back to the parable of

the Prodigal Son, which they interpreted as associating poverty with lechery.[251] In *The*

Booke of Matrimonie (1564), the influential Anglican theologian Thomas Becon argues

that the Prodigal Son's idleness and lechery caused God to punish him with destitution:

"What shall I speak of that prodigall and wastful sonne, of whome we rede in the

Gospelle? Was not he so plaged for his riotous and luxurious life with whores & harlots

that he fell into beggerye?"[252] That Autolycus claims to have "compassed a motion of

the Prodigal Son" shows that this understanding of roguery is very much alive in *The*

Winter's Tale (4.3.80).

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[250] John Downame, *The Plea of the Poore* (London, 1616), 38.
[251] On the cultural significance of the parable of the prodigal son in early modern England, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 202-210.
[252] *The worckes of Thomas Becon* (London, 1564), fol. 654.

Religious connections between rogue sexuality and bastardy were consonant with the widespread depictions of a flourishing criminal underground found in the contemporary popular cheap pamphlets I analyzed in Chapters 1 and 2.[253] Thomas Harman's oft-reprinted and plagiarized *A Caveat for Common Cursitors*, for example, routinely compares rogues to "beasts" characterized by sexual incontinence.[254] Responding to the notion that a female rogue could be married, Harman, as I noted in Chapter 2, viciously denies the possibility, comparing her to a cow "that gooeth to Bull every moone, with what Bull she careth not."[255] Like animals, rogues, according to Harman, care nothing for marriage or the reproductive consequences of their sexual promiscuity. Harman is rather insistent on this point, seeking to "put you out of dout that not one amongst a hundreth of them are maried, for they take lechery for no sinne, but naturall fellowship."[256] This notion of the rogue's unmarried and unashamed "natural fellowship" led later seventeenth-century pamphleteers like Thomas Dekker to link rogues to the social problem of children born out of wedlock. Describing the barns in which the vagrant poor often found temporary lodging, he writes, "here growes the Cursed *Tree* of *Bastardie* that is so fruitfull."[257] The metaphorical figuring of rogues as naturally fecund – whether as flora or fauna – grows out of and supports the pamphlets' assertions about rogues' natural sexual incontinence. It is a short logical and literary step from Harman's promiscuous rogue cows to Dekker's bastard family tree.

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[253] On the connections between religious views of poverty and the vagrant poor, see Beier, 1-8. On the relationship between rogue literature and religion, see Jeffrey Knapp, *Shakespeare's Tribe: Church, Nation, and Theater in Renaissance England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004), 61-79.

[254] Thomas Harman, *A Caveat, or warening for Common Cursitors, vulgarly called vagabonds* (London, 1566), Sig. F2r.

[255] Ibid., Sig. G1r.

[256] Ibid., Sig. E3r.

[257] Thomas Dekker, *Lanthorne and Candlelight, Or, The bell-mans second nights-walke* (London, 1609), Sig. D3v.

Both the language of bastardy and roguery surrounding Perdita's expulsion and the ecclesiastical context of Hermione's trial suggest that considerations of socio-economic order and processes of communal authority are crucial to a consideration of the play's treatment of sexuality. The context of bastardy and roguery and the role of the community in interpreting sexual meaning and enforcing social order provide the terms in which the play's subsequent explosion of sexual energy in Bohemia needs to be understood. The pastoral scenes of the Bohemian countryside, with their wily rogues, gossipy maids, and communal festivities, are not so much a break from the elevated yet claustrophobic setting of the Sicilian court as they are the culmination of the play's exploration of how royal bodies and elite sexuality might fare under the communal processes that ordered sexual experience for the vast majority of people living in early modern England.[258]

II. A Scandal in Bohemia

The cultural script the play follows in its first acts might predict a second half in which the infant Perdita dies or, in the unlikely event of her survival, grows up as an ideally virtuous but destitute ward of a generous parish, or worse, a lecherous wandering "she rogue." Upon finding Perdita, the Shepherd seems to follow just such a script, supposing her the illegitimate child of a maid lacking the means to raise her: "Sure some

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[258] For the past 35 years, some critics of the *The Winter's Tale* have bristled at E.M.W. Tillyard's notion that Shakespeare's romances conclude with a "complete regeneration" of the social world. To my knowledge, however, the degree to which Bohemia is haunted by bastardy, and the connection between this kind of sexual disorder and the social disorder represented by Autolycus (and thus between Acts 1-3 and Act 4), has escaped notice. See E.M.W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's Last Plays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1951), 22. Early critics to dissent include Philip Weisntein, "An Interpretation of Pastoral in *The Winter's Tale*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 22.2 (1971), 97-109; and Thomas McFarland, *Shakespeare's Pastoral Comedy* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1972). Louis Montrose's work on the political valence of the pastoral genre has also been influential. See especially Montrose, "'Eliza, Queene of Shepheardes' and the Pastoral of Power," *English Literary Renaissance* 10 (1980), 153-82.

scape. Though I am not bookish, yet I can read waiting-gentlewoman in the scape"

(3.3.67-8). Furthermore, he recognizes that the illegality of illegitimate pregnancy and

infanticide makes abandonment a necessarily secret task: "This has been some stair-work,

some trunk-work, some behind-door-work" (3.3.68-69).[259] For the Shepherd, Perdita's

abandonment marks her as an illicitly abandoned bastard, whose meager prospects earn

her the Shepherd's "pity" (3.3.70). Yet, after the Shepherd agrees to adopt her, the play

dispatches with her penury as suddenly and absolutely as the bear does Antigonus. The

gold that accompanies Perdita allows the shepherd to reap the rewards as well as the

burden of "rear[ing] another's issue."[260] His generous adoption of the orphaned bastard

and his subsequent financial success repudiate the destructive socio-economic logic of

the poor laws, with their insistence that childcare outside of marriage is a losing

investment. Further, the Shepherd's generosity heralds an emotional and psychic

expansion beyond Leontes's paranoia, one which begins mending the play's torn social

fabric.[261] But while the play insulates the adult Perdita from the taint of bastardy and

destitution in order eventually to unite her with Prince Florizel of Bohemia, it introduces

her shadow in the figure of Autolycus, the wandering rogue. A "theef by generation," as a

seventeenth-century reader called him, Autolycus is an example of Downame's

"promiscuous generation" of rogues, and his life can be read as a parallel counter-history

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[259] Pregnant single women like the one the Shepherd imagines faced serious social and economic stigma: legally considered criminals, many also became vagrants in order to avoid prosecution, or because their lovers and families refused to support them. McNeill, 94, discusses how some of these women hid their pregnancy and either gave their children up for adoption or abandoned them, and observes that this practice is mentioned in Thomas Heywood's *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon*. See also *Singlewomen in the European Past*, eds. Amy Froide and Judith Bennet (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1999), 35-41.

[260] Cf. Laura Gowing's observation that "child abandonment in early modern England remained, as it had historically been, something of a gesture of faith in charity." See Gowing, 194.

[261] For a discussion of the dynamics of adoption in this and other Shakespeare plays, see Marianne Novy, *Reading Adoption: Family and Difference in Fiction and Drama* (Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2005), 56-86.

that reveals, in understated counterpoint, the life that the infant Perdita could have been expected to live.[262]

Educated audience members may have recognized an allusion to bastardy in his mythological namesake, since the original Autolycus was the bastard child of an affair between Chione and Mercury.[263] Through him, the play illustrates the life Perdita has been spared: that of the lecherous vagabond, thief, and con-artist, whose "traffic is sheets" and whose "revenue is the silly cheat" (4.3.23). Autolycus sings of "tumbling in the hay" with his "aunts," a slang term for prostitutes, and tells the audience that he wears rags because of two vices: the "die and drab," or gambling and whoring (4.3.25-26). Although he does not make any mention of his children, the possibility that Autolycus has knowingly or unknowingly fathered bastards during his sexual "tumbling" through the whorehouses of the Bohemian countryside is ever present. Similarly, his claim to marriage raises more questions about his family life than it answers. Autolycus states that he "married a tinker's wife," but no wife appears in the play, nor is she mentioned again (4.3.80). Itinerant laborers, tinkers and their families were often grouped together with bastard rogues, an association seemingly at work here, since it is only after marrying this tinker's wife that Autolycus "settled in rogue" (4.3.82).[264] His apparent abandonment of his wife, and presumably whatever children they produced, is the kind of behavior that made local officials treat bastardy and roguery as related social ills.

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[262] Yamada, 90.

[263] The mythological story of Autolycus is relevant to this play in other ways. Chione had affairs with both Mercury and Apollo, and bore twin sons as a result, Autolycus and Philammon. Chione's sexual liberty does not result in genealogical confusion: the affair produces a clearly identifiable son for each father. The story enacts a patriarchal fantasy in which paternity does not depend on the control of female sexuality, a utopian solution to the social problem *The Winter's Tale* dramatizes. In terms of Autolycus, his twin birth suggests that he is a character generically given to doubling.

[264] On the early modern tendency to interpret itinerant laborers as idle rogues, see Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007), 3-46.

Autolycus seems to exude, in the words of John Fortescue, the "certain corruption and stain from the sin" of their conception that was thought to characterize bastards.[265]

Autolycus's cozening of the Clown contains linguistic and dramatic elements marking him as both a professional rogue and Perdita's doppelganger. Mimicking the robbery victim in the Good Samaritan parable, Autolycus distracts the Clown with a tale of woe while he picks the Clown's pocket. Autolycus's false cry: "O, that ever I was born!" (4.3.43) indicates that this scene is an ironic parallel of the earlier scene in which the infant Perdita is found by the Clown's father, who plays the Good Samaritan by adopting the helpless foundling.[266] Coming so soon after the "newborn" Perdita is found and ministered to by the Shepherd, this pitiful refrain is a ghostly echo of what the infant might have said in the previous scene, had she the power of speech (3.3.98). The play neatly presents this as a parallel. Perdita, a helpless newborn, is saved from a life of roguery and licentiousness by a Good Samaritan; Autolycus, mimicking a newborn's helplessness, practices the tricks of the life Perdita escaped on that Good Samaritan's son.

Ironically, Florizel's poetic description of Perdita's "singular" perfection (4.4.144) likewise creates an echo effect between the reputed bastard and the rogue. Rhapsodizing over the excellence of her performance as Flora, goddess of flowers, Florizel says to Perdita

> What you do
>
> Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,

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[265] John Fortescue, *A Learned Comendation of the Politique Laws of England* (London, 1567; facsimile ed., Amsterdam and New York: Theatrum orbis Terrarum, 1969), fols. 95v. – 97v; Qtd. in Neill, 151.

[266] Joan Hartwig points out that Autolycus's scam parodies the previous scene between the Shepherd and Perdita, arguing that Autolycus, as a victimizer, is a double for Leontes. See Hartwig, "Cloten, Autolycus, and Caliban: Bearers of Parodic Burdens," in *Shakespeare's Romances Reconsidered*, eds. Carol Mcginnis Kay and Henry E. Jacobs (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1978), 91-103. G. Wilson Knight notes the parallels between Autolycus's ruse and the Good Samaritan story in *The Crown of Life* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1947), 101-102.

I'd have you do it ever. When you sing,

I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,

Pray so; When you do dance, I wish you

A wave o'th'sea, that you might ever do

Nothing but that. . . (4.4.135-142)

Florizel offers a reassuring response to Perdita's fear that her pastoral playing is too like

the immodest celebrations at Whitsuntide, which often included Robin Hood plays

featuring literary characters not unlike Autolycus.[267] He insists that any action Perdita

performs, including the flirtatious bestowal of flowers upon all the men at the festival, is

perfect and fitting, even for holy prayer. This defense and celebration of Perdita's virtue,

however, focuses on singing, almsgiving, and dancing – all subjects that recall the

musical performance of the unemployed rogue in the previous scene, where he introduces

himself to the audience by singing a canting ballad. These lines also foreshadow the

Shepherd's Servant's admiring description of Autolycus's skills, occurring less than fifty

lines later:

Oh, master, if you did but hear the peddler at the door, you would never

dance again after a tabor and pipe; no, the bagpipe could not move you. . .

Why, he sings [his goods] over as they were gods or goddesses; you would

think a smock were a she-angel, he so chants to the sleevehand and the

work about the square on't. (4.4.181-204)

The Servant seems as seduced by Autolycus's singing as Florizel is by Perdita's, and his

excited descriptions recall the intensity, if not the poetry, of Florizel's remarks. The

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[267] On Robin Hood plays at Whitsuntide celebrations see Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin, *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1997), 182.

Servant's description of Autolycus's peddling comically mirrors Florizel's acclamation of Perdita: he sings as he sells, and his songs seem worthy of prayers to the gods.[268]

The mirroring effect of these descriptions seems at odds with the play's attempt to represent the princess's natural sexual purity as consonant with her innate noble purity – a consonance most commentators assume to be self-evident, for good reason. Her royal bearing is apparent to everyone who meets her: although no one in Bohemia knows she is a princess, she is thrice called a queen, and Polixenes himself asserts that she is "Too noble for this place" (4.4.5, 146, 161, 159). Her apparently innate social superiority is also signaled by the repeated description of her skin as "fair" (a term applied to Perdita on nine separate occasions by seven different characters), or "as white as . . . the fanned snow" (4.4.341-42). In this passage, fair skin functions as an ideological sign of natural bodily difference between socially distinct groups of people. Kim Hall has argued that fairness could also communicate inborn sexual purity, a characteristic associated with Perdita through her rejection of grafted flowers, or "nature's bastards" (4.4.84).[269] Perdita's defense of genealogical purity has been read as a sign of her innate understanding of her place as the true heir to the kingdom of Sicilia, as well as the play's naturalization of noble blood. Her rejection of the "streaked gillyvor" is equally important, however, in signaling her natural chastity: not only is she not a bastard, but she

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[268] David Schalkwyk has also found this passage to parallel aspects of Perdita, observing that "as 'pranked-up' queen of the feast, Perdita is an echo of Autolycus's 'smock' transformed into a 'she-angel.'" See Schalkwyk, *Shakespeare, Love, and Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2008), 274.

[269] Perdita is called "fair" twice by Florizel (4.4.42, 492) and Polixenes, (4.4.78, 367), and once by Camillo (4.4.544), a Servant (5.1.87), Leontes (5.1.131), a Lord (5.1.190), and Paulina (5.3.119). My understanding of how the word "fair" implies a relationship between whiteness and sexual purity is indebted to Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1995).

would never bear one.[270] While the sexual scandal of Perdita's alleged bastardy is made

present through the figure of Autolycus, the play makes a concomitant effort to elevate

her beyond moral reproach. These elements combine to represent Perdita as both

Autolycus's opposite *and* his double, rendering her sexual status overdetermined in

distinctly contradictory ways.[271]

The tension between her apparent inborn chastity and the sexual disrepute of her

origins culminates in the discovery of her betrothal to Florizel. Once that romance is

common knowledge, the sexual purity that was so apparent earlier immediately seems to

desert her. Polixenes accuses her of being a "fresh piece of excellent witchcraft" with

designs on Florizel's royal inheritance (4.4.438, 402-403). The king subsequently warns

Perdita to keep her desires in check, saying "if ever henceforth thou these rural latches to

his entrance open,/ Or hoop his body more with thy embraces," she will be tortured and

executed (4.4.417-421).[272] Perdita's cross-class engagement makes the social context of

her upbringing more salient to determining her sexual reputation than her apparent

natural "nobility." The social disparity between Perdita and Florizel is no doubt one of

the major reasons their tryst appears sexually suspicious, but this suspicion is also caused

by the changeable definition of marriage in the early modern period. Depending on the

situation, a valid marriage could be made through a consensual agreement, the act of

reproductive sex, a vow in front of witnesses, or a written contract.[273] In this context, the

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[270] Amy Tigner also reads Perdita's dislike of gillyvors in light of her "potential bastardy," although her argument does not connect this moment to the play's other invocations of the discourse of illegitimate sexual reproduction. See Tigner, 123.

[271] On the relationship between overdetermination and contradiction, see Lous Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination," in Althusser, *For Marx* (London: Verso, 2005), 87-128.

[272] In its metaphorization of female genitalia as an open door, Polixenes's instructions evoke Leontes's earlier anxiety over the notion that there is "no barricado for a belly" (1.2.204).

[273] For a discussion of the different legal definitions of marriage in Shakespeare's plays, see B.J. and Mary Sokol, *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2003). There is a great deal of social

relationship between Perdita and Florizel raises the specter of the common figure of the

fallen maid, whether a "lowborn lass" like Perdita, or a "waiting gentlewoman," seduced

into premarital sex by the promise of marriage, or agreeing to sex in the belief that the act

alone constituted marriage (4.4.156).[274]

One reason to consider Perdita and Florizel's relationship in the context of illicit

pre-marital sexuality is that the play has already explored the sexual dangers of

engagement through the gossip surrounding the Clown's romantic entanglement with two

shepherdesses, Mopsa and Dorcus. When Mopsa reminds the Clown that he owes her

"certain ribbons and gloves," which were "promised [her] against the feast," Mopsa's

friend Dorcas responds by teasing her about a rumor that Mopsa and the Clown have

agreed to get married, saying, "He hath promised you more than that, or there be liars"

(4.4.224-228). In a culture where promises of marriage could emerge from a verbal

contract or a sexual tryst, saying to an unengaged maid that her lover has promised

marriage could imply that they had engaged in premarital sex.[275] Indeed, Mopsa seems to

interpret Dorcas's teasing comment about their romantic engagement as sexual slander,

since she retorts, "He hath paid you all he promised you. Maybe he has paid you more,

which will shame you to give him again" (4.4.229-30). Implying that the Clown already

had sex with Dorcas, Mopsa turns the tables on her accuser, taunting her with the

"shame" of bastardy – a return of the Clown's seminal "payment" to her. This passage

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history that analyzes the flexibility and mutability of marriage in early modern England, including Ingram; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997); and Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000).

[274] McNeill, 80-114, discusses the unstable definition of marriage and female chastity.

[275] In early modern England, bridal pregnancy rates were extremely high, from anywhere between 10 and 30 percent. Keith Wrightson has argued that sexual restraint routinely "crumbled with marriage in view." See Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1982), 85. Cressy, 277-281, also examines premarital sexuality.

may seem like playful teasing, but the Clown's reaction to their gossip suggests that it hits a nerve: "Is there no manners left among maids? . . . must [you] be tittle-tattling before all our guests? 'Tis well they are whisp'ring. Clamor your tongues, and not a word more" (4.4.231-235). Berating their manners while accusing them of "tattling," or slander, the Clown takes the maids' exchange seriously enough to try to shut them up. The strained exchange between the members of this love triangle highlights the way in which the promise of marriage could turn into the threat of fornication and illegitimate pregnancy.

Such is the hold of the tight link between nobility and chastity (and their naturalization through discourses of "blood"), however, that no critic of the play has explored how Perdita's adoptive brother's promises should affect our interpretation of her own. Ironically, King Polixenes seems to have no trouble worrying over his royal son's chastity, worryingly asking Camillo, "Is it not too far gone? It is time to part them" (4.4.322). Polixenes knows the couple has not yet been publicly married, having just discussed the matter with Perdita's father, the Shepherd, yet he worries that he may be too late to prevent Perdita from opening her rural latch and "hooping" Florizel. When Florizel boasts that "the gifts [Perdita] looks from me are packed and locked/ Up in my heart, which I have given already/ But not delivered," this description could be read to mean that he has "given" himself to Perdita sexually, but not formally "delivered" himself in a marriage ceremony (4.4.338-9). This interpretation is supported by the fact that it is this kind of marital vow that Florizel consequently attempts to "deliver" to Perdita, asking the Shepherd to "Contract us 'fore these witnesses" (4.4.336-338). Through such intimations, the suspicion of pre-marital fornication and the specter of

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illegitimacy shadows Florizel's and Perdita's romance. My point here is not that the play

represents the couple as fornicators, but that the play makes Perdita's chastity an

interpretive crux, not at all taken for granted as natural, but open to the suppositions of

the community on stage and in the audience.

The play's invocation of the socioeconomic context of vagrancy and bastardy thus

encourages us to see something about Perdita that critical insistence on her status as

chaste princess prevents us from seeing: she is not, cannot be, the solution to the problem

of securing patriarchy that the first half of the play dramatizes. Like all early modern

women, she never would be able to prove who fathered her child, leaving her potentially

vulnerable to accusations of bastard-bearing in much the same way that her pregnant

mother was vulnerable to accusations of adultery. Her chastity is therefore a very live

issue even into the fifth act – one that Shakespeare exploits when Leontes finally meets

his long lost daughter. Florizel begs the Sicilian king to support his engagement: "At

your request," he insists, "My father will grant precious things as trifles" (5.1.221-22).

Distracted by the beauty of Florizel's fiancée, Leontes replies, "Would he do so, I'd beg

your precious mistress,/ Which he counts but a trifle" (5.1.223-24). Critics have

questioned whether Leontes's unconscious desire for his own daughter should affect our

perception of him as "the penitent King," but the effect of this passing incestuous

moment on the audience's view of Perdita has received less attention (4.1.5).[276] In trying

[276] Carol Thomas Neely discusses incest in *The Winter's Tale* in *Broken Nuptials in Shakespeare's Plays* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1993), 164-209. The introduction to a recent edition of the play refutes the scene's incestuous charge, calling it "healthy rather than incestuous." See *The Winter's Tale*, eds. Susan Snyder and Deborah T. Curren-Aquino (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 124. On Shakespeare's use of *Pandosto*, see Stephen J. Lynch, *Shakespearean Intertextuality: Studies in Selected Sources and Plays* (Westport: Greenwood Publishing, 1998), 83-112. On Leontes's repentance see Sarah Beckwith, "Shakespeare's Resurrections" in *Shakespeare and the Middle Ages*, eds. John Watkins and Curtis Perry, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009), 45-67. I am grateful to Professor Beckwith for providing me with a copy of her essay prior to publication.

to extol Perdita's value, Leontes also draws attention to the fact that during her time in Bohemia Perdita is a "lowborn lass" described by Polixenes as a "knack," which, like trifle, was an early modern term for a frivolous plaything (4.4.156, 408).[277] The comparison of valuable mistress to sexualized trifle only highlights the way in which Perdita is both these things: simultaneously an innocent, chaste princess and a bastard foundling whose desire could destroy a kingdom.

As we have seen, such sexual disorder is more typically associated with Autolycus, and it is appropriate that he is the only other character in the play to use the word "trifle," euphemistically describing his criminal profession as "snapper-up of unconsidered trifles" (4.3.25). The linguistic trace of Autolycus's self-description in Leontes's comment about Perdita recalls her history as an "unconsidered trifle" that was indeed found and snapped-up by the Shepherd. This "trifling" connection between princess Perdita and the cozener Autolycus is strengthened by the etymology of "trifle," a word adopted from the Old French "*trufle*," a parallel form of "*truffe*," which Randall Cotgrave translates in 1611 as "gullerie," and the Italian "*truffo*," which John Florio translates in 1598 as "cozening, cheating, conicatching."[278] Rematerializing on the brink of the revelation of Perdita's royal lineage, the word "trifle" reminds us how close she came to being like Autolycus.

When news of Polixenes's arrival reaches the Sicilian court, the couple's chastity becomes politically crucial with Leontes's friendly warning: "Your honor not o'erthrown

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[277] *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines "trifle" as "a toy, trinket, bauble, knick-knack," citing Jehan Palsgrave's *Lesclarcissement de la langue françoyse* (1530), which defines "Tryfell" as "a knacke, *friuolle*."
[278] See Randall Cotgrave *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Printed by Adam Islip, 1611), Sig. K4v; and John Florio, *A vvorlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London: Arnold Hatfield, 1598), Sig. Q2r.

by your desires,/ I am friend to them and you" (5.1.230). The legitimacy of the royal line

depends on their avoidance of sexual immorality, particularly bastard-bearing. To

withstand such suspicion, Perdita, whose "origin" in bastardy and whose propitious

engagement mark her as vulnerable, requires a solution to her quandary that is not so

much romantic as socially efficacious. The eventual revelation of her royal birth clears

the way for her to marry Florizel, but it cannot alone make her Bohemian engagement

beyond suspicion. To do this, the communities of both Sicilia and Bohemia must affirm

that the coming marriage is valid.

III. Seeing, Hearing, Swearing

    The arrival of Perdita and Florizel in Sicilia in need of communal approval of and

witnesses to their marriage provides an opportunity to heal the injury to communal

authority that occurred during Hermione's trial. The play's investment in dramatizing the

lovers' dilemma suggests that the royal family reunion should be the centerpiece of the

play's resolution. Instead, the play famously glosses over what could have been its

dénouement: the restoration of the long-lost Perdita's royal inheritance, which clears the

way for her marriage to proceed. Occurring off stage, the reunion is described by three

nameless Lords, the last of whom introduces his narration by claiming that despite its

apparent outlandishness, the story is "most true, if ever truth were pregnant by

circumstance. That which you hear, you'll swear you see; there is such unity in the proofs

. . . many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the King's daughter"

(5.2.22-29). This passage distinguishes the ocular proof provided by Hermione's mantle

from the hearsay and "surmises" characterizing the preceding sexual suspicion in both

Sicilia and Bohemia. Perdita's parentage thus is established with a degree of certainty that proved elusive in the earlier judicial proceedings. But even more important than the kind of "proofs" offered is the fact that these "evidences" convince the community of the court, and that the community itself is allowed to stand as witnesses. In proving that Perdita is after all the lost Princess, what Shakespeare allows us to see on stage is not a tearful family reunion, but the processes of communal affirmation that produce, and are reproduced by, women's sexual honor and men's sexual certainty. It is only after the community is portrayed as accepting this amazing reunion that Paulina can refer to Florizel and Perdita as "these your contracted/ Heirs of your kingdoms" (5.3.5-6).

The indirect representation of this reunion is often taken as a consequence of the play's perceived need to speed to the final scene: the reanimation of Paulina's statue of Hermione. But while this offstage reunion may not be same kind of dramatic spectacle as Hermione's apparently miraculous resurrection, it does have the thematic effect of resolving the play's earlier portrayal of Leontes's subversion of purgation. More importantly, it complicates the play's portrayal of sexuality by implying that chastity is neither an inborn quality nor a corollary to social status. Instead, the play demonstrates that chastity is the product of social processes of discussion, reflection, and communal affirmation. The Lord quoted above calls attention to the importance of neighborly communication in his promise, appropriate to both his neighbors and the theatrical audience, "That which you hear, you'll swear you'll see, there is such unity in the proofs" (5.2.23). The argument that circumstantial proof exceeds or substitutes for visual confirmation recalls Leontes's earlier insistence that Hermione's guilt is so certain because it "lacked sight only, naught for approbation/ But only seeing, all other

circumstances/ Made up the deed" (2.2.176-80). The difference here is that the circumstances have convinced not a jealous husband, but both the courtly and theatrical audiences of the truth. In calling on the audience of his tale to swear to its truth, this anonymous gentleman marshals his neighbors onstage, as well as the audience in the theater, to stand as confirmatory oath-takers on behalf of the resolution of the play's earlier uncertainty over sex and genealogy.

The play's penultimate scene therefore is just as metatheatrically charged as the play's final scene is often taken to be. Indeed, the famous statue scene can be thought of as continuing and expanding the themes of the preceding scene, an interpretation underlined by Paulina's use of the phrase "old tale" to describe Hermione's resurrection, the same phrase used by the courtiers to describe Perdita's survival in exile (5.2.20, 5.3.118). In a certain sense, the statue scene provides what the previous scene denies: the performance of a miracle that needs to be seen to be believed. Yet the statue scene denies its audience what the previous scene delivers: the explanation for how such a miraculous event could have possibly occurred. It is a lack that is acutely felt by those on stage, to the extent that it fairly dominates the response of the court to Hermione's return. Polixenes insists Hermione speak, while Camillo demands she "make it manifest where she has lived, / Or how stol'n from the dead" (5.3.115-116). Hermione denies them their request, instead asking Perdita for a retelling of the play's first old tale: "Tell me, mine own, / Where hast thou been preserved? Where lived? How found / Thy father's court?" (5.3.124-126). Hermione's desire for a recapitulation of the previous scene, in which the court is unified around the tale of Perdita's homecoming, and the way it frustrates the

desire for narrative closure in this scene, are both signs that despite the wonder of Hermione's reanimation, something is missing from the play's conclusion.

The lack of narrative closure may be caused by the old wounds that Hermione's resurrection opens, wounds that had seemed closed for good in the previous scene. With Hermione alive, the penitent Leontes faces not the attainable forgiveness of God, but a potentially difficult reconciliation with his wife. The court also faces uncertain political times, as factions loyal to the queen may perhaps once again be pitted against those loyal to the King. The importance of the courtly acceptance of Hermione's resurrection is evident in Paulina's almost too insistent suggestion that everyone "Go together, / You precious winners all; your exultation / Partake to everyone" (5.3.132-134). The absence of Hermione's story, and Paulina's consequent insistence on the collective performance of joy, suggests that the spirit of community may prove harder to attain than it was to destroy, and that, like the sexual status of its lost princess, the unity of Sicily's court cannot be magically produced or taken for granted as natural. This is not to undercut the power of the dramatic resolution of the play. It is to suggest, however, that the scene's power is not dependent on whether it posits a solution to the social contradictions it stages. It is no easier to distinguish faithful wives from unfaithful wives, or honest victims from criminals, or legitimate children from bastards than it was at the beginning of the play. Rather, like the affirmation of Perdita's patrimony, the statue scene's power derives from how Shakespeare displaces rather than solves these problems: through the mechanism of communal affirmation.

Paulina's concern about whether Hermione's reanimation is "unlawful," and Leontes's response, "If this be magic, let it be an art / Lawful as eating," frames

Hermione's restoration in terms of the play's earlier concern with the legal regulation of adultery, bastardy, and roguery (5.3.96, 111-12). Pointing out the Marian aspects of Hermione's reanimation, a number of critics have viewed Leontes's pronouncement as a reference to that most mystical of Catholic rituals, the Eucharist.[279] His assertion is just as important, however, for the way it emphasizes the interconnectedness of daily life and the law, seeking to enfold the play's magic, such as it is, within those quotidian bounds. If there is a miracle in Hermione's return, it is not only a religious one, or even a dramatic one, as so many critics insist. Rather, it is what we might call a social miracle. In a world where royal and marital alliances fall apart at the slightest provocation, it indeed requires an awakening of faith to believe in the possibility of an enduring reconciliation.

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[279] On the Catholic connotations of this scene, see Vanita; Jensen; Dolan, "Hermione's Ghost;" Knapp, 181-182; Lupton, 210-218; and Gareth Roberts, "'An art lawful as eating'? Magic in *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*" in *Shakespeare's Late Plays: New Readings*, eds. Jennifer Richards and James Knowles (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1999), 126-42.

Chapter 6

Coda: The Vice is of a Great Kindred

This dissertation began as a project about the construction of community in early

modern England. Influenced by Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, I intended

to argue that the theater helped construct discursive communities of nation and class by

repeatedly staging the rejection of sexual criminals from the social body. In other words,

I began by thinking that the center was constructed by the exclusion of the margin. When

I read *Measure for Measure*, however, it became clear that the relationship between

crime, sexuality, and community was more complicated than I had imagined. In that

play, Lucio, a dissipated Viennese gentleman, criticizes the futility of the city's recent

legal crackdown on lechery, saying "the vice is of a great kindred; it is well allied. But it

is impossible to extirp it quite" (3.2.83-84). The personification of lechery as the head of

a great family caught my eye for the way it uses the language of social order to describe

sexual disorder. I was further struck by the accuracy of this ironic description, the way it

captures the ubiquity of lechery in Vienna: practically everyone in the play seems

touched by sexual disorder, even the crusading Angelo and the righteous Juliet. From

these lines I realized that the relationship between social and sexual order did not divide

neatly along the lines of center and margin. Just as Lucio could apply the rhetoric of

orderly rule to disorderly sexuality, it would be impossible to "extirp" crime and

sexuality from the center of the socio-economic and national communities of early

modern England.

These observations led me to read with interest the work of Alan Bray and Mario

DiGangi, each of whom had written sharply observed analyses of the signification of

sexual and social order in early modern England. I learned from these scholars that

sexual disorder did not signify in a vacuum, but was embedded in a web of social factors,

such that sexual meaning was dependent on things like rank, age, gender, and

nationality.[280] Sexual discourse therefore was radically unstable, and the same sexual act

or language could mean very different things depending on social context. In early

modern England, social identity was often similarly unstable. Whole genres of literature

– courtesy manuals were only the most prominent – were written to explain, clarify, and

fix early modern England's system of social signification.[281] I began to suspect that the

relationship between sexuality and social order must have been more complicated than

that described in the criticism I was reading. This suspicion was confirmed when I began

reading the popular pamphlets known as rogue literature, another genre that attempted to

define the social order. In these pamphlets, not only was social order difficult to define,

but sexual disorder became the material with which these texts distinguished between the

social order and disorder. In other words, rogue literature used the discourse of sexual

excess to define social meaning.

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[280] See Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2003); Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994).
[281] On the instability of social order generated by and reflected in courtesy manuals, see Frank Whigham, *Ambition and Privilege: The Social Tropes of Elizabethan Courtesy Theory* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1984).

This argument became the basis for my inquiry into the drama of court, class, and nation that makes up the second half of the dissertation. At first, I thought I would find that these communities were simply established the same way that rogues were distinguished from non-rogues. That is, I expected that sexual excess would determine which characters were illegitimate members of the nation or court. Instead, I found that these culturally central institutions were constructed out of the rhetoric of rogue sexuality, making it difficult to distinguish the boundaries between the discourses of social and sexual order and disorder. In *1 Henry IV*, for example, the nation is defended by rogue soldiers and the Lancastrian victory is represented through the language of a sodomitical economy of roguery. In *Epicoene*, the fashionable urban elite are represented as fashionable to the extent that they are practiced at the sexual cozening of cony-catchers. In both cases, social victory is represented not against sexual excess but by means of it. This dissertation was begun as an effort to chart the politics of sexual exclusion, yet it ended up describing the interpenetration of sexual order and disorder.

Before I conclude with a few thoughts on possible future directions for the project, there are two more aspects of the argument whose centrality surprised me: gender and generation. One of the advantages of focusing on roguery was that it was a social category that transcended gender – or so I believed. After all, rogue literature describes women as vagabonds, pickpockets, and con-artists just as often as it does men. This was also the case with sexual excess, but here the equality had significant implications for early modern gender studies: unlike most early modern moralist literature, the male rogues were described as equally sexually aggressive as women. In fact, each chapter demonstrates that gender was a crucial determinant of the workings of rogue sexuality.

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Masculinity again came into play in *1 Henry IV*, in which the masculinity of the battlefield is implicated in language of sodomy, contradicting the common associations between sodomy and effeminacy. In the final two chapters, femininity became a more prominent focus of my analysis, as in my reading of *Epicoene*, in which elite urban masculinity is threatened by the power of female friends. In *The Winter's Tale*, Perdita's royal chastity is denaturalized by the discourse of roguery, suggesting that chaste gentlewomen are made and not born.

Gender also played a role in my thinking about rogue reproduction. Reproduction in early modern England is often analyzed in relation to the pregnant body, or the tension between male medical practitioners and female mid-wives. In either case, it is often centered around the female body: who has access to it, who determines its political meaning, and what that meaning is. In my analysis of rogue literature, I argue that rogue literature does something quite different: it thinks about reproductive sexuality writ large, about the large-scale social problems an army of rogues might pose to the commonwealth. To a certain extent, this reconfiguration of early modern reproductive thought mitigates the role played by gender, turning reproduction into an abstract political calculation. On the other hand, *Promiscuous Generation* has endeavored to show that such thinking only reemphasizes the centrality of sexuality to the social fabric, with all of the attendant gender dynamics that produces.

My analysis of the political ramifications of rogue reproduction could be fruitfully extended to consider more fully the relationship between this epistemological shift and early modern legal innovations like the Elizabethan poor laws. These laws are often seen as the foundation of the modern welfare state, and thus entangled in a teleological

narrative ending in modern liberalism. They have been examined less often for their

implications for the history of sexuality, for the way their economic and bureaucratic

logic might have changed the way that people thought about human life, social status, and

their relationship to the state in the early modern era itself. The sexual and social

regulation of the poor that my dissertation examines may provide a basis for a prehistory

of the concept of political economy that Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus would later

use to link ideas about population, the economy, and the state. Marxist critics like Guy

Debord locate the birth of the concept of political economy in the nineteenth century,

viewing its abstraction of material life as an effect of the Industrial Revolution and the

attendant fetishization of commodities.[282] My dissertation suggests that it would be

valuable to pressure this chronology by intertwining the histories of sexuality and

economics. Such a project would bring the history of sexuality to bear upon intellectual

history by demonstrating the ways in which the analytical category of "rogue sexuality"

helped lay the groundwork for modern ideas as various as population control, the

development and regulation of "national resources," and the birth of the modern nation-

state.

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[282] See Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 1983).

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