City Women: Daughters, Wives, Widows, And Whores In Jacobean And Restoration City Comedy.

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City Women: Daughters, Wives, Widows, and Whores in Jacobean and Restoration City Comedy

by

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Presented to the Graduate and Research Committee

of Lehigh University

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in

English

Lehigh University

October, 1996

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Oct. 1, 1996
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Acknowledgments

This study owes a great deal to many people who offered their critical thinking, support, and encouragement. I thank Jan Fergus, David Hawkes, and Augustine Ripa for their careful and thoughtful reading, and for their feedback which not only focused my thinking but pushed it to new levels. I thank Barbara Traister for all that and more: for encouraging me to develop new ideas and for guiding this study to say what I needed it to say.

I am also grateful to my husband, Gabor, my son, Todd, and my daughter, Sarah, for their loving, and at times, long-distance companionship, and for their good-humored patience. They listened to my ideas and critically read my drafts, offering intellectual as well as emotional support.

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Abstract

Great social changes due to capitalism, civil war, development of a parliamentary government, and restoration of the monarchy invoked anxieties in seventeenth-century England that found expression and relief in comedies centered on life in London. Often that comedic relief was realized through the dramatic portrayals of women. Playwrights used characterizations of daughters, wives, widows, and whores as vehicles through which to discuss concerns regarding the male, public world.

Chapter One discusses Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* as archetypical in its use of dramatic representations of women to discuss Tudor anxieties over class and economic change--issues that appear in Jacobean and Restoration drama.

Chapter Two examines the portrayals of the widow and whore in Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*, Middleton's *The Honest Whore* and *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's*, Etherege's *The Man of Mode*, and Congreve's *The Way of the World*. The widow and whore hold autonomous economic power unchecked by male authority and through the defeat of the whore and the remarriage of the widow the dramas reveal the century's goals: first to control the capitalist entrepreneur and later to find new markets for capitalism through

colonization.

Chapter Three uses Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Anything for a Quiet Life*, Etherege's *She Would if She Could*, Dryden's *Marriage A La Mode*, Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, and Congreve's *The Way of the World* to discuss how daughters and wives were used as sexual currency between men in the competition for public stature demanded by seventeenth-century patriarchy. Wives occupy the dual roles patriarchal subjects and patriarchal reflections of their husbands. Negotiations between Restoration wits and witty heroines replace Jacobean male negotiations over controlling a woman, the Restoration heroine becoming the reflection of the philosophical and political Restoration man.

Chapter Four contrasts Aphra Behn's dramatic representations of women with those of male playwrights. Behn's *The Rover* and *The Revenge* present issues of economic and social change through women characters who reveal frustrations and vulnerabilities of being marginalized. Also, Behn introduces new themes in her comedies: the possibility of sexual equality and the crime of sexual violence.

Chapter I

The First Women of City Comedy: Margery, Rose, and Jane

In *A Room of One's Own*, Virginia Woolf indignantly points out the supreme irony inherent in the representations of women in early English literature: until relatively recent times, literature has been the only sphere which depicted early women's lives, yet women have been prevented from helping to create those representations. Woolf deplores that "this ...woman in fiction," bred under such circumstances, offers no counter-balance to the fact that "history scarcely mentions her."[1] A later generation of historians, however, has given new authority to the field of social history, perceiving that "the life of the average Elizabethan woman must be scattered about somewhere," and finding it worthwhile to comb the "parish registers and account books"[2] that Woolf believed also held representations of women's lives.

Woolf's literary "granddaughter" Adrienne Rich provides, forty-three years after the publication of *A Room of One's Own*, a theoretical means to rescue the lives that Woolf deemed lost by misrepresentation or in obscurity. Rich's process of re-visioning--"the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction"[3]--enables the truths about women's lives

that are "scattered about" in literature to be gathered together. And, with the additional theoretical tool of new historicism, these truths coalesce to unveil hidden portraits of real women--rebellious daughters, dutiful wives, self-sufficient widows, destitute whores--the women who constitute the statistics of the parish register and the account books.

Drama, by the very nature of its interdependency among author, actor, and audience, provides a crucible in which to record and reveal human triumphs and failings. The city comedy of the seventeenth century, grounded as it is in contemporary issues, offers a particularly clear mirror of the times. Aiming to resolve affairs of the heart rather than affairs of state, the genre focuses on social relationships--domestic, amorous, companionate. Personal relationships, however, are lived out within the public arena of community and they can, therefore, incorporate and be influenced by the tensions of a larger world of political, economic, and patriarchal powers. The commonplace topics of its dialogue also make city comedy's messages--hidden or otherwise--elusive for a modern reader. Elusive, perhaps, but not inscrutable for, as Francis Fergusson notes:

> The process of becoming acquainted with a play is like that of becoming acquainted with a person. It is an empirical and inductive process; it starts with the observable facts; but it

> instinctively aims at a grasp of the very life of the machine which is both deeper, and oddly enough, more immediate than the surface appearances offer. We seek to grasp the quality of a man's life, by an imaginative effort, *through* his appearances, his words, and his deeds.[4]

This "immediacy" of urban comedy, obstacle that it may present, is also the key to seeing clearly--perhaps for the first time--the lives of women through dramatic representations. Historian Lawrence Stone also identifies the importance of considering the wider historical context when examining individuals' lives: "The life of no man can be fully understood without reference to the framework of institutions, traditions, and ideas within which it has been enacted."[5]

This study, therefore, looks for ways to redefine and reimage the lives of English women of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries through the "old texts" of city comedies. It does not attempt to "read between the lines" so much as to read the lines through a lens of cultural awareness, by examining three ways in which women functioned in their societies: as scapegoats for threatening economic or hierarchical issues, as sexual commodities within a patriarchal context, and as individuals struggling to gain autonomy. Although this study attempts to "revision" women through these three approaches, they often intertwine. Ultimately, patriarchy is the overarching authority, and it

encroaches upon every aspect of early modern women's lives. The title of this study acknowledges the primary identity of the women of these periods--as daughters, wives, whores and widows of men. William Shakespeare's characters, in fact, candidly outline these sole options for women in the Elizabethan world in *Measure for Measure*:

> Duke: What, are you married?
> Mariana: No, my lord.
> Duke: Are you a maid?
> Mariana: No, my lord.
> Duke: A widow, then?
> Mariana: Neither, my lord.
> Duke: Why, you are nothing then--neither maid, widow, not wife?
> Lucio: My lord, she may be a punk, for many of them are neither maid, widow, nor wife. (V.i.171-80)

In addition, this study traces changes within the periods' dramatic portraits of women: which images faded, which remained constant, which became more pronounced. It uses the Civil War and the Interregnum as a political, economic, and social dividing line. It aims, therefore, not only to provide a deeper understanding of the political and economic tensions within a period of emerging capitalism followed by a period of social reconstruction, but it also strives to uncover the roles forced on (or sometimes, chosen by) women that enabled them to function within those societies. For in trying to understand the past through members of marginalized groups, we can gain a different assessment than the one conveyed by the powerful and

articulate of the times.[6]

As much as in the parish registers, early modern women's lives are "recorded" in the commonplace themes of urban comedy. Having no real sanctioned presence, let alone power, in the public realm, women had as their domain the private world of social relationships--as is presented in one of the very first city comedies, Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*. Produced by the Lord Admiral's Men and performed before Queen Elizabeth on New Year's Day, 1600,[7] this comedy, on the surface a merry mix of the "folksy and romantic,"[8] presents well-defined portraits of three Elizabethan women and is the precursor to the comedies about London life that audiences relished even sixty years later.

Walter Cohen views drama as a provider of ideological resolutions to societal ills. Cohen's assertion that ideology functions most evidently "when a plot ends in reconciliation and joy, as in comedy,"[9] prompts us to look at *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in the context of the Elizabethan world: a society which maintained tremendous class distinctions, struggled with a new, commercial competition, and was ruled by a monarchy intent on keeping all elements of society balanced in order to maximize its own power. By examining the beginnings of city comedy we can appreciate why the genre contains elements that encourage subversive readings, leading Cohen to conclude that "as a rule the

festive side of a play is inversely proportional to both the social seriousness of the subject and the prominence of other, potentially antagonistic classes."[10]

The origins of city comedy lie in the medieval festivals of feudal Britain. Joyce Youings believes that the English weathered the great social changes of the Tudor period partially because they were a people who "in its essentials had retained its dominant late-medieval characteristics."[11] One of these characteristics can be identified as the folk tradition of early theater. As the early English theater developed from the peasant festivals celebrating nature, and from didactic morality plays, a sense of community solidarity and reaffirmation of traditional values--two elements found in city comedy--also developed. City comedy does not continue an ancient folk tradition that included clowns and Morris dancing, but it does retain the festive, community spirit of Tudor comedy, and that spirit promotes the same political objective: to create social cohesion. Michael Bristol states:

> Carnival in the early modern period is not simply festivity in general, though all festivity is very likely to have a 'conservative' social function. In considering a particular historical instance of festivity, however, it is necessary to ask who is conserving what and at whose expense.[12]

As Robert Weimann observes, the topsy-turvydom and festive release of medieval pageants provided a communal

consciousness and some social criticism.[13] No real social change occurred as a result of any festival but, for a time, there was a suspension of the routine of daily life. People engaged in the fantasy of a new reality created by the pageant. By resembling real life, the pageant held up the possibilities of change, that someday life might be like the pageant's "society."

As Leah Marcus notes, Marx and Bakhtin both identified the subversiveness of popular festivals, Marx arguing that the critique of authority historically hastened class conflict. Marcus states that Bakhtin, however, holds the "more problematic position that festival forms are completely separate from the official culture," and that this view gives limited attention to the motives of an "official elite" that seems willing to suspend its authority. Marcus's "own bias" is to accept that the pageant's "seemingly lawless topsy-turvydom can both undermine and reinforce--it can constitute a process of adjustment within a perpetuation of order; the precise balancing of the two functions depends on local and particular factors and creates different effects at different places and times."[14] Acknowledging that people enjoy celebrating, therefore, is not as important as noting what and how they celebrate--or find humorous. In addition, we must take into consideration people's attitudes after

celebration as they return to the reality of everyday life. Celebration that results in a sense of communal well-being--prolonged, even, through people's later conversations about the event--does not raise questions about the social order. Festivals and drama that resolve questions without openly asking them have the ability, therefore, to control what questions are asked.

We need only to examine Elizabeth I's creation of the holiday of Ascension Day to recognize the value she perceived in controlling society through merriment. Elizabeth declared a holiday to celebrate the annual anniversary of her ascension to the throne.[15] Time was given to sporting events and general entertainment, but divine worship was also part of the festivities--joining the secular with the holy. In granting her subjects an occasion to put aside their daily routine, she was, in fact, asserting her authority over them. Likewise, the people who so willingly participated in the merriment were reaffirming Elizabeth's authority by honoring the date it began. For the great majority of the population, Elizabeth's holiday resolved the issue of rightful ascendancy, not by debate but by simple affirmation.

In addition, the link between the rise of the city and the rise of the theater in Elizabethan England is a close one. As London grew, largely due to the increased business

conducted by the merchant class, commercialism touched many aspects of city life. The size of the population and the income of citizens could support a public theater. As Weimann points out, Richard Burbage built his theater in order to make a profit, not for the common good.[16] And even earlier, the acting profession had become linked to the new economic times when vagabonds, made homeless by the ravages of the plague and the enclosure laws, took up lives as traveling actors, eventually settling in London.[17] Just as the development of the public theater was tied to a new commercialism, so city comedies reflected the environment in which this money was made. Paster notes that in the late sixteenth century London was the only English city of a size to show the tensions between individual aspirations and the social order. Life in London itself became subject matter for drama as it wrestled with the two Renaissance views of the city: ideal community and predatory trap.[18] That a money-making enterprise like a theater dramatized people who devise money-making enterprises offers just one example of the ironies of Tudor life.

Recognizing, then, how the elements of ancient festive control were still functioning politically in Tudor society partially through a new commercial venture, we can turn to *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and find specific instances of the same controlling forces at work--forces that would adopt

different conventions in the urban comedy of subsequent political periods.

In order to resolve contemporary issues, Dekker's play uses a structure which affirmed traditional social unity: setting the tone through the main character, Simon Eyre, who exhibits traits of the ancient clown figure and works to create goodwill within the audience. But in the portrayals of its three women, Margery, Jane, and Rose, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* reveals Elizabethan anxieties and struggles in the political, economic, and social territories of the national landscape--themes with which later comedies also grapple.

Dekker was one of the prolific hack writers of the age, and his work, such as *Old Fortunatas* (1596), contains clear elements of fantasy-fulfillment.[19] *The Shoemaker's Holiday* also has fairy tale elements: a shoemaker finds his lost wife by recognizing the shoes he made for her when they are brought to him to be repaired. Based on the historical figure of Simon Eyre, an upholster or draper in fifteenth-century London,[20] the play focuses on the ebullient Eyre and his rise to the position of Lord Mayor. As the play weaves a colorful tapestry of good-natured bantering between master and apprentices and naive intrigues of thwarted romance, darker threads create the background: the tensions of a proto-capitalist society.

Margery, Simon's wife and helpmate; Jane, newly wed to

the apprentice, Ralph; and Rose, the daughter of the wealthy merchant, Sir Roger Oteley--each woman lives on a different economic level of Tudor society and therefore mirrors the functioning class hierarchy.

Margery Eyre is her husband's helpmate in a bourgeois marriage that they have formed as an emotional union but as a sort of business partnership as well. Their marriage is based on affection and a joint sense of purpose for their future. Not only does Margery supervise the women of the household in their domestic tasks, she also takes on the role of "master" of the shop when Simon is away, making sure that the apprentices do not become idle. The Eyres are an ambitious couple--upwardly mobile and nouveau riche by the end of the play. Upon closer examination, however, Margery's role in helping to create the Eyres' prosperity is full of ambiguities: she is expected to support and rejoice in her husband's entrepreneurial successes, but she is also made the scapegoat for the Tudor struggle of conscience over the acquisition of money.

Just as the monarchy tried to build a coalition among itself, the aristocracy, and the wealthy middle class, Simon Eyre is portrayed as doing his part to be a success for the ultimate good of the kingdom. Roberts describes the Tudor ideal of government as "a financially independent crown ruling in partnership with the nobility and gentry.[21] Given

the class distinctions demanded by the society, however, this partnership could never have been considered a union of equals, but rather a coalition of the crown and the aristocracy to use the resources of the commercial class. The crown needed to encourage commercial enterprise but never at the expense of destroying the class structure. Again, one only has to look at adroit Elizabeth's court to see this policy implemented. The ranks of government service during Elizabeth's reign were mostly filled with the sons of gentlemen who, in contrast to the nobility's young, were rather well educated. These commoners held a certain amount of power in the government, but ultimately their power was limited by their class status. While the queen promoted commoners to governmental posts, she did not encourage social ascent and created virtually no new members of the nobility.[22] Apparently, even this firm hold on class distinctions was not enough for the aristocracy to feel secure, as the Essex Rebellion in 1601 perhaps proved, when seven young earls joined with Essex to rebel not against the queen but against the commoner Robert Cecil, in order to "make the court a better place for aristocracy."[23] The partnership between Court and City was equal, therefore, only in its common goals: to preserve order, protect property, and defend the realm.[24]

At the same time that the crown enthusiastically

promoted entrepreneurship, its citizens were being rebuked for avarice by the church. Eyre, a multi-faceted Tudor businessman, acquires wealth in two ways: he sells many shoes (since a war is going on during the time of the play, perhaps he is even a military supplier), and on a tip, he makes a shrewd investment in a ship's cargo that, because of political intrigue, is uncollectible by the owner-merchant. Thus, Simon's wealth springs in part from another person's downfall. Because Tudor society was struggling with the emergence of a wealthy merchant class, it is conceivable that, just as Simon's business acumen was expressed in different activities, so too could Simon's increased fortunes be perceived in different moral lights. To some this increase might have represented the moral deterioration implicit in business dealings, and to others simply the turn of Fortune's Wheel and the reward waiting for anyone who could act decisively and take risks. The Elizabethan world view contained a Platonic dualism in which "the spiritual continually interpenetrated the material and there were a thousand correspondences between the two."[25]

The question of how to make money without losing one's soul was already a dilemma for the Tudor ambitious. The struggle of conscience over the acquisition of money is expressed through Margery, however, not through the real money-maker, Simon. Alexander Leggatt correctly points out

that Simon's ego and ambitions are played down by presenting Margery as the one who acquires new airs with new wealth and Simon as the doer of good works in providing a public banquet.[26] There is more, however, to be said about the *purposes served* by Margery's attitude of superiority: she can be openly criticized while the economic system cannot. In addition, in Margery's conceited actions and the apprentices' mockery of her grand airs, the threat to social cohesion brought about by *personal* advancement can be contained--diminished, even--by those left behind.

The contradictory messages about her own economic status that Margery receives from her husband reflect the mixed economic messages sent throughout Tudor society: she is to remember her place in the hierarchy while at the same time she must support the concept of upward mobility. Many of the economic "messages" are imbedded in raucous exchanges between Margery and the apprentices and between Margery and Simon, the smoke of the battle of the sexes thus screening economic and social tensions.

One of these scenes in particular clearly exposes underlying economic issues. As he has done earlier in the play, Eyre steps in to stop the squabbling between his apprentices and his wife; in this scene, however, by addressing Margery, he places *both* her and his apprentices in an economic context, with the apprentices clearly closer

to his own status:

> Eyre. Stay, my fine knaves, you arms of my trade, you pillars of my profession. What, shall a tittle-tattle's words make you forsake Simon Eyre?--Avaunt, kitchen stuff! Rip, you brown-bread Tannikin, out of my sight! Move me not! Have not I ta'en you from selling tripes in Eastcheap, and set you in my shop, and made you hail-fellow with Simon Eyre, the shoemaker? And now do you deal thus with my journeymen? (III.i.62-68)

Eyre describes his marital relationship as having "set" Margery in his shop and made her his "hail-fellow" in much the same way Simon might remind an ungrateful apprentice of his good fortune in having been elevated to work at the shoemaker's trade. Margery might have been elevated to a wife, but her status as a woman can keep her lower than Eyre's journeymen. Simon's scolding contrasts, however, with his view of Margery a few lines later as the personal, supportive partner who confirms his good fortune. As Simon puts on his silk and satin Alderman's gown for the first time, the couples' words reveal a more intimate relationship:

> Eyre. How say'st thou, Maggy, am I not brisk? Am I not fine?
> Margery. Fine? By my troth, sweetheart, very fine! By my troth, I never liked thee so well in my life, sweetheart; but let that pass. I warrant, there be many women in the city have not such handsome husbands, but only for their apparel; but let that pass too.(III.i.121-26)

As Eyre's position becomes more elevated--and more in the public eye--it becomes clear that Margery functions as

the "lightning rod" for society's uneasiness with ambition. In asides to the audience, the apprentices ridicule Margery's pleasure at becoming Lady Sheriff upon Simon's elevation to the post:

> Firk. O rare, your excellence is full of eloquence. (Aside.) How like a new cart-wheel my dame speaks, and she looks like an old musty ale-bottle going to scalding.
> .....
> Margery. Art thou acquainted with never a farthingale-maker, nor a French hood-maker? I must enlarge my bum, ha, ha! How shall I look in a hood, I wonder! Perdy, oddly, I think.
>
> Hodge (aside). As a cat out of a pillory.--Very well, I warrant you, mistress. (III.iv.11-42)

Margery distributes silver coins to the apprentices in celebration, and they accept the money while sneering at the giver. The three-pence she gives the men was used for maundy money, not in general circulation, so Margery's generosity mimics a sovereign dispensing alms[27]--actions that indicate her own sense of importance but which are inappropriate to her class. It is revealing that Simon, who comes home to change into his new robe of office and is extremely pleased with himself, receives none of his apprentices' mockery--it is, after all, the money he has gained from the labor of the apprentices that Margery has distributed to them; and it is the success of this shoemaking enterprise that has prompted the city authorities to tap Simon for official duties. In fact, he brings Margery the French hood she craves, while

reveling in his own symbol of affluence: "See here, my Maggy, a chain, a gold chain for Simon Eyre. I shall make thee a lady; here's a French hood for thee; on with it, on with it!" (III.iv.87-89).

The apprentices obviously relate to their master's success from a perspective that, in relation to Margery, engenders disdain. To the men, Simon's affluence holds out the promise of their future prosperity when they themselves become masters. In a belief system that rewards hard work with riches, Margery is a parasite, someone who has benefitted from the sweat of another's brow. It does not matter that the social mores do not allow Margery to learn a trade and open her own shop; and that she is forced, as is every woman, to entrust her very existence to the hands of a husband who will provide for her and her children, or who may, with impunity, keep her in abject poverty. Margery, as the indulged wife, and *because* she is a marginalized woman, can be criticized while Simon, the real money-maker, cannot. The play diffuses society's tension over determining the "goodness" of money, therefore, by praising Simon and condemning his wife. As long as there is hope that others will rise as Simon does, the acquisition of wealth is good--a sentiment present even today in capitalist societies. For her own protection, however, Margery *must* cling to each rung on the ladder of Simon's political and financial success,

being used either to push her husband up or to cushion his moral missteps.

Another city woman in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* whose existence depends upon--and is defined by--the financial success of a man is Rose, the only child of Sir Roger Oteley, the Lord Mayor when the play opens. Oteley is a few steps above Eyre on the economic ladder, and he has already obtained the political status which is bestowed on Eyre only at the play's end. Ranked a gentleman--whose *source* of money is not a focus in the play--Oteley represents the money-maker who has arrived at the top of the Tudor social scale for commercial citizenry. He occupies the vital point in the triangular coalition of crown, aristocracy, and gentry that Elizabeth promoted. At a more personal level, however, Oteley's money sets him up to be used by aristocrats, even as it provides him with the opportunity to join them. His entree into the upper classes is provided by his virgin daughter, Rose; for, in this social system of patriarchal power infused with economic advantages, the answer to the question of who will call Rose wife also answers the question of who will gain Oteley's money.

Peers in financial difficulties began pursuing city heiresses around the end of the 1500's and were soon courted themselves by wealthy city merchants eager to elevate their children by marrying them into the aristocracy.[28] In

Dekker's play, however, the opening lines reveal a wealthy gentleman and an aristocrat who are not comfortable with these "opportunities" to cross class rank. Oteley and the Earl of Lincoln are discussing the relationship between the young lovers, Rose and Lacy, the earl's nephew:

> Lincoln. Why, my lord mayor, think you it then a shame,
> To join a Lacy with an Oteley's name?
>
> Lord Mayor. Too mean is my poor girl for his high birth;
> Poor citizens must not with courtiers wed,
> Who will in silks and gay apparel spend
> More in one year than I am worth, by far:
> Therefore your honor need not doubt my girl.
> (I.i.10-16)

Neither man wants his relative to marry the other's because each thinks the marriage would be beneath his own family's status. Oteley's speech is full of hidden meanings that reveal his disdain for the aristocracy in the guise of dutifully acknowledging its ascendancy over him: his daughter is "too mean" for Lacy's "high birth," but if citizens do wed courtiers they face financial ruin from the courtiers' spending on "silks and gay apparel." In a time when one of the hallmarks of peerage was lavish spending and elaborate hospitality,[29] Oteley's remark reveals a clear distinction in class values: Oteley's ethic of thrift and hard work defines the Lacys' "natural" lifestyle as wasteful.

Only when Lacy is forced to abandon the idleness of

traveling to "countries for experience" and learns the shoemaking trade to pay his debts does Oteley begrudgingly note: "And yet your cousin Rowland [Lacy] might do well,/ Now he hath learned an occupation" (I.i.44-45). Even if we choose to view *The Shoemaker's Holiday* as "a realistic portrait only of Elizabethan middle-class dreams," rather than "a realistic portrait of Elizabethan middle-class life"[30] it is evident that the "middle-class dream" includes not only upward mobility, but the breaking down of the social hierarchy so that the aristocracy appreciates and validates the work of middle-class "hands."

The Earl of Lincoln, however, sees his nephew's new skills as a "descent," and his language also is replete with class references and hierarchical prerogatives. In speaking to Oteley, Lincoln's warning about his nephew's behavior seems democratically inspired: "Take heed, my lord, advise you what you do!/ A verier unthrift lives not in the world,/ Than is my cousin" (I.i.17-19). But when he addresses his nephew, since "now here are none but friends," his pride in lineage and his own disdain for social climbers is clear:

> Lincoln. I would not have you cast an amorous eye
> Upon so mean a project as the love
> Of a gay, wanton, painted citizen.
> I know, this churl even in the height of scorn
> Doth hate the mixture of his blood with thine.
> I pray thee, do thou so! Remember, coz,
> What honorable fortunes wait on thee:
> Increase the king's love, which so brightly shines,
> And gilds thy hopes. I have no heir but thee,--

> And yet not thee, if with a wayward spirit
> Thou start from the true bias of my love. (I.i.81-91)

Lincoln reaffirms his nephew's--and his class's--connection to the monarchy; Lacy's future lies in the "increase [in] the king's love" not in trade money. Yet in fact, the English did marry across class lines, and both classes gained something in the union: money for the aristocracy and titles for the commoners.[31] The wealthy were not immune to rising inflation; "the increasing cost of everything which contributed to the aristocratic lifestyle was the real drain."[32] Marriages that infused new wealth into ancient titles moved society out of the feudal age, but their capacity to provide social advancement jarred the established order. It is not difficult, therefore, to see the advantage for Dekker in representing Lacy and Rose's marriage in the romantic context of "love conquers all": the social disruption caused by the issue of crossing class lines could be diminished when given a romantic focus. And, since Rose is the prize in this class and economic contest, it is vital that she cooperate in this effort to maintain social unity. Her willingness to "marry for love"--even the love of a penniless aristocrat--therefore, resolves any issue of victimization for Dekker's audience.

But just how much Rose and real life city heiresses are pawns in this larger social struggle among patriarchal

powers is revealed in the words of the men around her. Lincoln, in advising Lacy not to become entangled with the Oteleys, calls Sir Roger a "churl" but hurls the most damaging invective towards the daughter: he describes Rose as "a gay, wanton, painted citizen." By using words that describe a whore, Lincoln insults Rose's morality, and attacks her social--and economic--worth as expressed in her status as a virgin. Lincoln's words attack Rose's virtue and they voice the underlying patriarchal fear of cuckoldry: an "heir's" paternity can never be proved beyond the virtue of the mother. In this aristocrat's world view, Lacy not only lowers his status but risks the possibility of tainting his lineage by pursuing Rose.

Rose, however, can be accused of tainting her own family line if she gives her body to the "wrong" man, someone who is of a lower status than she. In fact, her father's denunciation is swift and complete when he thinks that she has run off to marry a shoemaker:

> Lord Mayor. A Fleming butter-box, a shoemaker!
> Will she forget her birth, requite my care
> With such ingratitude? Scorned she young Hammon,
> To love a honnikin, a needy knave?
> Well, let her fly, I'll not after her,
> Let her starve, if she will; she's none of mine.
> (IV.v.47-52)

Believing his daughter has destroyed her social and economic standing with this "ingratitude" for his guidance, Oteley, the astute businessman, moves quickly to cut his losses. But

his anger at his daughter's choice in husbands has an undercurrent of snobbery that is unsettling in a play that seems to promote the honor of hard work and upward mobility. Some of the sting in Oteley's class-conscious words is eased, however, since the words are aimed at a foreigner. By disowning his daughter, Oteley not only protects his name, he also protects his money from falling into the hands of a "Fleming butter-box," the Dutch shoemaker Hans--who is actually Lacy in disguise. Tapping into the Elizabethan sense of nationalism, Dekker again refocuses the real issue of class, this time as an issue of "Otherness." Oteley is free to be outraged--and the audience is free to sympathize--since his daughter has run away with a *foreign* tradesman.

A great deal of Oteley's anger stems from the fact that a few scenes earlier Rose rejected the man he felt suitable for her: Hammon, "a proper gentleman./ A citizen by birth, fairly allied..." (II.v.74-75). Hammon and Rose flirt with each other from the very first moment they meet, but ultimately Rose rejects the "gentleman" she suspects of being merely infatuated with her, not truly in love. In the following exchange it appears that Rose controls her own destiny:

> Lord Mayor. ---How now, both pull back?
> What means this girl?
>
> Rose. I mean to live a maid.
>
> Hammon (aside). But not to die one; pause, ere

that be said.

Lord Mayor. Will you still cross me, still be obstinate?

Hammon. Nay, chide her not, my lord, for doing well;
If she can live an happy virgin's life,
'Tis far more blessed than to be a wife.

Rose. Say, sir, I cannot: I have made a vow,
Whoever be my husband, 'tis not you. (III.iii.36-46)

In reality, Rose's declaration to keep herself for another is tenable only because Hammon relinquishes his courtship of her. Rose's defiance is resolved by father and suitor, not by father and daughter. Oteley is quite willing to use his parental authority to satisfy Hammon: "If you will have her, I'll make her agree." Hammon, however, responds: "Enforced love is worse than hate to me" (III.iii.61-2). There is no doubt that it is Hammon who has the power to determine if he and Rose will marry; luckily for Rose, he decides she is not worth the trouble.

Hammon admits his real love interest in an aside that reveals another of Dekker's skillful maneuvers, this time around the troubling social issue of arranged marriage:

Hammon.(Aside.) There is a wench keeps shop in the Old Change.
To her will I; it is not wealth I seek,
I have enough, and will prefer her love
Before the world.--(Aloud.) My good lord mayor, adieu.
Old love for me, I have no luck with new.
(III.iii.61-67)

Hammon's declaration for the wench that "keeps shop in the Old Change" not only validates Rose's suspicions about Hammon's sincerity, but gives the impression that *both* young people have defeated patriarchal authority to pursue their own happiness. If we read Hammon's words a little more closely, however, we find the real misfortune that Rose has escaped: to be married against her will for her money. Hammon's "noble" statement, "it is not wealth I seek" is undermined with his concluding thought, "I have enough." This *disavowal* of interest in monetary gain is only a reminder of the more customary pursuit--and fate--of the daughters of the urban rich. Not surprisingly, while Hammon exits the stage to go to his old love, Rose is conveyed "Straight to th' Old Ford," where her father vows to keep her "straight enough"--until he and another suitor can come to an agreement.

The "wench" that Hammon flies to is Jane, the city woman on the lowest rung of the social and economic scale, and the woman most vulnerable to both social and economic pressures. Dekker clearly uses the sufferings of Jane and her shoemaker husband, Ralph, to reveal the cost war exacts from the socially insignificant: they are separated when Ralph is conscripted; mistakenly reported dead, Ralph returns from the war maimed; the couple is finally reunited just as Jane is ready to marry another.

When Jane loses her husband to the military she also gains a certain amount of autonomy. In contrast to Margery's and Rose's lives as appendages to men, Jane's attempts to establish an autonomous existence reveal another facet in the marginalized lives of Tudor women--lives which many men perceived as functioning only to embellish their own existence.

Jane gains her autonomy early in the comedy, but there is no doubt that she is also a loving wife. The play opens with a rather humorous scene in which Simon Eyre and his household accompany Ralph when he reports for duty, and Eyre attempts to secure Ralph's discharge with a bribe of a seven-year supply of shoes. Eyre and the apprentices cajole the officers while Jane, weeping, pleads, "O let him stay, else I shall be undone." And, when all efforts on his behalf have failed, Ralph implores the Eyres:

> Ralph. I must [go] because there is no remedy;
> But, gentle master and my loving dame,
> As you have always been a friend to me,
> So in my absence think upon my wife. (I.i.216-20)

Ralph asks his master and mistress to "think" upon Jane's welfare and offer her the protection of "family" that he will no longer be able to provide. The dangers from which Jane--and any woman--needs protection have been alluded to in earlier lines in this same scene: sexual and economic exploitation. When Jane somewhat bitterly asks: "Ay, ay,

you bid him go; What shall I do/When he is gone?" the apprentice Firk answers: "Why, be doing with me or my fellow Hodge; be not idle." And Simon Eyre responds:

> Let me see thy hand, Jane. This fine hand, this white hand, these pretty fingers must spin, must card, must work; work, you bombast-cotton-candle-quean, work for your living, with a pox to you. (I.i.225-32)

To some extent Firk's and Simon's comments to Jane can be interpreted as simple raillery--they are said in front of Ralph, after all. But, there are enough other double entendres in the play to give the phrases "be doing with me" and "you bombast-cotton-candle-quean" more than a suggestion of sexual overtures, and to imply that, for Jane, "work" can be defined as prostitution, and the "pox" which comes with it.

After this opening scene, it is not until Act III that we learn what has actually happened to Jane since she was separated from her husband's protection. Ralph returns from the war and is devastated to learn not only that has Jane left the Eyre household, but also that no one knows for sure where she is in London. In the following exchange, which focuses on Ralph's grief and Margery's insensitivity, the strange ambiguities in Jane's departure lie unaddressed and unexplained:

> Ralph. Yet all this while I hear not of my Jane.
>
> Margery. O Ralph, your wife--perdy, we know not

> what's become of her. She was here a while, and *because she was married, grew more stately than became her*, I checked her, and so forth; away she flung, never returned, nor did bye nor bah; and, Ralph, you know, "ka me, ka thee."
> .....
> And so, indeed, we heard not of her, but I hear she lives in London; but let that pass. *If she had wanted, she might have opened her case to me or my husband*, or to any of my men; I am sure, there's not any of them, perdy, but would have done her good to his power.
> .....
> And so, as I said--but, Ralph, why dost thou weep? Thou knowest that naked we came out of our mother's womb, and naked we must return; and, therefore, thank God for all things. (III.iv.99-118) (my italics)

Margery's allusion to Jane's inappropriate "stateliness" is clearly connected to Jane's status as a married woman--a status which resulted in Jane overstepping some bounds of propriety. Until this point in the play, however, there is nothing to indicate that Jane is anything but a frightened, meek young woman. What changed with Ralph's departure was not Jane, most likely, but others' perception of her: she was now "wife" in name only, with no man to protect her or to discipline her. It is easy to envision that in this "unchecked" state, Jane assumed some behavior that was actually permissible to her only while Ralph was in the household.

One of Jane's presumptions could easily have been that she was truly a member of the Eyre household. The play often alludes to the fact that Simon Eyre's entrepreneurial spirit provides work for the apprentices and the serving

maids, and his enterprise provides food and lodging for them in an extended family atmosphere. But it is just as obvious that the cornerstone of Eyre's extended family is hard work and knowing one's place. His joviality towards his men is based in his exhortation "To work, my fine knave, to work." His grumblings that "They wallow in the fat brewis of my bounty, and /lick the crumbs of my table, yet will not rise to see my/ walks cleansed," (II.iii.2-3) is a clear indication that Simon expects a return for his "bounty" and that his relationship with the apprentices is an exchange of "goods": the master's protection for the income workers generate. As a result, Jane, whose status as an apprentice's wife makes her part of the "family" but no real contributor to the shop's income, can be cast out on a vague charge once there is no one to produce goods to replace the "bounty" she consumes.[33] Jane is not just a drag on the household economy, however. The fact that she is out of the reach of her husband's supervision represents a threat to the patriarchal running of the household and is, ironically, a threat to Jane herself. Even though Simon is master of the house, there is still some ambiguity as to the amount of control he has over another man's wife and, therefore, Simon's authority can be compromised. In addition, he must deal with the potential discontent of the other women under his roof if they witness Jane thriving independently. In

either case, the result is a threat to social order.

And for Jane, the lack of male protection could become, tragically, the obverse of the lack of male supervision. Firk's and Simon's comments about Jane's possible "work," and Simon's characterizations of the women in his hierarchial household as "powder-beef queans" and "fat midriff-swag-belly whores," imply that the men are acutely aware that Jane's sexuality is also unsupervised by her husband. Jane's hasty departure from the household--with neither "bye nor bah"--is understandable if she was trying to escape from sexual molestation, and her aloofness can be viewed as an expression of her fear and attempts at self-protection. The possibility that Jane assumed that she would be safe from sexual harassment in the Eyre household because she was Ralph's wife gives an achingly sharp edge to the vagueness of Margery's charge: "and because she was married, grew more stately than became her." And, from the same perspective, we can understand why Jane could not have even "if she had wanted," to "have opened her case" to Simon *or* Margery.

It is also hardly a coincidence that Margery is the one to voice the criticism directed at Jane. Although he sent Ralph off with the exhortation to "crack me the crowns of the French knaves," Simon is absent in the scene when Ralph returns, and it is left to Margery to tell Ralph the bad

news about his wife. And, just as the apprentices' criticism of Margery masks the period's economic tensions, so Margery's criticism of Jane masks hierarchical and patriarchal struggles. What better way to affirm patriarchy than by presenting one woman criticizing another for not conforming to patriarchal standards? Neither Simon nor the apprentices have to defeat an open challenge to their male authority--Margery does it for them. And in doing so, she gives the audience an opportunity to shift its focus from the power of patriarchy to her own "callousness."

For whatever reason she leaves the shoemakers, Jane is compelled, ultimately, to fend for herself in the teeming city of London. Unlike a woman of the upper class, she has no manor house in which to wait for the return of her soldier husband. Without Ralph's income, she must now earn her own bread, and she finds work in a sempster's shop, doing the lowest tasks of cloth production. During this early capitalist period, English women were relegated to carding and spinning wool, while the knitting was done by the master and apprentices in the shop. Many women worked as spinners, and upwards of twenty women could be employed by an individual weaver; this situation left little chance for women to demand decent wages.[34]

In finding work Jane might have saved herself from an entrepreneurship in prostitution, but her meager existence

does not protect her from being targeted by wealthier men. Her work is something which the young city gallant, Hammon, cannot take seriously. His plea of "Good sweet, leave work a little while; let's play" is answered by Jane's realistic, "I cannot live by keeping holiday," which Hammon easily resolves with, "I'll pay you for the time which shall be lost" (IV.i.38-40). Offering to pay for Jane's time certainly has a ring of procurement to it; Hammon sees Jane's "product" not as the goods she sells but as her self.

Coming on the heels of being rejected by Rose, and given society's rigid class distinctions, Hammon's love for Jane must be viewed with suspicion. Jane would be susceptible to Hammon's attentions, perhaps, because of her difficult life, but she resists his advances--and exposes their baseness--by declaring the measure of her love for Ralph: "Whilst he lives, his I live, be it ne'er so poor,/ And rather be his wife than a king's whore." (IV.i.95-6)

Hammon succeeds in his wooing only when Jane believes Ralph has been killed. But when Ralph unexpectedly appears moments before Jane and Hammon's wedding, Jane is overjoyed, and Hammon's only appeal is that she not "break her faith" with him. Hammon quickly realizes his situation--and only influence--and offers Ralph money for Jane. Whatever illusions we hold about Hammon's love and about Jane's autonomy are shattered in this scene at the church door.

While Hammon's offer might seem crass, it still is not out of place, since everything else in the play has been bargained for.[35]

But there is more than bargaining taking place even though Hammon says to Ralph:

> Good fellows hear me speak; and, honest Ralph,
> Whom I have injured most by loving Jane,
> Mark what I offer thee: here in fair gold
> Is twenty pound, I'll give it for thy Jane.
> If this content thee not, thou shalt have more.
> (V.ii.137-141)

The additional class distinction gives Hammon, a wealthy gentleman, this freedom to extend such an offensive offer *for* Jane *to* Ralph. When earlier rejected by Rose, Hammon offered no price to win Rose over. Money doesn't hold such power for an already wealthy household, and Hammon acknowledges his defeat when declaring he wants no "enforced love" from Rose. Hammon has pressured Jane to accept him (so much for repudiating enforced love), but when Ralph returns Jane's autonomy disappears, and Hammon deals with the one who has the ultimate proprietorship of Jane.

Ralph challenges Hammon's class prerogatives when he answers, "Hammon, dost thou think a shoemaker/ is so base to be a bawd to his own wife for commodity?" (V.ii.146-47). This obviously *is* what Hammon thinks, but his apology and ultimate gift of the money take the sordidness out of this scene--if we can believe the vow of such a fickle young man:

"Since I have failed of her, during my life,/ I vow no woman else shall be my wife" (V.ii.155-56). Again, such total moral conversion and self-denial seem to be offering another "happy ending" to shift the focus away from Jane's inability to protect herself and from the impossibility of her retaining her autonomy.

Jane's vulnerability to abandonment and whoredom, real as it was, is only alluded to in this comedy. Being a married woman and "belonging" to Ralph, Jane is not free to sell even herself. Hammon knows this when he appeals to Ralph, not Jane, at the church door. Hammon must negotiate with the person in possession of what he wants to buy. The negotiations over Jane's body and selfhood proclaim her sister to women who more openly were commercial goods in Tudor England.

The representations of the lives of Margery, Rose, and Jane set the stage for the portrayals of women during the next sixty years in English dramatic comedy. The following chapters will examine, in more detail and in an extended time frame, dramatic representations of women as instruments for economic discourse, as the commerce of patriarchy, and as individuals struggling for autonomy. Examining these dramas brings the "scattered lives of Elizabethan women" together in a way that expands our understanding about what it means--and what it has meant--to be Woman.

NOTES

1. Woolf, 43-44.

2. Woolf, 45.

3. Adrienne Rich introduces the concept of re-visioning in the essay "When We Dead Awaken," in *On Lies, Secrets and Silence*. She considers the process, however, "more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival" for women in a male-dominated society(35). During the feminist movement in the 1970's, this same sense of a life and death struggle for identity is expressed in Judith Fetterley's call to women to become "resisting readers." Although Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* addresses the misogyny she sees inherent in much of American literature, her strategy is valuable in approaching any text. Indeed, re-visioning is possible only if one first has resisted the text, as Fetterley describes it, by questioning the values and assumptions the literature wishes to keep hidden--the universal "truths" it presents, the behavior it calls "natural."

4. Fergusson, 11.

5. Stone, *Crisis*, 5.

6. Ochshorn, 94.

7. Gassner and Green, 481.

8. Gassner and Green, 479.

9. Cohen, 187.

10. Cohen, 190.

11. Youings, 384.

12. Bristol, 39.

13. Weimann, 24.

14. Marcus, 7.

15. Marcus, 4.

16. Weimann, 170.

17. Weimann, 53.

18. Paster, *Idea of the City*, 6.

19. Gassner and Green, 479.

20. Gassner and Green, 481.

21. Roberts, 316.

22. Youings, 333.

23. Youings, 333.

24. Roberts, 297.

25. Roberts, 311.

26. Leggatt, 16.

27. Gassner and Green, 513. The editors cite "H. Spencer" for the footnote which describes this type of coin and its usage.

28. Stone, *Crisis*, 631. Stone recounts the efforts of Alderman Sir William Cockayne around this time who bought his son an Irish viscountcy and orchestrated his five daughters' "potential" so that between them they married three earls, a viscount, and a baronet.

29. Stone, *Crisis*, 48. Stone also points out that there was some benefit to the poor, however, in this system of free spending as a way to indicate great wealth. Feeding the poor, especially in times of famine, was a common practice among the peerage. One has to think that the aristocrats' lack of concern for the causes of poverty, even as they tried to alleviate it on a personal level, indicates their acceptance of the natural order of hierarchy. This contrasts with the generosity of the urban wealthy who gave to create public works, such as hospitals.

30. Kastan, 325.

31. Thomson, 174.

32. Youings, 331.

33. Breight, 11.

34. Dominguez, 37-8. In this article Dominguez examines the way Dekker uses the characters of Margery and Jane to dramatize the patriarchal guild system that benefitted from

women's work as a "major contribution to the Renaissance city," but never openly acknowledged that contribution.

35. Mortenson, 251.

Chapter II

Monied Women: Widows and Whores

Money seldom changes hands on the Jacobean or Restoration stage, yet the periods' comedic plots humorously twist and turn on concerns about cash: who has it, who needs it, how to get more of it, how to keep someone else from getting more of it. City comedy plots do not merely focus on acquiring silver and gold; they also expose characters' maneuverings to secure the status and power that money bestows. Even though the procurement of capital is almost exclusively a male prerogative, men's anxieties about acquiring power and wealth are revealed through city comedies' portrayals of women with money.

A woman with money in her pocket is not a twentieth-century phenomenon, but a woman with money and *autonomy* is. The course of women's lives has always been determined by money--through dowries, inheritances, and even sometimes their own earnings--but it is only relatively recently that women have had *real control* over money, and as a result, have acquired power over their own and others' lives. Social conventions in early modern and Restoration England prevented women from becoming an active element in forging the new middle class; and their few sources for acquiring

personal wealth indicate the distinctive position of monied women. They deviated from the periods' prescribed roles for women because money gave them independence and power when society valued submissiveness and humility in them. Therefore, these women, because of their money, are disadvantaged in different ways from poor women and are vulnerable targets for the community's criticism. In addition to the yearly Shrove Tuesday attacks on brothels--"one of the earliest and most enduring sports on London's Bankside"[1]--literary whorebashing in drama and religious tracts operated as measures of social condemnation, albeit verbal rather than corporal.

Ironically, then, the respectable widow and the reprobate whore form an economic sisterhood in that they both control money and are not themselves under the direct authority of a man. Their financial status is a result of having connections with men--a husband or a satisfied customer--but their autonomy stems from the fact that while the money remains, the man has gone. Because their monied status comes from the *absence* of a man, patriarchal society perceives these women as potential threats to social order and to traditional gender hierarchy: they have *both* money and control.

This is not to say, however, that the control--or autonomy--that the whore and widow acquire is without severe limitations, both social and economic. There is great

social pressure for the widow to remarry and the whore to reform, and economic realities are also harsh: the whore has limited time to turn her youth and beauty to good account; the widow has to have the managerial skills to run a shop or to manage an estate. In addition, there are always authoritative men in these women's lives (fathers, uncles, brothers, sheriffs, pimps) ready to crush female independence. Nevertheless, patriarchy perceives the "unabsorbed" widow and whore as having slipped from the grasp of direct male supervision.

By stepping out of prescribed cultural roles and by becoming empowered through money, the periods' monied women also mirror the movements of enterprising men who acquire wealth. As a result, these women could be viewed as double threats to society: they were tangibly empowered women and also symbolically reminders of unchecked male financial autonomy. And, in a patriarchal society that promotes individual economic enterprise, it is *male* upward mobility that threatens the class structure and creates tension. Part of this tension arises from the fact that the power brokers and policy makers in society promote economic development but, at the same time, resist disruption of the class hierarchy. Direct attacks on the actions of entrepreneurial men who were adding to the riches of the nation, even as they jostled for elevated status, only placed additional strain on the social fabric. From the

nascent capitalism of early modern England to the avid trading in stocks and bonds during the Restoration, money provides the purchasing power to by-pass the traditional social hierarchy and, therefore, to create social disorder.

In order to function while threatened by potential social and economic upheaval, English society adopted a "doublemindedness"[2]: professing a belief in the benefits of change while, at the same time, clinging to the status quo for some sense of stability. One of the ways this doublemindedness manifested itself, I argue, is in the displacement of society's anger at and criticism of entrepreneurial interlopers onto "safer," weaker targets: the widow and whore. In the portrayals of monied women, therefore, anxieties about monied men can be aired.

Jacobean drama stages transactions in sexual pleasure--one of the services that the Jacobean market economy offered for sale in early modern England, especially in London, the center of capitalist opportunity for moneylenders, merchants, and tradesmen. The market in prostitution expanded with the creation of new profit centers, although the sale of women's bodies was most often a result of the poverty, not the riches, created by capitalism. London was flooded each year with several thousand young people: second sons, servants, laborers, the unemployed, and these "masterless men" became a focus of anxiety about crime and disorder.[3] Women of the countryside, who had enjoyed a

valued position when helping their husbands in cottage industries, joined the ranks of displaced workers as their menfolk began to work away from home and "the family wage became the individual wage."[4] They poured into London after the men--often being recruited into prostitution by deals struck between the carrier bringing them to the city and brothel owners.[5]

As the chronicles of urban life, city comedies portray the ambitious London entrepreneur and the wanton London whore as witty characters in humorous plots. Anne Haselkorn identifies two types of prostitutes that are portrayed in Elizabethan and Jacobean city comedies: the courtesan and the common whore, women who plied the same trade but had come to it from very different circumstances.[6]

The common whore belonged to London's common poor. Without the support of her family, and not skilled enough to do the limited work available to women, she sold her body to provide herself with the basic necessities of food and shelter. More reliable than begging, her "work" was motivated by a simple desire to survive.[7] And, just like the other faceless poor--the aged, the mentally ill, the maimed veteran--the common whore was powerless; she was also a social pariah because of her "fallen" state. The period's drama reflects this low status, treating her as a type rather than as an individual; she is either nameless or nicknamed "Moll" or "Doll" to indicate her trade, not her

personal identity,[8] and she is seldom of major importance to the plot.

The few plays that focus on an individual--and independent--courtesan, on the other hand, articulate the unease felt about empowered women and entrepreneurial men. As depicted in the drama, the courtesan usually began her life in more comfortable circumstances than the common whore. She was often apprenticed into the trade through a seduction: by a gentleman who promised marriage or through the schemes of a pimp or bawd who put her into a compromising position. Knowing that society will never treat her as other than a fallen woman while she remains a courtesan, she aims to do more than survive; she aims to rise to the top of the "falling trade" as a mistress or even to escape it as a wife.[9] In comparison to her destitute sisters, the courtesan possesses some control over her life; she plots and plans as well as reacts to her circumstances.

In the same way, the drama shows her affecting the outcome of the plot or influencing the actions of others--as do the courtesans in Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Honest Whore* (1604) and in John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605). The courtesan claims her place on the stage as an individual because of what she represents: a woman in control of her sexuality and her life. It is not a condition patriarchal society celebrates, but one it seeks to undermine and contain. Not only do the Dekker/ Middleton

and Marston plays demonstrate different ways in which Jacobean patriarchy attempts to control the whore, the plays also reveal different ways in which the Jacobean power bases of religion and class hierarchy try to manage *male* ambition and individual enterprise.[10] The titles of *The Honest Whore* and *The Dutch Courtesan* acknowledge the autonomy of the central female characters, Bellafront and Franceschina, but in reality the comedies examine *two* socially disruptive powers: autonomous female sexuality and the moral and class instability created by capitalism. And, as research on theater audiences has shown, both courtesans and wealthy merchants would be in attendance to receive--or disavow--the dramatic analysis of their daily behavior.[11]

Set in Milan but clearly depicting life in London, the plot of *The Honest Whore* revolves around the reformation of the courtesan Bellafront, the uniting of the lovers Hipolito and Infelice, and the battle of wits between the "patient" linen draper Candido and his exasperated wife Viola. Bellafront epitomizes the successful courtesan: she is beautiful, lives independently, employs a servant boy, and entertains several young gentlemen--all potential or current customers--in an erotically charged "salon" where wine flows and the latest gossip is passed on. As the young gallant Fluello describes a raucous previous night's supper, there is no doubt that Bellafront is famous and desired, just as there is no doubt that she is well aware of her worth:

> **Fluello: No faith Coz; none but Cocks, signior Malauolta drunke to thee.**
>
> **Bellafront: O, a pure beagle; that horse-leach there?**
>
> **Fluello: And the knight, Sir Oliver Lollio, swore he wold bestow a taffata petticoate on thee, but to breake his fast with thee.**
>
> **Bellafront: With me! Ile choake him then, hang him Mole-catcher, its the dreamingst snotty-nose..... this sweete Oliver, will eate Mutton till he be ready to burst, but the leane-iawde slave wil not pay for the scraping of his trencher. (II.i.91-109)**

Seduced and now a "Puncke at fifteene," Bellafront has turned her victimization into opportunity to gain material wealth. Like any shrewd entrepreneur, she is at the top of her profession because she saw and acted on opportunities that perhaps other women in her predicament would not have seen--or been able to carry out. Yet this woman, who demands full payment for her desirability, speedily and utterly rejects her whoredom a few scenes later. What brings about this reformation? Her love of Hipolito--and his rejection--forces Bellafront to admit to the wickedness of her life. Matheo, Bellafront's original seducer, brings his friend Hipolito to Bellafront's salon in order to relieve Hipolito's sorrow over the reported death of his sweetheart, Infelice. Even though grieving, Hipolito is sexually attracted to Bellafront and implies that he wants to be her lover--only to turn cruelly on her when she responds with a confession of real love:

Hipolito: But would you let me play Matheo's part?

Bellafront: What part?

Hipolito: Why, imbrace you: dally with you, kisse:
Faith tell me, will you leave him and love me?
.....

Bellafront: Matheo! thats true, but if youle
beleeve
My honest tongue, mine eyes no sooner met you,
But they conveid and lead you to my heart.

Hipolito: Oh, you cannot faine with me, why, I
know Lady,
This is the common fashion of you all,
To hooke in a kind gentleman, and then
Abuse his coyne, conveying it to your lover,
And in the end you shew him a french trick,
And so you leave him, that a coach may run
Between his legs for bredth.

Bellafront: O by my soule!
Not I: therein ile prove an honest whore,
In being true to one, and to no more.
(II.i.255-311)

Amazingly, Hipolito rejects what he asks for (exclusive possession of Bellafront's body) when she pledges it to him with her love. Hipolito will not trust a whore's promise to become "honest" and in the next one hundred lines denounces her and all other whores as the "miserablest Creatures breathing." Bellafront is devastated by Hipolito's hatred and accepts his measure of her, saying: "I am foule: Harlot! I, that's the spot that taints my soule. . . " (II.i.442-44). As Anne Haselkorn points out, the Puritan desire to reform the sinner is one of the ideological foundations of this play.[1-] Therefore the supreme irony of this scene can only be attributed to Dekker and Middleton's dramatic and

dialectic purposes: Bellafront must be given a reason to reform (she recognizes her unworthiness), but the Puritan sense of social order must be preserved by denying whores the possibility of social elevation and complete cleansing through marriage.

Bellafront does marry another by the end of the play, but until the moment that Hipolito is reunited with his love Infelice, Bellafront never stops trying to be worthy of the young gallant who cruelly has condemned her: she writes him poetry that vows her reformation, dismisses her servant, sends away all her customers, and denounces a bawd who comes to offer a wealthy new gentleman client. Falling back on Dekker's frequent use of a fairy tale optimism to resolve moral tensions, Bellafront reveals no inner struggles about her decision. She does not rail at Hipolito's audacity in criticizing her after having made the initial sexual approach; she expresses no fears about becoming destitute and voices no concern about how she will live if she rejects her livelihood--presumably a major concern since the financial security of a "good" marriage is unavailable to her. She focuses only on becoming worthy in Hipolito's eyes and gladly gives up material goods for a spiritual reformation. She becomes, for all intents and purposes, the virtuous Christian, a Mary Magdalene who has heeded the call to seek divine treasures in places of worldly pleasures. The whore's life and reformation, therefore, contain the

elements of *mankind's* miserable condition: a deep-seated sinfulness (once a woman enters into whoredom its stain can never be erased); love for one that is purer (Hipolito is not without sin, but she is still unworthy of his love); correction of behavior (she hopes to earn Hipolito's love by mending her ways); proselytizing to the unenlightened (denounced, the bawd Mistress Fingerlock wonders how it is that Bellafront has "growne so holy, so pure, so honest"). But while Bellafront becomes the sanctified Puritan, Hipolito is no Jacobean Christ, and he never grants her the love she seeks.

Bellafront's conversion is real, however, and represents a cleansing of lust from both the body and from the soul. For, unlike the common whore, the courtesan is not only the fallen woman who trades on her body in order to survive, she is also the successful entrepreneur who *manipulates* others' lust for her greater financial gain. Viewed from this perspective, Dekker and Middleton's Puritan reformation of the courtesan can be seen as a paradigm for the reformation of the Jacobean business*man*.

In the Jacobean economic environment the problem was not that whores were becoming better and more successful merchants, but that capitalism was turning middle-class merchants into whores. Ironically, the Puritan aversion to worldly pleasure promoted a belief in thrift and increased absorption in business[13]--itself a worldly pursuit easily

turned to pleasure for those who are successful at it. Modern sociologists and economists have written that capitalism rationalized greed and that Calvinism (Puritanism) helped both to create and to criticize capitalism.[14] Puritans took a moralistic, feudal-based approach to economic affairs and "the Puritan merchant was consequently subject to almost intolerable psychological pressures as he strove to maximize profits and to conform to ethical doctrines of just price."[15] In other words, successful trade and reasonable profit were a sign of belonging to the Elect; opportunistic greed and manipulation were a sign of whoring for the god Mammon.

Hipolito's initial diatribe against Bellafront, focusing more on the courtesan's ill-gotten wealth than on her lust, reads like a Puritan sermon thundered at the city merchants for whom nothing mattered but making a sale:

> Hipolito: You have no soule,
> That makes you wey so light: heavens treasure
> bought it,
> And halfe a crowne hath sold it:....
> .....
> For gold and sparkling jewels, (if he can)
> Youle let a Jewe get you with christian:
> Be he a Moore, a Tartar, tho his face
> Looke uglier then a dead mans scull,
> Could the divel put on a humane shape,
> If his purse shake out crownes, up then he gets,
> Whores will be rid to hell with golden bits:....
> (II.i.322-342)

And in the same vein, when the bawd, Mistress Lockfinger, points out that these are days of economic opportunity--"it could not be better! gold ynough stirring; choyce of men,

choyce of haire...of beards...of every, every, every thing" --the reformed Bellafront chastises: "thou art basest:..for thou livs't Upon the dregs of Harlots, guard'st the dore, Whilst couples goe to dauncing: O course devill!" (III.ii. 20-39). In a capitalistic economy, bawd and merchant both savor the prospect of increased profit from the increased work of others, whether in a brothel or in a shoemaker's shop.

The Puritan doublemindedness regarding the acquisition of wealth reveals itself both in the play's condemnation of the successful courtesan *and* in its approval of her economic foil: the linen draper Candido. As the prototype of the charitable tradesman, Candido approaches business--indeed life--with one attitude: patience. This umbrella term actually describes Candido's desire to avoid confrontation with his wife and customers, and ultimately says more about Jacobean gender politics than about business acumen.

Viola, Candido's wife, is frustrated with her husband because, as she explains to her brother: "No losse of goods can increase in him a wrinckle, no crabbed language make his countenance sowre, the stubburnnes of no seruant shakes him, he haz no more gall in him than a Doue" (I.ii.70-72). Even though he "haz wealth enough, and wit enough," Viola believes that "hee who cannot be angry, is no man" and ultimately has him committed to the Bethlem Monasterie for lunatics. The humor of the play's subplot is obviously

based in gender reversal: Candido should be angry, impatient, dynamic; Viola should be meek, patient, passive. The confluence of gender and economic issues are revealed in the personality clashes between husband and wife over how to handle the business in the linen shop.

Viola and Candido's marriage has strong similarities to Margery and Simon Eyre's union in *The Shoemaker's Holiday*: the couple work side by side in the successful trade; Candido holds a position on the city council; patriarchy ultimately diminishes Viola's status as a real business partner. Selling a product that is not of his own making, however, Candido functions somewhat differently in the business world than Simon Eyre. Since he acts as both buyer--from the weaver--and seller--to the customer--his success depends on his ability to compromise and successfully strike deals. Candido's behavior with the young aristocrats who visit his shop clearly reveals his approach to business: the customer is always right. Mocking him, the young gallants press for more and more outrageous conditions in the purchase of a penny's worth of "lawne" until Candido willingly concedes and cuts the expensive cloth in the middle of the bolt in the exact size of a penny, presenting it with, "Looke you Gentleman, theres your ware, I thank you,/ I haue your money heare; pray know my shop/ Pray let me haue your custome" (I.v.99-101). Two tensions of the Jacobean business world are presented in

this scene. Either Candido can be viewed as a most astute businessman for making the sale, or his fawning behavior can be seen as the humiliation he accepts as the high cost of doing business. These two versions of the sale exist in stark contrast, however, to the sale of Bellafront's body to the highest bidder of jewels and gold: the ethics of "just price" is certainly met in a penny's worth of "lawne" in the size and shape of a penny.

Both the courtesan's and the draper's business affairs are settled by the Duke in the play's final scenes at the Bethlem Monasterie. By this time Viola regrets her anger and her haste in having Candido committed for his mild ways, and she begs the Duke to release him. When interrogated, Candido settles the question of his madness by an appeal to the authority of the patriarchal system that denies Viola any real partnership in their trade:

> Candido: Then may you know, I am not mad, that know
> You are not mad.....
> I did cut out Penniworths of Lawne, the Lawne was yet *mine owne*:
> A carpet was my gowne, yet twas *mine owne*,
> I wore my man's coate, yet the cloath *mine owne*,
> Had a crackt crowne, the crowne was yet *mine owne*,
> She says for this Ime mad...(V.ii.467-76) (my italics)

Even the harsh reality that Viola's existence also depends on the success of their linen trade gives her no right to question or disagree with her husband's strange behavior, for Candido owns everything they have.

The Duke is impressed with Candido and wants to hear more of the draper's philosophy of patience. As England moved into world markets, the crown's foreign policy emphasized the value of compromise that resulted in increased trade, and the value the Duke of Milan places on patience in *The Honest Whore* gives a strong indication of the English crown's interest. The Duke's invitation to Candido to "Come therefore you shall teach our court to shine/ So calme a spirit is worth a golden Mine" (V.ii.514-15) is a call, therefore, for social cooperation over individual ambition.

Bellafront, on the other hand, is now resigned to the fact that Hipolito cares only for Infelice and demands that the Duke compel Matheo to marry her as recompense for the loss of her "very rich iewell, calde a Maidenhead" (V.ii.410-11). While this forced marriage effectively "retires" Bellafront from her ambitious trade and integrates her into mainstream society,[16] the reality for Bellafront is that Matheo claims no responsibility for her past and simply calculates that his willingness "To take a common wench, and make her good" (V.ii.446) rather than be cuckolded by a virgin bride is, after all, to his advantage. As modern feminists could quickly point out, in her last transaction--for the socially sanctioned marriage bed--Bellafront sells her body as much as in her whoredom, except that now she is committed for life, not for one night.

In another comedy which focuses on the wealthy whore, John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan*, the portrayal of the whore as Jacobean entrepreneur reveals additional social and economic anxieties--with darker resolutions. The play contains the subversive elements often found in city comedies: the *Prologue* claims the play's purpose is "not to instruct but to delight," but closer examination reveals the play also "delights" in order to defuse social tensions. And, the portrayal of the Dutch whore, Franceschina, is Marston's locus for examining his society's apprehensions about their changing world. In the process of defeating her, his society finds relief.

Franceschina's whoredom is the moving force in the play. The *Fabulae Argumentum* states that "The difference betwixt the love of a courtesan and a wife is the full scope of the play." Indeed, the comedy's main plot centers on Franceschina's outrage at being discarded by Freevill, a rakish young gentleman. Freevill has decided to marry virtuous Beatrice and, renouncing his whoring, turns Franceschina over to his friend Malheurex, a serious young man who has always distanced himself from "natural" appetites such as lust. Malheurex, however, falls in love with Franceschina at first sight. She is beautiful, talented, in charge of her own household, and not the least bit interested in this awkward suitor. When Malheureux says he will do anything to be allowed into her bed, Franceschina

sees an opportunity to strike back at Freevill. She demands that Malheurex kill his friend as the price of her embraces. Malheurex agrees but then regrets his decision, and the remainder of the play focuses on Malheurex's and Freevill's retaliation against the courtesan. In addition to the *Argumentum*, however, there is an another element in the plot: Franceschina's desire for revenge and her plans to achieve it are manifestations of an autonomy and a self-assuredness bred from economic independence that threatens patriarchal authority.

Freevill enjoyed the Dutch woman's body, and Malheureux was obsessed with gaining his own access to it. Some in the audience would condemn Freevill and Malheureux for giving in to the urges of their flesh. But in this Jacobean society in which patriarchy supersedes moral ideology, Franceschina's ability to seduce these men's better judgments would represent the greater cause for worry. Who is on top in the contest of seduction is no small matter--not in the play, or in the real Jacobean world--for it indicates who is in charge of the situation. Under patriarchy, for a man to admit that he cannot control his urges is one thing. To admit that a woman controls them is quite another. And in the case of the courtesan, her financial success indicates where the balance of power lies in the commercial and sexual transaction. Therefore, in the opening of the play Freevill can cynically justify to

Malheureux the benefits of London's bawdy houses: "I would have married men love the stews as Englishmen lov'd the Low Countries: wish war should be maintain'd there lest it should come home to their own doors." And, with even more deft word play, he describes the situations in which women become whores:

> Alas, good creatures, what would you have them do? Would you have them get their living by the curse of man, the sweat of their brows? So they do. Every man must follow his trade, and every woman her occupation. A poor, decayed mechanical man's wife, her husband is laid up; may not she lawfully be laid down when her husband's only rising is by his wife's falling? A captain's wife wants means, her commander lies in open field abroad; may she not lie in civil arms at home?... Why is charity grown a sin? or relieving the poor and impotent an offense? (I.i.91-104)

Freevill speaks in a droll manner in order to shock and tease his friend, but also because he is describing instances in which men are in control of the situation--women are victimized by it. And, it is in this vein that he intends to pass Franceschina on for Malheureux's use, for he believes she is his to give.

In refusing to be passed on and in seeking some redress for being discarded, Franceschina overturns the assumed power relationship between courtesan and patron. Marston defuses this unnerving concept, however, through Franceschina's emotionalism and her foreignness. In addition, her foreignness serves to fragment the tensions created by the complex economic power relationship between England and Holland.

Franceschina's Dutch identity reflects certain social and economic factors that had produced the contemporary Southwark and Bankside neighborhood in which Marston places her. By 1600 there were more than a thousand Dutch families settled in Southwark, most of them craftsmen, artisans and traders.[17] Beginning in 1550 (and continuing until 1650), war and religious persecution on the continent led to a huge influx of immigrants, especially Dutch Protestants from the Spanish Netherlands. In general, the English accepted the immigrants on religious and humanitarian grounds, but they also saw commercial advantages in accepting the new workers.[18] Along with the craftsmen who introduced new methods in trades like brewing, highly trained whores set up their own "falling trade," introducing new measures of hygiene. Most of *these* immigrants settled in an area called Paris Gardens, where the most famous and popular brothel for some thirty years was known as "Holland's Leaguer," run by one Elizabeth Hollander.[19]

Franceschina's nationality, therefore, might be a literary "tip of the hat" to the infamous madam or, simply, a facile way to trade on the contemporary audience's knowledge of Holland's Leaguer. The English, however, actually had a complicated relationship with the Dutch when it came to commerce and the high seas. England and Holland clashed over rivalries in India, Africa, and the Baltic; so much jealousy arose because the Dutch grew wealthy from

fishing off the English coast that a speaker declared in the House of Commons: "the Dutch eat us out of our navigation." The dilemma for British trade was that Holland was not only England's chief competitor, but also her chief customer. In order to overcome the competition, the English imitated this arch-rival, adopting Dutch methods not only in ship building, in engineering, and in the tax system but also in lowering interest rates.[20] These unresolved issues of rivalry and cooperation with the Dutch are also part of the Jacobean audience's changing economic world. Once again, the whore--in this case a *Dutch* whore--can relieve multicultural tensions through a "justifiable" condemnation of her immorality.

Franceschina's silly "Dutch" accent is sweet when she affectionately says to Freevill: "O mine aderliver love, vat sall me do to requit dis your mush affection?" (I.ii.79-80). But, it turns her monstrous when, hearing of Freevill's intended marriage, she rages: "Ick sall be reveng'd! Do ten tousand hell damn me, ick sall have the rogue troat cut; and his love, and his friend, and all his affinity sall smakrt, sall die, sall hang!" (II.ii.41-43). Since her misuse of the language defines her as the cultural Other, the audience can keep a comfortable distance from the human pain behind her "unnatural" speech and thus focus only on the necessity of defeating her.

Franceschina's emotional pain is grounded in allusions

to her real love for Freevill. In this same scene she first weeps at the betrayal of her emotional investment in Freevill. When the bawd, Mary Faugh, tries to calm Franceschina by reminding her other men are available ("Though blue and white, black and green leave you, may not red and yellow entertain you? Is there but one color in the rainbow?"), Franceschina shoots back: "Grand grincome on your sentences!. . . You ha' brought mine love, mine honor, mine body, all to nothing!" (II.ii.4-9). We are offered the possibility that Franceschina's rage arises from a sympathetic version of the patriarchal truism, "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned."

Marston cleverly manipulates these smokescreens of foreignness and feminine emotional turbulence for his Jacobean culture, but even with these diversions, we can still locate the real cause of Franceschina's outrage: the loss of control over her own life. By giving in to her conflicting emotions, Franceschina sees the true vulnerability of her position--a shot of irony, certainly, that Marston either aimed at the audience or unconsciously volleyed at himself. Her insight begins when Mary distracts her from the issue of emotional loss by recounting all the ways that Mary has helped her to become a courtesan:

> I could not ha' sold your maidenhead oft'ner than I ha'done...I have made you acquainted with the Spaniard, Don Skirtoll; with the Italian, Master Beieroane; with the Irish lord, Sir Patrick; with the Dutch merchant, Haunce Herkin Glukin Skellan Flapdragon; and especially with the greatest

> French, and now, lastly with this English (yet, in my conscience), an honest gentleman.... (II.ii.12-16).

Franceschina is brought back to her commercial senses and, panicking, vacillates between begging for Mary's continued help ("Nay, good naunt, you'll help me to anoder love, vill you not?"), to blaming her for the situation ("Paugh! did you not praise Freevill to mine love?"), to fearing the future ("Vat sall become of mine poor flesh now? Mine body must turn Turk for twopence"). Money has brought Franceschina independence, but she knows her days of productivity are numbered; aging is the biological clock against which she races. Finally then, it is this vision of having to give herself to any man with twopence--a devastating loss of financial power--that launches her campaign for revenge.

Out of her savage outburst that concludes with "de hot Neapolitan poc rot him" comes a cold-blooded plan calculated to destroy three people: Freevill, Malheureux, and Beatrice. Her intention to destroy Beatrice's happiness seems particularly vindictive, but Franceschina's ruthlessness takes on another dimension if we view Beatrice as Franceschina does: Beatrice represents the icon of patriarchy, the "Good Wife." She possesses a status that society will forever deny Franceschina and is the agent that instigated Freevill's desertion. In addition, from a capitalist perspective, by eliminating Beatrice,

Franceschina makes an astute business decision in order to reduce the "unfair" competition presented by a virtuous woman in the marketplace of whoredom.[21]

From a patriarchal perspective, however, her plan has another terrifying component: man turning against man at woman's instigation. At one level, Franceschina's ability to set friend against friend can be credited to Malheureux's vulnerability. On the other hand, Franceschina's strategy reveals an enterprising and audacious mind: not only does she pit her enemies against each other, but she also fully intends to have Malheureux charged for Freevill's murder before he can collect the sexual payment she promised. Over the years, Franceschina has turned her initial sexual vulnerability into her own successful commercial venture, and now she applies the same tactics to her desire for revenge. This time, however, her own vulnerability to Freevill's abandonment is redirected onto Malheureux's weakness, and Freevill's life becomes the currency that is to buy her.

From the opening scenes in which Freevill and Malheureux debate the character of bawdy houses until Franceschina is punished at the end of the play, a secondary dialogue runs throughout the comedy that has nothing to do with women and everything to do with the period's new commercial man. Anxieties about crumbling class hierarchies, new ethical standards, and shifting power

bases are all camouflaged, however, in the verbal drive to condemn the courtesan--which in Freevill's case is cloaked in a sophisticated pose that, nevertheless, denigrates women through a sarcastic wit.

Freevill refers to the corrupt marketplace as he expounds his theories on whoredom:

> They sell their bodies; do not better persons sell their souls? Nay, since all things have been sold--honor, justice, faith, nay, even God Himself--
> Ay, me what base ignobleness is it
> To sell the pleasure of a wanton bed? (I.i.118-122)

Freevill's speech is intended to shock and confound Malheurex with its justification for whoring, and therefore, the twists in logic and the word play (such as "her husband's only rising is by his wife's falling") put a comic focus on Malheureux's exasperation: "Of ill you merit well. My heart's good friend,/Leave yet at length, at length" (I.i.128-29). Putting Marston's clever word play aside, however, we are left with a biting reference to "better persons" prostituting their souls--a sin just as great as, if not greater than, prostituting the body. Certainly anyone in Jacobean society could be considered "better" than the whore, but when we consider that the best of society, the aristocracy, and the good, hardworking poor were not the nation's vendors, we are left to focus on the merchant class who might very well, it was suspected, sell their souls if doing so would sell their goods.

A later scene evokes an even more threatening aspect of capitalism's negative influence on society: the betrayal of friendship for profit. The subtlety with which this anxiety is addressed mirrors the degree of uneasiness it causes. Malheureux confesses to Freevill that he has promised to kill Freevill so that he can "possess [Franceschina's] sweetness." Freevill is incensed at Franceschina's vileness, but then asks his friend: "You ha' vow'd my death?" Malheureux responds "My lust, not I, before my reason would; yet I must use her," and thus shifts blame from himself, the male endowed with "reason," to Franceschina's feminine ability to ignite lust. As noted earlier, this confession raises the troubling issues of woman's power and of man's loss of control in the battle of the sexes. But the betrayal of friendship is the crux of Malheureux's sin: he has agreed to pay the market price to satisfy his lust. Here is another instance in which the ethical standard of just price was abandoned in the drive to close a deal. As money lenders profited from interest rates as high as ten percent[22] and as cloth merchants competed for new markets for their wool, some in the audience might have wondered if the betrayal of a friend to satisfy lust for sex might not also occur to satisfy a lust for money. Malheureux's "reason" failed to control his desperate desire for the prize of Franceschina. Would other men fare any better when the desire for money, satisfied, resulted in the

greater prizes of social mobility, political influence, and material comforts? The issue of betrayal is diminished when Freevill agrees to help Malheureux to Franceschina's bed by pretending to be murdered: the men now refocus on a common enemy, the whore. The issue would not be so easy for Jacobean men to resolve, however, when the common enemy was intangible greed.

The issue of betrayal is only partially resolved in this scene, for the ties of friendship are also strained by underlying tensions that are found in the period's class conflict. Freevill conspires with Malheureux to destroy Franceschina, but he also intends to punish his friend. The men agree that Freevill will hide at a certain goldsmith's while the word is put forth that Malheureux has murdered him. After Malheureux has bedded Franceschina, Freevill will come forward, and the two friends will expose Franceschina's scheme. Freevill has no intention, however, of going to the goldsmith, and in a monologue reveals his anger: "Now repentance, the fool's whip, seize thee!/Nay, if there be no means I'll be thy friend, /But not thy vice's" (IV.ii.31-33). Disguised, he later enjoys seeing Malheureux's terror at being accused of murder when Freevill cannot be found and the goldsmith denies any knowledge of his whereabouts. Malheurex's actions have disturbed the power hierarchy between the friends--the same kind of disruption that caused conflicts between the aristocracy and

the rising merchant class. Freevill's anger is partly based upon the fact that Malheureux, given the chance to enjoy Franceschina through Freevill's benefaction, has shown himself to be too aggressive a suitor. He rose above his humble station, one that was subordinate to Freevill's sophistication, and became the consummate whoremonger. His drive to satisfy his appetites not only erased any sense of gratefulness to Freevill, but became a threat to Freevill's very existence.

In the same manner, the aristocracy was alarmed by the rise of the middle class--a rise that challenged the notion that every man was born into a social position. Elizabeth I's government, filled with powerful but untitled officials, offered concrete proof that men could function above their prescribed stations. The power that controlled London's government was based in the merchants who controlled the twelve city companies.[23] What could hold the line against the onslaught of merchants, armed with commercial success and powerful positions in city government, who breached the walls of aristocracy and joined it, or worse yet, tried to replace its traditional authority with the authority of capitalism? When Freevill finally reveals himself, he justifies his deception, claiming that there was no other way to save Malheurex since, "No arguments of reason, no known danger,/ No assured wicked bloodiness,/ Could draw your heart from this damnation" (V.iii.38-40). This is

blatantly untrue, since Malheurex, troubled by violating the bonds of friendship, on his own initiative confessed to Freevill his role in the courtesan's plan of revenge. Freevill's claim, however, reestablishes the old power hierarchy between the friends: Freevill knows what is best for Malheurex. Malheurex confirms this when he replies to Freevill's mocking address, "Frolic, how is it, sir?" with

> I am myself.
> . . . . . .
> I am now worthy yours, when, before,
> The beast of man, loose blood, distemper'd us.
> He that lust rules cannot be virtuous. (V.iii.61-67)

Having been unable to manage the sophisticated, lustful life successfully, Malheurex returns to his "proper" station as a humble onlooker, "worthy" of Freevill's association. Freevill's satisfaction in teaching Malheureux a lesson, in destroying his new "identity" as lover, may well have been mirrored in certain haughty smiles in Marston's audience.

Even so, Malheurex is only chastised, and the friends are reunited. To demand more punishment would reveal the real scope of Malheureux's transgressions, and the possibility that men's relationships could be controlled by women. Franceschina, however, is available for severe punishment: society already views her as an irredeemable reprobate. She is the physical scapegoat through which society can strike out at the frightening intangibles of a changing economic system and threats to traditional authority. At Franceschina's trial, Freevill's final

condemnation declares the triumph of patriarchy and social order over Franceschina's attempted chaos: "O thou comely damnation!/Dost think that vice is not to be withstood?/Oh, what is woman merely made of blood!" (V.iii.48-50). Sir Lionel Freevill's command, "To severest prison with her!" is a practical benediction on his son's curse, but it is Franceschina herself who admits to being vanquished: "Ick vill not speak. Torture, torture your fill,/For me am worse than hang'd; me ha' lost my will" (V.iii.57-58).

Franceschina's declaration would be deeply gratifying to members of a culture which demanded silence, obedience, and chastity from its women. Indeed, in her final lines the defeated whore takes on the attributes of the "good wife": she will be silent, she acknowledges the authorities' ability to punish her and, with the loss of "will"--a pun on the contemporary slang for penis[24]--she is forced to be chaste. But, just as in other instances, her words address other issues and here, they also concede authority to traditional class boundaries. Franceschina's autonomy and passion reflected entrepreneurial instincts and demonstrated economic success. The loss of that will--her drive, her ambition--ultimately reassures the Jacobean audience that the smooth surface of social harmony will continue to cover the turbulence of contemporary tensions.

Unlike the courtesan, the Jacobean widow could not be condemned, of course, for the way in which she had gained

her money since it was common practice for a wife to receive at least a portion of her husband's estate. In addition to funds needed to rear children, a widow was entitled to receive one-third of her husband's estate for her use during her lifetime--her "dower."[25] Widows also could inherit and continue to run their husband's trade. The perceived danger to society in a widow's having money was not, therefore, that she had the autonomy to earn it immorally, but that she had autonomy from money that she had not earned, that rightfully was her husband's--money, in fact, that would still be under his control if he were alive. As a result, city comedies focus on the "problem" of returning a widow's money to direct male supervision--which is always achieved by the widow's remarriage.

Even though rights of inheritance had a long tradition, Jacobeans could consider a widow's position in a more contemporary light: as a mirror of the new Jacobean capitalist entrepreneur who was "usurping" wealth from traditional economic sources. The newly escalating profits made from established industries such as shipping and cloth-making gave the entrepreneurs' profits the appearance of "easy money," much in the way a young widow's relatively brief marriage might result in her gaining a large legacy. Also, the entrepreneur's newly elevated status has a counterpart, at least in patriarchal thinking, in the "unearned" heightened status a woman gains in becoming a

wealthy man's wife. (Simon Eyre's chastising reminder to his wife, Margery, that he "brought her up" through marriage offers an example.) Therefore, the disruption to patriarchy that the autonomous, wealthy widow could cause echoes the potential disruption to class hierarchy that the autonomous capitalist presents. In both cases, there is the additional tension that other aspects of the widow's and entrepreneur's enterprises (e.g. rearing heirs, new economic development) are *supported* by society. The drive to remarry the widow and recontrol her money, then, echoes the desire to constrain the aggressive capitalist.

As a result, in plays such as Thomas Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1605-6) and *The Widow* (1616), even though the details of the plots vary, a formulaic treatment governs the portrayal of the widow and the plots' resolutions through her remarriage. In *A Trick to Catch the Old One,* the young gallant Witgood sets his uncle and his uncle's rival against each other to win the hand of a rich widow, who is actually a courtesan in disguise, and in this way Witgood wins the hand of the uncle's rival's niece. In *The Widow*, Valeria, a young widow, is tricked into a verbal marriage contract with young Ricardo and so turns to her other two elderly suitors for legal help. In both of these plays, however, as in many other city comedies, the widow is portrayed as a young woman, and her suitors (there are usually at least two) as decrepit curmudgeons. This May-

December equation adds up to humorous situations and dialogue, to say nothing about the comic relief the audience feels when the widow is able slip through the old men's clutches into the arms of a much younger gallant. From a capitalist perspective, however, the feeble men are embodiments of the traditional economic hierarchy and power structures, while the young widow is a symbol of the entrepreneur. This cat and mouse courtship game also presents, therefore, a celebration of the new economic order--or at least an acquiescence to its inevitability.

In Middleton's *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* (1611-13), even though the "formula" for wooing the rich widow Lady Goldenfleece is in place with four older suitors, the real economic issue--the misery caused by an unscrupulous business deal--is revealed and rectified through the confrontation of two women, Lady Goldenfleece and Mistress Low-water. When the play opens, the "decayed gentleman," Master Low-water, and his wife have been thrown into poverty by Lady Goldenfleece's late husband. Compared to other, earlier city comedies that specifically describe greed, this drama never makes clear what Lord Goldenfleece did, nor which of the Low-waters he actually injured: there is no reference to a forged I.O.U. or a confiscated manor house, for example. Mistress Low-water, cursing Goldenfleece's widow, at one point cries out against her personal injury, "My wealth her husband left her and me her grief" (I.ii.19);

but when she seeks her husband's approval for her plan of revenge, she impresses upon her husband the wrong done to his estate, "Husband,/ Wake, wake and let not patience keep thee poor" (I.ii.150). There are several possible causes for the Low-waters' impoverishment which the contemporary audience could have supplied. If their property were in land, the Low-waters could have been cheated in some matter pertaining to their lease on an estate in the country. Or, since the play is set in London, they could have been tricked while speculating in urban development: beginning in 1600, the growth in the administrative activity at Westminster and in the popularity of the London social "season" led to a building boom of expensive manor houses for the aristocracy and the leasing of smaller lots for builders to construct tenements on speculation.[26] In any case, it can naturally be assumed that it is Mister Low-water, not his wife, who has been cheated in his dealings with Lord Goldenfleece. In fact, when Mistress Low-water's brother, Beveril, a poor scholar, returns from his travels, he is dismayed to hear of his sister's present situation, for when he left she was "new married" and apparently financially secure. He can do little to help, however, admitting "Mean are my fortunes," (II.ii.177) thus underscoring the fact that sister and brother have no family money.

Another unclear point is the extent of Lady

Goldenfleece's responsibility for whatever injustice was done to the Low-waters. She is accused when Mistress Low-water says of her: "The course of her whole life, and her dead husband's/ Was ever full of such dishonest riddles/ To keep right heirs from knowledge of their own" (I.ii.45-47). Yet, by the end of the play, Beveril is to marry Lady Goldenfleece--a love match accomplished through the schemes and with the blessing of his sister. Other characters, who are familiar with the Low-waters' state and sympathize with it, remain on friendly terms with Lady Goldenfleece, and in fact, all gladly attend her wedding.

Ambiguities in the plot are joined by ambiguities in the characterizations of the two women and, ultimately, point to the underlying function of these women within the drama: they carry on their *husbands'* battle. Money--ill-gained or unjustly lost--has pitted these women against each other in a conflict that properly belongs to men. Lady Goldenfleece, in acquiring the estate of her dead husband, is perceived as an embodiment of his unscrupulous dealings. His money taints her at the same time that it gives her a measure of autonomy. Just as patriarchy perceives her to be a threat because of the power her husband's money bestows, so the Low-waters perceive her as enemy because of the corruption her husband's money symbolizes. On the other hand, Mistress Low-water, as an impoverished wife who is totally dependent on her husband for financial security, is

a representation of her husband's poverty-stricken status. She feels such outrage at the loss of her husband's wealth that she convinces him to let her implement a plan of revenge: she will disguise herself as a young man and woo the widow Goldenfleece while Master Low-water acts as a servingman. Master Low-water gladly accepts his wife's plan and will play squire to her knight-errant on behalf of *his* family's honor.

The scheme calls for a sham marriage between Lady Goldenfleece and Mistress Low-water, who will then gain control of Lady Goldenfleece's money as her "husband." The new "husband," however, rejects the widow-bride on their wedding night (with good reason, obviously) and sets up an elaborate scheme so that brother Beveril, who secretly loves Lady Goldenfleece and thinks he is responding to her letter for help, visits the distraught bride. The new "husband" finds them together and accuses the bride of infidelity in front of all the still-assembled wedding guests. Echoing Jonson's plot in *Epicoene*, Mistress Low-water intends to release Lady Goldenfleece from the sham marriage by revealing her true identity--after Lady Goldenfleece has consented to relinquish all of her wealth in order to rid herself of this new husband who has turned so cruel and cold within hours of the wedding.

This tangled comedy contains not only a subplot with persons lost at sea, the possibility of incest, and babies

switched by a wet-nurse, but "spectacles" for the audience in a zodiacal banquet and a wedding masque--commandeered by the four rejected suitors. Even more complex are the portrayals of Lady Goldenfleece and Mistress Low-water. It is difficult to identify either one as the villain in this story of injustice and revenge. Both women act in ways that gain our admiration or sympathy: Mistress Low-water is disgusted by the suitor Sir Lambstone's scheme to marry Lady Goldenfleece and use her money to attract Mistress Low-water to be his lover; Lady Goldenfleece sees through the avaricious motives of the older suitors only to be hurt and utterly confused by the rejection of the "man" she married for love.

Middleton's desire to create comedy answers the question of why the playwright chose Mistress Low-water as opposed to Master for the part of the feigned bridegroom: humor is guaranteed when "normal" male/female relations are turned upside down. For example, Mistress Low-water, disguised as the young gallant, can honestly declare that she has never known a woman "as man e'er knew her"--and the audience will at least chuckle, if not guffaw, at the excitement with which Lady Goldenfleece greets the confession of this male's "virginity." If we look past this skewed battle of the sexes for humor's sake, however, we see that by placing the two women in such circumstances and conversations, humor also can undercut the seriousness of

the underlying issue. Neither Master Low-water nor the audience has to confront whatever it is that Lady Goldenfleece's husband actually did; everyone is too busy maintaining disguises or laughing at double entendres to focus on the reality of the economic sabotage that has been perpetrated on one male by another.

There is no question, however, of the proper resolution for the Low-waters' revenge or for the audience's delight: the widow must be remarried. By the final scene of the play the distraught widow has handed over all the jewels and money in her house to rid herself of the "husband" from her first "remarriage." When the "husband" reveals that Lady Goldenfleece is actually free to marry another since "he" was already married when they wed, the widow cries,

> Married to another!
> Then, in revenge to thee,
> To vex thine eyes, 'cause thou hast mock'd my heart,
> And with such treachery repaid my love,
> This is the gentleman I embrace and choose.
> (V.i.309- 313)

She promptly embraces Beveril--and of course, gives the Low-waters even more joy. Beveril, delighted, dutifully warns the discarded "husband" about the noose waiting for him if he really is a bigamist. Mistress Low-water, her job *as* "husband" and *for* her husband finished, replies, "You can put me to my book.../I've my neck-verse perfect, here and here" (V.i.343-44) and removes her disguise, revealing her breasts.

Exposing her female body allows Mistress Low-water to reclaim her proper place in patriarchal society as a forgiving, nurturing, and loving feminine being. She embraces her brother and accepts her former enemy as a "good sister" should, admitting,

> I'm bound to love you;
> Y'have exercis'd in this a double charity,
> Which, to your praise, shall to all times be known,
> Advanc'd my brother, and restored mine own.
> .....
> You wish'd for love, and, faith I have bestow'd you
> Upon a gentleman that does dearly love you;
> That recompense I've made you; and you must think, madam,
> I lov'd you well, though I could never ease you,
> When I fetch'd in my brother thus to please you.
> (V.i.359-370)

The widow Lady Goldenfleece, having suffered the schemes of suitors, having been tricked into a sham marriage, and finally, having unknowingly chosen to marry her enemies' brother, nevertheless takes her cue from Mistress Low-water and responds in kind--but more than likely with thoughts also of her first husband:

> I see too late there is heavy judgment
> Keeps company with extortion and foul deeds,
> .....
> My punishment is gentle, and to show
> My thankful mind for't, thus I'll revenge this,
> With an embracement here, and here a kiss.
> (V.i.372-78)

The widow embraces Mistress Low-water and kisses Beveril, thus guaranteeing that her money will be returned to the control of a man and that the family that was injured will

be compensated in the most lucrative way possible financially and socially. The old knight Sir Oliver's words pronounce a fitting description for the resolution of this comedy about "extortion and foul deeds": "Here's unity forever strangely wrought!" (V.i.371).

More than sixty years after Middleton penned *The Widow*, city comedy was still portraying the tensions between traditional class hierarchy and economically empowered social advancement, but to an audience "dominated by a Court-and-Town coterie."[27] Drama was no longer a form of entertainment that played to a broad cross-section of class and economic positions; the small, enclosed playhouses were physical representations of the elitist attitude that claimed the theater as a place for the refined and genteel in society, not the masses. Even though by the time of Charles II's coronation the nascent capitalism of the Jacobean period had become the established economic system, Restoration comedies reflect contemporary economic tensions and bear the stamp of a social consciousness that developed from the political crucibles of regicide and restoration. If "doublemindedness" characterizes the Jacobeans, "compromise"[28] distinguishes the mindset of Restoration society.

The rejection of the Commonwealth was a rejection of a Puritan form of government but not a rejection of the economic system of capitalism upon which it was based.

Loyal subjects restored Charles II to the throne, but they did not restore the principle of absolutism. In these choices the English people preserved or discarded social structures based on the scale of recent experiences: they rejected a commonwealth in favor of a monarchy but retained a strong Parliament; they adopted a free enterprise system but reaffirmed an aristocratic social hierarchy. These compromises characterize a society which attempts, not always successfully, to meld the authority of the "old" with the possibilities of the "new."

When the theaters opened their doors again in 1660, comedy about life in London did not portray men who reveled in their clever entrepreneurship and "rise" in the world. Rather, it presented men who had already "arrived" financially.[29] Not only do the published comedies' casts of characters lack tags such as "wealthy merchant" or "goldsmith," the gentlemen themselves never refer to their business dealings. Some men are titled, but more are not. These men have money (indicated by their fashionable clothes, leisure time, and company of servants), but how they came by that money is not an issue in the play. As the drama unfolds, many of the main male characters, in fact, reveal themselves to be mirrors of the "coterie" audience: lords, knights, lesser gentry, minor officials, foppish young men.

The fact that these characters are distanced from the

source of their wealth can be traced, perhaps, to two factors in Restoration society, one psychological and the other material. Having experimented with--and rejected--Puritan egalitarianism, Restoration men avidly sought ways to acquire the label of "gentleman." But, while that term sprang from aristocratic social hierarchy, the contemporary attitude of compromise also gave the appellation a new, broader definition--in both an intellectual and a tangible sense. Hence, in some instances a man was recognized as a gentleman by the "wit" he displayed; on a more practical level, his enviable financial standing could afford him a place in the ranks of the genteel. This is not to say, however, that these criteria carried equal weight. A servingman might prove to have the tongue of a wit, but his status would never be elevated without the upward push from capital--and then, only so far. In the same way, a wealthy gentleman's foolish or irrational pronouncements might make him a laughing stock, but they would never reduce his rank. Money and wit helped to define the Restoration gentleman, but it was up to the individual male to negotiate between the two elements and to strike the right combination. An ill-developed or out-of-control wit could label one a rake or a fop; money which was too actively earned could proclaim its owner a tradesman.

When the upward mobility of capitalism threatened social order in the sixteenth century, conservatives

promulgated the belief that "it took three generations for a family to purge its blood from the taint of inferiority and to become an accepted member of the upper class."[30] There are indications that this theory held some sway over the Restoration psyche as well. The "taint of inferiority" even in the most successful entrepreneur could only be eradicated by time--time during which the succeeding generations' hands became cleaner as they removed themselves from the actual toil of making money. In reality, the most desirable financial profile was modelled on the aristocracy: money accrued, not earned. Hence, the literature is replete with references to the "quality" of a person--an intangible social indicator that, along with the economic one, calculated degrees within the ranks of the genteel, or, perhaps, calculated how far along an individual was in the "cleansing process."

The traditional way to hasten, if not totally circumvent, the cleansing process had always been to marry into the aristocracy. Another less immediate but more modern way, however, appeared with the increased activity of selling and trading on the stock market. Ten thousand English pounds were invested in joint-stocks at the time of Elizabeth I's accession, but by 1695 more than four million pounds were in this paper marketplace.[31] The Restoration form of entrepreneurship, therefore, balanced the need for money with the desire to avoid laboring to produce a

product: *money* worked to make money. Or, as a preamble to a Statute in 1662 declared:

> Divers noblemen, gentlemen and persons of quality, no ways bred up to trade or merchandise, do oftentimes put in great stocks of money into...public societies, and receive the proceeds of those stocks sometimes in ready moneys, sometimes in commodities, which they usually sell for money or exchange again, by which means the trade of those companies is much encouraged.[32]

Not only was trade "much encouraged" in existing companies, but capitalism found new markets in the growth of the banking industry with money itself as the product.[33]

George Etherege proffers several variations on the theme of the monied and unmonied Restoration gentleman in *The Man of Mode* (1676). He presents Sir Fopling Flutter, the ultimate fop; Medley and Dorimant, wits verging on rakes; and Bellair, a romantically inclined young man, threatened with the loss of his inheritance.

As in the case of earlier city comedies, male concerns are played out within the male/female relationships portrayed in the drama. The distance from "base" work that the men enjoy is mirrored in the distance they keep from the realities of their sexual/economic exchange with women, even though the play is full of commercial allusions to sexual relationships. The main character, Dorimant, is an aristocrat who tries to find his place in a capitalist world that provides riches for "self-made" men. He needs money, but he cannot bring himself to lower his status to that of a businessman and earn his bread. He uses his aristocratic

characteristics--an extravagant lifestyle, his wit, his boredom with the mundane--to distinguish himself from the ambitious capitalists and, at the same time, to claim some kind of connection to capitalism, thus becoming an economic "man of mode." The best he can do, it seems, is actively to engage in the "business" of conducting love affairs. When the play opens he is bemoaning the fact that he has to write a love letter to Mistress Loveit, a woman in whom he's lost interest:

> What a dull, insipid thing is a billet-doux written in cold blood, after the heat of the business is over! It is a tax upon good nature which I have here been laboring to pay and have done it, but with as much regret as ever fanatic paid the Royal Aid or church duties. (I.i.1-5)

Dorimant's language is filled with mercantile metaphors readily available in a capitalist culture. Well-supplied with clothing and servants, he claims to spurn any active participation in commercial enterprises, a likely characteristic of the capitalist who lets his money work for him through investments or, in the case of aristocrats, through land. His friend, Medley, in reading the love letter, warns Dorimant of the consequences of his double-dealing in sexual capital:

> Medley(reads):"I never was a lover of business, but now I have a just reason to hate it, ce it has kept me these two days from seeing you...."
> ---This business of yours, Dorimant, has been with a vizard at the playhouse; I have had an eye on you. If some malicious body should betray you, this kind note would hardly make your peace with her. (I.i.p.86)

But Dorimant reveals that he thrives on volatile situations and risky relationships, not steady growth and long-term profits, when he answers:

> But the devil's in't, there has been such a calm in my affairs of late, I have not had the pleasure of making a woman so much as break her fan, to be sullen or forswear herself, these three days. (I.i.p.86)

Later in the play when Dorimant's scheme to upset Mistress Loveit into breaking with him begins to unfold, even Mistress Loveit's maid, Pert, sarcastically uses Dorimant's well-known denigration of the commercial world to attack him:

> Dorimant: Oh, Mistress Pert! I never knew you sullen enough to be silent. Come, let me know the business.
>
> Pert: The business, sir, the business that has taken you up these two days. How have I seen you laugh at men of business, and now to become a man of business yourself! (II.ii.p.99)

There is another side to Dorimant, however, a side that is drawn to the stability of tradition--the mode of life that is represented by young Bellair. Bellair is faced with an aristocrat's dilemma: how to retain his inheritance and marry his love Emilia. Old Bellair has threatened to disinherit him by himself remarrying if his son will not marry Harriet Woodville. Bellair's and Dorimant's finances and love lives could hardly be more dissimilar, yet Dorimant admits to Medley that he and Bellair each gain something from their friendship:

> It is our mutual interest to be [friends]. It

> makes the women think the better of his understanding and judge more favorably of my reputation; it makes him pass upon some for a man of very good sense, and I upon others for a very civil person. (I.i.p.89)

In other words, Dorimant and Bellair are engaged in working out a compromise between the "old" and the "new" representations of the aristocracy in their society, and they exchange social currencies to their mutual benefit. Through his association with the popular Dorimant, Bellair acquires the reputation of a man of contemporary "good sense"--meaning, in this urbane milieu, having "wit." In exchange for this newer virtue, Bellair, a model of traditional wealth and social status, lends respectability to Dorimant. In spite of being a new age wit, Dorimant understands the advantage in being seen as someone who conforms to traditional modes of behavior, attitudes, and taste--the standard that Restoration society continues to value and which continues to be a major locus of power.

Dorimant's adventures in finding his place between the modern and the traditional social hierarchy as a man are portrayed in his economic and sexual exploits with women. His relationships with the city women Mistress Loveit and Bellinda and with the virtuous, estate-bred Harriet Woodville correspond to his attempts to attain the position of a financially secure Restoration gentleman.

Volatile Mistress Loveit and yielding Bellinda, besides being in love with Dorimant, share a unique status in the

play: they are unattached to, and therefore unprotected by, any man or family. Even given the difference in their ages, it is not really possible to determine whether they are widows, spinsters, or heiresses; no absent husbands, fathers, or brothers are mentioned. Their isolation contrasts to the protection enjoyed by the play's two marriageable virgins, Harriet and Emilia. Harriet's mother, Lady Woodville, keeps an eagle eye out for the "wicked" Dorimant and "all the under-debauchees of the town"; Emilia can confide in her sympathetic mentor, Lady Townley, about her love for young Bellair and about the lecherous advances of Old Bellair, Lady Townley's brother.

Mistress Loveit's and Bellinda's autonomy affords Dorimant easy access to them. That access, however, especially in the case of Mistress Loveit who has apartments and servants, also smacks of the autonomy of the courtesan: if owned by no man then available to all men. In a scene that leaves no doubt that Dorimant and Bellinda have just finished making love, Bellinda takes her leave, fearful that she will be recognized on the streets, not that she is missed at home. Dorimant reveals his view of the relationship when he responds to the jests of his friends who have come on the heels of Bellinda's departure. Having sent Bellinda on her way with the blessing, "Everlasting love go along with thee," he sees her in another light when she is out of earshot:

> Sir Fopling: We thought there was a wench in the case, by the chair that waited. Prithee, make us a confidence...Was she pretty?
>
> Dorimant: So pretty she may come to keep her coach and pay parish duties, if the good humour of the age continue.
>
> Medley: And be of the number of ladies kept by public-spirited men for the good of the whole town. (IV.ii.p.131)

Dorimant's words suggest monetary rewards for Bellinda's ability to please men; Medley's use of the word "kept" openly suggests she will be maintained by various men--"public spirited" libertines who bestow "gifts," perhaps, of clothing and jewels or "donations" of cash.

Dorimant's witticism about Bellinda distances him from the act of whoring just as his disdain for "business" disassociates him from the concept of work. Dorimant avoids the humiliation of toiling for money; by "maintaining" a sexual partner he avoids haggling over rates--something that would reveal a crass commercialism, not unbridled passion or romance, as the basis of the relationship.

Although Mistress Loveit and Bellinda engage in illicit sex, they are neither shunned nor severely criticized by their social group. This treatment markedly contrasts with the condemnation or forced reformation of the Jacobean courtesan, even though these Restoration mistresses' temperaments identify them with the archetypal dramatic representations of whores: Mistress Loveit's outbursts affiliate her with the dangerous, revengeful courtesan;

Bellinda's vulnerable sensuality bears a striking resemblance to those courtesans who, first, were seduced young women. Yet, the high drama of Mistress Loveit's reactions to Dorimant's inattention and philandering only results in Lady Townley's comment of rather condescending amazement: "How strangely love and jealousy rage in that poor woman!" (II.i.p.95).

We find that in Restoration comedy there is no longer any need to condemn the courtesan as a way to ease social tensions and control ambitious men. The struggle *among men* between "just price" and capitalism has been resolved, so now the courtesan serves as a *sign* of a man's financial success. And, since money brings power, the portrayal of the Restoration courtesan functions to point out the power of the Restoration "new" man. A relationship with a courtesan indicates a level of financial achievement that enables a man to "maintain" a woman--even, perhaps, in addition to his own wife.[34] The sexual power he wields in a private bedroom is evidence, therefore, of the power he wields in the public marketplace. And, since Charles II introduced the "fashion" with his numerous and openly acknowledged mistresses[35], maintaining a courtesan could also be considered a characteristic of the new aristocracy.

Even though Mistress Loveit and Belinda share characteristics of courtesan autonomy, they are clearly portrayed as being under Dorimant's control. To begin with,

they are competitors for his affection and attention. This is not a simple case of two women vying for the attentions of the same man, however. Dorimant has appropriated the women's friendship as a means to rid himself of the mistress who has become tiresome. On Dorimant's instructions, and in the guise of a helpful friend, Bellinda tells Mistress Loveit that she has seen Dorimant in the theater with another woman--"a lady masked," who was actually Bellinda herself. In this way, Dorimant plays with Mistress Loveit's emotions, generating the anger he wants so she will leave him; and, since she confides in Bellinda, he will also receive reports about Mistress Loveit's frame of mind and her future intentions.

This scene is reminiscent of other confrontational scenes between courtesan and patron, filled with tears, recriminations and clever and cruel word play:

> Mistress Loveit: Is this the constancy you vowed?
>
> Dorimant: Constancy at my years? 'Tis not a virtue in season; you might as well expect the fruit the autumn ripens i' the spring.
>
> Mistress Loveit: Monstrous principle!
>
> Dorimant: Youth has a long journey to go madam. Should I have set up my rest at the first inn I lodged at, I should never have arrived at the happiness I now enjoy.
>
> Mistress Loveit: False man!
>
> Dorimant: True woman.
> . . . . . .
>
> Mistress Loveit: Horrid and ungrateful, begone! And never see me more!

> Dorimant: I am not one of those troublesome coxcombs who, because they were once well-received, take the privilege to plague a woman with their love ever after. I shall obey you, madam, though I do myself some violence.
>
> Mistress Loveit: Come back, you sha' not go! Could you have the ill nature to offer it? (II.ii.p.100-101)

Dorimant, nevertheless, storms out, but distraught Mistress Loveit does not plan his murder; the only violence done is that she has ripped her fan to shreds.

Bellinda witnesses this scene, however, and is disturbed by Dorimant's abusive behavior, saying to herself:

> H'as given me the proof which I desired of his love; but 'tis a proof of his ill nature too. I wish I had not seen him use her so.
>
> I sigh to think that Dorimant may be
> One day as faithless and unkind to me.
> (II.ii.p.102)

Even though she is shocked by his cruel treatment of Mistress Loveit, Bellinda proves helpless to resist her own desire for Dorimant and continues to be a part of his scheme. She ultimately accepts Dorimant's vow that he will never see Mistress Loveit again except in public, having convinced herself that *her* relationship with Dorimant will be different from his previous liaisons.

Mistress Loveit's volatile temperament reduces her, ultimately, to a laughing stock. She rants and raves at Dorimant and tries to beat him at his own game of jealousy by enticing Sir Fopling, but in the final scene when she discovers that Dorimant has been pursuing the heiress

Harriet, she is easily appeased by his excuse that he needs Harriet's fortune, and says in relief: "Was it no idle mistress, then?" (V.ii.p.147). It is easy to laugh at Mistress Loveit's seeming gullibility, but her words actually indicate an awareness of her true rival: another mistress, not a wife. Unlike Jacobean comedies in which a courtesan is outraged or devastated because of her lover's impending marriage, the Restoration courtesan knows that it is her lover's lack of financial means or his discovery of a new passion that will signal her abandonment, not his wedding ring. As a result, the audience may chuckle at Mistress Loveit's frustrations and may pity Bellinda's naivete, but it does so only out of an awareness of Dorimant's influence and control--he, after all, gets what he wants from both women.

As are the men, all the women in the play are acquaintances and there *seems* to be no distinction, socially, among them. There is, however, an invisible dividing line between the women that resonates both with male economic issues and class aspirations: the degree of their sexual activity. Neither Mistress Loveit nor Bellinda has any class or legal impediment which would prevent either from becoming Dorimant's wife, but their pre-marital sexuality has classified them as unmarriageable. In effect, they are left to wander, it appears, in some state of modish whoredom, excluded from one social tie (marriage) while at

the same time included in others (visiting acquaintances, friendships). Even in this new age, the comedy suggests, men may sleep with whores, but they marry virgins. What helps to create this situation is the patriarchal culture's demand for a steady supply of women to function not only as sexual objects, but as the trophies awarded for successfully implemented monetary strategies. It is not difficult to picture Mistress Loveit and Bellinda repeating the relationship they have with Dorimant with one wealthy man after another, circulating in the social set but never winning the wedding ring.

Dorimant carries on three relationships simultaneously in this comedy: with Mistress Loveit, with Bellinda, and with Harriet Woodville. Only with Harriet, however, is Dorimant able to look beyond immediate sexual dividends and to invest himself in the growth of a long-term relationship. In Harriet he sees the resolution to his financial and class dilemma, by acquiring his society's traditional power base: landed money. Assuredly, Harriet is a "witty" match for Dorimant's clever words, and their repartee is infused with a sexual tension that is predicted by Medley's description of Harriet earlier in the play:

> [She has] More [wit] than usual in her sex, and as much malice. Then, she's as wild as you would wish her, and has a demureness in her looks that makes it so surprising. (I.i.p.85)

But Harriet is not just another exciting woman: she's a landed heiress, "vastly rich." Dorimant reveals his

awareness of Harriet's wealth in comments appropriate to the romantic predicaments commonly found in city comedies, but they are undergirded by the economic realities of the age. For example, in their very first meeting at the fashionable thoroughfare, the Mall, Harriet and Dorimant ostensibly talk about the "game of love" but their words are based in an awareness of the power of money. Harriet, however, speaks from the perspective of one who *has* money, Dorimant as one who *strives* for it:

> Dorimant: I have been used to deep play, but I can make one at small game when I like my gamester well.
>
> Harriet: And be so unconcerned you'll ha' no pleasure in't.
>
> Dorimant: Where there is considerable sum to be won, the hope of drawing people in makes every trifle considerable.
>
> Harriet: The sordidness of men's natures, I know, makes 'em willing to flatter and comply with the rich, though *they* are sure never to be the better for 'em.
>
> Dorimant: 'Tis in their power to do *us* good, and we despair not but at some time or other they may be willing. (III.iii.p.114) (my italics)

This exchange begins with the double entendre of "deep play" and "ha' no pleasure in't" but, moving to "they and "us," ends in allusions to contemporary socio-economic divisions. As an heiress, Harriet is acutely aware of the role her wealth plays in her personal relationships: whoever wins her hand in marriage, also wins her money. She responds to Dorimant's comment, "Where there is a considerable sum to be

won," by describing the manipulative tactics of flattery and ingratiation that poorer men use towards the rich. As a woman, Harriet sees herself as a target for exploitation, but as one of the landed gentry she also speaks from a class perspective. Echoing the class tensions of the Jacobean period, Harriet does not view the poor's fawning as the kind of "even exchange" that Dorimant conducts with Bellair, but only as a loss for the aristocracy: "they are sure never to be the better for 'em," she concludes. Dorimant, on the other hand, makes no attempt to hide his view of those wealthier than he--"'Tis in their power to do us good"--they exist to be used. Significantly, this dialogue, which strips away the facade of social melding to reveal two economic "camps," takes place between a man and woman. The Jacobeans were not the only playwrights to use gender politics as a means of discussing class tensions; Restoration dramatists dipped their pens in that same inkwell when it was useful.

In another instance, again in a joking exchange--the red herrings of comedy--Bellair cautions Dorimant, "You had best not think of Mistress Harriet too much. Without church security, there's no taking up there" (V.i.p.134). The tone of Dorimant's response is pure male bravado, but it also reveals the distinction he draws between his potential marriage and the wealthy Bellair's: "I may fall into the snare, too. But,/ The wise will find a difference in our

fate:/ You wed a woman, I a good estate" (V.i.p.134). Perhaps this is the only reason such a hedonist can offer to rationalize his becoming "snared," but Bellair, of all Dorimant's friends, is the one who certainly could understand the power of love. On the other hand, he is also the friend who represents the position Dorimant will attain when he marries Harriet. Bellair needs only a woman since he has an inheritance; Dorimant needs one to get the other.

Dorimant's final reference to Harriet's wealth adroitly mixes truth with lies. He gives Mistress Loveit yet one more excuse for having discarded her: "...this is/ the business, this is the mask has kept me from you...a wife, to repair the ruins of my estate that/ needs it" (V.ii.p.147). Having been privy to Dorimant's asides in which he admits his love for Harriet, the audience knows that Dorimant paints a false picture for Mistress Loveit. But reflecting on Dorimant's ambiguously bankrolled lifestyle and on their own class aspirations, the contemporary audience might also have recognized more than a kernel of truth in Dorimant's apparent falsehood.

It is humorously ironic that Dorimant, the man who seems to be able to have any woman he wants and who shuns business, must work very hard to win Harriet's hand in marriage. And, since Harriet's "hand" also embodies traditional upper-class wealth, it is not surprising that Dorimant must also win over Lady Woodville, "a great admirer

of the forms and civility of the last age" (I.i.p.84). Dorimant, disguised at Harriet's suggestion as "Mr. Courtage," joins in Lady Woodville's criticism of the age in order to win her good will. The bon vivant who has mocked the toil of others now toils at self-mockery in order to placate the apprehensions of the conservative establishment. He must repudiate the very things in which he takes the utmost pleasure while at the same time trying to put in a good word for "the wicked Dorimant" whenever possible.

These are humorous exchanges, and to be sure, some are directed at Lady Woodville's vanity and nostalgia for the good old days when love, not lewdness, "was the business" of the day:

> Dorimant (as Mr. Courtage): [Young men of this age] cry a woman's past her prime at twenty, decayed at four-and-twenty, old and insufferable at thirty.
>
> .....
>
> Lady Woodville: The deprived appetite of this vicious age tastes nothing but green fruit and loathes it when 'tis kindly ripened.
>
> Dorimant: Else so many deserving women, madam, would not be so untimely neglected.
>
> Lady Woodville: I protest, Mr. Courtage, a dozen such good men as you would be enough to atone for that wicked Dorimant and all the under-debauchees of the town. (IV.I. p.121)

But the conversation also focuses on the issue of "quality" and subtly points to a social perspective stubbornly unshaken by Restoration "modishness": traditional wealth and class hierarchy remain standard measures of a

man's place in the world.

> Dorimant: All people mingle nowadays, madam. And in public places women of quality have the least respect showed 'em.
>
> Lady Woodville: I protest you say the truth, Mr. Courtage.
>
> Dorimant: Forms and ceremonies, the only things that uphold quality and greatness, are now shamefully laid aside and neglected. (IV.i.p.120)

True to the audience's expectations, this city comedy ends with a wedding and feast--Bellair and Emilia's wedding celebration. Dorimant and Harriet are not married by the end of the play, but Lady Woodville grants Dorimant permission to continue courting Harriet at their country estate--the proper place and pace, after all, for someone who is "earning" his way into substantial wealth. But, even as he moves upward, there remains the strong possibility that Dorimant is too much a man of his age to revert to the gentlemanliness of an earlier time. Harriet senses this when she rejects Dorimant's vow to renounce wine, women, and friends for her sake, and she says: "Hold! Though I wish you devout, I would not have you turn fanatic" (V.ii.p.144).

When he marries Harriet, Dorimant's circumstances will open up with new possibilities: there will a steady stream of estate money to try his hand at investing in stocks and bonds; Harriet's own love of London could easily result in a town-and-country life;[36] contemporary social mores would permit further sexual intrigues throughout the marriage.

Dorimant, it appears, has found a middle ground for himself in this "new" age.

Even though Jacobean whores became mistresses in Restoration comedy, monied widows were portrayed on the Restoration stage much as on the Jacobean boards--as reservoirs of potential capital gains for males. As a result, the issue of controlling a widow's money through her remarriage is also a focus of Restoration comedies. William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700) is a comedy often discussed in the context of the "proviso scene" between the lovers Millamant and Mirabell. The crux of the plot, however, lies in the struggle over the control of a widow's money--two widows, in fact. This struggle, I argue, contains elements of the British policy that was to shape the political and economic mindset in the new century: imperialism.

Fainall and Mirabell are friends who maintain different social and legal ties with the widowed Lady Wishfort and her widowed daughter, Arabella. The men have the same male patriarchal license to control female autonomy, however, and this inherent authority along with the men's conflicting self-interest renders the play's moving force the power struggle between men, portrayed in the scuffle over the women's capital. Admittedly, as is usually the case with comedies filled with romantic intrigues, Congreve's play twists and turns on one sexual conquest, defeat, or quagmire

after another. The twists and turns leading to the happy union of Mirabell and Millamant, however, run parallel to the snares Fainall and Mirabell lay to attain their sexual and economic goals.

Fainall has married the young widow, Arabella, solely for her money, and now he sees a chance to increase her estate by the six thousand pounds she would receive if her cousin Millamant were disinherited for marrying Mirabell. Fainall is annoyed that his own lover, Mistress Marwood, because she is jealous of Millamant, has ruined this chance by telling Lady Wishfort of Mirabell's "pretended passions" towards the older woman in order to be near her niece. In frustration he scolds Mistress Marwood:

> Fainall: ...And wherefore did I marry, but to make a lawful prize of a rich widow's wealth, and squander it on love and you?
>
> Mistress Marwood: Deceit and frivolous pretense!
>
> Fainall: Death, am I not married? What's pretense? Am I not imprisoned, fettered? Have I not a wife? Nay a wife that was a widow, a young widow, a handsome widow; and would be again a widow, but that I have a heart of proof, and something of a constitution to bustle through the ways of wedlock and this world. (II.p.171)

What Fainall does not know, however, is that the "lawful prize" of his wife's money has never been in his control--even though he has obtained a marriage settlement for "the best part of her estate." Fainall is cognizant of the fact that Arabella and Mirabell once were lovers, but he does not know that his marriage to Arabella was orchestrated

by Mirabell as a way to save Arabella's reputation, especially if she had become pregnant as a result of their liaison. In an early scene in the play Mirabell reminds the unhappy Arabella of the necessity for her marriage:

> If the familiarities of our loves had produced that consequence of which you were apprehensive, where could you have fixed a father's name with credit, but on a husband? I knew Fainall to be a man lavish of his morals, an interested and professing friend, a false and designing lover; yet one whose wit and outward fair behavior have gained a reputation with the town enough to make that woman stand excused who has suffered herself to be won by his addresses. A better man ought not to have been sacrificed to the occasion; a worse had not answered to the purpose. (II.p.172)

Mirabell presents himself as Mistress Fainall's protector from social degradation. He also protected himself, however, from the necessity of having to marry Mistress Fainall.

Not only did Mirabell "cuckold" his friend Fainall sexually, but he also accomplished it economically. Before she married Fainall, Arabella signed a deed of conveyance of her entire estate in trust to Mirabell, so there never was any "half of her estate" to be settled on Fainall at the marriage. Again, Mirabell explains the protection offered to Arabella through this conveyance, since "the wholesome advice of friends" warned her of Fainall's "inconstancy and tyranny of temper" (V.p.215). But Fainall was Mirabell's choice for Arabella, after all, and he gained a second time from the scheme: he gained control of her money without having to be her husband. Fainall has been manipulated and

his economic rights as a husband have been undermined--not by a scheming or revengeful female, but by his wife's lover, his supposed friend.

This astounding news is revealed at the end of the play when Mirabell uses it to force Lady Wishfort to declare: "I'll forgive all that's past; nay, I'll consent to anything to come" (V.p.213)--in other words, ultimately, to assure Millamant and Mirabell's union. The revelation's more immediate effect is to stop Fainall's new greedy lunge for Lady Wishfort's money. Having failed in his scheme to obtain Millamant's inheritance, Fainall tries to blackmail Lady Wishfort by threatening to divorce Arabella because of her infidelity, thus exposing the family to public scandal. Not only does Fainall want the remainder of Arabella's estate to be conveyed to him, and "for her maintenance depend entirely on [his] discretion" (V.p.210), he also wants Lady Wishfort to promise never to seek remarriage or, if she is pursued, to grant Fainall the "power to choose" (V.p.210) her husband. His threat is effectively stopped when Mirabell reveals Fainall's true, estate-less status.

Even though he tries to destroy rather than to protect reputations, Fainall seeks to create new positions of patriarchal and economic authority just as Mirabell does. Both men can claim the title "entrepreneur" as they attempt to expand their authority beyond traditional boundaries: Mirabell, even though a lover, secretly controls money a

husband should have; Fainall declares his position as husband to be one of absolute authority, expanding it to include his mother-in-law.

Mirabell's and Fainall's scheming reveals how capitalism worked within English culture some twenty years after Etherege's Dorimant pursued status and money through marriage. Mirabell and Fainall reveal characteristics of the imperialist capitalist--a form of entrepreneurial ambition which seeks to create a "self-supporting empire." But, in this particular instance, Fainall and Mirabell attempt to colonize vulnerable women rather than vulnerable foreign states.

The success of capitalism depends on the proliferation of markets in which to buy and sell. By 1700 English capitalism had progressed from the early days of small entrepreneurs, from the selling and buying of money itself through the banking and investment marketplaces, to another level of operation: that of utilizing raw goods from far-flung colonies to produce products to supply existing markets and to create new ones. London, of course, was the center of this commercialism that now, more than any earlier time in English history, focused on the shipping trade. Capitalist entrepreneurship and investment practices, which had spawned the East India Company in 1600, grew a "forest of masts" on the Thames as ships brought tea from India, animal pelts and tobacco from North America, ivory from

Africa,[37] and sugar from the Caribbean to a society eager to consume the goods of the world.

Since Restoration women's lives already contained the paternalistic elements found in the imperialistic equation--sustenance and protection in exchange for total submission--it is not difficult to point out additional connections in this comedy between the wily attempts at appropriating women's wealth and the patronizingly exploitative national policy of colonialism. To begin with, neither Lady Wishfort nor Arabella is valued for the "finished product" of her body--a child--that a man might desire to perpetuate his estate. Indeed, Lady Wishfort seems well past the age of child-bearing, and a pregnancy for Arabella might have created paternity problems for Mirabell and would be a financial blow for Fainall, who needs funds to lavish on Mistress Marwood. Rather, the women are valued for the "raw resources" of their monies, resources with which Fainall and Mirabell can use to produce new authority and extended powers--the "commodities" they really desire.

In addition, the women's quasi-independent status, which these "raw" assets grant, is akin to the autonomy of a small or underdeveloped state, rich in natural resources but lacking means to repulse attempts at domination from outside its borders. Even though regaining "rightful" male control over a widow's money contains a gender conflict not found in the act of appropriating the "natural" resources of a state,

the paternalistic mindset of colonialism is at work in both cases: belief in another being's innate ineptitude as an underlying justification for subjugation. The expression, "the white man's burden," it seems clear, traces its roots back to the rhetoric of patriarchy. To Mirabell and Fainall, then, the women's wealth would provide satellite territories of income based in economic, social, and sexual dependency all supported by legal codes.

Fainall's efforts, however, crumble in the face of the reality of his situation; and Mirabell, having revealed his secret "cache," forfeits its control to Arabella, the rightful owner. Mirabell tells Arabella he is returning her deed of trust so that "it may be a means, well-managed, to make you [and Fainall] live easily together" (V.p.216). His gesture will not provide Arabella with any real measure of empowerment within her marriage since the law still deems her money to be under her husband's control, but Mirabell's "generosity" mitigates his responsibility for having helped to create Arabella's situation in the first place. Besides, Mirabell has used the fact of his trusteeship to bargain for what he really wanted: Lady Wishfort's permission to marry Millamant and her six thousand pounds. Lady Wishfort's and Arabella's reaction to all of these revelations of chicanery and manipulation focuses on their gratitude to Mirabell. Even when Lady Wishfort compliments Arabella on wisely conveying her estate saying, "O daughter, daughter, 'tis

plain thou hast inherited thy mother's prudence," Arabella replies, "Thank Mr. Mirabell, a cautious friend, to whose advice is all owing" (V.p.216). The humor in this exchange is based in the fact that Lady Wishfort has actually been very imprudent in lavishing her emotional resources on all the wrong men--first, on Mirabell, and then on his disguised servingman. Ultimately, the women never move from their symbolic "colonial" status: they are really no less vulnerable now than when the play began; while they have escaped assaults on their autonomy, they have not gained additional strength and are grateful to be left alone. In these initial, crass attempts, Fainall and Mirabell do not succeed in grasping the widows' resources. England, however, would forge ahead in the new century to build an economic empire, and later plays and new forms of literature would take up the themes of colonialism[38]--a mixture of economic and social subjugation that Congreve's comedy illustrated for the Restoration stage.

In summary, it might at first seem incongruous to look for connections between economics and women in societies where women have little standing and almost no opportunities to amass fortunes of their own. An examination of the portrayals of monied women on the Jacobean and Restoration stages shows, however, that the courtesan and the widow

served important functions in these emerging capitalist societies.

In Jacobean city comedies, condemnation of the courtesan is the means by which to control both female autonomy and male ambition. The courtesan is a socially marginalized figure and is, therefore, vulnerable to the kind of criticism to which the aggressive businessman was immune, since the culture valued his success even as it feared his social aspirations.

On the Restoration stage, when capitalism had become established economic policy, the figure of the courtesan is no longer used to condemn the ambitious man but, instead, to validate his success. The gentleman's ability to maintain a mistress indicates not only his sexual prowess but his financial resources, as well. Even though the Jacobean tensions between "just price" and profit have long been resolved, the Restoration man must negotiate between the currencies of modish and traditional lifestyles. The drama's treatment of the courtesan reflects this cultural polarization since she is received at social gatherings but never considered marriageable.

The portrayal of the widow remains more constant during the two periods: she is someone whose money must be returned to proper male control through remarriage. Not surprisingly, in the guise of regaining this control other issues between men are aired. In the Jacobean period a

wealthy widow might become the target of revenge for her late husband's capitalistic dealings; the Restoration widow might suffer men's fledgling attempts to flex imperialistic muscles. In all of these dramatic representations, however, men discovered ways--through their relationships with women --to speak to other men about money matters.

NOTES

1. Burford, 124. The author describes an eyewitness account in 1543 when hooligans, rowing on the Thames, shot stones "at the queenes on the Banckes." The types of bows used had been forbidden by the King's ordinance, but obviously "the miscreants may have thought that when the whores were targets, it was permissible." Burford notes that the tradition of whorebashing thrived as late as the 18th century as recorded by Smollet.

2. Rose, 32. Mary Beth Rose uses this term specifically in reference to Puritan tracts of the time. For example, the tracts called for women's subordination while declaring women's souls equal to men's; also, they maintained that an individual's personality and desire must be asserted and fulfilled but not by violating spiritual authority and social stability. I make reference to this application of the term later in this chapter, but I also see this doublemindedness as a possible characteristic of any society in any age that is in the throes of change.

3. Fletcher and Stevenson, 38.

4. Burford, 141.

5. Shugg, 296.

6. Haselkorn, 2.

7. Haselkorn, 15-16. The government tried to deal with the problem of the vagrant poor by reenacting in 1601 the Poor Law of 1598. Besides requiring parishes to put aside funds for the poor, the law also permitted forced labor of the poor in the form of permanent apprenticeship to a master. Those refusing to work were sent to a house of correction. Haselkorn points out that given the alternatives--forced labor or imprisonment, or prostitution or imprisonment--many women chose the more unfettered labor of prostitution.

8. Shakespeare uses Doll Tearsheet as a name for the whore in *Henry IV, Part II*; Middleton's use is more oblique in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*: the daughter of the goldsmith Yellowhammer is called Moll, indicating her potential whoredom since her father tries to "sell" her into marriage with Sir Walter Whorehound--whose name is also appropriately descriptive. Moll Cutpurse in Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* is an exception, since her status is fluid throughout the play.

9. Haselkorn, 2.

10. Haselkorn, 22. Haselkorn's extensive study divides the *moral* attitude towards whores in the period's drama into three categories: Cavalier, Puritan, and Liberal. I have chosen to focus on two plays which I feel discuss economic tensions through the main character of the courtesan; I also describe *The Honest Whore* in terms of Puritanism, but from the economic component in the religious ideology.

11. Cook, 287. In an article that draws perceptive conclusions about audience based on contemporary criticism of whores in attendance at playhouses, Cook notes that this criticism lends credence to the idea that the wealthy merchant and wealthy courtesan did attend the Elizabethan theater: courtesans wouldn't or couldn't afford to waste a whole afternoon at a play if there wasn't some possibility that they could expect "an angel as their return on an 18 pence investment."

12. Haselkorn, 22.

13. Lipson, 209.

14. Weber, 53. See also *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism* (1926) by English economic historian, R. H. Tawney.

15. Stone, *Social Mobility*, 52.

16. Haselkorn, 124. Bellafront's marriage could be viewed as a reward from society for her conversion, but her husband will not provide her with any *personal* happiness. Matheo is a wastrel and a cynic who thinks that all women eventually become whores.

17. Burford, 145-6.

18. Palliser, 381-82. Palliser notes that besides brewing, the Dutch immigrants made an impact in "New Draperies," using up hitherto discarded medium grade wool in cloth that appealed to the poor because of its lower cost and to the fashionable because of its variety. It is not unthinkable that Candido in *The Honest Whore* reflects, in some way, the influence of the commercial philosophy of the Dutch immigrant drapers.

19. Burford, 146. Burford relates that the brothel, which was encircled by a moat and entered by a drawbridge, could claim royal connections: the cousin of Queen Elizabeth, Lord Hunsdon, leased the property to Hollander, and King James was among its many satisfied customers. Hollander's own tolerance for all nationalities (and her business acumen) is expressed in her declaration: "I make no scruple but give free trafique to all nations. If you have paid your dues,

you may putt in!" The brothel was closed by government troops in 1632 (178).

20. Lipson, 10-11.

21. Hedrick, 3. I am indebted to the author's recognition of this concept in his paper presented at the March, 1995 Shakespeare Association of America seminar "Prostitution in Early Modern Society and Drama."

22. Roberts and Roberts, 307.

23. Roberts and Roberts, 307.

24. Jackson and Neill, *The Dutch Courtesan*, in *Selected Plays of John Marston*, editors' note, 388.

25. Jardine, 80.

26. Stone, *Crisis*, 358. While Stone concentrates on the nobility in his valuable study, he does reveal an interesting level of participation in urban development by the middle or gentry class businessman. He notes that while the valuable London property was held by the upper class (usually having been gained through the Crown by the dissolution of the monasteries) and "...the landlord controlled and directed the development of his property,...the capital was supplied either by the individual tenant or by a speculative builder who took the lease of a block and built to sublet."

27. Wilson, 31. The author describes this group as consisting of courtiers made of up of "lords, ladies, knights, dames, and lesser gentry who as the King's or the Duke of York's servants, lodged in the sprawling congeries of chambers of Whitehall and St. James Palace. The Town included all the wealthy, fashionable folk, habitues of the Court, who had mansions or lodgings in Piccadilly, St. James Square." He also identifies a "fringe group" of politicians, minor officials, university students, the visiting wealthy from the country, and footmen and maids who sat in the upper galleries.

28. Burns, 1. Burns' term focuses more on the push towards embracing the new in Restoration society than I believe to be the case. He says, "Restoration culture is a compromise, often uneasy, sometimes poised, an anxious and contradictory endeavor to *create traditions* and celebrate newness" (my italics). In the same way in which I adapted Mary Beth Rose's term "doublemindedness" to my argument regarding economic issues with the Puritans, I also adapt Burns' term as a way to describe the culture's attempts to *maintain old*

traditions (and thus, a sense of social stability) while it celebrated "newness"--at times a disruptive unknown.

29. The Restoration theater also incorporated the reality of women actresses and playwrights within the drama it presented. Aphra Behn's perspective and influence within city comedies will be discussed in Chapter IV.

30. Stone, *Social Mobility,* 28. Stone discusses this idea in the context of the "fundamental dichotomy" in the sixteenth century between the non-gentleman and gentleman: those who worked with their hands and those who did not. As capitalism took hold, however, I believe that this simple division had to make room for the reality of the financial success of men who "worked with their hands," and that even during the Tudor period, this dividing line was being challenged and blurred.

31. Lipson, 217. Just 15 years later over 50 million pounds would be invested in stocks and bonds.

32. Lipson, 216.

33. Lipson, 222-31. The interesting history of the development of the banking system includes the role of the goldsmiths who received and physically guarded a depositor's funds "while the King gave assurance of their solvency and declared that the Exchequer would meet its obligations to them" (231).

34. Tannahill, 336. By the mid-1700's, Tannahill points out, the professional men on the continent preferred the "semi-official mistress" who was maintained in rented rooms or an apartment separate from the family--hence, the expression, "kept woman."

35. Roberts and Roberts, 377. The authors note that the king acquired his first mistress by the age of 18 and fathered 14 bastard children from his numerous liaisons thereafter.

36. Stone, *Crisis,* 337. Stone mentions that the aristocracy not only built themselves city homes but by the mid-1600's some aristocrats had become urban developers, creating both fashionable districts and tenements, and therefore finding new sources of income from rental properties. Splitting their time between two homes--one in the city and one in the country--thus became one of the hallmarks of the upper class. The custom arose from both ends of the social spectrum: the aristocracy began moving into London to relieve the isolation of the dreary estates during the winter months and developed what became known as the social

season. Wealthy merchants, already living in London, tried to emulate the ancient aristocracy by purchasing country estates. Business concerns--on the docks or in the fields--still, however, determined the amount of time spent at either dwelling.

37. Roberts and Roberts, 409.

38. Aphra Behn's comedy *The Widow Ranter* and the novella *Oroonoko* present views of life in the English colonies of America and Surinam. Daniel Defoe's novel *Robinson Crusoe* is a mixture of the white, Western ideals of self-sufficiency and the patronizing attitudes held regarding even the "noble" savage.

Chapter III

"Authentic" Women: Daughters and Wives

In the first half of the seventeenth century, women and actors acquired their "roles" from the same source: from scripts written by men. Actors portrayed women on stage by memorizing a playwright's witty lines or speeches of pathos. Real women, however, mastered their societal roles by adhering to patriarchally scripted legal codes, religious tracts, and the unwritten but powerful tenets of tradition.

Modern feminism allows for, and often fiercely debates, various definitions of patriarchy.[1] While accepting the theory that, fundamentally, patriarchy is a social system that promotes belief in male superiority and supersedes historical time frames, I believe also that the system's *specific* goals are always changing and, as a result, patriarchal actions reflect the social climate of an age. In other words, patriarchy must "fit" the period's concept of male superiority.

Therefore, this study focuses on both Jacobean and Restoration women's identities through relationships with men as their daughters, wives, and mothers. Patriarchy declared that these were the "authentic" positions of women within the hierarchy that God had established with the

creation of Adam and Eve and their descendants, and the periods' legal codes and religious teachings supported this view. It follows, then, that this chapter will speak more of men than women since the seventeenth century viewed women as primarily as vehicles through which to establish male identity.

For the purposes of this study, the works of Heidi Hartmann, Christine Delphy, and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick are especially relevant. Hartmann describes patriarchy as "a set of social relations between men...which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women."[2] Delphy sees patriarchy as "a system of exploitation of women by men through the marriage contract."[3] Sedgwick sees patriarchal misogyny firmly linked to homophobia, as a means of regulating male relations.[4] While these authors focus on the economic aspects of male dominance and on homosexuality respectively, their salient points--patriarchy as a social system among men, and the power of the marriage contract--are valid and applicable in a much broader sense of gender relations in the Jacobean and Restoration periods and help to reveal what, I believe, is the periods' unspoken patriarchal goal: to provide men with a way to demonstrate their manhood and thus claim a place in the male, public world.

To understand the true significance of women's lives

under patriarchy during this time, it is important to note that men, too, were governed by explicit definitions of gender. They were expected to be obedient sons and conscientious husbands and fathers. Men, however, moved in the public worlds of war and work, and were never solely defined by their biological functioning, nor by their relationship to women.

In fact, a fundamental difference existed between the seventeenth century's demands on men and on women, which reveals the true character of women's lives under patriarchy. This fundamental difference, based in patriarchal necessity of demonstrating manhood, viewed the control of women as the *manifestation* of manhood. And, even though women were, undeniably, the victims of patriarchal oppression, the system ultimately had more to do with men than with women--as is revealed by the unchanged status of women even in the face of the stirring political, social, and economic changes of the Jacobean and Restoration periods.

During James I's reign economic changes caused anxieties as the concepts of just price and entrepreneurship clashed. In addition, the Reformation, and especially the Puritan dissenters' views of marriage, helped to create a tenuous and ambiguous position for women: the natural "equality of all souls" was subordinated, in women's everyday lives, to the natural authority of men within the

family and society.[5]

As Margaret Ezell notes, "Seventeenth-century domestic patriarchalism was a literary phenomenon--a concept of power derived from a literary source, the Bible, and codified in written documents."[6] Universally held religious beliefs based in the Biblical "truth" of Genesis solidified the concept of male superiority. And yet, the position of wife was also likened to Eve's as Adam's helpmate; she toiled willingly along with him for the same goals. Milton's *Paradise Lost* offers a poetic version of that Biblical truth as Adam lays out their gardening duties to Eve:

> To morrow ere fresh morning streak the east
> With first approach of light, we must be ris'n,
> And at our pleasant labor, to reform
> Yon flow'ry arbors, yonder alleys green,...
> (IV.623-26)

Eve, acknowledging Adam's authority, replies:

> My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
> Unargued I obey; so God ordains.
> God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
> Is woman's happiest knowledge and her praise.
> (IV.635-38)

Some more liberal thinkers and female apologists tried to "elevate" women's status by pointing out that Eve was God's last, and therefore, most perfect creation, or that she was a true "helpmate" since she was fashioned from Adam's rib, and not his foot--this bent bone indicating her true ability to be pliable and supportive to her husband's leadership.[7] Or, as Reay Tannahill describes it: "In effect, [the religious reformers] upgraded the position of 'wife' without

upgrading the women who held it."[8] No one, however, attempted to disturb the concept that man was positioned at the top of the hierarchical order. Since women were considered men's natural inferiors, their challenge to men's *natural authority* could only be perceived as rebellion.

But the true moral of Adam and Eve's story emerges only when seen in the light of their children's fate: the competition between Cain and Abel to claim a place in the world, I suggest, is mirrored by the seventeenth century's concept of patriarchy. As Adam's sons, men could claim dominance over women as their birthright, but all of the "sons" had to compete with each other to find a place in the *fraternal* hierarchy. Since men had natural authority and women none, the real struggle for power and control was based outside of the male/female relationship, as men tried, ultimately, to dominate *each other*. Certainly, struggles for dominance within personal relationships between men and women existed--city comedy offers us many such scenes--but these struggles take place in the private, domestic world and are grounded in the concept of a woman's "rebellion" against the "natural" authority of her husband or father.

Since men found their identity in the public world, their ability to wrest some measure of power from each other--whether physically on the battlefield or psychologically within the community--was what gave them status in the public sphere. Daughters and wives were the

currency through which individual men could become power brokers. Woman's womb might define her as the biological repository of new male life, but patriarchy actually claimed her whole being as the vessel needed, psychologically and physiologically, to help beget male identity.

Marriage, the most intimate of legally forged relationships, also wore a very public face. The marital relationship provided individual men the domain--a microcosmic world--in which to prove their ability to govern while, at the same time, it produced sons with which to perpetuate and reaffirm male dominion over the earth. The Reformation helped to increase the authority of a husband, in another melding of private and public worlds. As Christopher Hill notes:

> The Reformation, by reducing the authority of the priest in society, simultaneously elevated the authority of lay heads of households, as intermediaries between the central government and their own servants and dependents, no less than between the latter and God.[9]

Replacing the priest, the Protestant husband was responsible for the salvation of the souls within his household, and one of the ways he could carry out his duty was to enforce his family's attendance at public church services.[10] The man who governed a chaste, silent, and obedient wife and daughter could declare his manhood no matter what his actual social or economic status, since this concept of manhood was more fundamental than class identity. Therefore, a baron

could be derided (behind his back, of course) for being under the lashing tongue of a shrewish wife, or a laborer could be admired for maintaining a household consisting of an obedient wife and children.

Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1612) is a city comedy that clearly demonstrates male competition as expressed through relationships with women. The play reveals patriarchy as a system that provides men with a way to claim manhood: the men in *Chaste Maid* negotiate privately among themselves in order to gain a specific status within the larger community. Three marriages are presented, each beset by the husbands' and wives' personal dilemmas, but all greatly influenced, if not totally defined, by these dealings between men. In all three marriages what has been privately bargained for, however, is the control of a woman: most specifically, of her body. In other words, the comedy is the men's "story" and, even though the women in the play are portrayed as having distinct personalities, they all *function*, ultimately, as collateral in these male contracts.

The goldsmith, Yellowhammer, and his wife, Maud, are the first couple on stage--scolding their reluctant daughter, Moll, into accepting marriage with Sir Walter Whorehound, whose true baseness is aptly described by his name. Middleton presents a sympathetic, albeit conventional, picture of young lovers, Moll and Touchwood, Jr., thwarted by the Yellowhammers' parental authority;

their reunion after "death" at the end of the play is a happy version of the much earlier *Romeo and Juliet*. What undergirds this story of true love, however, is both the sordid bargaining between Yellowhammer and Sir Walter, and the patriarchally defined functions of wife and daughter in the matrimonial marketplace.

Yellowhammer has offered his daughter's virginity and a substantial sum of gold in exchange for the title and honor that Sir Walter will bestow upon Moll and, through her, upon the goldsmith's family. It matters little to Yellowhammer that Sir Walter is corrupt. His title indicates honor, and even the appearance of honor will satisfy Yellowhammer's drive to be allied with the upper classes, for the wealthy goldsmith realizes his money raises him only so far up the social ladder.

In fact, when Yellowhammer is informed that Sir Walter has been bedding another man's wife for the past ten years and has several children by her, Yellowhammer, though at first angry, almost immediately rationalizes a way to keep his contract viable:

> Well grant all this, say now his deeds are
> black,
> Pray what serves marriage, but to call him
> back;
> I have kept a whore myself, and had a
> bastard. . .
> This knight is rich, he shall be my son-in-law,
> No matter so the whore he keeps be wholesome,
> My daughter takes no hurt then, so let them
> wed,
> I'll have him sweat well e'er they go to bed.
> (IV.1.270-2,277-80).

Yellowhammer clearly aligns himself with male sexual prowess and prerogative--he, too, has kept a whore and had a bastard--and therefore can easily dismiss Sir Walter's conduct and refocus on the bargaining chip he holds: his daughter's virgin body. His intention to have Sir Walter "sweat well" to remove any disease is a way to pay lip service to his fatherly duty as his child's protector.

It is clear from the very outset of the play that Moll is a victim of her father's ambitions. Even the title of the play refers to her, although the contemporary audience might have considered it an oxymoron: Cheapside maids were not known for their chastity.[11] Yet Middleton gives the young girl a nickname common to prostitutes and thereby continues the irony: even given Moll's chastity, the name fits because she is being prostituted by her father. When she is discovered on the point of marrying her true love, Touchwood Junior, her father's shouts clearly indicate her place and value in the family circle: "I will lock up this baggage,/ As carefully as my gold; she shall see as little sun/ If a close room or so can keep her from the light on't" (III.i.50-2).

As the daughter of a wealthy tradesman, Moll's position places her in an especially cruel trap fashioned from her father's attempts to gain upward social mobility. If Moll were from a poor family, she would be freer to choose whom

she wanted to marry for, more than likely, she would be on her own in London, or her family would view her marriage as simply relieving them of one more mouth to feed. From the late Tudor period on, the growing population of London included an influx of young women from the countryside looking for work. These young women had great freedom in choosing their mates; with the geographical distance, parents lost a great deal of control over choosing, or even approving, their daughter's husband.[12] On the other hand, if Moll were from a titled family, she would have been given her wifely "script" by an early age: to be married to a husband whose title would help to create a dynasty when joined with her own.[13] Neither poor nor titled, Moll is subject to the changing Jacobean social climate and to the whims of her father's growing ambitions. And, as a result, she and Touchwood Junior fall in love as two poor young people might, while she is susceptible to being bartered off like an aristocrat. This type of vulnerability defines Moll as a true member of a "middle" class.

While Moll is obviously a "commodity" to her father, she does not appear to be much more than that to her mother, either: the play opens with Maud harshly criticizing Moll for being "dull" and for weeping over the intended wedding to Sir Walter. Very few dramas of the age portray the mother/daughter relationship and when they do, their women characters identify with each other only in response to

their relationship with the men in their lives--an indication, perhaps, that, even in creating women characters, the male playwrights' mirror on society continued to reflect men.[14]

In this comedy, Maud and Moll's relationship is portrayed as part of the theme of Moll's proposed marriage to Sir Walter and, given the focus of the plot, this choice makes dramatic sense. But to appreciate fully the roles of mother and daughter in Jacobean society, we must also note what is *not* represented on stage: any allusion to a woman-centered relationship between them. There is no sympathetic exchange between mother and daughter, for example, that acknowledges the heavy duty of women to be obedient, nor the encouragement of an older woman to a younger one to be brave in taking up the wifely role. Maud does not offer any empathy because, even though a mother, she functions in this play as a *wifely agent* of patriarchy, or stated in contemporary terms, as the Good Wife.[15] Any woman-centered relationship must be subsumed in the patriarchal hierarchy and must yield to patriarchal goals--in this instance, Yellowhammer's negotiations.

As the Good Wife, one of Maud's chief characteristics is adaptability to her husband's way of thinking. He leads and she follows, altering herself to be both a reflection of and partner to her husband.[16] Just as governance over women was needed for men to be able to declare their manhood

psychologically, so too, the wife as psychological companion was a necessity. In other words, wives were forced to exist in the dual roles of submissive follower and supportive consort so that men could compete successfully against each other.

As the supportive helpmate, Maud must ensure Moll's cooperation in the marriage plans, and in the opening lines between mother and daughter Maud proclaims various patriarchal messages about women's value and their sexuality:

> Yes, you are a dull maid alate,. . . do you weep? A husband. Had not such a piece of flesh been ordained, what had us wives been good for? To make salads, or else cried up and down for samphire. . . . When I was of your youth, I was lightsome, and quick, two years before I was married. . . I hold my life you have forgot your dancing. . . When I was of your bord, [the dancer] missed me not a night, I was kept at it; I took delight to learn, and he to teach me, pretty brown gentleman, he took pleasure in my company; but you are dull, nothing comes nimbly from you, you dance like a plumber's daughter, and deserve two thousand pounds in lead to your marriage, and not in goldsmith's ware. (I.i.3-20)

Even with her support of marriage--"what had us wives been good for?"--Maud's allusions to her youthful sexual exploits seem a curious, if not a shocking way to speak to a chaste daughter who must remain chaste and obedient within her marriage if she is to be respected within society. But since Maud is an agent for patriarchy, her words also subtly allude to the male perspective--and male anxieties--about women's sexuality.

Jacobean men might have enjoyed a double standard in their own libidinous activity, but they found themselves in a double bind regarding women's sexuality. On one hand, a woman needed to be aroused to orgasm, it was believed, in order for her to conceive; on the other hand, a woman who was too easily aroused might become promiscuous and conceive outside of her marriage bed. Maud's sexual exploits, which took place *before* her marriage, represent the "training" Moll lacks that now must be instilled verbally. Therefore, once Maud has affirmed the proper place for sex--with a husband--she can sanction the "delight to learn" and being "kept at it," for she must also ensure that Moll's chastity will give way to lustiness when she is married.

When Yellowhammer enters this scene between mother and daughter, however, his words immediately declare his place at the top of the family hierarchy:

> Yellowhammer: Now what's the din betwixt mother and daughter, ha?
>
> Maudlin: Faith small, telling your daughter Mary of her errors.
>
> Yellowhammer: 'Errors,' nay the city cannot hold you wife, but you must needs fetch words from Westminster. (I.i.21-4)

Yellowhammer's criticism of his wife's language immediately reduces her to a subservient status, proving he is as free to control her behavior as his daughter's. Yet her language seems almost innocuous given his own pretentious behavior a few lines later. An elderly porter arrives with a message

in Latin from the Yellowhammers' son, Tim, a boorish fellow and a student at Cambridge. The parents dote upon Tim, unlike Moll, even sending him a silver spoon with which "to eat his broth in the hall, amongst the gentlemen/commoners" (I.i.51-2). Tim's life, too, is determined by patriarchal goals--his father wants him to marry an "aristocratic" Welsh woman who, unbeknownst to the Yellowhammers, is really one of Sir Walter's whores. But, through his schooling (another arena for male competition) Tim is also being groomed for a role in the public world.

In a hilarious scene the Yellowhammers and the porter try to translate Tim's Latin message, with all three refusing to admit they haven't a clue as to its real meaning. The Yellowhammers look equally foolish because their attempts at translating are manifestations of their social aspirations. Besides mocking the couple's social pretensions, these lines more importantly reveal the basis for Yellowhammer's criticism of his wife: Maud's attempt at autonomy. Maud must be brought down when she rises too far above herself--and by herself. Linda Woodbridge has noted that during this period:

> Women's tongues are instruments of aggression or self-defense; men's are the tools of authority. In either case speech is an expression of authority; but male speech represents legitimate authority, while female speech attempts to usurp authority or rebel against it.[17]

Obviously, Yellowhammer hears Maud's speech as a challenge to his authority to mold his wife's identity. Therefore,

Maud's airs--and language--are permitted only if she is following her husband's lead.

Even though Maud functions as a patriarchal agent in the play, she cannot be separated from her primary status as a woman--a separation just as impossible for the real Jacobean wife. And this primary status as a woman makes her vulnerable to society's criticism for carrying out her husband's scheming.

In a later scene by the "Common Stairs" at Puddlewharf, where the Yellowhammers are desperately seeking Moll, who has run away to meet Touchwood Junior, Maud finds Moll and enters the stage, dragging her daughter by the hair. The watermen follow and offer the only community-based criticism of Moll's treatment:

> Maudlin: I'll tug thee home by the hair.
>
> Watermen: Good mistress spare her.
>
> Maudlin: Tend to your own business.
>
> Watermen: You are a cruel mother. (IV.ii.55-58)

The watermen exit but later report Maud's behavior to Touchwood Junior: "Half drowned, she cruelly tugged her by the hair,/Forced her disgracefully, not like a mother" (IV.ii.96-97). Maud's behavior is assuredly cruel and reprehensible, but the real sting of the criticism leveled against her is that her behavior is un-womanly. As much as we condemn Maud's behavior, we cannot ignore the fact that she is caught in the contradictory demands that patriarchy

imposes on all women: to remain the nurturing female while carrying out the often callous goals of patriarchy. The Jacobean mother was expected to run an ordered household and maintain strict discipline over children and servants, an expectation which could easily put her into direct conflict with her other "natural" role as nurturer. Even though she is carrying out the demands of the patriarchal household and being a helpmate to the father, Maud is attacked for having abandoned her identity as a tender-hearted woman.

While Maud is the one who receives society's condemnation, Yellowhammer is the one who fears the condemnation, knowing it threatens his status in the community and, therefore, his male identity. Near the end of the play, when the Yellowhammers think that Moll has died and that all their hopes for advancement are therefore lost, Yellowhammer frets over his situation:

> Yellowhammer: All the whole street will hate us,
> and the world
> Point me out cruel: it is our best course wife,
> After we have given order for the funeral,
> To absent ourselves, till she be laid in ground.
>
> Maudlin: Where shall we spend the time?
>
> Yellowhammer: I'll tell thee where wench, go to
> some private church,
> And marry Tim to the rich Brecknock gentlewoman.
>
> Maudlin: Mass a match,
> We'll not lose all at once, somewhat we'll catch.
> (V.ii.108-116)

Yellowhammer's assessment of his "cruel" actions has no connection to a sense of personal conscience; he is not

afraid of being judged by God, but rather by public opinion. At first glance, it seems easy to dismiss Yellowhammer's repulsive words as simply indicating of his "basic" immorality. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that Yellowhammer is devising a way to continue his quest for a place in the world of men--a world that, unlike God, soon forgets sins, especially when swayed by class and wealth. Therefore, Yellowhammer proposes to appease public outrage over his daughter's death by lying low and then returning to the community with his son married to the Welsh "heiress." Not surprisingly, Maud, whom we identify by now not as the heartless mother, but as the Good Wife, speaks as Yellowhammer's helpmate and, once again, affirms her husband's goals.

A second marriage in the play contains a bizarre sexual *menage a trois*, its humor based on social relations turned upside down--much like the topsy-turvy elements in the festive, medieval pageants, the precursors to city comedies.[18] As the Yellowhammers struggle to bring their uncooperative daughter to the altar, the waiting groom, Sir Walter, is busy maintaining his secret relationship with Mistress Allwit--and his secret patriarchal negotiations with her husband. Master Allwit's public role is to run Sir Walter's London household; his private role is to provide his employer complete sexual access to his wife. The secret relationship between Sir Walter and the compliant Mistress

Allwit furnishes the willing Allwit with yet another public role: providing a facade of respectability by pretending Sir Walter's bastard children are his own. Critics have remarked on Middleton's brilliant ability to present the relationships in this play in the extreme--to create comedy from the audacity of outlandish behavior and situations[19]--and Allwit's happy cooperation in being cuckolded is no exception.

As in the case of Yellowhammer's sale of his daughter, Allwit's relinquishment of his sexual rights over his wife is motivated by more than just simple greed for material wealth--even though Middleton focuses on this aspect, and critics often look no further than money to explain Allwit's behavior.[20] Allwit's initial soliloquy reveals, however, that he has given up his conjugal rights for something that is just as valuable, if not more valuable to him than money: relief from the duties and responsibilities of Jacobean manhood. Allwit, having ordered the servants to prepare for the master's homecoming, exults:

> I thank him, h'as maintained my house this ten years,
> Not only keeps my wife, but a keeps me,
> . . . . . .
> He gets me all my children, and pays the nurse,
> Monthly, or weekly, puts me to nothing,
> Rent, nor church duties, not so much as the scavenger:
> The happiest state that ever man was born to.
> .....
> I see these things, but like a happy man,
> I pay for none at all, yet fools think's mine;
> I have the name, and in his gold I shine.
> .....

> O two miraculous blessings; 'tis the knight
> Hath took that labour all out of my hands;
> I may sit still and play; he's jealous for me--
> Watches her steps, sets spies--I live at ease;
> He has both the cost and torment. . . (I.ii.16-55)

In his deft negotiations over his wife's body, Allwit has managed to relieve himself of two male *burdens*--earning his bread and breeding his own children--all the while maintaining his status in the community as a prosperous family man and churchgoer.

In fact, Allwit considers his status higher than that of the lover and knight, Sir Walter. Although based neither in wealth nor in heredity, Allwit's status reflects the basic patriarchal definition of manhood: successfully competing with--and defeating--another man through the control of a woman. For not only does Sir Walter pay Allwit for the privilege of "using" his wife, Sir Walter also has purchased the agonies of jealousy and the constantly nagging fear of being cuckolded--by none other than Allwit! Ironically, by giving up his own sense of ownership of his wife, Allwit has gained the higher ground in the male battle for place; *he*, now, is someone to be feared, someone who might sleep with his own wife while Sir Walter is absent.

While much is made of the great irony of the predicament--the cuckolder being cuckolded--such comedy could only generate nervous laughter in patriarchal society. For undergirding the comedy, though not directly addressed, is the chilling fact that, in the patriarchal

system, *every* man is a potential seducer and *every* married man is vulnerable to being cuckolded because every man views woman as a means of forging his identity. Allwit shows to what great lengths a man must go to remove himself from this competitive equation.

This male dynamic is most clearly, and not unexpectedly, revealed through the portrayal of fecund Mistress Allwit, who, heavy with her seventh child by Sir Walter, "longs for nothing but pickled cucumbers, and his coming" (I.ii.7-8). She is defined by her body and its cravings: first, for sex, and now, as a consequence, for certain foods. Her large belly declares Sir Walter's virility and ownership, and it also should declare Allwit's defeat, but in Allwit's eyes it is a symbol of his victory over Sir Walter. Even though Mistress Allwit and Sir Walter express what seems to be genuine affection toward each other, and Sir Walter even takes a fatherly interest in the education of the sons he's sired, Master Allwit is not totally supplanted. Allwit is part of the household--not an absentee husband--and, therefore, Mistress Allwit is something to be negotiated for over and over as we see Sir Walter accuse Allwit, "Yet, by your leave, I heard you were once offering to go to/ bed to her" (I.ii.105-6). Within the comedy of a man accused of trying to bed his own wife, we should not miss the fact that Mistress Allwit is not confronted with the same accusation; it is only the men who

wrangle over possession, and Mistress Allwit does not own herself.

Mistress Allwit is merely the vessel that holds the physical result of these two men's negotiations and because she so willingly accommodates both of them, she has no really independent identity. She becomes an individual--someone to be reckoned with--only if she becomes a stumbling block or a threat to the men's aims. Her affectionate (and cooperative) demeanor is apparent when she first appears on stage and, in the presence of her husband, greets her lover:

> Mistress Allwit: Sweet knight
> Welcome; I have all my longings now in town,
> Now well-come the good hour.
>
> Sir Walter: How cheers my mistress?
>
> Mistress Allwit: Made lightsome, e'en by him that made me heavy.
>
> Sir Walter: Methinks she shows gallantly, like a moon at full sir (I.ii.135-140).

Mistress Allwit, as the authentic Jacobean woman, defines herself as a wife and mother, but more importantly, she just as easily and proudly declares herself a lover, because *these* men allow her to. They find her purely sexual role just as authentic as the others in this instance, and for their purposes.

Later, after Mistress Allwit is delivered of a baby girl, a christening celebration takes center stage and the comedic irony continues, albeit for different patriarchal

goals. Neighbor women, mostly Puritans, come to dine after the christening, at which Sir Walter has "honored" the Allwits--and duly impressed the community--by standing as a godfather to their (and his) new daughter.

Most obviously, the scene attacks Puritan theology by attacking its representatives: Puritan women who reveal themselves to be more anxious for comfits, wine, and virile husbands than for salvation. The additional irony is, of course, that these Good Wives are actually celebrating the Good Whoredom of Mistress Allwit.

The scene also offers a more cultural and secular perspective since it resembles the celebration after a "churching ceremony"--a highly public announcement of self-congratulation by the mother for having survived the physical and psychological challenges of childbirth.[21] The "churching ceremony" was held four weeks after childbirth when the new mother and the women of the community marched to church to give thanks for the safe delivery and the mother then took back her place in society. Here, the gossips, principals in the scene, refer to the birthing process much like war veterans who converse in "short hand" language that only alludes to the dangers they are describing; there is no need for details since they all have personally experienced the risks of the birthing battlefront:

> 2 Gossip: She had a sore labour on't I warrant you, you can tell neighbor

3 Gossip: O she had great speed;
We were afraid once,
But she made us all have joyful hearts again
'Tis a good soul i'faith;
The midwife found her a most cheerful daughter (III.ii.21-27).

And later, Mistress Allwit herself acknowledges the common bond that the women share:

Mistress Allwit: Here Mistress Yellowhammer, and neighbors
To you all that have taken pains with me,
All the good wives at once.

1 Puritan: I'll answer for them;
They wish all health and strength,
And that you may courageously go forward,
To perform the like and many such,
Like a true sister with motherly bearing
(III.ii.79-86)

From scullery maid to duchess, all women faced the same, real physical dangers childbed, and, therefore, the relief of a safe delivery could be celebrated by whore and wife alike. This supportive exchange between Mistress Allwit and her neighbors is undermined, however, as these proper, unsuspecting Good Wives mock themselves in later comments in which they reveal their attraction to the whoremonger and their approval for the "zeal" with which the Allwits must be procreating:

3 Gossip: O dear sweet gentleman, what fine words he has--

2 Gossip: [Sir Walter] calls us all ladies.
. . . . . .
Methinks her husband shows like a clown to him.

3 Gossip: I would not care what clown my husband

were too, so I had such fine children.
. . . . .
Ay, and see how fast they come.

1 Puritan: Children are blessings, if they be got with zeal,
By the brethren, as I have five at home. (III.ii.31-41)

In addition, by holding up the unsuspecting neighbors to ridicule for celebrating the birth of a bastard, the patriarchal view is reinforced that, to be valued, birth must serve to perpetuate established lineage and social order. Even though men created this value system and demand its implementation, this scene ridicules women as a way to displace male anxiety over their own inability to guarantee the paternity of their offspring. The system they created to produce "rightful" heirs does not guarantee them total control over the process. After all, the neighbor wives will go home to tell their husbands about the new baby who is "a chopping girl, so like the father. . . As if it had been spit out of his mouthpiece" (III.ii.12-13), and Allwit will receive the husbands' congratulations, as well.

Middleton, however, offers Jacobean men the opportunity not only to "remove" their anxiety about paternity, but to focus on the natural inferiority of women by identifying with Allwit and Sir Walter in this same scene. Not surprisingly, the men who are responsible for Mistress Allwit's whoredom exit the stage, unable to tolerate the women's presence. Allwit, who is chagrined at the women's

voracious appetites, says: "I'll stay no longer;/It would kill me and if I paid for't./Will it please you to walk down and leave the women?" Sir Walter, for whom the women's company, not money, is the source of irritation, promptly replies: "With all my heart Jack" (III.ii.91-93). The two men, who control Mistress Allwit's body to their mutual satisfaction, are faced with women and body parts they can not control--the gossips' hungry mouths symbolize "dangerous" female cravings of sexuality and independent speech.[22]

The negotiated relationship between Allwit and Sir Walter comes to a sudden and permanent end when Sir Walter, wounded in a duel, undergoes a moral conversion. Allwit realizes that Sir Walter's potential death will end his own sham "life" as an upstanding citizen, and when he hears Sir Walter's denunciation--"Thou poison to my heart" (V.i.16)--he tries to remind Sir Walter of their common bond: Mistress Allwit's body. He pushes her forward, saying: "Now he is worse and worse,/ Wife, to him, wife, thou wast wont to do good on him." His pun on the word "do," meaning copulation[23] clearly acknowledges the sexual role Mistress Allwit has played for both men's benefit.

Sir Walter's condemnation of Mistress Allwit--"There's nothing but thy appetite in that sorrow/ Thou weep'st for lust" (V.i.60-61)--seals both the Allwits' fates. Sir Walter established the value of Mistress Allwit's body, and he now

totally devalues it, leaving Allwit powerless and stripping Mistress Allwit of any honor in her role as lover. Abandoned thus by her lover, she has nothing left to do but revert to the status of Good Wife, which she does by joining in Allwit's counterattack on Sir Walter. Hearing that Sir Walter may have killed Touchwood Junior, the other duelist, Allwit calls for the constable and assumes his role as upstanding householder, saying: "You have been somewhat bolder in my house/ Than I could well like of;. . . I thought you had been familiar with my wife once" (V.i.153-55). Mistress Allwit chimes in: "With me? I'll see him hanged first; I defy him,/ And all such gentlemen in the like extremity" (V.i.156-57). For her own protection within the community, Mistress Allwit must publicly proclaim herself a chaste wife--supporting a husband who has been an accomplice in her whoredom.

Just like Yellowhammer, Allwit devises another plan to replace his negotiations with Sir Walter. He declares: "There's no gamester like a politic sinner" (V.i.179), and he therefore intends to expand the scope of his male competition--and his wife's whoredom--by establishing a brothel with all the household finery Sir Walter's money has supplied. This son of Adam has devised a way, ultimately, to join the micro world of marriage to the macro world of public commerce in women's bodies in order to establish his public sphere: he will now control many whores and,

therefore, be supported by many men.

The third view of male negotiations presented in "Cheapside" lies in the marriage of Sir Oliver and Lady Kix, and their attempts to produce an heir. What marks these negotiations as especially significant is that they involve the blatant crossing of class boundaries in order to meet the goals of patriarchy. As Middleton is wont to do, comedic overtones are offered in the names of the two men in this third negotiation. Sir Oliver Kix, whose name means the dry stem of a plant, needs to beget an heir; Touchwood Senior, whose name describes easily inflammable kindling, is the virile man who will do it for him.[24] Through the body of Lady Kix, of course.

The very first scene introducing the Kixes reveals the personal and public dilemma of their childless state. They are fearful that they will lose their estate if Sir Oliver's cousin, Sir Walter, begets a child through Moll Yellowhammer. In addition, the fact that the Kixes have been married seven barren years creates anxiety about their identities as adequate male and female. As a result, their relationship consists of both accusations and calls for patience, or as the maid, Jugg, says, "O mistress, weeping or railing/ That's our house harmony" (II.i.177-78). When Jugg reports that Touchwood Senior (who has overheard the Kixes) can help them since he "has got/ Nine children by one water that he useth;/ It never misses..."(II.i.186-88), both

Kixes seize on the idea, even though Touchwood "comes very dear."

In an age when little was known about reproduction, the fact that both Kixes seem to be held "liable" for infertility may at first seem to present them in too modern a light. However, the belief that man's semen was the integral component of procreation had long existed in Europe through the writings of Aristotle. In fact, the fluid, which Clement of Alexandria defined as "something that was about to become man," became so important that religious teachings deemed its "use" proper only in procreation, an activity which was proper only in marriage.[25] Given that the culture called only women "barren," we would expect Sir Oliver to be confident in his seminal output and, therefore, bitterly disappointed, and his lady utterly ashamed, that *she* can not become "hot" enough to produce a child. Ironically, however, for the sake of plot development, Sir Oliver's sexuality must be in question. The negotiations, then, between Sir Oliver and Touchwood Senior culminate in the use of Lady Kix's body: Touchwood Senior's "water" will replace Sir Oliver's. Sir Oliver must give up his private sexual relationship with his wife to insure his posterity--and his public place in the world.

The scene in which Touchwood Senior "uses" his magical water verges on farce: Sir Oliver drinks a vial of "almond milk" and is directed to ride for five hours for the water

to take effect. Touchwood reviews their agreement as he directs Sir Oliver to "Stir up and down sir, you must not stand" (III.iii.136): Touchwood is to receive 400 pounds if the treatment results in a pregnancy and the successful birth of a child. Sir Oliver's ridiculous jumping up and down makes a farce of patrilineage. And, even if the audience wants to consider Sir Oliver ridiculously naive for leaving his wife unsupervised to take her part of the treatment from the virile Touchwood, by the end of the play there is no doubt that Sir Oliver knew exactly what he had to do privately to assure the public perception of his unbroken family line.

After Sir Oliver rides off, Lady Kix's part of the "treatment" continues the farcical tone:

> Lady Kix: How must I take mine sir?
>
> Touchwood Senior: Clean contrary, yours must be taken lying.
>
> Lady Kix: Abed sir?
>
> Touchwood Senior: Abed, or where you will for your own ease; Your coach will serve.
>
> Lady Kix: The physic must needs please. (III.iii.167-172)

There is no such stage direction at the end of the line, but can anyone *not* imagine Lady Kix's large wink at the audience?

Buried within this burlesque of a seduction is a glimpse of the position of an upper class woman under Jacobean patriarchy and the special "problems" she

presented. Middleton's titillation of the audience with sexual humor might serve to diminish the importance of *what* Lady Kix is about to do, but not the fact that she will be *well aware* of doing it: subverting the social hierarchy.

Indeed, Lady Kix has more lines than the other wives in the play and even argues with her husband over which one of the two of them is the cause of the family's potential extinction. At one point in their volley of insults she shoots: "--I barren!/ 'Twas otherways with me when I was at court,/ I was ne'er called so till I was married" (III.iii.55-57). Her reference to her sexual exploits at court and her criticism of her husband's failure to do his patriarchal duty and produce an heir, show that Lady Kix has much more autonomy than Mistress Yellowhammer or Mistress Allwit. It also reveals how the idea of the Good Wife was modified to fulfill certain class expectations. As Margaret P. Hannay notes:

> In practice, Renaissance culture defined women as much by their class as by their gender. . . Although all Renaissance women were instructed to be chaste, silent, and obedient, class structures dictated their particular duties and deportment. The stricture of chastity allowed no exceptions for rank, even in the queen, but silence and obedience were relative.[26]

The Jacobean view of class distinctions did not differ from those of Elizabeth's time, so Hannay's points can be observed in the character of Lady Kix. Just *why* upper class women were allowed more autonomy, however, points to yet another conflict that patriarchy created for itself: while

the control of women was the means to creating male identity, women were also considered reflections of that identity. Therefore, an upper class woman was expected to demonstrate--through her social graces, her intelligence, her sense of family pride--the qualities of her husband. And, in the male competition for public stature, there would be little benefit to the man if the woman being dominated was, by herself, of little social value. If, however, a woman showed too much stature--through autonomy, especially --she would be viewed as rebellious, a threat to male authority, just as in the lower ranks. As a result, the upper-class woman had to juggle the requirements of her class position in addition to her roles as womanly nurturer and patriarchal helpmate, yet her "naturally" subservient identity as female could be used against her to undermine any real attempts at autonomy.

Lady Kix's knowledge of her real role in the infertility treatment is, then, an ironic mark of the astuteness demanded by her class rank. She is invested in the family's posterity just as much as her husband (she earlier says, "Think but upon the goodly lands and livings/ That's kept back through want [of a child]") and she understands what needs to be done about it. And, true to her "reflective" role, we evaluate her actions according to what we think of her husband. She can be viewed as supporting the facade of respectability her husband has

chosen to cover his negotiations with Touchwood Senior. And she can be seen as even more of a helpmate by allowing her body to be used without causing her husband to acknowledge it--privately or publicly. In any case, Lady Kix's full cooperation undermines the patriarchal class system while it guarantees her husband's place within it.

With a child on the way by the end of the play, the negotiations between Sir Oliver and Touchwood Senior become a permanent contract for the use of Lady Kix's body. This contract reveals the pressures patriarchy places on men like Sir Oliver: the system declares authentic lineage to be of the utmost importance but forces men to find ways to beget children in any way possible in order to perpetuate lineage. Patriarchy, thus, ultimately forces men to approach the private begetting of children in terms of public consequences. In his joy over the impending birth of his heir, Sir Oliver offers a "purse, and bed, and board" so that Touchwood Senior and his family can be reunited and live together on the Kixes' estate. Sir Oliver's additional encouragement--"Be not afraid to go to your business roundly,/ Get children, and I'll keep them" (V.iv.82-83)--- not only reminds the audience of Master Allwit's former procurer's position, but also indicates that Sir Oliver has found the means of securing his lineage through the "business" Touchwood will have in the future with Lady Kix. After all, the awaited "heir" might not live to adulthood or

might be a girl--an additional complication in patriarchal inheritance. Sir Oliver realizes that he must guarantee the possibility of conducting more "business" to produce an heir that will reach maturity and will safeguard the Kix line.

All the competitiveness between men and all the tensions between husbands and wives that patriarchy creates dissipate at the end of this comedy as the focus shifts to the creation of new marriages: the joyous union of Touchwood Junior and Moll and the calculated coupling of the duped Tim to the supposed Welsh heiress/whore.

What the Cheapside neighbors also celebrate, however, is the preservation of the larger community--something that is created by the private, intimate relationships of marriage and family. But, after the feasting is over, real married life begins, and these new marriages perpetuate the male competitiveness and female oppression inherent in the patriarchal system. Tim, being groomed at Cambridge for a public place, rails at being tricked into a penniless and status-demeaning marriage and cries: "Where be these mountains? I was promised mountains" (V.iv.99). Told to make the best of it, he then refers to his wife and situation with coarse double entendres: "Why then my tutor and I will about her" (V.iv.112) and "So much for marriage and logic. I'll love her for her wit, I'll pick out my runts there: and for my mountains, I'll mount upon--" (V.iv.119-21). Tim, who sees his wife as a sexual

commodity, gives every indication that he will use this currency to negotiate for his public male identity--beginning, perhaps, with his tutor--and ending up as another "Allwit."

While much more loving and devoid of cynicism, the romantic union of Touchwood Junior and young Moll has its own place in the patriarchal system, most specifically in Moll's role as the Good Wife. When the new husband declares: "My joy wants utterance," and his brother Touchwood Senior encourages: "Utter all at night then brother," the bride states: "I am silent with delight" (V.iv.49-51). Moll, whom we know is chaste, thus adopts the second requirement of the Good Wife: silence. Her new brother-in-law acknowledges her new status and encourages her with: "Sister, delight will silence any woman,/ But you'll find your tongue again, among maidservants,/ Now you keep house, sister" (V.iv.52-4). The irony in Touchwood's friendly words is that he describes the paradoxical, and often self-defeating, roles of subservient wife and principal helpmate that Moll will have to master while her husband negotiates his place in the patriarchal hierarchy.

Even though *Chaste Maid* ends by focusing on the new marriages and yet to be realized negotiations among men, there is every indication that Yellowhammer, Master Allwit and Sir Oliver will continue to negotiate for their own public identity. The attempt to meet the requirements of

patriarchy is never-ending; men must continually be vigilant against an attack on their public status and must compete over and over to hold their place.

This unending male competition as enshrined in patriarchy is revealed in another of Middleton's comedies: *Anything for a Quiet Life* (1621). The play also presents three marriages from the male perspective, as the title and prologue declare, and then the comedy works toward giving each husband the domestic peace and quiet he craves. This is achieved, of course, through the successful control of a wife. In one marriage, the husband panders his reluctant wife, and the control focuses on a woman's body. In the second marriage, a husband struggles to control the tongue of his shrewish wife.

The third marriage defines the main plot and deals with an older husband's attempts to control the will of his younger, second wife. Unlike the men in *Chaste Maid*, Sir Francis Cressingham does not define his public status through male negotiations over his wife's body; rather, he is required to prove his manhood by demonstrating that he has made a wise choice in selecting a Good Wife for his second spouse. Sir Francis is an older widower, well respected in the community, and wealthy; yet the fact that both his friend and his son freely criticize his marital choice puts him in the position of having to prove himself a man by controlling a "new" woman.

The very first lines of the comedy set up the struggle awaiting one of Adam's older "sons": Sir Francis is being roundly criticized by a friend over his choice of a second wife.

> Lord Beaufort: Away, I am asham'd of your proceedings!
> And, seriously, you have in this one act
> O'erthrown the reputation the world
> Held of your wisdom.
> . . . . . .
> ---and to marry
> A girl of fifteen, one bred up i' the court,
> That by all consonancy of reason is like
> To cross your estate.....
> . . . . . .
> I fear, that in the election of a wife,
> As in the project of war, to err but once
> Is to be undone forever (I.i.1-18).

Beaufort's words resemble many contemporary warnings to men about their choice of wives. He predicts that the new wife will "cross" Sir Francis' estate, a common warning about the woman who would devour wealth as opposed to contributing to it by wisely governing the household.[27] The period's even more strident voices thundered in antifemale satires that "a woman will pick thy pocket, and empty thy purse, and laugh in thy face and cut thy throat."[28]

Sir Francis, however, defends the character of his new wife, reinterpreting her "faults," and thereby, more importantly, defending his choice:

> That she is young is true; but that discretion
> Has gone beyond her years, and overta'en
> Those of maturer age.....
> . . . . . .
> I confess she was bred at court,
> But so retiredly, that, as still the best
> In some place is to be learnt there, so her life

Did rectify itself more by the court-chapel
Than by th' office of the revels.....(I.i.34-40)

This exchange highlights the male challenge facing Sir Francis: will he be able to maintain his public standing--"the reputation the world held of [his] wisdom"--by this second marriage or will he be revealed as, and thereby reduced to, the fool?

In addition to his friend's criticism, Sir Francis must deal with the displeasure of his son, George, who views his step-mother's "harsh nature" working to turn his father from his children and their rightful inheritance. In the patriarchal struggle for place, George, as heir, represents Sir Francis' inevitable, and natural, replacement in the existing hierarchy: he will succeed upon his father's death. George, in his open hostility towards his step-mother and his criticism of his father presents a premature, and therefore, threatening disruption to the patriarchal order--and his father's place in it. It is one thing for George to inherit title and lands upon Sir Francis' death; it is quite another for Sir Francis to be displaced as head of the household by a son who successfully attacks his authority. Sir Francis must defend and prove himself on two "fronts" to maintain his public status: to his contemporaries and to his posterity.

The young Lady Cressingham, from the outset of the play, seems to be the sure ruin of Sir Francis. She willfully devises ways to send his younger children to be

boarded; she denies them and George the jewelry their mother bequeathed to them. Even more shocking, she urges Sir Francis to sell his land and decaying manor house for another estate that is "new-fashioned" and which will bring in more rent. Lady Cressingham shows all the confidence of a middle-class, educated woman when she says: "...my father was a lawyer, and died in the commission; and may not I, by a natural instinct, have a reaching that way?" (I.i.354-56). With that confidence she continues to disrupt Sir Francis' household--even to the point of planning to sell off the family estate to buy land in Ireland. Eventually, her husband is reduced to declare: "Sir Francis stands for a cipher; I have made away myself and my power, as if I had done it by deed of gift. . . " (IV.i.9-12).

The end of the play, however, not only presents Lady Cressingham in a much different light, but also reaffirms Sir Francis' foothold on his place in the world. Lady Cressingham tells her husband that what really happened to the household is that she saw her duty as the Good Wife to rescue it:

> Your state is not abated, what was yours is still your own; and take the cause withal of my harsh-seeming usage,--it was to reclaim faults in yourself, the swift consumption of many large revenues, gaming; that of not much less speed, burning up house and land. . . that part of hell in your house is extinct. (V.ii.268-278)

Although Lady Cressingham's words tend to tarnish Sir Francis' image--he had to be saved from himself, after all--

her final profession of "obedience" diminishes Sir Francis' weaknesses. And, even though Lady Cressingham shows as a middle-class woman her investment in patriarchy by using her brains (as Lady Kix used her body) to save the lineage, she gladly relinquishes her role:

> ...and then these feet
> Shall level with my hands until you raise
> My stoop'd humility to higher grace,
> To warm these lips with love, and duty do
> To every silver hair, each one shall be
> A senator to my obedience. (V.ii.279-84)

The play ends on a happy note: not only is Sir Francis' estate saved, but he has the added stature of having chosen a wife who was *so* conscious of her duty that she could perform it despite severe criticism. Sir Francis' response to his wife's confession contains only the most cursory contemplation of his own weakness and focuses on addressing the "public" who questioned his wisdom in the choice of a wife:

> All this [goodness] I knew before: whoe'er of you
> That had but one ill thought of this good woman,
> You owe a knee to her, and she is merciful
> If she forgive you. (V.ii.285-88)

The male patriarchal system may owe Lady Cressingham its "knee," but to her husband, it owes the reaffirmation of his place. And Sir Francis gets this reaffirmation when Lord Beaufort declares that his asking Lady Cressingham's forgiveness "shall be private penance" but regarding the rescue of the estate--and, therefore, Sir Oliver's status--"we'll all joy in public with you" (V.ii. 289-90).

The goals of patriarchy as disclosed in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* and *Anything for a Quiet Life* remained unchanged during the Restoration: a man's successful domination of a woman still declared his manhood; men continued to compete for a public identity through the control of women; the "authentic" role of a woman was still based primarily in her biological function to produce sons. What did change, however, was the *definition* of manhood. The Civil War and the Interregnum not only irrevocably destroyed old political concepts, but they fragmented social and psychological identities as well, and left many men with no choice but to redefine themselves and their place in the world. Patriarchy still provided the route to claiming masculine identity, but the methods used to attain this patriarchal goal--in other words, the *way* men dominated women--reflect this "new" man. It is not surprising then, to find that Restoration comedies present, in some ways, quite a different portrayal of daughters and wives, and the institution of marriage.

Another element in Restoration comedy that must be recognized as new in comparison to the Jacobean period is the "structure" of the theater itself. Theater companies now included actresses, who, by royal mandate, played women's roles.[29] The physical attributes of the theater had narrowed from the expansive seating and the platform stage of the Globe into the more intimate enclosed hall and

proscenium arch of the Drury Lane Theater.[30] And, similarly, the wide social cross-section of characters presented on the Jacobean stage had been distilled into the representation of a single class: "gentleman." The previous chapter has addressed the different economic foci of the two periods' plays: Jacobean comedies showcased the rise of clever entrepreneurs, while Restoration comedies presented the exploits of wealthy and impoverished gentlemen in the nation's move towards creating a new society. Similarly, Restoration comedy focuses on the competition between members of that "gentleman" class to define and claim their manhood. It reveals a different kind of contest from the Jacobean goal of upward class advancement; this Restoration contest is more subtle--but no less fierce--as the competitors strive to reach a higher degree *within* a class. This struggle becomes apparent in the plays' frequent use of the words "wit" and "honor," terms which the period uses to describe gentlemanly characteristics. Thus, in a patriarchal context, a liberal wit appropriately used is the gauge of how successful a gentleman's attempts are at claiming male identity.

Since gentlemen try to out-maneuver other gentlemen, we find that the portrayals of the Restoration women resonate with the tensions of these male negotiations and competitions within one class. Therefore, even though the comedies introduce the "witty" heroine, she is ultimately

revealed to be no more than a patriarchal reflection of the "witty" gentleman, and her primary function still lies in her biological and psychological relationship to men.

The period's "new" men and women did not burst upon the Restoration stage with the first re-opening of the theater doors in 1660, however. The restoration of Charles II finished a complex social change that had begun with the overthrow of a monarchial government followed by the establishment of a commonwealth structure, and had ended, finally, with the return to a monarchy limited by a strong Parliament. Part of the complexity of that social reorganization is revealed in the way that comedies mix elements of "new" thinking with nostalgia for pre-civil war life. The foundation of both the new thinking and the nostalgia, however, is the patriarchal system and its unchanging goals. While male competition remains fierce, Restoration patriarchy takes on the characteristic of one man duping or making a fool of another. The cornerstone of Jacobean competition, father/suitor or, even, husband/lover negotiations over the control of a woman, shifts to become a male/female negotiation between the witty gentleman and the witty heroine--still, however, for the benefit of male identity.

These two elements--the mixing of old thinking with new, and male negotiations being replaced by male/female sparring--define Restoration patriarchy and Restoration

comedy, as first seen in George Etherege's *She Would if She Could* (1667).[31] The comedy's title could just as easily have continued "..., *And He Would if He Could*" since it concerns the attempts of Lady Cockwood *and* her husband, Sir Oliver Cockwood, a "country knight," to master the sexual sophistication of London life. The play's comedy centers on the ways the couple is prevented from carrying out their sexual trysts, and both are made to look ridiculous in the process. Other elements of the plot concern the wooing of two young country ladies, Ariana and Gatty, by the town gallants Courtall and Freeman. The young women have been brought to London by their Falstaffian uncle, Sir Joslin Jolly, who hopes to spend his time "wenching" and drinking with Sir Oliver.

In fact, in addition to the romantic couples of Courtall and Gatty and Freeman and Ariana, everyone is part of a "couple" in this play, and that the "coupling" serves to highlight differences in *degrees* of thinking and behavior--in contrast to clear dichotomies found in Jacobean plays. Of the two town gentlemen, Courtall is more roguish than Freeman; he finds Lady Cockwood old and repulsive but uses her desperate advances as a means to get to the young women. Freeman, on the other hand, "admires [Courtall's] impudence," admitting he could "never have had the face" to make such a fool out of Sir Oliver when he didn't even care for the wife. Both Gatty and Ariana come to town to have

fun, but Gatty is more blunt in revealing her sexuality and refuses to "dissemble" or be swayed by "a melancholy madrigal, composed by some amorous coxcomb," as she says her sister would be. Sir Joslin and Sir Oliver, aristocratic provincials, are in London to have their own fun; Sir Oliver burdens himself with attempts to appear the sophisticate while whoring, but Sir Joslin's self-centeredness focuses on feeding his coarse, but candid, appetites for wine, women, and song--not on status. Even Lady Cockwood has a foil in her "gentlewoman," Sentry. Although Sentry's official class status is lower than her mistress's, she has more than a simple servant's role in the play. She is Lady Cockwood's accomplice and confidant, but while she carries out Lady Cockwood's wishes and defends her lady (thus perpetuating the facade of honorable behavior her mistress clings to) Etherege gives Sentry lines and asides which reveal her exasperation with Lady Cockwood's highly cultivated hypocrisy.

In addition to these binaries, Etherege pits one generation against another to show the period's conflicted "restoration" thinking: traditional attitudes versus more liberal ones. This conflict is most clearly shown in Sir Oliver's and Lady Cockwood's attempts at sexual adventures outside their marriage. Both *want* the experience but are thwarted because their half-hearted attempts to maintain traditional roles--their country values--leave them

vulnerable to their own clumsiness and to others' manipulations.

Their attitudes about their marriage introduce another identifiable characteristic of the "gentleman" class in Restoration society: cynicism toward marriage. Their cynicism is expressed in the hypocritical double standards they maintain about their relationship: Lady Cockwood declares she is her husband's "obedient lady" while she criticizes Sir Oliver's philandering *and* schemes to meet with Courtall. Likewise, Sir Oliver cowers at his lady's displeasure and seems protective of her honor, but when his tongue is loosened with drink, he says that he was forced into marriage--"with a design to be baulked, as they tie whelps to the bellwether" (III.iii.254-56)[32]--and so justifies his wenching. Also, in contrast to another Sir Oliver and his Lady Kix in *Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, the function of marriage as dynasty building is not even alluded to in this Restoration couple's union. The Cockwood marriage is presented solely as a limitation on personal freedom, without mention of its being a duty performed for posterity, to ensure a family line.

This lack of concern with family does not mean that the joining of family lines through marriage was no longer important in Restoration society--it was, as the younger couples prove later in the play. What it does suggest, however, is a *broadening* view of marriage, which looked at

the husband and wife as individuals, not merely as a potential father and mother. And, since Restoration comedies represent a social class which seems to have identified much more with the monarchy than with London merchants, we can look to Charles II himself and recognize that his personal life shattered the family model which his father and grandfather, both monarchial patriarchs, presented.[33] Charles, after a young adulthood spent in exile and sexual adventure, finally married in 1662 when 32 years old.[34] The fact that he continued to maintain mistresses openly while his marriage produced no children starkly contrasted with the large families that the Stuarts had consistently produced. In political terms, the Civil War's disruption of monarchical (family) succession resulted in the establishment of a Parliament based on a model of individuals' empowerment. Perhaps ironically, that same disruption, which caused the young Prince Charles's life to emphasize personal survival and personal pleasure--emphases that persisted even after his coronation and marriage--ultimately opened an avenue for questioning the traditional institution of marriage.

Even though both Cockwoods express hypocritical attitudes about their marriage, Lady Cockwood's words are more vulnerable to criticism and manipulation because they focus on her "honor"--a word full of male connotations of integrity, respect, and rank. Lady Cockwood scolds her maid

Sentry for leaving her alone with Courtall (a situation Lady Cockwood has worked hard to bring about) since Courtall might think her "innocent intentions" to have a conversation were dishonorable. She even worries that Sir Joslin doesn't control the comings and goings of his young kinswomen better since they might "bring an unjust imputation on [her] honor" (II.ii.107). Yet, in the patriarchal system, since a woman is valued only as a man's *exclusive* sexual possession, the only way a woman can maintain her value is to maintain the position that she *is* exclusively one man's. Her "honor" then becomes the word that symbolizes this select status, and it becomes a shield behind which to hide from other men's attempts to make her sexually common. Lady Cockwood doesn't want such protection, but she knows patriarchy demands she preserve the illusion for her survival. In fact, a threat against her honor is a way to control Lady Cockwood, as Courtall eventually proves.

In a scene in which it has been planned that he and Lady Cockwood will meet in the Exchange and then go off in his closed coach, Courtall engages the help of a woman less concerned with honor, his former lover, the shopkeeper Mistress Gazette, to ruin the plans. Mistress Gazette vows, "She dares not force/ you away in my sight; she knows I am great with Sir/ Oliver, and as malicious a devil as the best of 'em" (III.i.87-9). When Lady Cockwood appears in the Exchange, Gazette intercepts her to show her a new lace that

has just arrived in her shop. In addition, Lady Cockwood's young house guests, Gatty and Ariana, also appear, and the moment to be whisked away by Courtall is lost in Lady Cockwood's confused concern for propriety:

> Courtall: 'Sdeath, madam, if you had made no ceremony, but stepped into the coach presently, we had escaped this mischief.
>
> Lady Cockwood: My over-tenderness of my honor has blasted all my hopes of happiness.
>
> Courtall: To be thus unluckily surprised in the height of all our expectation leaves me no patience.
>
> Lady Cockwood: Moderate your passion a little, sir, I may yet find out a way.
>
> Courtall: Oh 'tis impossible, madam: never think on't now you have been seen with me. To leave'em upon any pretense will be so suspicious that my concern for your honor will make me so feverish and disordered, that I shall lose the taste of all the happiness you give me.
>
> Lady Cockwood: Methinks you are too scrupulous, heroic sir. (III.i.168-182)

Not only does Courtall manipulate the social circumstances to rescue himself from Lady Cockwood's clutches, he plays her concerns with "honor" against any possibility of future trysts. Lady Cockwood is guaranteed her honor, but since it is only at the cost of lost sexual adventure, she is left looking like a woefully inept player in a new, highly complicated game of love.

In the same way, her husband, Sir Oliver, is made to look the fool because he clings to traditional notions such as honoring his wife's feelings and begging her forgiveness

when he has "sinned," even though he has declared earlier: "Well, a pox on this tying man and woman together, for better, for worse! Upon my conscience it was but a trick that the clergy might have a feeling in the cause" (I.i.132-34). In fact, he pays for his nights of drunken carousing the next day by wearing his "penitential suit"--shabby, out-of-date garments put on only because Lady Cockwood has locked up all his regular clothes in order to humble him and to keep him at home. Ironically, this is the same man who has confessed to Courtall earlier that he has come to London "for want of gentleman-like recreations;" he describes country society's disdain for swearing and philandering and toleration for a bad quality of drink as stiflingly limiting; he declares, "..a man had better be a vagabond in this town, than a Justice of Peace in the country" (I.i.77-8).

Sir Oliver can handle the libertine London lifestyle no better than his wife can. In a hilarious scene in which he cannot resist Sir Joslin's entreaties to go to The Bear tavern to meet with Madam Rampant and her "bevy of damsels in sky, and pink, and flame-colored taffetas," Sir Oliver appears in his penitential clothes, uncomfortable, and worried that the whores will think the less of him: "Nay, I know my behavior will show I am a gentleman; but yet the ladies will look scurvily upon me, brother" (III.ii.33-4). Sir Joslin, who is hopelessly unsophisticated but knows the

business they're about, seeks no one's approval if it's not truly needed. He answers Sir Oliver's qualms with:

> That's a jest i'faith! He that has *terra firma* in the country, may appear in anything before 'em.
>
> For he that would have a wench kind,
> Ne'er smugs up himself like a ninny,
> But plainly tells her his mind,
> And tickles her first with a guinea.
>
> (III.ii.35-40)

Sir Oliver wants to fit into London fast life with the panache of the gentleman he envisions himself to be; Sir Joslin just wants to get his needs met and enjoy himself tremendously in the getting.

From the very beginning of the play these two old country knights are dismissed by young Courtall and Freeman:

> Courtall: Was there ever a couple of fops[35] better matched than these two knights are?
>
> Freeman: They are harp and violin; Nature has so tuned 'em, as if she intended they should always play the fool in consort. (II.i.1-5)

More ridicule is heaped upon Sir Oliver, however, because he has pretensions about becoming an urban gentleman--he is a potential interloper in Courtall's domain. At the Bear, he allows himself to be criticized by the whoremaster, Rake-Hell, for his penitential clothes, and then is re-wigged and hatted by Rake-Hell. In the midst of the dialogue between the whoremaster and knight about the desires of "ladies" for properly wigged gentlemen, Courtall and Freeman enter and Sir Oliver must explain his humiliating clothes to the gallants he wishes to emulate. When the masked "whores"--actually Lady Cockwood and the young women that Courtall is

sneaking out of the tavern--arrive, the whole scene collapses into farce. At that moment the real whores also arrive, and Sir Oliver proposes wenching "teams": "Ned Courtall and I, against Frank Freeman and you, Brother Jolly. . . for gloves and silk stockings, to be bestowed as the conqueror shall fancy" (III.iii.281-84). Lady Cockwood promptly "counterfeits a fit," surely to protect her honor but also to stop her husband.

It is not simply Etherege's comedic inventiveness that makes both of the Cockwoods figures of ridicule and rejection in this play. Under the patriarchal system it is natural and expected. Courtall, the main character, has already labeled Sir Oliver a fop and has dismissed him as any threat to his own manhood or his public identity; Sir Oliver is someone to be ridiculed for attempting to elevate himself to the status of a sophisticate. And, since the knight is not a threat, Courtall is not interested in possessing or even controlling Lady Cockwood's body.

Lady Cockwood, on the other hand, is a ridiculous figure on two levels, because she plays two roles under patriarchy. Her sexual--biological--role can be viewed as ludicrous because her age has eliminated any possibility of fecundity and sexual pleasures, the primal male interests in females. In her second role, as the patriarchal reflection of her husband, she mirrors his foolishness. This play does not present Lady Cockwood as the patriarchal helpmate, the

Good Wife; rather, she is the extension, in another version, of her husband's provincialism. Lady Cockwood's two roles reveal once again the ambiguous position of women under patriarchy but, even more importantly, we see how that position can shift according to a husband's goals and the value society places on those goals.

Courtall refers to Lady Cockwood as "the old one," and "the ravenous kite," emphasizing her age as a primary reason for his lack of interest in her. This attitude often masks male anxiety over women's sexuality, and especially the "problem" of the insatiable female sexual appetite. Worry centers on the possibility that age does not diminish that appetite, which a man might not be able to satisfy or control. This anxiety has its place in this comedy--we can easily imagine a different sexual dynamic at work if Lady Cockwood and Courtall were the same age, both either young or older. And, while her age seems to be the cause, Courtall's rejection of Lady Cockwood is actually based on his dismissal of her husband as a serious contender in the competition for male status. This contentiousness is clearly revealed when Courtall changes his attitude towards Lady Cockwood from one of disdain to possessiveness because his friend, Freeman, shows an interest in her:

> Courtall: I know not what I might do in a camp where there were no other woman; but I shall hardly in this town, where there is such plenty, forbear good meat to get myself an appetite to horseflesh.

> Freeman: This is rather an aversion in thee, than any real fault in the woman. If this lucky business had not fallen out, I intended with your good leave to have outbid you for her ladyship's favor.
>
> Courtall: I should never have consented to that, Frank. Though I am a little resty at present, I am not such a jade but I should strain if another rid against me. I have ere now liked nothing in a woman that I have loved in spite only, because another had a mind to her. (IV.ii.143-155)

Courtall considers Freeman a competitor, as he did not consider Sir Oliver. In an earlier scene, he has attempted to establish his superiority over his friend. Freeman suggests that they take advantage of Sir Oliver's absence and visit Lady Cockwood and, while jokingly schooling Freeman in the niceties of keeping trysts, Courtall nevertheless denigrates Freeman's mastery of honor and wit--and, therefore diminishes his status as a Restoration gentleman:

> Courtall: Gently, good Frank. First know that the laws of *honor* prescribed in such nice cases will not allow me to carry thee along with me; and next, has thou so little *wit* to think that a discreet lady. . .can have so good an opinion of the constancy of her servant as to lead him into temptation? (II.i.16-22) (my italics)

In the later scene, when Freeman reveals his intentions towards Lady Cockwood, Courtall puts joking aside and bluntly responds:"I should never have consented to that, Frank." If Freeman becomes Lady Cockwood's lover and thus, controls her body, he will have supplanted *both* Sir Oliver and Courtall and won a higher degree of identity as successful town rake. Courtall immediately recognizes this

threat and warns off his friend; Lady Cockwood now becomes valuable because whoever controls her will have out-maneuvered another worthy adversary.

Once male competition is fully revealed, Etherege adroitly shifts the focus and the tension of this exchange onto the young Ariana and Gatty with their appearance on stage. Ironically, in contrast to their potential competition over Lady Cockwood, the two young gallants have no such friction over the younger women because each man has a spirited virgin to bring under his control. In keeping with the patriarchal system, we see that Gatty and Ariana, besides being sexual objects ripe for owning, are also the reflections of the gallants they attract.

Interestingly enough, while the young women are the "kinswomen" of Sir Joslin, there is no real parental figure in the comedy who is in charge of them. Sir Joslin pushes them forward rather than restraining them from Courtall and Freeman, and calls them "Mad-cap" and "Sly Girl." Lady Cockwood sees them only as competition for Courtall's attention and uses their attraction to test Courtall's "faithfulness." While they certainly are conscious of the social proprieties they must uphold to maintain their good reputations, Gatty and Ariana are, in their thoughts and speech, just as unfettered as Courtall and Freeman.

These are not shy young things, in provincial awe of London's wickedness; they have come to experience

excitement. When more reserved Ariana nervously asks Gatty, ". . .but I hope you do not intend we shall play such mad reaks as we did last summer?" her sister wins her over with words that reveal she knows her social role as a matrimonial "bargain" but intends to challenge it for her own pleasures:

> Gatty: Wouldst thou never have us go to a play but with our grave relations? Never take the air but with our grave relations? To feed their pride, and make the world believe it is in their power to afford some gallant or other a good bargain? (I.ii.133-37)

On the very first occasion that the young women and the young gentlemen spy each other in the Mulberry Garden, their witty dialogue sets up the ensuing battle of the sexes:

> Ariana: Now if these should prove two men-of-war that are cruising here to watch for prizes.
>
> Gatty: Would they had courage enough to set upon us. I long to be engaged.
>
> Ariana: Look, look yonder. I protest they chase us.
>
> Gatty: Let us bear away then. If they be truly valiant they'll quickly make sail and board us. (II.i.73-79)

The women see themselves as patriarchal sexual "prizes" who will then hope to be "engaged" and "boarded." The men focus on the excitement of capturing the women--and thus, controlling them:

> Freemen: 'Sdeath, how fleet they are! Whatsoever faults they have, they cannot be broken-winded.
>
> Courtall: Sure, by that little mincing step they should be country fillies that have been breathed at Course-a-Park and Barley Break. We shall never reach them. (II.i.80-86)

The couples do engage, and the dialogue centers on convincing the women to remove their vizards. Courtall becomes impatient and says: "This is a pretty kind of fooling, ladies, for men that/ are idle; but you must bid a little fairer, if you intend/ to keep us from our serious business" (II.ii.136-8). Gatty shoots back, calling them "men of great employment that are/ every moment rattling from the eating-houses to the playhouses" (II.ii.140-42). Rather than being insulted by Gatty's impudence, both men respond to her wit with increased sexual interest:

> Courtall: Now would not I see thy face for the world. If it should but be half so good as thy humor, thou wouldst dangerously tempt me to dote upon thee, and forgetting all shame, become constant.
>
> Freeman: I perceive, by your fooling here, that wit and good humor may make a man in love with blackamoor. That the devil should contrive it so that we should have earnest business now. (II.ii.145-52)

Gatty, even masked, is exciting because she embodies what the men value: wit. Her body offers one prize, but to the Restoration gentlemen her mind is equally provocative.

Just as Gatty's and Ariana's bodies are not autonomous under patriarchy, neither, really, are their witty tongues. Their attraction lies in the fact that they reflect the two men's thinking. There is no danger, however, that this thinking will result in the women's being dominant since the prize in the game Ariana and Gatty are playing is marriage, and as wives they will submit, ultimately, to their

husbands' control. The patriarchal game of domination is still being played and its outcome is still assured; the players simply utilize different kinds of moves.

Gatty and Ariana are keenly aware of the men's attraction to them and they negotiate another meeting on the terms the women have laid down: that the men will swear not to visit any other women before they meet again. Despite this facade of controlling the men's actions, the women, in private conversation, reveal no sense of power but, in fact, understand that their speech will point only negatively to their autonomy:

> Ariana: I wonder what they think of us?
>
> Gatty: You may easily imagine; for they are not of a humor so little in fashion to believe the best. I assure you the most favorable opinion they can have is that we are still a little wild, and stand in need of better manning. (II.i.190-94)

The women do not revel in the success of their wit; instead, they understand that it will probably construe them as "wild" and in need of a man and "manning"--taming.

In a later scene, Sir Joslin also dismisses the women's wit and, true to his provincially traditional background, draws Courtall's and Freeman's attention back to the women's bodies, to him the primary female attribute:

> Sir Joslin: Come, come, you have heard them exercise their tongues a while; now you shall see them ply their feet a little. This is a clean-limbed wench, and has neither spavin, splinter, nor wind-gall. . . (II.ii.211-15)

Sir Joslin's equestrian frame of reference obviously lends

humor to the scene, but it does not hide his message to the men: these women are sound enough for bedding and for producing heirs.

The young people continue to circle each other, tossing out witty sayings and gibes throughout the play, while side-stepping Lady Courtall's trickery and the debris of Sir Oliver's and Sir Joslin's ill-fated attempts at wenching. In contrast to Jacobean endings, however, this comedy's final scenes present the young couples *negotiating* their future weddings. And, even though there is a call for dancing and feasting (from old-fashioned Sir Joslin, of course), Restoration social tensions shape the last dialogues. The lack of an actual parental presence in this negotiation--the young people are determining their futures on their own--coupled with the awareness that family considerations still potentially limit them, are characteristics of the period's evolving attitudes toward marriage.

While debating the question of marriage, both Gatty and Courtall refer to the lurking danger of nuptials that are governed more by finance than romance, and marriage as entrapment, not comfort, for bride or groom:

> Gatty: The truth is, such experienced gentlemen as you are seldom mortgage your persons without it be to redeem your estates.
>
> Courtall: 'Tis a mercy we have 'scaped the mischief so long,. . . most families are a wedding behind hand in the world, which makes so many young men fooled into wives to pay their father's

debts. (V.i.434-443)

These references to family pressures to marry echo the complaints of young people in earlier plays, but while the words might be the same, the social context is quite different. As changes occurred in Restoration thinking, the idea among upper class parents that they should have absolute control regarding the choice of their children's mates was also tempered. It was determined better in the long run--since patriarchy and primogeniture could still be served--to allow young people the leeway to refuse to marry someone they abhorred. This did not mean, however, that young adults were free to chose their mates, just that they were free to refuse one. The relaxing of parental authority can be connected partially to the general breakdown of social order during the Civil War (certainly the challenge to the "parental authority" of the monarchy provided a model) and the implementation of laws from a centralized government.[36]

In addition to the disruption of the old order, new social orders were proposed by groups that came into existence because of war and the establishment of the Commonwealth. Radical groups such as the Family of Love, the Levellers, the Ranters, and the Diggers called for a new world order within a mix of political, religious, and social issues--much to the dismay of a patriarchal society trying to regain a sense of stability. In particular, the Diggers,

who believed land should be held in common, proposed revolutionary views of marriage as stated in their *Laws for a Free Commonwealth*:

> Every man and woman shall have the free liberty to marry whom they love, if they can obtain the love and liking of that party whom they would marry, and neither birth nor portion should hinder the match.[37]

The short duration of the Diggers movement (from approximately 1648 to 1660) points to its insubstantial effects on mainstream society, but still it was one of the many new "voices" that shouted for a moment or two during the cacophony of social discourse leading to the Restoration. And, once society addresses a revolutionary idea--either to accept or reject it--the idea has entered the social consciousness as possible behavior, thus adding another level of complexity to social structure. In other words, traditional society could not protect itself from being subliminally influenced by radical thoughts simply by rejecting them.[38]

While it may be difficult to prove the extent of influence of any one philosophy on the changing marital customs in the Restoration, it is not quite as difficult to point to very practical financial tensions affecting marriage--a situation Gatty and Courtall specifically address. Dowry and jointure monies, the patriarchal "coin of the realm" that passed the control of a virgin from father to husband, had always been a vital part of sealing

marriage contracts, and it was no different during the Restoration. What was different, however, was that the amount of a good dowry went up[39] as the availability of money went down. By the time of the Restoration, many royalist families were trying to recover wealth lost from the war years' sequestrations and confiscations; other estates had been ruined in actual fighting; still other families' finances were thrown into jeopardy and legal entanglements because the fathers--perhaps exiled or dead--had supported the King.[40]

Marrying a wealthy merchant's daughter was often the way to infuse new money into an estate, and aristocratic sons were called upon to do their duty to family by marrying across class lines. But this kind of negotiation was not available to the daughters of impoverished aristocrats and the gentry, who held out for class, it seems, at all "costs."[41] In addition, since there is no place of value in the patriarchal system for unmarried women, marriage had to remain women's only "natural" aspiration and her security for the future. As a result, these dowry-poor girls often had to take whatever gentleman--young or old, dull or dissolute--that they could get. It is no wonder that Restoration comedies are full of cynicism about marriage; in addition to the King's own libertine past as a model, in practical terms, marriage often became a "take what you can get" union just at the time when personal choice in a

partner seemed more possible.

Interestingly, Gatty and Courtall's dialogue about gentlemen "mortgaging their persons" speaks only to the male dilemma of finding money for an estate--Gatty's dual vulnerability as either the targeted wealthy woman or the desperate poverty-stricken one is never specifically addressed. This lack of clarity about Gatty's status is interesting but not surprising if we remember that marriage to Gatty (or any woman) is ultimately the male's means to the end of his selfhood: how he chooses that woman is the focus here, not the woman who waits to be chosen.

In addition, the final exchanges between Courtall and Gatty and Freeman and Ariana result in uncertainty rather than closure to their story--once again pointing to the Restoration period's conflicted thinking *and* to the refutation of women's authority. The young women bargain for a month's time to test Courtall's and Freeman's behavior and suitability for marriage, only to have their agreement effectively undermined a few lines later under the guise of the "natural" impatience that love causes. When answering Sir Oliver's "Well spoke i'faith, girls; and is it a match, boys?" the men's remarks offer doubts, not reassurances, as to the probable success of their promise:

> Courtall: If the heart of man be not very deceitful, 'tis very likely it may be so.
>
> Freeman: A month is a tedious time, and will be a dangerous trial of our resolutions; but I hope we shall not repent before marriage, whate'er we do

after. (V.i.513-17)

With the arrival of Sir Joslin the scene becomes even more cluttered with possible endings. After everyone dances in celebration of the couples' agreement, the young men switch tactics and pressure Gatty and Ariana to marry immediately, or as Freeman so romantically puts it: ". . . yet I never could find the pleasure of waiting for a dish of meat when a man was heartily hungry." The women refuse, Gatty offering, "Marrying in this heat would look as ill as fighting in your drink," and Ariana concludes, "And be no more a proof of love, then t'other is of valor" (V.i.591-94). Sir Joslin, the embodiment of tradition, has the very next words, however, and effectively dismisses the women's protests--and their negotiations: "Never trouble your heads further; since I perceive you are *all agreed* on the matter, let me alone to hasten the ceremony. Come, gentlemen, lead 'em to their chambers" (V.i.595-97; my italics). He sings a raucous song, Sir Oliver says a few words of appeasement to his lady, and the entire cast exits--whether to witness a wedding ceremony or to hear the continued protests of the young women we are not quite sure.

We do not know whether Etherege's audience left the theater feeling comforted by the vision of an off-stage wedding scene, or rather uneasy because of the ambiguity in the play's conclusion. But we do know that audiences throughout the Restoration were presented with these same

tensions. The "wit" of the period's playwrights was aimed at such themes as marriage as entrapment, male struggle for place, female oppression through the facade of negotiation. All are present in various degrees in later and more popular plays and all define the social climate of the age. In John Dryden's *Marriage A La Mode* (1672), William Wycherley's *The Country Wife* (1675), and William Congreve's *The Way of the World* (1700) we can identify the Restoration patriarchal model, first presented in *She Would if She Could*, and observe how this model evolves up to the end of the century.

The title of Dryden's play succinctly sums up the target of this comedy: the institution of marriage. But the play itself reveals that the "mode" of Restoration marriage is in a state of flux as the patriarchal system slowly redefines the meaning of manhood. Dryden, through two parallel plots, presents three types and views of marriage. The first marriage, which seems to be the major plot, has all the earmarks of a traditional Elizabethan love story: an usurper's daughter, Palmyra, falls in love with handsome Leonidas, whose real status as the son of the rightful king is not revealed until the end. True to the Elizabethan mode of happy endings, the lovers are united after revelations about mixed-up babies and ships lost at sea. The political undertones of this romantic union are unmistakable: not only does Dryden put the true monarchical line back on the throne, but the usurper's line is effectively contained by

the control Leonidas will have of Palmyra through his marriage.

Setting the play in the kingdom of Sicily emphasizes the "otherworldliness" of Leonidas' and Palmyra's romance, but it does not hide the Restoration tensions within the play's other two marriages. In these, contemporary marital attitudes are expressed within the structure of Restoration patriarchy: men of the same class compete with each other and negotiate with women.

The comedic dilemma of these two couples is that two friends are each in "love" with the other's woman, without, initially, being aware of how the women are connected to each man: the courtier Palamede is enamored of Doralice, Rhodophil's wife, and Rhodophil, the captain of the guard, hopes to make Palamede's fiancee Melantha, a talkative young woman who tries to ingratiate herself into the court, his mistress. In the farcical attempts of the couples to meet secretly, only realizing their true relationships at the end, we are presented with views on two types of marriage.

Palamede, under the threat of being disinherited, has returned to the kingdom to be married so that two families and their estates are joined. Palamede describes his situation as inevitable, as he tells Rhodophil:

> In few words, my old man has already married me; for he has agreed with another old man, as rich and covetous as himself. . .the articles are drawn. . . and yet [I] know not what kind of woman I am to marry. (I.i.p.188)

Rhodophil has his own sad story to tell in response: "In one word, I am married; wretchedly married; and have been above these two years." Later dialogue between Rhodophil and his wife, Doralice, seems to verify that their relationship represents entrapment to them both: their frustration is earmarked with cynicism and sarcasm. In this early scene between the two men, Dryden points a finger at the general cynicism of the times as being partially responsible for the breakdown of this marriage. Rhodophil confesses to his friend:

> I remember, indeed, that about two years ago I loved her passionately; . . . and I think, in my conscience, I could have held out another quarter, but then the world began to laugh at me, and a certain shame, of being out of fashion, seized me. At last, we arrived at that point, that there was nothing left in us to make us new to one another. (I.i.p.189)

It seems, then, that Dryden sees the larger pressures of "estate" and "fashion" as equally negative influences on marital relationships.

The way in which these two friends solve their personal dilemmas, however, is simply to allow themselves to respond to the guiding forces of patriarchy: they become competitors and, therefore, they come to want sole possession of women they earlier deemed undesirable. All their patriarchal urges are revealed when their own plotting is revealed, and true to Restoration thinking, the competition is grounded in an evaluation of the other's wit:

Doralice: But you can neither of you be jealous of

what you love not.

Rhodophil: Gad, I am afraid there's something else in't; for Palamede has wit, and, if he loves you, there's something more in ye than I have found: Some rich mine, for aught I know, that I have not yet discovered.

Palamede: 'Slife, what's this? Here's an argument for me to love Melantha; for he has loved her, and he has wit too, and, for aught I know, there may be a mine; but if there be, I am resolved I'll dig for it. (V.i.p.257)

In order to conclude this patriarchal struggle and to protect themselves from further attacks, the men negotiate a settlement that focuses on keeping the *women* "innocent," in other words, under control. Earlier in the play, all the sexual assignations were negotiated between the men and their targeted women, but Doralice and Melantha no longer play a role once the men have had to acknowledge their own competitive desires. The women's sexuality is now dangerous to the men, as Palamede reveals when he first suggests a "blessed community betwixt us four"--total sexual freedom--but then quickly rejects it. He and Rhodophil conclude that if the women were interested in the same man they'd have to draw lots, "wishing for the longest cut." In other words, their sexual performance would be in competition and vulnerable to *female* evaluation--this is not the way to declare their selfhood. Rhodophil offers the solution that, while limiting their sexual adventures, guarantees their status as men to the world: they retain control of their wives and will not be cuckolds. He says, "Then I think,

Palamede, we had as good make a firm league, not to invade each other's propriety [property]"[42] (V.i.p.258).

Even though the comedy ends on a Jacobean note of male negotiation, it remains grounded in the Restoration with a final declaration from Doralice.

> Doralice: I will add but one *proviso*, that whoever breaks the league, either by war abroad, or neglect at home, both the women shall revenge themselves by the help of the other party. (V.i.p.258)

Doralice is no silent Good Wife, and she tries to insert herself back into the negotiations, not with her own authority, but by using the threat of renewed male competition. Hers is a voice, nevertheless, that speaks to the complexities of Restoration gender relations.

The struggle of male competition is presented in Wycherley's highly popular *The Country Wife* through Horner, the main character and main rake. His manipulation of the patriarchal system to create a public identity that also assures him personal benefits would have won the admiration of *Cheapside's* Master Allwit. But while Master Allwit secretly gave up his sexual prerogative over his wife in exchange for the public stature of a worthy citizen, Horner emasculates his public identity as a lover to gain more sexual license secretly. He has engaged the help of Doctor Quack to spread the rumor that he is impotent as a result of venereal disease, "an English-French disaster." The perception of Horner among other men as a non-competitor in

the struggle to possess women, ironically, gives him free access to all women. Just like Master Allwit who gained stature in the marketplace, Horner unburdens himself from the "work" of competing for a standing among other men in the bedroom; a gentleman, he is not concerned with the marketplace. Horner is confident of his plan because he has recognized the role of "honor" for many women in his society, as he tells Dr. Quack:

> And then the next thing is, your women of honor, as you call 'em, are only chary of their reputations, not their persons, and 'tis scandal they would avoid, not men. (I.i.166-69)

As a "eunuch," Horner, of course, provides the perfect cover to avoid scandal.

Horner's skill is highlighted by the bumbling figure of Pinchwife, the provincial, domineering husband, whose ineptitude in managing his wife's sexual innocence--not by wit, just with force--throws him squarely in competition with other men, as he becomes a prime target for cuckolding. He is acutely aware of the male competition, saying, "Well, gentlemen, you may laugh at me, but you shall never lie with my wife; I know the town" (I.i.457-58). He might "know the town," but he does not know how to control its influence on his young wife. The harder he tries, of course, the more he propels his wife into Horner's arms, and she, ready for any city experience, willingly goes.

Horner's main conquests are Mistress Pinchwife and Lady Fidget, and both women have dual identities in the comedic

structure. First, they are patriarchal mirrors of their husbands: Mistress Pinchwife reflects the unsophistication of her husband, and in contrast, Lady Fidget is Sir Jaspar's consort in the urban social life of playgoing and card playing--and looking for sexual adventures. Secondly, in their roles as "authentic" women, Mistress Pinchwife, as wife, represents the traditional, obedient woman, and Lady Fidget wears the mantle of the cynical Restoration mate. The way in which they negotiate their liaisons with Horner follows the pattern set by their wifely identities.

Mistress Pinchwife, who knows little of Horner except that he singled out her beauty at the playhouse and has flirted with her, naively imagines herself in love with him. Oblivious to her husband's probable reactions, she tells him that Horner has kissed and embraced her. Pinchwife is so enraged that he orders her to send Horner a letter condemning his actions and, when she hesitates, he threatens: "Write as I bid you, or I will write 'whore' with this penknife in your face"(IV.ii.95-6). Given the amount of violence that seventeenth-century society condoned towards women, Pinchwife's words, shocking as they are to the twentieth-century reader, must be seen in the comedy's context: they emphasize what a bumbling brute this man is, one without any wit. The final proof that Pinchwife's tactics diminish his male stature comes when his young *obedient* and guileless wife simply substitutes a love letter

for the original when Pinchwife leaves the room for a moment.

Lady Fidget, who knows Horner's secret and immediately plots to take advantage of his sexual availability, succeeds with Horner by helping to out-wit her husband in a way that highlights her sophistication. Lady Fidget is caught at Horner's apartments and lies that she has come to view some "china" which he has purchased but will not let her see:

> . . .for he knows china very well, and has himself very good, but will not let me see it lest I should beg some. But I will find it out, and have what I came for yet. (IV.iii.110-112)

She rushes into his chamber and locks the door--and begins one of the most risque scenes of double entendre in city comedy. Horner says, in feigned disgust, that he is tired of squiring around city wives for the convenience of their husbands, those women "more impertinent, more cunning and more mischievous than their monkeys." Sir Jaspar thoroughly enjoys hearing of Horner's frustrations, and chuckles when watching "the capon" being miserable. Since it sounds as if Lady Fidget is destroying his bedroom--"rifling all I have --"Horner declares, "but I'll get into her the back way, and so rifle her for it." The short exchange between Sir Jaspar and his wife which then follows presents the Restoration audience with most probably its highest level of farcical titillation:

> Horner: Stay here a little, I'll ferret her out to you presently, I warrant.

> Sir Jaspar: Wife! My Lady Fidget! Wife! He is coming into you the back way!
>
> Lady Fidget: Let him come, and welcome, which way he will.
>
> Sir Jaspar: He'll catch you, and use you roughly, and be too strong for you.
>
> Lady Fidget: Don't trouble yourself, let him if he can. (IV.iii.130-37)

The fact that Sir Jaspar believes and enjoys Horner's "disgust" with women is the whole basis for the comedy in this scene. Not only does he participate in being cuckolded--his crying, "Wife!" only emphasizes his status as husband--but he does it because he is so sure of his own male status; he has "won" long ago, he believes, in the male competition with Horner.

Horner, however, continues to win even unto the end of the play: his "impotence" is used not only to absolve Mistress Pinchwife, but also to provide the cover for future liaisons; Lady Fidget gladly keeps Horner's secret; in fact, she hopes he won't "share" it with her friends. In this comedy, the final dancing celebrates a superficial communal harmony; in reality, it applauds the patriarchal game of male competition that has been played with a bold, reckless ingenuity.

As the new century dawned, Congreve's *Way of the World* indicates, in some ways, the final formation of the "new" man: he is on his way to becoming the creator of new public institutions, and begins practicing his skills by

negotiating within the partnership of marriage. The famous "proviso" scene between Millamant and Mirabell reveals a young couple who, before they agree to marry, are negotiating personal needs, not family estates, and the individual speaks, not the lineage.

Millamant, a witty young beauty, and Mirabell, a young gentleman, have arrived at this scene through previous teasing and retorts that all point to their love for each other. Millamant declares that she will not "dwindle into a wife" unless her demands are met; Mirabell declares he has conditions of his own in order to become a husband. They both are willing to hear and consider the other, but what they hear reveals the continuing presence of patriarchy, hidden in a facade of equality. Among the conditions Millamant asks for are: to freely pay visits and to receive any guests she chooses, to freely send and receive letters, to wear what she pleases, to converse about what interests her, to assure her privacy behind her closed door, and to be the "empress" of her tea table. Mirabell, in good humor, answers with conditions of his own: that Millamant have only acquaintances "in general. . . no sworn confidant or intimate of [her] own sex," that she never attend a play in a mask in order to trick him into proving his "constancy," that she not "new-coin" her face with make-up as long as he likes her as she is, that she not "strait-lace" herself when pregnant with his "boy," and that her tea table contain no

hard talk or hard drink, so as not to "encroach upon the men's prerogative" (IV.i.p.197).

When the provisos are thus listed, it quickly becomes apparent that all the items focus on *Millamant's behavior.* Her desire for privacy, for freedoms in speech and relationships, all point to a desire for autonomy. Mirabell *seems* to support her "articles" but actually undermines many of them. To her desire to receive guests freely, he answers she should have only general acquaintances. To her assertion for privacy, he demands that she have no confidants. In addition, the provisos he lists that are not in direct response to hers focus either on her sexual role or making sure that her life remains in the domestic realm: she is to care for her body to please him and to ensure a healthy "man-child"; she can "rule" her tea table, but it must be a kingdom built on talk about "mending of fashions, spoiling of reputations, railing at absent friends." Mirabell, true to the patriarchal system, wants control of his lineage and wants to keep his private and public lives separate. He makes no demands regarding his own behavior because, as a man, there really is nothing he cannot already do. As Millamant's spouse he will have only more authority, or as he says with the facade of egalitarianism: "Well, have I liberty to offer conditions--that when you are dwindled into a wife, I may not be beyond measure enlarged into a husband?" (IV.i.p.197)

This is the game of male control on the most subtle of levels. Mirabell's authority is assured and, therefore, he can listen to what Millamant asks for. In addition, his willingness to listen can be construed as progress in human relations--the creation of a new way of relating. Mirabell can incorporate into his male identity a vision of himself as a forger of the new, but in a "safe" arena that will never impose real change upon him or force him to give up his authority.

As the Restoration age moved towards ways of questioning and eventually becoming "enlightened" about political, ideological, and religious institutions, Congreve points out one way into this new world. Carole Pateman states that a "fraternal social contract" arose from the political upheavals of the Civil War and the Interregnum. This contract between the sons of Adam led in the new century to the:

> "birth of civil society. . . The 'birth' of the civil body politic however, is an act of reason, there is no analogue to a bodily act of procreation. . . the civil body politic is fashioned after the image of the male individual. . .he is nothing more than a 'man of reason.'" [43]

While giving birth to the body politic may not involve a woman's body, Restoration comedy reveals that the witty heroine plays a psychological role in helping men not only forge their identity, but create a new society. Domestic life becomes the place to try out the concepts of

negotiation, to practice degrees of compromise in order to be ready to build the "real" world--the public world in which men continued to be the only real participants.

In summary, since the Jacobean and Restoration periods declared that the only "authentic" roles for women were as daughters and wives to men, women were bound to play only secondary roles in the structure of patriarchal society--just as they do in most of the comedies discussed in this chapter. And, since patriarchy is a system that promotes belief in male superiority, the secondary roles women played were as vehicles through which men tried to declare their superiority over other men. Patriarchy, while on some levels an ahistorical concept, does reflect historical time periods and the social climate of an age: the Jacobean and Restoration periods espouse different methods of male struggle for superiority, including different modes of controlling women to ensure that superiority.

Jacobean city comedies reveal men's struggle for public stature through secret bargaining over the control of a woman's body--whether a virgin daughter's or a wife's. Sometimes this bargaining results in material gains, sometimes in the perpetuation of lineage. Men, however, are never free from the necessity of proving their manhood, and a man's firmly established status can be jeopardized when he

joins with a new woman. The comedies portray some signs of rebellion among Jacobean women but, by and large, the women cooperate and, by necessity, become willing currency in the men's bargains.

While Jacobean comedies portray men who struggle for public stature, Restoration comedies show gentlemen who focus on personal gain in out-witting other gentlemen. Wit, not title or money, is a measure of manhood in this patriarchal world, and male competition now takes more subtle forms that include the cooperation of women in new ways. The secret bargaining of Jacobean men is replaced with negotiations between men and sexually adventurous women. This new method of reaching the same patriarchal goals of male superiority gives rise to the dramatic concept of the witty heroine. She is exciting because she is a patriarchal reflection of the witty male, but ultimately, she is still the means for men to proclaim their manhood--and to try out their negotiating skills, skills which will build their public lives and public institutions in the next century.

NOTES

1. Feminist definitions of patriarchy acknowledge the imbalance of power between males and females. The basis of this power struggle, however, reflects the focus of the feminist offering the definition. Therefore, patriarchy can be variously defined as an economic oppression of women (see Margaret Benston's "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation," *Monthly Review* 21, no. 4 [September 1969]); as rooted in the biological inequality of the sexes (see Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*, New York: Bantam, 1970); as a male-defined gender/sex oppression (see Kate Millet's *Sexual Politics*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1970, and Marilyn French's *Beyond Power: On Women, Men and Morals*, New York: Summit Books, 1985).

2. Hartmann, 14. Cited in Murray's *The Law of the Father*, page 7, Hartmann's view focuses on the material and personal benefits to men in this arrangement, such as a higher standard of living and sexual opportunities.

3. As cited in Murray's *The Law of the Father*, 7. On page 11, Murray describes Delphy's work as arguing that "the marriage contract is equivalent to the labour contract," and that "in return for domestic labour. . . we are told that women get only the costs of their own subsistence."

4. Sedgwick, 89. Sedgwick notes the difficult bind that men are in as they try to be a "man's man" but not so much as to be perceived as "interested" in men.

5. Ochshorn, 100.

6. Ezell, 16.

7. Ezell, 55-56.

8. Tannahill, 328.

9. Hill, 446.

10. Hill, 447. Hill notes that heads of households could be fined "10 pounds a month" as penalty if their children and apprentices did not attend church. Men were urged in pamphlets, prayer books, and sermons to keep their households on the path to righteousness; Archbishop Edwin Sandys preached: "'The householder that feareth God will, by good order and due consent, keep [his family] in the fear of God.'"

11. Brissenden, xviii. The editor quotes Thomas Dekker's *The Owl's Almanac* (1618) in which he writes about the

district: "A fair wench can be seen every morning in some shop in Cheapside: And in summer afternoons the self-same fair opens her booth at one of the garden-houses at Burnhill." Burnhill was a vicinity apparently frequented by prostitutes.

12. Youings, 368.

13. Stone, *Crisis*, 591. Stone describes the aristocratic family well into the 17th century as an institution for passing on life, name, and property.

14. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* come to mind as dramas which portray mothers and daughters. Mary Beth Rose has offered an interesting reason for the lack of women's parts (such as mothers) in the drama of the period: there were not enough boy actors to play women's roles, so only the most essential woman (the virginal heroine) became a character. It seems more likely, I think, that male playwrights did not find the mother/daughter relationship important enough to focus on. Indeed, given that the plays usually revolve around the negotiations among men, women would always be viewed as peripheral to the action. And, given the patriarchal mood of the period, surely few, if any, playwrights were very much aware of the relationships women maintained among--and for--themselves.

15. Ezell, 38. Ezell notes that, while the characteristics of the Good Wife did not originate during the 17th century, by mid-century "celebrations" of the Good Wife were one of the four common literary forms that spoke of women. Others were: "histories of famous women, satires on the general nature of women, and defenses refuting the satire" (36).

16. Ezell, 40.

17. Woodbridge, 208.

18. Weimann, 24.

19. See Wilbur Dunkel's *The Dramatic Technique of Thomas Middleton in His Comedies of London Life*, New York: Russell and Russell, 1967; Anthony Covatta's *Thomas Middleton's City Comedies*, Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1973; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, Ed. Charles Barber, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969.

20. See *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* edited by Alan Brissenden and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* edited by Charles Barber, Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1969.

21. Adrian Wilson, *Ceremony of Childbirth* in Paster's *The Body Embarrassed*, 185. Wilson sees a strong connection between the birthing process and real female power: the birth took place in the marital bedchamber ("the locus of patriarchy" [185]) closed off to men with only female attendants. Paster disagrees and sees both the closed chamber and the churching ceremony as confirming women's "shame," not power: the birthing chamber was closed because giving birth was a shameful process; women "cleansed" themselves of this shame by going to church. I tend to agree with Wilson: for such a ritual to even be alluded to and then dismissed in this play leads me to believe that it was powerful enough to create male anxieties over control, especially since it took place in a public ritual that, because of their biology, men could never appropriate.

22. Paster, in *Leaky Vessels*, 57-58. The author notes that this scene of "female over-indulgence" includes sexual aggressiveness: the women eat only the phallic "long plums" and stuff their "pockets" as well as their mouths. This aggressiveness results in circumventing the usual male rivalries so that Allwit (and, I suggest, Sir Walter) are here mutually threatened by "Amazonian women's appetites."

23. Brissenden, 83.

24. Brissenden, 3.

25. Tannahill, 342. The author notes that this "almost mystical" view of semen also led to the admonition against men "wasting" their seed by masturbating.

26. Hannay, 38.

27. Ezell, 39.

28. Joseph Sweetnam's *Arraignment of Lewd, Idle, Froward and Inconstant Women* (1615) as cited in Ezell, 46.

29. The introduction of actresses onto the English stage will be discussed more fully in Chapter IV.

30. Wilson, 9. The author notes that some of the very first locations for the "new" theaters during the period of re-opening were renovated tennis courts, such as Gibbons' Tennis Court at which the King's Company played, and Lisle's Tennis Court where the Duke's Company performed. The King's Company actually built a new building with "a modern stage and all the latest inventions in scenes and machines" and opened its doors on May 7, 1663. This Theater Royal was the ancestor to the Drury Lane Theater.

31. Taylor, xxii. In Taylor's introductory notes to the play she cites *She Would if She Could* as "the first example of the new comedy" of the Restoration because it fuses all the distinctive elements of "social, romantic, artificial, and intellectual strains"--as opposed to other comedies (e.g. Cowley's *The Cutter of Coleman-Street*, 1661; Howard's *The English Monsieur*, 1663; Dryden's *Secret Love*, 1667)--which simply "were comedies written early in the Restoration period."

32. Taylor, 67. The edition's footnote explains that the vision Sir Oliver has of himself describes "the practice of tying young dogs to the lead sheep in order to break them of bothering the sheep."

33. Even though James I was openly homosexual, he still married, had many children with Queen Anne, and thus dutifully presented his people with a traditional model of family life.

34. Fraser, *Charles II*, 125. Of course, Charles' marriage to Catherine of Portugal *did* have tremendous political implications and their lack of children made Charles' brother James and his Catholic children as potential heirs a serious threat to Protestant England. I am focusing here, however, on the influence of the personal lives of monarchs as the models to which their subjects look in order to structure their own personal lives--especially those who see themselves as members of an aristocratic class. This idea is discussed in Jonathan Goldberg's *James I and the Politics of Literature* in relation to the absolutist James presenting himself to his people as the patriarchal head of the nation and whose rule reflected the increased role of patriarchy in English society: he gave the love of a father and, in return, his subjects owed him their absolute allegiance.

35. It is interesting to note that the word "fop" here is used to refer to two men who have very different concerns about their appearance and demeanor. The Middle English origins of "fop" to mean "fool" certainly apply to Sir Joslin; the more common, later usage that also includes the criticism of vanity and affectedness seems to refer to Sir Oliver. Here, in a single word then, is yet one more indication of the transitional nature of Restoration thinking.

36. Stone, *Crisis*, 669. Stone sees a significant shift in family patterns over a long period--between the 1520's to the 1680's--and includes the growing belief in a sense of individual responsibility for personal harmony.

37. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 233. The author quotes from "Laws for a Free Commonwealth" by the Digger leader, Gerrad Winstanley. She cites the rationale for this basis for marriage in the group's philosophy that "we are all of one blood, mankind, and for portion, the Common Storehouses are every man and maid's portion, as free to one as to another." This kind of philosophy not only attacks capitalism, it threatens the patriarchal aspects of male competition and female oppression--it was obviously doomed to be rejected.

38. Ultimately, perhaps, societies draw bits and pieces of many philosophies to form the social structure. Antonia Fraser quotes Margaret Duchess of Newcastle as saying at this time "no one should marry 'against their own liking' because it led directly to adultery" (272). From ancient cultures to the Puritans, adultery had always been condemned and recognized as a negative off-shoot of the marital relationship. The connection between enforced marriage and adultery was always available to be identified; the fact that that connection was most clearly made during the Restoration suggests that the connection arose because this society was questioning and making "connections" on many issues.

39. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 268. The author cites Stone's *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, 637-45, to point out that: "the average ratio of dowry (given by the father) to jointure (settled on the girl by the bridegroom's family) rose from 4 or 5 to 1 in the middle of the sixteenth century to between 8 and 10 to 1 by the end of the seventeenth."

40. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 267-9. Fraser recounts the hard experience of the four Verney women, sisters to Sir Ralph Verney. The sisters remained at Claydon, the family estate, while their brother went into exile, "their portions caught up in the legal tangles caused by their father's death in the King's cause. For such dowerless young ladies, there were no brilliant matches available." One sister married "a debt-ridden and drunken widower, spending her early married life at his side in the Fleet prison;" another married "'a very humoursome cross boy' who was soon to make her cry 'night and day;'" and the third, "a poverty-stricken curate;" the fourth with "one Robert Lloyd" and "was probably pregnant beforehand."

41. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 269. For example, Lord Sandwich is quoted as saying in 1660 that he would willingly see his daughter, Jemima, "with a pedlar's pack at her back" so long as she was married to a gentleman rather than "a citizen."

42. Editor's note, 258. "Propriety" was as often used to mean "property."

43. Pateman cited by Murray in *Law of the Father?*, 91-92.

Chapter IV

Different Voices: Women in Plays by Aphra Behn

Daughters, wives, widows, and whores--all walked across the Jacobean and Restoration stages, fleshed out by the imaginations and perspectives of male playwrights. In December, 1670, however, the tragicomedy *The Forced Marriage* played at the Lincoln's Inn Fields and for the six-night run[1] the audience viewed a dramatic innovation: women characters created by Aphra Behn, a thirty-year-old widow.[2]

Behn certainly was not the first woman to be serious about putting pen to paper--women had been writing perceptive letters to friends and family, keeping contemplative diaries, translating Latin and Greek religious tracts, and creating poetry since before the time of Elizabeth I.[3] But, unlike these private creative efforts, "closet pieces" that were circulated only among friends, if at all, and unlike even the political and religious pamphlets circulated during the Interregnum, Behn's dramas were written not only for public eyes but for public ears. A prolific dramatist, she wrote more plays than any other Restoration dramatist except Dryden.[4] Spoken on the public stage, her dialogues, filled with witticisms and retorts, literally gave a new voice to women of the period--and also gave Behn professional and economic autonomy.

Behn's plays are linked to early Jacobean city comedies while, at the same time, they reveal changes in focus that were to become more pronounced in the efforts of later women dramatists. In the two plays this chapter will examine--*The Rover* and *The Revenge*--Behn creates her own portraits of contemporary women and reshapes Jacobean women characters. She also reconfigures, from a woman's perspective, the economic and patriarchal themes presented in her male contemporaries' comedies. Behn's work, then, can be viewed as a composite of what had been and what was yet to come in comedy.

Earlier chapters in this study have focused on the intertwining relationship between comedy and the socio-economic and political climates of the Jacobean and Restoration periods. Aphra Behn's work must be looked at through the same lens. Certain factors in Restoration society, however, had to join to "produce" the woman playwright Behn before she could produce her plays. Since women had been "scribbling" privately for years earlier, only changes in the public world of men could have enabled Behn to find a toehold to step into the playhouse as author. Ironically, but not surprisingly perhaps, these changes in the male world had to do with women and their increased participation in certain areas of public life as a result of the Civil War, the Interregnum, and the Restoration.

Seventeenth-century women were "engaged" in the battles

of the Civil War both psychologically and physically. Not only did they become impoverished by the deaths of husbands, fathers, and sons--men upon whom their existence depended--but they often had to take arms themselves or organize household servants to stave off an attack from either Roundhead or Royalist soldiers.[5] And, surprisingly, Royalist women "'appeared before Committees, and pleaded their own Causes, like men,'" to gain back sequestered or confiscated estates that Parliament had used to pay for war supplies.[6]

Even women who were not directly under attack often became active in the war effort: they nursed the wounded, raised money, and became spies or "intelligencers" and emissaries.[7] This was an ironic granting of autonomy, indeed, to a sex that was generally deemed both physically helpless and morally unreliable in comparison to men.

Once peace was declared, however, women were no longer needed as comrades-in-arms, and they were forced to revert to their submissive roles as men's domestic helpmates, although often now a helpmate who held opinions. As a result, some women turned to writing on political and religious issues, but no longer as "closet pieces." As Janet Todd states:

> During the Commonwealth they wrote pamphlets intended to intervene in the political and religious life of the nation and they wrote clearly under their own names and printed each other's books, now inveighing against the tyrannical Cromwellian government, and now

> castigating the sins and high living of Oxford and Cambridge or the luxurious decadence of the restored monarchy.[8]

Women in great numbers also wrote as little as their names, often petitioning Parliament during this time; "one petition, submitted in 1653, bore as many as 6,000 signatures."[9]

As the Puritan fathers busied themselves in creating the Commonwealth, some women sectaries were busy practicing the tenet of freedom of conscience by preaching in public. Besides choosing to disregard the Biblical admonition to "keep silent," they were also publicly declaring an allegiance to a higher authority than that of their fathers or husbands. Even though often the women made self-depreciating admissions about their womanly mental "weaknesses," their preaching still created anxiety over the possibility that women were placing themselves above the control of their husbands. This led to the customary criticism of women's talkativeness--"prattling"--and, in some cases, to the authorities taking women into custody.[10]

In addition to the social pressures from war, politics, and religious fervor that gave women a limited, but marked, participation in the public world during the Civil War and Interregnum, a singular event took place within the confines of the Restoration theater that contributed enormously to the creation of Aphra Behn, the professional playwright: the employment, in 1660, of English women as actresses. Just as

women had written before Behn, there had been actresses and travelling women performers in England years earlier, but they had been foreigners, like the "unchaste, shameless, and unnatural tumbling Italian women" that performed in Lyme during the reign of Elizabeth; or the French actresses who performed at Blackfriars in 1629 and were jeered off the stage for their "immorality."[11]

While the accusations of actresses' "immorality" continued throughout the period and well beyond, English women's legal right to be on stage began with the restoration of Charles II.[12] Shortly after his restoration, the new monarch licensed two playhouses in London, and under his patronage, it was stipulated that actresses play women characters.[13] Thus, in 1660, as a young actress[14] stepped into the footlights to play Desdemona in *The Moor of Venice,* the stage was set for Aphra Behn and "her" women to follow.

The questions about--and the often prurient interest in--actresses' morality would never be extinguished, yet there was an attempt by the authorities to rationalize morally the profession of actress. The actress was put on a patriarchal pedestal as the pacifier of men's brute lusts: she was to "improve the moral tone of the playhouses, and the drama."[15] Or, as the patent granted to Thomas Killigrew in 1662 stated:

> for as much as many plays formerly acted doe conteine severall prophane, obscene, and scurrulous passages, and the women's part therein have byn acted by men in the habit of women, . . .

> for the preventing of these abuses for the future. . .wee do likewise permit and give leave, that all of the woemen's part. . . may be performed by woemen soe long as their recreacones, which by reason of the abuses aforesaid were scandalous and offensive, may by such reformation be esteemed not onely harmless delight, but useful and instructive.[16]

Actresses did little to "control" the bawdiness of the Restoration authors' pens and the audiences' tastes and, given the fact that many actresses personally lived up to the rumors of scandalous lives,[17] the concept was doomed from the start. More significantly, however, companies recognized the addition of women as a major draw and promoted audience interest in the personal lives of actresses.[18] In this way, theater companies not only helped to maintain the patriarchal view of woman as sexual object, but also forged additional connections between the professions of actress and whore. There was, however, at times perhaps a more positive aspect in the connection between an actress's personal life and her stage life. It is interesting to note that Behn's friend, the well-known actress Elizabeth Barry, played the lead in the two plays discussed in this chapter--indeed, had the lead role in almost all of Behn's plays.[19] Although the roles varied--here, a witty heroine and a passionate mistress--they all presented women who struggle to declare some measure of autonomy in a society that demands they function in prescribed ways. Certainly Barry's lifestyle fit the "scandalous" model of actresses, but perhaps this "orphaned

daughter of a barrister ruined in the Civil War"[20] was also able to inform her roles with an insight born of her *own* struggles for autonomy within the male-dominated acting profession.

There were other women in the theater at this same time, however, women who did not stimulate the gossip that actresses did, but whose presence declared the theater--a public arena--as a sphere in which a woman could do work. These women were the orange sellers, the dressmakers, dressers, charwomen, and most importantly, theater managers.[21] Among the few women theater managers, almost all of whom were widows who simply held their late husbands' shares in the company, Lady Henrietta Maria Davenant, widow of a playwright-manager, stands out as the active director of the Duke's Company from 1668 to 1673, a time of distinct success for the group.[22] Her influence was felt in the introduction of certain actresses to the stage and in the production of plays with "sympathetic or challenging views of women" and "plays with transvestite heroines."[23] Aphra Behn's first three plays were produced by the Duke's Company under Davenant's management. While it is impossible to say whether Behn chose the Duke's Company over the King's[24] because of Davenant's presence, the fact remains that these productions stand as a striking collaboration between two women wielding creative authority in a world formerly controlled solely by men.

Reared in this social atmosphere of a circumscribed but vocal women's activism in different aspects of public life, Aphra Behn was thus prompted to give voice to *her* vision of women. The themes that she chose to confront--sexual relations and money--had been on center stage since Thomas Dekker wrote *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in 1600. Behn added a female perspective to these basic elements of city comedy: while men wrote about economic mobility and imperialism, Behn saw the economic dependence and vulnerability of women; while men wrote about claiming a patriarchal place in the public world, Behn wrote about the sexual violence done to women and about the possibilities of sexual equality. Not only does she view these elements of sex and money differently, but she sees how they affect lives according to who is in control of them. Jacqueline Pearson says:

> Behn is unusual in revealing so nakedly how all social relationships, those of generations as well as of the sexes, are simply lightly camouflaged struggles for power. . . She is unusual in her period for using the word 'Politicks' to mean not only Whig and Tory, but more broadly any kind of relationship based on a struggle for power, which for Behn meant almost any relationship.[25]

Even though for Behn, the personal was political, nevertheless, she was also a product of her age. The contradictory or "conflicted" aspects of her plays most likely reflect the difficult position of a woman writer trying to find a niche within an existing, male profession *and* simultaneously to write about life as she knew it.

Behn's most popular play, *The Rover*,[26] is based on

Thomas Killigrew's *Thomaso*, a comedy written in two parts that follows the adventures of English cavaliers in Madrid during the time of Charles II's exile. As Jane Spencer notes:

> Behn reacted angrily to charges of plagiarism, and certainly she was only following common practice in drawing on a source in earlier dramas; but she does take far more from *Thomaso* than she acknowledges in her defensive postscript.[27]

Jones DeRitter states that Behn's attempt to downplay the impact of her source was a disingenuousness that reflected "her fundamental hostility to the type of sexual politics presented and approved in Killigrew's closet drama,"[28] and that "Behn purposely sought to transform Killigrew's politically regressive fantasy into a consciously (if covertly) feminist work."[29] If one of Behn's purposes, as DeRitter convincingly contends, was to undermine the exalted image of Killigrew's wanderer Thomaso, she achieved her aim to a great extent by offering new visions of women and by revealing how the patriarchal system could oppress both women and men. Behn not only tightens the organization and increases the pace of *Thomaso*, "a play of interesting but long-drawn-out ideas,"[30] but she mines the dramatic conventions and character types that her male predecessors had developed--and that Killigrew also employed--manipulating them in ways that shed a different perspective on economics and gender relations, creating a play that she could call her own.

Thomaso contains two conventional representations of women: Serulina, the virgin heroine, and Angelica Bianca, the courtesan. They both love the wanderer, Thomaso, and his description of his relationship with them clearly confirms them as patriarchally inscribed: "one is my religion, the other my sport and diversion" (Part I,IV.ii.p.363). Behn offers a third vision of women, however, one that splinters the simplistic patriarchal binary of virgin/whore. Hellena, Behn's own creation and very different from any character in *Thomaso*, is a woman who is both chaste and frankly interested in sex.[31] It is through Hellena that Behn chooses to introduce the issue of sexual equality. Behn transforms Killigrew's Serulina into Hellena's sister, Florinda, and rather than the Rover, gives her a like-minded love interest: the honorable Belvile. And while Behn retains the courtesan Angellica Bianca, she presents her as a woman driven to agonizing self-examination, in contrast to Killigrew's figure who represents only a "type" of prostitute. Through these three women, Hellena, Florinda, and Angellica, Behn engages the themes of sexual and economic equality and injustice.

The very first scene reverses the sexual politics of *Thomaso* and, indeed, the typical Restoration comedy: the curtain rises on two women, not men, in their chamber discussing love and potential lovers. Hellena and Florinda function as the young gallants do in plays by Etherege and

Wycherley (and even earlier, in Marston and Middleton): to introduce the plot. But they introduce it through their perspective,[32] and an audience therefore is brought first into the female world when it enters the "reality" of *The Rover*. This opening subtly validates the importance of the young women's discussion and their desires, and every action and scene moves out from that center.

High-spirited Hellena and the more sedate Florinda are foils, but not competitors, in the quest for love, and their first exchange reveals the sisters' close, supportive relationship. In addition, both sisters make strong statements that compel the audience to view the ensuing action of the play from their perspectives:

> Florinda: . . . and how near soever my father thinks I am to marrying that hated object, I shall let him see I understand better *what's due to my beauty, birth, and fortune, and more to my soul,* than to obey those unjust commands.
>
> Hellena: And dost thou think that ever I'll be a nun? Or at least till I'm so old I'm fit for nothing else? Faith no, sister; and that which makes me long to know whether you love Belvile, is because I hope he has some mad companion or other that *will spoil my devotion. Nay, I'm resolved to provide myself this Carnival, if there be e'er a handsome proper fellow of my humour above ground, though I ask first.* (I.i.21-40) [my italics]

Florinda, trapped by the patriarchal system of marriage, uses language that helps to vent her outrage, but ultimately does not reveal a specific course of action: she will make sure her father "sees" that she understands what is due her "soul." Hellena, also chafing under patriarchy, but

destined to become a bride of Christ, uses words that leave no doubt as to her plans during the Carnival: she will "provide" herself with a young man of her "humour" who will "spoil" any lingering possibility of her intended vocation. These statements reflect the sisters' differing personalities and hint at Florinda's future victimization and Hellena's audacity, but both statements also reveal a sense of self-worth and a striving for autonomy.

In another manipulation of Restoration comedic conventions, Behn presents Hellena as a witty heroine--a reflection of the wit in the hero Willmore--but a reflection ultimately grounded in her own agency, not in patriarchy. Hellena responds to her sexual urges with a natural curiosity and a frank evaluation of her potential desirability: she is of "humour gay," "vigor desirable," and "well shaped" (I.i.45-6). She is willing to ignore social convention if it seems to put an unjust limitation--like not being allowed to attend the Carnival--on a her life.

Behn emphasizes the immediate attraction of two like souls when Hellena and Willmore first meet. Willmore begins the sexual banter:

> . . .for I am come from sea, child, and Venus not being propitious to me in her own element, I have a world of love in store. Would you would be good-natured and take some on't off my hands.

and Hellena matches his banter with her own:

> Why, I could be inclined that way, but for a foolish vow I am going to make to die a maid. (I.ii.153-59)

She then takes charge of the raillery, even mocking her own predicament and Willmore by placing him in the role of a sexual father confessor:

> I perceive, good Father Captain, you design only to make me fit for heaven. But, if on the contrary, you should quite divert me from it, and bring me back to the world again, I should have a new man to seek, I find. And what a grief that will be; for when I begin, I fancy I shall love like anything; I never tried yet.

Willmore can't believe his ears; here is a virgin who is ready for love, and he excitedly responds:

> Egad, and that's kind! Prithee, dear creature, give me credit for a heart, for faith, I'm a very honest fellow. Oh, I long to come first to the banquet of love! And such a swinging appetite I bring. (I.ii.190-99)

The two engage in sexual banter that is charged with sexual appetite; their only difference is that Hellena seeks her first taste, Willmore his next feast.

This exchange is a far cry from the sexual coyness of the two young couples in Etherege's *She Would if She Could*, who meet in Mulberry Garden. Even though the sisters Ariana and Gatty (nicknamed "Mad-cap" and "Sly Girl") are in London in search of excitement, their whole demeanor is based on the premise that they should be "caught" by men. Their own interests in men are circumscribed by the male prerogative to make the first move--a social convention that demands they be passive players or stealthy manipulators in the game of love. Seeing Courtall and Freeman, Gatty says: "Would

they had courage enough to set upon us. I long to be engaged" (II.i.75). In contrast to waiting for a "courageous" man to "engage" her, Hellena leaves Willmore only after she has fixed a time and place for them to meet again and "explore" their mutual interests in each other.

Hellena's *awareness* of what she wants exists also in marked contrast to another Restoration heroine very much interested in the experience of being loved: Wycherley's *Country Wife*, Margery Pinchwife. Even though she has been kept from the "profane" world in a nunnery, Hellena's contemplation of her future and the recognition of her desires have filled her with a knowledge of her own needs. Margery, even though she has experienced the marriage bed, remains child-like. She tells her husband that she wants to go to the theater only "to look upon the player-men, and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me" (III.i.64-5), and that Horner "put the tip of his tongue between my lips. . .", something she would not let him do again ". . . .unless he should force me" (IV.ii.37-44). Margery's comments about sexual matters verge on being ludicrously "innocent," and at the same time reveal a sexual fuse just waiting to be lit by a lucky man. Of course, Margery's "frank" remarks and Pinchwife's jealousies form *The Country Wife's* comedic base, but Margery also serves as a male fantasy of the non-threatening, sexually available woman: lots of "action," not much thought. Hellena,

however, has given much thought to what *she* wants to experience, and with what kind of man.

Hellena's and Willmore's mutual sexual interest drives the twists and turns in the plot until interest becomes mutual love--in spite of Willmore's "infidelity" with Angellica. Hellena is able to accept Willmore as he is--whether we choose to call him an audacious womanizer or a hopeless lover of women--but she continues to act also in her own interests. She discovers she loves Willmore at the same time she discovers he has made love to Angellica: "What the deuce should this be now that I feel?. . .I cannot choose but be angry and afraid when I think that mad fellow should be in love with anybody but me" (III.i.21-27). Rather than be broken-hearted and condemning, Hellena is "a woman . . .[who] is willing to use the rake's tools against him,"[33] and she chooses to confront Willmore whenever she can--in her gypsy disguise and dressed as a page--to show her wit, and more importantly, to remind him that he must make choices if he wants to join with her. Willmore, who not only sees Hellena as a beauty, but as a "damned honest person of quality. . . so very free and witty" (I.ii.312-13), has never experienced such a dilemma.

Their mutual pursuit ends in what can be considered a "proviso scene"--even though it pre-dates the negotiations between Mirabell and Millamant in Congreve's *Way of the World*. In Congreve's patriarchally defined scene,

Millamant's attempts to delineate her marital relationship with Mirabell are undermined by "equitable" negotiations, ultimately confirming that Millamant will "dwindle" into a wife under her husband's authority. Behn's scene, however, does not serve to negotiate the kind of marriage Hellena and Willmore each want, but to determine if there will be a marriage at all before they bed. This issue is never contemplated by couples who accept the traditional sexual double standard: "honorable" women wouldn't consider pre-marital sex; men would have access to a steady supply of sexual partners until they wed, in any case. Behn, however, presents Hellena and Willmore as equally interested and as equally having a choice regarding their coupling, although she recognizes that sexual equality in spirit does not, for women, overcome social consequences. Willmore has acknowledged the hold Hellena has over him: "Egad, I was never clawed away with broadsides from any female before. Thou hast one virtue I adore--good nature" (V.422-23). Willmore is ready to "fall to" their love making, and Hellena agrees "to lose no time" after the "priest [says] amen to't"--then she will lie down "without fear or blushing." As she has been throughout their relationship, Hellena is frank about her deep sensuality, but reminds Willmore that she will unleash it only if it benefits her as much as it does him. Hellena might have attracted Willmore in an unconventional way, but she knows that she must live

ultimately in conventional society, and marriage enables her to function within its structure. Willmore protests that "Hymen and priest wait still upon portion and jointure. . . Marriage is as certain a bane to love as lending money is to friendship" (V.445-47). Hellena's response that she, on the other hand, without marriage will have "a cradle full of noise and mischief, with a pack of repentance at [her] back" (V.453-54) moves Willmore to understand they both fear being trapped, but from different perspectives; he concludes, "Well, I see we are both upon our guards" (V.459). The focus of the exchange becomes, then, not what one lover demands of the other, as in *Way of the World*, but what each sees as the consequence of a specific choice: entrapment. Willmore then considers the person--not just the body--before him, and declares: "I see there's no way to conquer good nature but by yielding. Here, give me thy hand: one kiss, and I am thine"(V.459-61). Hellena's self-assured wit in response to Willmore's decision, not only reaffirms her sexual nature, but confirms for Willmore the correctness of his choice:

> Hellena: One kiss! How like my page he speaks! I am resolved you shall have none, for asking such a sneaking sum. He that will be satisfied with one kiss will never die of that longing. Good friend single-kiss, is all your talking come to this? A kiss, a caudle! Farewell, captain single-kiss.
>
> Willmore: . . . By heaven, both the Indies shall not buy thee from me. I adore thy humor and will marry thee, and we are so of one humor it must be a bargain. Give me thy hand. (*Kisses her hand.*) And now let the blind ones, love and fortune, do

their worst. (V.462-72)

The marriage that Hellena and Willmore agree to is wholly unconventional, however, in the lack of family presence, let alone patriarchal control of Hellena. When she is later faced with the patriarchal authority of her brother and his incensed opposition to the marriage, Hellena defies him with a startling revelation:

> Why, I have considered the matter, brother, and find the three hundred thousand crowns my uncle left me, *and you cannot keep from me*, will be better laid out in love than in religion, and turn to as good an account. (V.522-25) [my italics]

Hellena has money of her own and, therefore, is autonomous. She can provide for herself, and even for Willmore, and having this ability, she usurps her brother's (and father's) authority over her, and makes his incensed opposition to the marriage meaningless. In what seems an astoundingly modern statement, Behn makes clear the connection between a woman's autonomy and financial independence, as Hellena, no longer beholden to her family for her maintenance, seeks neither her brother's approval nor his blessing on her marriage.

Hellena's disclosure, coming as it does at the end of the play, serves several purposes, some dramatic, some thematic. First of all, it thrills the audience with a surprise solution to the only remaining obstacle to the lovers' union and seals the "happy ending" motif. In this way, Behn manipulates another comedic convention: the pursuit of the wealthy heiress by the penniless gallant. In

reality, Hellena is a wealthy heiress and Willmore certainly is penniless, but money has not been a focus of their relationship--in fact, the couple doesn't even exchange names until they have decided to wed. Unlike other Restoration heroines, Hellena has not had to protect herself as a wealthy "target" nor has Willmore been put in the position of looking like a fortune-hunter. Behn was, therefore, able to keep the audience's focus on the attraction between "two like souls"--a love match of sensuality and keen wit.

On the other hand, Hellena's swift transformation from potential novice to a woman of independent means raises other questions about women, self-hood, and money that Behn does not answer. For example, are we to believe that Hellena was waiting simply for the right moment to reclaim her money from her family's control and would have claimed it whether she had met Willmore or not? Did the fact that she rightfully has "three hundred thousand crowns" embolden her already adventuresome nature? Or, is it only when hopelessly in love with Willmore that she realizes she has the means to live with him if he will have her? Or, is it, in fact, the empowerment she feels when she realizes that Willmore loves her for her "nature" that fortifies her to confront and break with family authority? Whatever the answers, these questions force us to consider--or even re-consider--Hellena as a woman, a self-assured "match" for

Willmore.

In addition, Behn forces us to consider how Hellena and Willmore will live out their married life--and hints that it will not be on a strong patriarchal model. In the final scenes of *Thomaso*, Serulina's brother, Pedro, becomes friends with the newly reformed Thomaso and gives his blessing to his sister's clandestine marriage. He undergirds the patriarchal exchange of authority over Serulina as he asks Thomaso also to manage the family estate while he is gone:

> Sister, you were yesterday all my care, and now Don Thomaso has blown that fear all over; Faith take the house into your Protection too; for Carlo and I am resolved to spend a year or two in Italy on this occasion. . . (Part II, V.x.p.462)

In *The Rover*, however, since Hellena has overturned the male authority that Pedro represents, he must find a way to save face. He attempts to do this by declaring his relief at being rid of the "burden" of Hellena, yet he still speaks as if he has the patriarchal authority to hand her on to Willmore: "Take her; I shall now be free from fears of her honor. Guard it now, if you can; I have been slave to't long enough" (V.530-32). Willmore, however, does not play his part as expected in this male exchange, but, instead, grants Hellena a novel kind of autonomy which she heartily endorses:

> Willmore: Faith, sir, I am of a nation that are of opinion a woman's honor is not worth guarding when she has a mind to part with it.

Hellena: Well said, captain. (V.533-36)

Willmore's and Hellena's responses offer strong hints that their marriage will be defined by the characteristics that have attracted them in their courtship: a challenge to social conventions by kindred spirits.

Just as Behn uses the sensuality of Hellena to discuss sexual equality, she uses the sexual objectification of Florinda to expose sexual violence against women. Behn follows Killigrew's plot in presenting the conventional love story of Florinda who is caught between the plans of her father and the plot of her brother to marry her against her will. Her "conventional" love story takes a dark, ugly twist, however, when she is almost gang raped--by a group that includes her brother. Killigrew's *Thomaso* includes the potential rape scene of Serulina, but the changes Behn makes to the scene in *The Rover* result in a much more disturbing message: the connection between patriarchy and violence towards women.

Fleeing from discovery by her brother as she tries to meet Belvile, Florinda seeks refuge in the first house she spies and rushes into Blunt's chamber. Blunt, one of the Cavaliers' cohorts, is enraged over being robbed and stripped by a whore whom he naively thought a willing gentlewoman. The abuse he's experienced reverses "the traditional seduction. . .in which the woman, as the object of desire, is seduced and abandoned."[34] It also has

overturned the patriarchal power structure, so that being sexually controlled and humiliated by a woman diminishes his male identity. When Florinda asks for sanctuary, Blunt's seething against all "womankind" and the disturbing scene that follows clearly present rape as an act based in male anger and a sense of thwarted power over women, not sexual gratification. Blunt's words chillingly fit the profile of a rapist:

> . . .Cruel? yes, I will kiss and beat thee all over, kiss and see thee all over; thou shalt lie with me too, not that I care for the enjoyment, but to let thee see I have ta'en deliberated malice to thee, and will be revenged on one whore for the sins of another. (IV.v.53-57)

Florinda is perceived to be a harlot, and she will get therefore what she "deserves." Blunt and Frederick's last-minute uncertainty about her class status, however, ultimately delays their assault and lets events unfold toward Florinda's eventual rescue. All of this material closely follows Killigrew's plot--even to the clear motive for rape as anger expressed by Killigrew's would-be rapist, Edwardo: "I'll kiss, and see thee; not that I care a rotten Orange for't; Nay, I will ly with thee too, and yet you are never the safer from my anger" (Part II, II.iv.p.410). Edwardo's anger, however, seems to be bolstered by his drinking--"what cordial comfort, I and counsel too, have I found in Sack"--a fact that he uses later to partially exonerate his behavior. Behn, however, offers a second focus in the rape scene in addition to Florinda's

victimization: how men are trapped by the same patriarchal system which they endorse.

In contrast to Edwardo's, Blunt's anger is a sober rage and Florinda's tears are ineffectual; she is put in a room until Blunt and Frederick can assure themselves of her identity before commencing to use her. "In effect, Behn suggests that Blunt finds it necessary to master a woman because he cannot master himself. In order for the duped Blunt to regain manly authority, he attacks a woman--any woman."[35] Behn clearly reveals the patriarchal demand that a man control a woman in order to establish his manhood and underscores this concept by Blunt's behavior when the Cavaliers and Pedro suddenly pay him a visit. At this point in *Thomaso*, Serulina is whisked to another room because her tears have moved Edwardo's cohort, Ferdinando, to offer her protection from her brother:

> By this light, she is really Concern'd, I see now, by her Paleness; poor Girl, Come be not afflicted; by my life, he shall neither see thee nor Injure thee here; come be confident: poor rogue how she shakes! (Part II,II.iv.p.413)

Behn, however, not only denies the fantasy that a woman's tears will touch a rapist, but she shows that it is Blunt's panic at being ridiculed by his friends about his being abused by the whore--"say I am not at home, or that I'm asleep, or--or--anything"--that buys Florinda some time. Blunt refuses to open his chamber door saying, "I am about a necessary affair of life: I have a wench with me. You

apprehend me?--The devil's in't if they be so uncivil as to disturb me now" (V.25-27). Blunt tries to manipulate male consensus regarding the patriarchally sanctioned use of a woman's body--"a necessary affair of life"--both to protect himself from his friends and to reaffirm his position among them. Since Blunt has a low status among the men to begin with, however, he is still vulnerable to their raillery, and they end up entering after all.

Behn, therefore, puts all of the men in the play--including Belvile--in this scene, participating in and, to varying degrees, responsible for the violence aimed at Florinda. The men draw swords to see who has the longest and therefore, will be the first to go in to see if Florinda is a woman of "quality" or for "diversion,"--a scene which is not in *Thomaso*. They reveal male competition over the sexual control of a woman in a most blatant exchange: "Come, the longest sword carries her" (V.100). Florinda's brother, Pedro, wins. While the men's aggressiveness and the potential incest create the dramatic impact of this part of the scene, it is actually undergirded by Belvile's anxious struggle with the patriarchal system. Belvile's dilemma represents another change from the scene in *Thomaso*, since Thomaso is almost immediately able to talk with Serulina while the other men wait outside. Belvile, however, finds himself in a particularly desperate bind since he has recognized Florinda's ring but cannot declare the "harlot's"

true identity because of Pedro's presence. Earlier, Belvile criticized Willmore for accosting Florinda, thinking she was a whore: "Ah, plague of your ignorance! If it had not been Florinda, must you be a beast? A brute? A senseless swine?" (III.vi.2-3). He has criticized Willmore's male aggressiveness--which is supported by the patriarchal system--and now finds himself, ironically, emasculated by that same system because he cannot perform the "manly" act of saving her. The best he can do is to try to deter Blunt by tapping into the male need for public status, in this instance on a national level:

> Hark'ee, fool, be advised, and conceal both the ring and the story for your reputation's sake. Do not let people know what despised cullies we English are; to be cheated and abused by one whore, and another rather bribe thee than be kind to thee, is an infamy to our nation. (V.82-86)

Behn makes it clear that Florinda and Belvile are well-matched in their honorable natures; and Heidi Hutner sees this resemblance as "Behn's revision [implying] that if women are to be virtuous, men must be virtuous too. Florinda is stereotypically good--unappropriative, passive--but so is Belvile."[31] This scene, however, points to Behn's recognition that both women *and* men can be trapped by the patriarchal system that wants to see women only as sexual objects.

When Florinda's true identity is finally revealed and before the couple hurries off to be married before Pedro

discovers their plans, the men ask Florinda's pardon. She grants it willingly, as does Serulina in *Thomaso*. Florinda's readiness to grant forgiveness is not inconsistent with the practice of city comedy: providing audiences with happy endings and reconciliation. The length of the potential rape scene (almost 300 lines) and the explicit language ("We'll both lie with her, and then let me alone to bang her") stand in stark relief, however, to the 38 lines it takes later to forgive and forget all. In *Thomaso*, by contrast, many more lines are devoted to these apologies, which contain Ferdinando's rationalization: "...though my part of the injury may find excuse from her Veil. . . nor was her veil off," and Edwardo's: "I have now as much shame and sorrow as there was wine or anger in my injury"(Part II,III.iv.p.417). The length of Behn's scene of realistic violence almost negates the fairy tale forgiveness which follows, strongly suggesting that she was simply paying lip service to this reconciliation goal of city comedy. The scene offers an example of Behn's "conflicted" writing: she saw with a woman's eyes, but she had to write for a partially male audience.

Behn brings the elements of love, independence, and money together yet one more time in the character of the courtesan Angellica. In her portrayal of the whore, she presents a much more complex representation than the Jacobean harlot or the Restoration trophy mistress. Janet

Todd states:

> In [Behn's] works a constant theme is the power of love and the need for it to exist between people for its own sake and not be transformed into a commodity, an item to be exchanged for money, influence or selfish gratification.[37]

As noted above, this theme is certainly expressed in the relationship between Hellena and Willmore. But Angellica's body is firmly tied to the acquisition of money, and when she tries to sever that connection and use her body to express her love for Willmore, she is repaid only with the pain of his betrayal and the loss of her sense of self.

At first glance, Angellica seems to be the most sexually and financially independent among the play's three main women characters: her fame has preceded her to Naples, and the high price she charges indicates she knows the value men place on her. Angellica's success has come at a cost, however, and as Catherine Gallagher contends, that cost was recognized by Behn when contemplating her own position as a playwright. The real basis of Angellica's autonomy can be found in Gallagher's examination of Behn's use of "the metaphor of the author as prostitute to create distinctions between the obliging playwright and the withholding private person, the woman's body and her self, the stage and real life."[38] Gallagher convincingly asserts that Behn's identification with the prostitute was based in her view of the whore as "internally divided: what can be seen of her is never what she is."[39] This vision of the

whore is what Behn presents to us in the figure of Angellica. In contrast to the several whores in *Thomaso*, whom Killigrew divides into the "bad" and--like his own Angelica Bianca--the "good," Behn presents a minor "bad" whore Lucetta who tricks Blunt, but focuses on Angellica, a woman who is psychologically divided.

Until Angellica meets Willmore, however, her ability to function within the dichotomy of self that she has constructed brings her material wealth, and even a type of emotional satisfaction. Returning to Naples to find a new patron, she seems to have no qualms about being exposed to the marketplace once again, even if men refuse to pay her price, confidently declaring:

> No matter, I'm not displeased with their rallying; their wonder feeds my vanity, and he that wishes but to buy gives me more pride than he that gives my price can make my pleasure. (II.i.128-31)

The emotional part of herself that she must deny in order to be satisfied with men's "wonder" and money is alluded to and dismissed when Angellica explains how she has avoided the "disease" of being in love:

> A kind but sullen star under which I had the happiness to be born. Yet I have had no time for love; the bravest and noblest of mankind have purchased my favors at so dear a rate, as if no coin but gold were current with our trade. (II.i.151-54)

Very much like Hellena, Angellica is affected by Willmore at their first meeting. While Hellena's and Willmore's sexual banter is couched in sensual flirtation,

Willmore crudely tries to bargain for "a pistole's worth" (II.ii.39) of Angellica or to see if it is possible to buy a share in her with his friends. Angellica's response, in an aside, reveals that she is already beginning to lose her carefully crafted identity: "Sure this from any other man would anger me; nor shall he know the conquest he has made" (II.ii.51-52). Angellica knows how the whore should respond--with outrage that Willmore would haggle over her acknowledged value--but she does not know how the woman should respond to the love she is feeling for the first time.

As Angellica and Willmore engage in their own kind of "proviso" scene which will determine if Angellica will take Willmore to her bed for love and not money, Angellica struggles with her feelings for Willmore but makes no apologies for her status as a courtesan. Her behavior starkly contrasts that of Killigrew's Angellica, who hopes that Thomaso can forget that she "was to be sold" and declares through her tears:

> Oh! that such a stream could make me as pure a Virgin as I am now a perfect Lover; then I would beg to be thy wife; but that must not be; for love bids me not ask that which honour forbids thee to grant. (Part I,II.iv.p.341)

Killigrew's Angellica "thinks of herself as a 'whore': her status as an immoral outcast is central to her identity,"[40]--similar to the Jacobean concept of whoredom as a permanent stain on a woman's soul. Killigrew's Angellica does not see

the love she offers Thomaso as adequate: ironically, but in keeping with Killigrew's patriarchal vision of the whore, she longs for the return of her maidenhead--the "jewel" so avidly purchased, and often prostituted, in the marital marketplace.

Behn's Angellica, on the other hand, acknowledges the mercenary aspects of her "joys" but challenges Willmore to consider the hypocrisy of the patriarchal marriage market:

> Pray tell me, sir, are you not guilty of the same mercenary crime? When a lady is proposed to you for a wife, you never ask how fair, discreet, or virtuous she is, but what's her fortune. (II.ii.90-93)

As Angellica continues, however, to venture into this unknown territory of real emotions and ultimately declares her love--"I never loved before, though oft a mistress"--she clings to the only identity she can rely on, and continues to use mercenary terms in the hope of protecting herself: "And will you pay me then the price I ask?. . . The pay I mean is but thy love for mine. Can you give that?" (II.ii.148-155). Ironically, and tragically, when Angellica brings her mind, body, and heart to Willmore's embraces--when she acts more like a wife than a whore--she is nearly destroyed. As Gallagher points out, the seventeenth century felt that:

> The unique unreserved giving of the woman's self to her husband is the act that keeps her whole ... It was precisely this ideal of the integrated woman, preserved because *wholly* given away, that Aphra Behn sacrificed to create a different idea

> of identity, one complexly dependent on the necessity of multiple exchanges. . . Self-possession and self-alienation, then, are two sides of the same coin; the repeated alienation verifies the still maintained possession.[41]

Therefore, when Angellica cries to her maid about Willmore's abandonment, her sense of betrayal comes from the fact that she has allowed Willmore to penetrate her emotionally and, having giving up this once-reserved part of her self, she now possesses nothing:

> ". . . Had I given
> Him all my youth has earned from sin,
> I had not lost a thought nor sigh upon't.
> But I have given him my eternal rest,
> My whole repose, my future joys, my heart!
> My virgin heart, Moretta! Oh, 'tis gone!
> (IV.ii.146-51)

As long as Angellica remains internally divided she is a successful courtesan. When she can no longer maintain the dichotomy that allows her to give her body but not her self to a man, she comes to the terrifying realization that she must reinterpret who she is as a woman. She rails at Willmore:

> Had I remained in innocent security,
> I should have thought all men were born my slaves,
> And worn my power like lightning in my eyes,
> To have destroyed at pleasure when offended.
> But when love held the mirror, the undeceiving glass
> Reflected all the weakness of my soul, and made me know
> My richest treasure being lost, my honor,
> All the remaining spoil could not be worth
> The conqueror's care or value.
> . . . . . .
> Why would thou then destroy my fancied power?
> (V.281-96)

She wonders how she will be able to function in a world where her "power" came from her own sense of invincibility, her conviction that "all men were born [her] slaves," when she now feels emotionally vulnerable.

There is no real solution to Angellica's personal situation, and the plot does not try to provide one. Even her own solution--to kill Willmore--is thwarted when Antonio, an admirer, disarms her and, as a consequence, her will for revenge. Even though she leaves the stage alone, we know where she is headed: back to her courtesan trade and to a newly forged identity. Unlike Jacobean whores, Angellica suffers no public condemnation nor pressure to reform; she is simply condemned to remain the courtesan, but one who now feels frightened and vulnerable. Through the figure of Angellica, Behn presents not only the marginality of the mistress/whore in Restoration society, but delves into the consciousness of women who pay a high emotional cost to collect the monetary rewards for serving the patriarchal double standard.

In 1680, three years after the production of *The Rover*, Behn again addressed the figure of the whore, but this time by adapting John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* of 1603 into *The Revenge*.[42] Behn's changes essentially leave the Jacobean plot intact but shift the *focus* of the play.[43] As noted in Chapter II of this study, Marston's comedy concentrates on two male friends, one pitted against the

other at the instigation of a revengeful whore. Major themes seem to be male friendship and man's vulnerability to passion, but the play also reveals that through the condemnation and control of the economically independent whore, the Jacobean power bases of religion and class hierarchy are attempting to manage male ambition and individual enterprise.

The women in Marston's play provide the arena within which the men play out these themes, but Behn puts women and their struggle with patriarchy at center stage. She makes a few obvious but significant changes relating to characters in her adaptation, which, in turn, result in changes in the plot. Restoration dramatists often revived pre-Commonwealth dramas,[44] but Behn's changes indicate much more than a simple updating of an older comedy: she comments on the condition of women by revisioning the women's roles in Marston's play. As an established playwright who had received both criticism and accolades by the time she adapted *The Dutch Courtesan*, Behn was aware of the power of language to trap as well as to liberate women. She shifts the focus of the play, first of all, by changing the identity and therefore the speech patterns of the whore: she transforms Marston's Dutch immigrant Franceschina into the young English girl Corina. Marston's whore speaks a fractured English which emphasizes her outsider status, and her comical accent helps to undermine the legitimacy of her

anger at her lover and her sense of betrayal. While Franceschina's speech traps her in a degrading stereotype, Corina's words liberate her to express the depths of her confused feelings of love and hatred for her lover, Wellman. Given what we know of Behn's personal connections with the Dutch--if not through marriage, then certainly through espionage--the possibility certainly existed for her to retain the whore's Dutch accent, refining her speech to be less ridiculous but still recognizably foreign. But by stripping away a cultural smokescreen of Otherness, Behn reveals through Corina the marginality of women within English society.

One of the ways in which this marginality is expressed, Behn indicates, is in the limited action women can take to try to control their own lives. Corina and Franceschina are both outraged at their lovers' betrayals, but in contrast to the hysterical yet ultimately passive Franceschina, Corina desperately tries to gain some control over her life--if only by attempting murder and then suicide. The fact that she takes some action, as did Angellica, distinguishes Corina from the Dutch whore. Only when her own actions fail does she look outside herself to avenge her hurt, by setting one male friend against another.

The contradictory way in which Corina perceives her whoredom contrasts with Franceschina's clear acquiescence in her debased status and echoes the loss of identity which

Angellica faced. In Corina's case, however, her love for Wellman has enabled her to reject psychologically her identity as a whore--but only until he abandons her. Both Angellica and Corina lose their sense of self in giving themselves totally to a man; Corina simply loses it much earlier than Angellica. In contrast to Angellica who returns to her whoredom after a traumatic but short time with Willmore, Corina has grown confident during her long relationship with Wellman that he truly cares for her.

In *The Dutch Courtesan*, after the initial shock of the news of Freevill's intended abandonment, Franceschina bewails a second horror: she will have to return to selling herself to many men until she finds one man who will keep her steadily as his mistress. She cries to her bawd, Mary Faugh, "Nay, good naunt, you'll help me to anoder love, vill you not?. . .Vall sall become of mine poor flesh now? Mine body must turn Turk for twopence" (II.ii.22-38). In the same way that Franceschina's foreignness works to undermine her humanity, her focus on replacing her lost income undermines the sincerity of her relationship with Freevill and therefore limits our sympathy for the degradation that awaits her.

Corina, on the other hand, cannot imagine any life after her lover Wellman. It is not clear whether Corina was "groomed" for whoredom and Wellman was simply her first customer, or whether she was "ruined" by Wellman and had no

recourse but to accept whoredom. What is clear, however, is that Corina loves Wellman. When she learns of his intentions to leave her she says:

> I have been false to Vertue, false to Honour, false to my Name and Friends; but was to Wellman what Heaven is to the Just and Penitent, all soft, all mercie, all complying sweetness (I.ii.206-209).

References in the dialogue reveal that Wellman initially seduced Corina with the help of the bawd, Mrs. Dunwell. Dunwell complains that since then, Corina has avoided other customers. Whether or not their relationship began with love, Corina has given herself entirely to Wellman. Behn also suggests the possibility that Corina has rationalized the shock of her initial seduction into romance with Wellman--a way, Behn perhaps sees, that women learn to live with such sexual trauma. Whatever the case, the fact that the beautiful young girl now loves her seducer makes his abandonment of her even more poignant.

Yet, even though her commitment to Wellman suppresses it, Corina is never totally removed from a knowledge of her identity as a whore. When the rogue Trickwell tries to buy her favors she dismisses him with the insult that he is below her standards, even though he has the right purchase price:

> "A Whore! what tho to her that bears it 'tis a shame, an infamie that cannot be supported? To all the world besides it bears a mightie sound, petition'd, su'd to, worshipp'd as a God, presented, flatter'd, follow'd, sacrific'd to, . .

> . And darest thou raise thy hated eyes so high to gaze on such a Constellation! No, be gone, with all thy base-got worthless Trifles, quickly pack up, and hence, or I will kill thee" (IV.ii.37-46).

This remark incites Trickwell to attempt to rape Corina--a scene which does not take place in the Marston play. Even though Corina speaks with a sense of empowerment, Behn underscores just how tenuous Corina's autonomy is as a whore: she belongs to no one man and is, therefore, vulnerable to all men.

Another plot change--Corina's proposed marriage at the end of the play--starkly contrasts the fates of the Dutch and English whores. Franceschina is condemned to prison for her plotting and admits her defeat saying, "Torture, torture your fill,/ For me am worse than hang'd; me ha' lost my will" (V.iii.57). Corina, on the other hand, seems to "win" quite a bit by the end of the play: the financial and social stability of marriage with Sir John. Even though Corina will receive the respectability that was not offered to Angellica, Behn does not present the marriage as a "happily ever after" resolution that comedies call for. The marriage is possible only because Wellman has told Sir John that Corina is his sister, thereby giving her an instant respectability. What Wellman has done also, however, is to give *himself* further access to Corina by establishing this family tie. As her "brother" now he is free to "give" her in marriage, but he is free, also, to meet with her

frequently under the guise of a sibling relationship. Given the fact that Corina loves Wellman, it is easy to visualize the emotional strain of this connection for Corina--and the likelihood that her whoredom will continue as a married woman.

In this resolution to Corina's crisis Behn again reveals that human relationships are multi-faceted, continuous connections and that resolution of a situation does not necessarily lead to closure. While Franceschina's story is essentially over when she is physically removed from the stage, Behn's play impels us to think beyond the final act, as with Angellica--to the life Corina will live after the curtain has come down.

Ironically, the person who has helped rescue Corina from whoredom but who also has added complications to her married state is witty Diana, a sister-in-spirit to *The Rover's* Hellena. Compared to her counterpart Crispinella, in Marston's play, Diana is more outspoken in complaining of the indignities that women suffer from men. Crispinella agrees to her lover's demands that she will be "silent in [the] house, modest at [the] table and wanton. . .in bed" (V.i.77) while Diana declares ". . . yet I love kissing too, if I may chuse my man and place" (III.i.17). Echoing Hellena, Diana expresses a woman's view of what women want to be sexually, in contrast to Marston's focus on what men want women to be sexually.

Diana also knows, however, that her ability to resist the patriarchal system is limited and that the only real security for a woman is marriage. She helps Corina obtain respectability by threatening Wellman with "mischief" if he does not "provide" for his abandoned mistress with his family name--the very thing patriarchy tries to protect. She is the agent of Corina's rescue because she insists that Wellman deal with Corina's needs, just as she declares her own sexual needs earlier in the play.

Given Diana's declaration of sexual autonomy, it seems contradictory, therefore, that Behn later undermines the legitimacy of Diana's sexual needs. Wellman tells her that his comrade Friendly's lustful involvement with Corina was a result of Friendly's trying to meet Diana's demand for sexual proficiency in a husband. In other words, her earlier declaration--"I love a man who knows the way to a woman's bed without instructions" (II.i.40)--made Friendly do it. Behn allows Wellman to lay Friendly's sins at Diana's feet, but his words ring hollow in light of Friendly's many declarations of his uncontrollable "destiny" in using Corina--for his own pleasure, not as a means of developing sexual prowess to win Diana. In fact, after meeting Corina, Friendly calls Diana "dull and tedious." Besotted with Corina, he declares: "I love, and to be short, wou'd have thee pay my flame, I will be grateful in what way you please. Take me to your Embraces, to your Bed"

(II.i.196-98). Rather than undermining Diana, Behn is actually revealing how men can use the patriarchal notion of a "demanding" female sexuality as a way to absolve themselves from responsibility for their own actions.

While Diana's story ends more conventionally for her social status than Corina's, Behn still offers resolution but no real closure. She accomplishes a resolution by changing Marston's plot and making Friendly Diana's suitor. In Marston's play these two characters go their separate ways, but by the last act of Behn's work Diana is happily awaiting marriage with Friendly. Ironically, however, the false family bond that Wellman has created by declaring Corina his sister potentially may complicate Diana's life also. Wellman is to become Diana's brother-in-law and, therefore, the access that Wellman will have to use Corina is, in another way, extended to Diana's husband, Friendly. This family's ties, Behn implies, will be fraught with entanglements.

As the characters gather in the final act at Newgate Prison where all the romantic intrigues will be resolved, there is a final change in the plot: Behn introduces Nan, her husband, the condemned thief, Jack Shamrock, and various felons. These crude characters and the final scenes of black comedy and social realism have no counterpart in Marston. The whole seems disruptive to the narrative and has led at least one critic to comment, ". . .it is wholly

irrelevant to the rest of the play, and such a lapse in craftsmanship is difficult to explain."[45]

There is a likely explanation if we see Behn's goal as revisioning women, not just updating an older play. In the Newgate Prison scenes, Behn has the opportunity to portray women who struggle to survive in the larger world outside of Behn's own social circle; women whom she met, perhaps, when she herself spent time in debtor's prison in 1668. Behn gives voice to Nan, the faithful wife who perjures herself in order to hang with her husband, so they can "dye as lovingly" as they have lived. Not only does she intend to die with him, but she has ordered a coffin that will hold them both. Nan explains her actions, saying:

> ". . .when the Tidings came to me of poor Jack's being apprehended, I soon knew which way the World would go with him; I ne're snivel'd and snouted like a feeble Woman for the matter, but e'ne resolv'd bravely to take a Turn at Tyburn with him" (V.iv.151-54).

Nan expresses what seems almost a parody of the patriarchal view of the steadfast Good Wife. What Behn thought of this patriarchal view is suggested, however, in Nan's ultimate fate. The results of Nan's actions are as pathetic as they are humorous: she is robbed of the money for the final payment on the coffin, her burial linen has been sold by the laundress and, at the last moment, she is given a reprieve.

Incomprehensible as it seems, Nan's determination to

die is actually an extreme example of the control Corina and Diana have tried to wield over their own lives. As her husband tries to console her upon the news of the reprieve, the humor in the absurdity of Nan's dilemma is checked by her own response:

> Art thou turn'd cruel too, and preachest Patience? Patience with life--no, I defie my Fate--Scorning to live without thee thou shalt see, I'll find a thousand ways to dye with thee" (V.iv.387-90).

With these final words Behn compels us one final time to think of the life after the play. What life awaits Nan? We have been given glimpses of it: she is at the very bottom of the social scale, now without even the protection of a husband; penniless, she must fend for herself. Given what we already have seen of her tremendous vulnerability, it is not hard to imagine her living a slow death in whoredom.

The final moments of Behn's play quickly revert to city comedy's call to feast and dance and celebrate the triumph of romance. As the weeping Nan is led off stage, Sir Lyonell responds to her anguish with: "By th' Mass a hearty Wench I'll warrant her, but come let's away: good Boys let's home and Dance. . ." (V.iv.91-92). This is comedy, after all, and the play cannot end with Nan's plaintive cries.

In summary, both Aphra Behn's position as a playwright and the portraits of women in her plays reflect a specific

aspect of Restoration society: the voices of women are more numerous and more lively within public life. Behn uses the traditional themes of city comedy but often manipulates its conventions to reveal how women's personal lives are affected by their lack of power in sexual and economic matters. She portrays women who strive for autonomy, and she offers a vision of sexual equality to a patriarchal society that can use women violently. In the figure of the whore, she reveals that, for some women, self-alienation is the only means of achieving self-possession. One of the most interesting aspects of Behn's drama is her ability to suggest a life beyond the final act, usually a life that is filled with complicated relationships. As a result, her plays contain the traditional motifs of humor and good cheer traditional to city comedy but at the same time, they also embody change by offering intensely personal depictions of women and contemporary Restoration life.

NOTES

1. Naismith, v.

2. Few details are known about her early years, but it is supposed that Behn was born Aphra Johnson in 1640, perhaps to a family of gentry status, and that she possibly lived for a short time in Surinam. Nothing is known about Mr. Behn, and there is a good possibility that he died in the plague sometime during 1665. It is certain, however, that she was in Antwerp in 1667 as a spy for Charles II's government during the Anglo-Dutch War. She returned to London and, unable to collect the money owed her for her services to the crown, landed in debtor's prison in 1668--an experience which was to figure in her comedies in the theme of women's economic vulnerability.

3. Even as early as during the reign of Henry VIII aristocratic women were writing seriously. Margaret More Roper, daughter of Sir Thomas More, excelled in Latin, and not only translated religious tracts but carried on a lively, intellectual correspondence with Erasmus. Margaret P. Hannay, in her essay "O Daughter Heare," in *Attending to Women in Early Modern England*, mentions that "Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke is known primarily for her elegies, her translations, her *Psalmes*. . . .The countess's literary protegee was her niece and goddaughter, Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth" (38). On a less aesthetic level, but perhaps just as meaningful to the writer, "commonplace books," a type of Renaissance scrapbook, were kept by educated men and women and passed around to be read among friends. These contained the owner's personal comments on poems, worthy ideas on many topics, thoughts to share with others, and even medical and food recipes.

4. Naismith, vii. The editor cites 20 plays for Behn's oeuvre, but I also include an additional one: *The Revenge*, which I will discuss in this chapter; there is convincing contemporary evidence to indicate that in this play, Behn adapted Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* for the Restoration stage.

5. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 173-181. Aristocratic households were often under siege since, as happens in civil war, homes and villages become military objectives. For example, the Countess of Derby held on to her husband's ancestral home, Lathom House, under three months' siege by Parliamentary soldiers, who tried to drain the castle's water supply. On the other hand, a Puritan, Lady Harley, held out during the siege by the King's troops against the family home, Brampton Bryan, and was constantly concerned about the possible treachery of the surrounding Royalist

neighbors. She became ill and died from the deplorable living conditions, leaving "'the saddest garrison in the three kingdoms, having lost their head and governess.'"

6. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 205. The author quotes the promoter of women's education, Basua [*sic*] Makin, who saw another side to women's heroic efforts in the war. She felt that women's ability to think and act rationally in time of crisis, "[was] evidence of the female's fitness for education generally denied to her."

7. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 185.

8. Todd, 36.

9. Bacon, 433. Bacon points out that in a time of little schooling for women and when many women could not sign their names, "a woman's signature carried considerable significance in terms of political self-assertion."

10. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 242-247. The author cites a 1646 petition from the alderman of London to the House of Commons requesting action on eliminating "the multitude" of religious sects. In particular, there was one parish with "'eleven private congregations and conventicles who deserted the parish churches and have tradesmen and women preachers.'" The women preachers from these groups were taken into custody and some of them questioned by the Committee of Examinations of the House of Commons (246).

11. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 419.

12. Roberts and Roberts, 377. If not the French actresses themselves, Charles at least brought back to England the notion of the acceptability of actresses, along with other Continental ideas on food, clothing styles, and pleasurable pastimes that he had adopted in his years of exile. He is reputed to have announced to his Council in 1666 that he would change his style of dress; he then appeared in a coat and waistcoat--the precursor to the modern coat and vest. In addition, he was a great sportsman and introduced yachting for pleasure (until then a Dutch amusement), and he popularized racing at Newmarket with the introduction of Barbary stallions. Similarly, Fraser, in *Weaker Vessel*, recounts the shabby treatment of Samuel Pepys' sister, Paulina, or "Pall," who became a victim to the middle classes' attempts to mimic the aristocracy and their taste for everything French. After some misadventures trying to carry out her duties as a maid for her sister-in-law, Pall is sent back to the countryside for "Mrs. Pepys had set her heart on another symbol of gentility--a French maid; for . . . French attendants had become the rage. . ." (316).

13. Todd, 43-44. The author also notes the Stuart family "tradition" in supporting drama since Charles I's court was criticized by the Puritans for putting on theatricals, often including Queen Henrietta Maria, sometimes in male attire--a precursor to the popular Restoration drama's "breeches parts." Charles I's own mother, Queen Anne, also performed in masques, often written by Ben Jonson for the entertainment of James I's court.

14. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel,* 419. Fraser notes that there is controversy over the name of the actual actress since both the warranted troupes, the King's Company and the Duke's Company, claimed to have provided the first actress on stage. While it cannot be declared positively which one of the contenders--Anne Marshall, Mary Saunderson, or Katherine Corey--was the first professional English actress, it can be noted that the companies recognized the significance--to the audience and to their own pocketbooks, no doubt--of offering the newest element in entertainment to the public.

15. Avery and Scouten, 442.

16. Avery and Scouten, 442. As quoted from *A New History of the English Stage* by Percy Fitzgerald, London, 1882.

17. Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel*, 420-425. The author states that "roughly a quarter of these actresses lived respectable lives" (425) and points to various economic and social factors contributing to actresses' bad reputations. For example, actresses were paid less than actors (when first starting out they were expected to work for nothing) and often hoped to become mistresses of wealthy theater-goers.

18. Pearson, 26.

19. Howe, 178. The author provides a comprehensive listing of important Restoration actresses, the plays in which they had leads, and the character types they presented.

20. Goreau, 159.

21. Pearson, 25.

22. Pearson, 32.

23. Pearson, 32-33.

24. Pearson, 32. The author mentions the interesting fact that the King's Company was headed by Thomas Killigrew, Behn's friend. This connection raises the intriguing possibility that either Killigrew's friendship could not

help to bring about the production of a "woman's play" or that Behn, herself, chose to turn her play over to a company that was led by a woman.

25. Pearson, 150-151.

26. The comedy opened at the Dorset Gardens Theater in March, 1677 and was performed numerous times between 1677 and 1790.

27. Spencer, xiii.

28. DeRitter, 82.

29. DeRitter, 92. DeRitter sees a clear connection between Killigrew's play and his personal life in the fact that the rake Thomaso is loved both by Serulina and Angellica: that love is symbolic of the two states of mind some Restoration males held. DeRitter states that "judging from *Thomaso*, Killigrew's friends conceived of themselves as heroic, devil-may-care protectors of England's legitimate government, forced to subsist on borrowed or stolen money in a corrupt or indifferent world.. . and yet the nostalgia for a stable society--dominated of course, by England's legitimate ruling class--was equally attractive" (83). This is another instance, therefore, of the struggle to forge traditional perspectives and those born from social disruption into a new social order, as I have discussed in an earlier chapter.

30. Spencer, xiii.

31. As many critics have noted, Behn's character has the same name as a rather minor character in *Thomaso*, a ridiculous, decrepit whore who pays a mountebank for potions to restore the beauty she had when fifteen years old. In what might be considered a feminist act of "revisioning," Behn restores the beauty Killigrew's Helena seeks, thereby declaring that it *is* possible for a woman to be young, beautiful, autonomous, and lusty.

32. Pearson, 23. Pearson discusses Catherine Trotter's first three plays and her concentration "on women characters to a remarkable extent" including the use of women to open the plays--as Behn opens *The Rover*.

33. DeRitter, 91.

34. Hutner, 109.

35. Hutner, 110.

36. Hutner, 109.

37. Todd, 70.

38. Gallagher, 8.

39. Gallagher, 17.

40. Copeland, 23.

41. Gallagher, 24.

42. No known extant manuscript cites Aphra Behn as the playwright of *The Revenge*, but the comedy is credited to her on the basis of a text purchased by Narcissus Luttrell on July 6, 1680. The play was often assigned to Betterton, but scholars have accepted Luttrell's custom of buying and dating items soon after publication as evidence of the play's authorship.

43. Butler, 50.

44. Butler, 18. It is estimated that about 175 older plays were revived between 1660-1700.

45. Link, 90.

Chapter V

Conclusions

Seventeenth-century England underwent great changes as a result of the rise of capitalism, the proselytizing of new religious sects, the overthrow and the restoration of the monarchy, and the development of a parliamentary government. These changes invoked anxieties that found expression and relief in the comedies centered on life in London. Often that relief was realized through the dramatic portrayals of women.

Jacobean and Restoration women lived in worlds that were created by political, economic, and religious struggles among men, and their existence was bound by their relationships to men as daughters, wives, widows, or whores. Men defined and translated women's existence into a state of being the "Other." These male-centered labels that women carried provided distinct characterizations that male playwrights used in order to explore male anxieties regarding the male, public world.

Historical events determine the pressures and tensions within a given society and a given time period, and therefore Jacobean and Restoration plays respond differently to the large issues of economics and gender relations. In these comedies, the larger world that is structured by

political, economic, and religious policies is reduced to a manageable world of "humorous" everyday life. Although we call these London-based plays "city comedies" in the Jacobean period and "comedies of manners" in the Restoration years, these terms reflect different social environments, not really different issues. Similarly, women remain daughters, wives, widows, and whores in both historical environments, but they clothe themselves in different styles of dress.

Jacobean comedy reveals the economic tensions of a proto-capitalistic society that has to contend with upward social mobility, a Puritan work ethic, and the issue of just price. Women who function in society "unchecked" by male control--the widow and the whore--become figures through which to discuss, and often scapegoat, the threatening, but lucrative, changes in the nation's economy and class structure.

Widows and whores are women who are first and foremost defined by money--money that is unsupervised by proper male authority. Not only is the widow's and the whore's money uncontrolled, but money also gives these women power to make decisions on their own and, thus, to develop their autonomy. The Jacobean widow and whore, on stage, became representations of the uncontrolled money gained by Jacobean entrepreneurs, men who also gained money perhaps by their own, independent thinking; money that was ungoverned by the

authorities of class, church, and state. Therefore, to control the widow (through remarriage) and the whore (through punishment or reformation) was to represent control of economic change. Thus, even though women were not active historically in the nation's move towards capitalism, the comedies reveal how their lives could be governed and defined by it.

By 1660, capitalism had become an established economic system and, as a result, Restoration comedies reflect different economic concerns: how men could find their place in a world that now valued both aristocratic and entrepreneurial characteristics. Restoration society gave a new connotation to the term "gentleman" as a way to combine the elements needed to give birth to the new economic man: wit and money. Restoration comedies, then, focus on how men of one class succeed in mastering the finer points of developing wit and acquiring money in order to elevate their rank. Since Restoration society did not try to repress men's economic enterprise, its whores are not crushed by punishment or condemnation as are their Jacobean sisters. Restoration widows (and their money), however, are still targets for domination, although controlling the widow is not always accomplished through marriage.

The Restoration whore is most often presented as a woman who is supported by her lover's expensive gifts of jewelry, coaches, or even fine living quarters--not by hard

cash transactions. As a "kept" woman, a mistress, she becomes a symbol of male economic success, her threatening autonomy reduced as she receives men's "favors," rather than charging for her own. This status of dependency is heightened by portraying discarded Restoration mistresses as over-wrought emotional women (who break fans and cause scenes) as opposed to the Jacobean whore/avengers who plot revenge and calculate lost income.

The attempt to gain control of the Restoration widow's money through remarriage is similar to the Jacobean goal, but in Restoration comedy the widow and her money can also symbolize "raw resources" that are available for any man's use, not just a husband's. This crossing of the boundaries of traditional male proprietorship over the wife and all her goods mirrors the national economic drive at the end of the seventeenth century towards a search for new markets for capitalism in the form of colonization. In this context, the woman's label of widow does not change, but its meaning is broadened to reflect the times. In this period, a widow could be viewed as a woman whose money was available for any male who was able to establish control over her, even to the point of bypassing traditional modes of "ownership" through marriage. "Colonizing" a widow in this way, as Fainall and Mirabell attempt to do in *The Way of the World*, added another, more radical, dimension to the representation of the witty gentleman.

The sexual relationships that provide the second focus of seventeenth-century comedies were also circumscribed by the larger world, most specifically the public world of male competition generated by patriarchy. Seventeenth-century patriarchy compelled men to compete with each other for some measure of status in the public world. One of the ways that men could prove their manhood, and thus gain standing in the community, was by controlling the women who had the most intimate relationships to them: their daughters and wives. Often, that control was demonstrated by defeating another man, as Jacobean and Restoration comedies reveal. Although the patriarchal system remained intact, the definitions of man varied, however, according to what Jacobean and Restoration societies valued as "manly."

Jacobean plays focus on men's desires to attain a higher class status, or material wealth, or to preserve family lineage. These comedies reveal male patriarchal competition in the negotiations between men over the use of the bodies of their wives and daughters. Women do not own their bodies, so they do not play a major role in these negotiations. They are defined and valued, however, by their bodies' ability to provide men with pleasure and with children--what patriarchy called the "authentic" role of women.

In comparison to the Jacobean daughter, whose whole existence could be defined by a father's ambitions, the

Jacobean wife plays a more complicated, dual role as both patriarchal helpmate and submissive subject--what is called the Good Wife. While the comedies portray upper class women as seeming to have a greater voice in the marital relationship than do their middle and lower class sisters, all women must balance their marital roles, ultimately, by steering their behavior towards submissiveness and away from personal authority.

In addition, the character of a young, second wife is the vehicle through which playwrights reveal the never-ending nature of male patriarchal competition. In an historical period during which second marriages were commonplace, often due to the dangers of childbirth, comedies show that even men who are well-established in the community have to reaffirm their standing by proving they can control a new wife.

In the Restoration period, male competition still was a cornerstone of the patriarchal system, but the definitions of manhood and marriage were in a state of flux. The Civil War and the Interregnum had broken the old social structures and challenged the traditional views of the institutions of state, church, and marriage. Restoration society tried to meld egalitarian gains from the Commonwealth period with the nostalgia for a class-oriented social hierarchy as a way to restore social order.

This effort to blend the old world and new spawned the

witty gentleman character in comedy: a figure whose wit, not brute domination over other men or women, gains him first place in rivalry with other males. In the same way that the Jacobean whore became the mistress, a reflection of the Restoration gentleman's financial ability to maintain a woman, so too the Jacobean daughter became a witty heroine, a reflection of the Restoration gentleman's ability to attract and control a woman who displays characteristics he values within himself. Thus, the witty heroine becomes a worthy adversary in witty conversation, and the Jacobean negotiations between men are replaced by negotiations between a man and a woman of equal wit. These usually sexually-loaded barrages of dialogue held an additional element of excitement for the audience since women now played women's roles and actresses, who often had scandalous personal reputations, were identified with their roles.

Often these stage negotiations between the witty gallant and heroine occur over differing views of marriage. Since these negotiations never result in anything but the traditional roles of authority for husbands and submissiveness for wives, men's control over women is never seriously threatened, let alone changed. These negotiations can also be viewed, in a broader, political sense, as the philosophical side of the new Restoration man who, at the beginning of the eighteenth century would solidify the two-party political system, debate the meaning of man and

nature, and even greatly expand English trade--all by negotiated speech, not warfare.

Even though men were still firmly in control of women, Restoration comedies reveal a cynicism about marriage and a sense of entrapment for both husband and wife. In the role of wife, once again, the Jacobean character changes, in this instance, from a woman who must be the good wife, to one who reflects her husband's dissatisfaction with their marital union. Restoration comedies touch lightly, if at all, on marriage as a way to perpetuate lineage and instead focus on personal sexual pleasures and fulfillment. In a society whose upper classes slavishly copied the libertine lifestyle of Charles II, the comedic attempts at extra-marital sexual adventures by both husband and wife may seem to be an expression of a true loosening of sexual mores, the sexual voraciousness of both men and women indicating eradication of the sexual double standard. This is hardly the case, however, since, just as the witty heroine is ultimately controlled by marriage, the sexually adventurous wife's actions are circumscribed (or even defeated) by her concerns for her reputation, her "honor."

Included in the genre of city comedy, yet containing elements that set it distinctly apart, is the work of the Restoration playwright Aphra Behn. Even though Behn's comedies also focus on sexual relationships and money, her works add a new character and a new dimension missing from

other Jacobean and Restoration plays: a female character created by a woman gives voice to a female perspective.

The increased participation of women in public life during the Civil War and Interregnum very likely helped to create the first English professional woman playwright and to inform her work. In the same way that male-authored comedies deal with the effects of the larger world on personal lives, Behn's women characters also reveal the effects of money and social relations on the lives of people, but people who have no part in shaping their larger world. Consequently, Behn's female characters express frustrations over being controlled, rather than male anxieties about maintaining control over others. Instead of extolling the clever acquisition of money, her female characters reveal the terrible vulnerability of women who have no money or who must use their bodies to earn it.

In addition, even while working within the traditional bounds of city comedy's humor and festive endings, Behn's works offer additional foci for the stage: the issues of sexual equality and sexual violence. Her outspoken, witty heroines declare their own sexuality and what they desire in a sexual relationship. In darker scenes that portray the potential rape of a heroine, Behn exposes male rage, not sexual desire, as the basis of rape. Ultimately, Behn removes the portrayals of daughters, wives, widows, and whores from their roles as merely the reflective Other and

gives them a voice that male playwrights had been unable or unwilling to provide.

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