

**The Economy of the Drinking House: notions of credit and exchange in the  
tavern in early modern English drama.**

Submitted by Charlotte Caroline Campton to the University of Exeter as a thesis for  
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## Abstract

This thesis traces how the drinking house was used by writers of early modern English drama to try to make sense of the period's culture of exchange. Organised around an examination of five plays, the project focuses on the way in which playwrights engaged with and examined notions of credit, circulation, and the commercialisation of hospitality. By offering close readings through the lens of the drinking house, I make fresh interpretations of the plays. Moreover, I seek to demonstrate the wider literary tradition dealing with this space that, to some extent, has been neglected. With this in mind, I also draw on other popular texts from the period, such as ballads, jest books and rogue pamphlets, which establish certain conventions and narratives that emerge in the drama.

In Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, the reckoning – or tavern bill – is used as an emblem through which Hal negotiates his moral and economic redemption, in the face of Falstaff's threat to the wider network of credit established in the tavern space. Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho* also stages credit as both a productive and unpredictable force. In the context of its Brentford location, the drinking house in that play is presented as a transformative space that allows for the possibilities of an alternative economic model. Irrepressible forces of commercialism define the Light Heart in Jonson's *The New Inn*; forces that effect character transformations and champion a fluid economy in contrast with landed-estate living. In Brome's *The Demoiselle*, these conventions are upended, and the commercialism of the New Ordinary is dispensed with in favour of a more settled economy.

The thesis testifies to the investment writers made in the drinking house as a dramatic space and as a space to be dramatised, a space through which the possibilities and energies of exchange were staged.

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**Note on the text**

All conflations of u/v, i/j and vv/w are routinely modernised.

## Introduction

In John Earle's 1628 character book, *Microcosmographie*, we find among the descriptions of various people a short account of "A Taverne":

[It] is a degree, or (if you will) a paire of stayres above an Alehouse, where men are drunke with more credit and Apologie. ... The rooms are ill breath'd, like the drinkers that have been washt wel over night, and are smelt too fasting next morning; not furnisht with Beds apt to be defil'd, but more necessary implements, Stooles, Table, and a Chamber-pot. It is a broacher of more newes then hogs-heads, & more jests then newes, which are sukt up heere by some spungie braine, and from thence squeezed into a Comedy. Men come here to make merry, but indeed make a noise, and this musicke above is answered with the clinking below. The Drawers are the civilest people in it, men of good bringing up, and howsoever we esteeme of them, none can boast more justly of their high calling. Tis the best Theater of natures, where they are truely acted, not plaid, and the busines as in the rest of the world up and downe, to wit, from the bottome of the Seller to the great Chamber. (C12r-D1v)

This description immediately alerts us to several intersecting ways in which the early modern tavern can be understood. Earle pays attention to its materiality, reaching as it does over several floors, with numerous rooms (some with apparent grandeur), furnished and busy with customers and employees. More importantly, however, he



draws out a sense of its productiveness: the tavern emerges here as a dynamic, generative space, that provides “newes” and “jests” for its customers, a hub of communication and sociability. Crucially, it also gives inspiration to writers. Indeed, Earle suggests that the tavern space provides a rich supply of material to those who may absorb the goings-on into a “spungie braine” and thereafter produce “a Comedy”. Bearing in mind that the “tavern is often depicted as a stage” in the early modern period, this particular statement invites the reader of his text to consider the way in which the tavern itself becomes a subject of drama (Smyth 199). While the space is “the best Theater of natures”, here Earle is surely aware of the way it has been staged and interpreted by those writing plays.

The depiction also alights – albeit briefly – on what I suggest is a defining characteristic of the way the early modern drinking house is understood in the literature of the period. In the first sentence, Earle writes of the “men [who] are drunke with more credit and Apologie”. Not only does this invite us to consider the complicated relationship between drinking and sociability, where men may find themselves regretful, but, more specifically, I suggest that the privileging of the notion of “credit” in the opening lines also locates the tavern as a potent site for the imagining of the early modern culture of exchange. Indebtedness – or at least the deferral of payment – is the consequence of drinking in such a space. Credit is also evoked when Earle comes to sum up his description: “To give you the totall reckoning of it. It is the busie mans recreation, the idle mans businesse, the melancholy mans Sanctuary, the strangers welcome, the Innes a Court mans entertainment, the schollers kindnesse, and the Citizens curtesie” (D2r-D2v). While of course “reckoning” means an account of something, it also suggests the very emblem of exchange in a tavern: the bill. Earle’s reckoning comprises those characters who

frequent the tavern, but it is also a marker of a site-specific act that has resonance for the wider culture of exchange.

This thesis is concerned with how certain early modern writers used the staged drinking house space to make sense of this culture. My focus is on early modern drama – Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* (1597-1600), Dekker and Webster’s *Westward Ho* (1604), Jonson’s *The New Inn* (1629), and Brome’s *The Demoiselle* (1638) – although I also draw from the period’s popular literature in the forms of ballads, jest books and rogue pamphlets. Through the lens of the drinking house, I will ask how the writers of these texts examine notions of credit, circulation, and the commercialisation of hospitality. How does the drinking house stage and shape encounters based on exchange, and how might a consideration of those encounters lead us to make fresh interpretations of the plays? These are some of the questions I will be asking, and which this thesis seeks to go some way to answer.

The term ‘early modern drinking house’ necessarily includes inns, taverns and alehouses, and it is useful to consider briefly the historical context of the space with which I am concerned. At the top of the scale were inns, providing food and accommodation to a generally well-heeled customer, and enjoying “relative freedom from the heavy burden of statutory controls imposed on alehouses”; taverns, which did not provide lodging, were essentially for drinking and catered mainly for the “upper and middling ranks of society” with the selling of wine; alehouses were at the bottom of the scale of drinking houses, their customers consisting of farmers, craftsmen, servants and the like, with some operations functioning from people’s homes (P. Clark 10-1). These categorisations were also made officially by the state: it defined “the way that premises were licensed and the legal obligations of their landlords”, and surveyed and categorised all drinking houses in 1577 (P. Clark 5-6).

Nonetheless, the terms denoting different establishments were often used interchangeably, sometimes in a “rather vague and haphazard” way, with some drinking houses straddling the categories (P. Clark 5-6). While I attend to the ways in which different staged spaces own the particular characteristics of a tavern or an inn, for instance, this thesis is alert to the slippage between those categories, and does not seek to privilege one over another.

While we should exercise caution when dealing with the data from the 1577 survey, it is clear that there were substantial numbers of drinking houses: over 17,000 were recorded in the 30 counties visited (Everitt 93; P. Clark 2). The vast majority were alehouses, the poorest sort, but others were successful businesses:

“Parliamentary surveys of metropolitan property during the 1650s disclose taverns valued at up to £70 per annum” (P. Clark 14, 12). They often occupied several rooms that afforded space and privacy to customers, and some of the more impressive inns, especially in the large coaching towns, could accommodate many hundreds of guests and their horses (P. Clark 12; Everitt 100-1). Furthermore, not only did the bigger establishments employ maids, tapsters, chamberlains and ostlers, but also they were furnished with plate and tapestries (Everitt 121; P. Clark 7, 66-7).

What emerges most of all from the history of the period is the way in which the drinking house occupied an important place in the economic and social lives of people in the early modern period (Wrightson “Alehouses” 2-3; *English* 168). Indeed, as Peter Clark writes: “in England inns and taverns not only performed important victualling services but also acted as the centre point of a galaxy of commercial, governmental and leisure activities” (14). Many drinking houses sought “to attract urban commerce to themselves, so that in effect they became covered or private market places”, sometimes supplanting the open market place (Everitt 97, 104). At

one end of the social scale, drinking houses “contributed massive financial rewards to lords, cities and princes” as well as at the other end, as Clark notes, offering “important financial succour” to those who needed to borrow money; by the early seventeenth century, the extension of credit to customers was commonplace (Kümin and Tlustý 8; P. Clark 137). The deferral of payment – of the tavern reckoning – presents a key moral question with which the texts of the time grapple, to a certain extent standing for the wider culture of credit that operated in this period.

Our understanding of these things has been shaped by the social history of the early modern drinking house space. There is now a considerable body of work that interrogates the culture of such spaces, but until recently it was focused on the details of individual establishments, architectural studies, and inn signs imagery. Alan Everitt went as far to say that at the time he was writing, “the literature of the English inn [is] for the most part a wretched farrago of romantic legends, facetious humour and irritating errors” and that there was no “serious systematic study of the *functions* of inns” (91). In the 1970s and 1980s, his work, and that of Keith Wrightson, marked a move away from an ‘old’ cultural history towards a more rigorous socio-economic analysis. From their studies emerges a portrait of the early modern drinking house as a space through which we can investigate notions of order, poverty, and sociability. Peter Clark’s seminal work *The English Alehouse* in particular is important because it provided the first comprehensive study of alehouses – social establishments which had traditionally been ignored in favour of inns, taverns and coffee houses because they attracted a less elite class of customer – and placed them at the forefront of our understanding of the spaces of early modern popular culture. His work has been invaluable to my project in that as well as tracing the social context of the drinking house, it asserts its place within a framework of commercialism.

To go some way toward understanding the wider debates about this culture, and in order to be aware of the discourses of exchange at the time, my research will engage with the work of Craig Muldrew. *The Economy of Obligation* has been invaluable to me in providing a background to the economy of England in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and in demonstrating the degree to which networks of credit extended through both place and social class. Before him, Jean-Christophe Agnew's history of market relations, *Worlds Apart*, charts the – liberating – anxieties that arose from a placeless market and the dissolving of traditional perimeters of exchange. These studies of the cultural meaning of credit and the importance of trust in exchange provide essential context to my reading of literary representations of taverns and inns as sites of economic vitality. In terms of depicting spaces of exchange, and also in relation to the complexities of the relationship between host and guest, owner and customer, the discourse of credit is something that underlies many of the negotiations in the plays I examine. Furthermore, it is interesting that Muldrew enters the debate about capitalism in the early modern period, and while it is outside my limitations to engage with the dense and complicated issues surrounding the decline of feudalism and the (supposed) rise of capitalism, Muldrew himself rejects the concept of an emerging capitalist exchange economy. This is important to my project, in that I am not arguing that we should read the growth of the tavern as necessarily part of an emerging capitalist regime, but rather as a way of making sense of the cultural space of exchange, the different cultural meanings of those exchanges, and the relationships that emerge from out of them.

The understanding of hospitality as a practice based on commercial exchange (or exchange of commodities) as opposed to one based on altruism or charity is a

crucial one in terms of this thesis. Felicity Heal has convincingly argued for the existence of complex and ambiguous structures of early modern hospitality that saw commercially-driven practices set in opposition to the more traditional welcome that guests expected and experienced. She writes that “the notion of hospitality in early modern England seems to be bound to that of reciprocity, of the exchange of gifts and rewards to which value was not simply articulated in money terms” and when hospitality was written about at the time, “a language of exchange in which reciprocities were not assigned a monetary value” was used (19). Her study asserts that much of early modern hospitality was underpinned by Christian teachings that “all men must act as hosts according to their means” (221). This kind of hospitality, however, was home- or monastic-based. It was characterised by its openness and its continued importance within society (especially in the higher levels), but more importantly, marked out by its reliance on a “social system in which gift-exchange transactions has not been wholly superseded by those of commodity-exchange” (Heal 389).

In contrast, the phenomenon of hospitality via “commodity-exchange”, as Heal calls it, is the focus of this study, and while I am mindful of the ways that older iterations of the host/guest relationship were formed, it is the newer, more commercially-led hospitality that remains of primary importance. The traditional relationship between host and guest was based on the outward display of hospitality, as well as the acceptance of certain “customary parameters” within the establishment (Heal 192). Admittedly, this is not totally unlike the kind of relationship we will see practised within the site of the tavern, but differences remain. Indeed, it is in those differences that we see financial obligations emerge as the necessary tools through which the tavern community is formed. Specifically, credit as a means to access

hospitality, as opposed to the “ideology of generosity”, is my overarching concern (Heal 389).

Exchange underpins the encounters and relationships forged in the onstage tavern space, as well as its real-life counterpart. Throughout this thesis I use the terms ‘commerce’ and ‘commercial’ to describe many of the exchanges we witness, in the expectation that they mark the interactions as ones founded within a business-related framework as opposed to the “gift-exchange transactions” dealt with by Heal (389). Drinking houses were, by their very nature, businesses. The sorts of establishments mentioned by Peter Clark and Alan Everitt, which I noted above, ranged from the modest to the expansive, but all were run to make money. Bearing in mind Heal’s research, it is important to differentiate the type of hospitality offered by the drinking house to its clients as one with the purpose of making money for its proprietor from traditional forms of hospitality.

Nonetheless, my use of ‘commerce’ encompasses several different notions. While ‘commerce’ may point to a transfer of goods for money, it also describes the system in which such transfers may be made. Using the term, as Everitt does, to suggest the environment in which taverns were working as quasi-marketplaces, is not an attempt to over-simplify – nor over-complicate – our understanding of the space (97). While one of the notions that my use of the word ‘commerce’ indicates is simply the exchange of money for hospitality, it is important to keep in mind that the people running drinking houses “stretch[ed] and transform[ed] codes of private hospitality” in freshly mercantile terms (McRae *Literature* 122). ‘Commerce’ also indicates the use of money in a more abstract way, separate from its exchange for material goods, with the goal of building up credit within a more capitalist economy. This points towards the manipulation of credit (as opposed to just capital) along mercantile terms.

Recently, critics from different disciplines have sought to engage with this social and economic history and to further our understanding of the functions and politics of the drinking house. B. Ann Tlusty's case study of Augsburg examines drink and its place in civic ritual in early modern Germany, which in turn builds on the research of Thomas Brennan on the culture of drink in Paris. Spatial politics have also been used as a starting point for the investigation of drinking houses, for example in Barbara Hanawalt's study in which she examines the ambiguous space of the medieval tavern (104-123). James Brown's recent unpublished PhD thesis provides a case study of drinking houses in early modern Southampton, examining the material and spatial properties of these sites, and finding them to be focal points in the socio-economic life of the town. Finally, there is a trajectory towards a synthetic approach encompassing the discourses of conviviality, social negotiation and the emerging public sphere. This is the kind of work that Beat Kümin and Ann Tlusty's collection, *The World of the Tavern*, points toward. Essentially an endeavour to bring together comparative approaches of tavern research, with a scope encompassing early modern Germany, Switzerland and Russia as well as England, *The World of the Tavern* offers a number of comparative approaches to the cultural history of the public house. The overarching theme of the collection is "the enormous economic importance of public houses" and while the focus of the book is distinct from the kind of research this thesis represents, it specifically points the way for further work to be done on the tavern in literary studies, calling it an "area of fruitful exchange" (Kümin and Tlusty 8, 10). Kümin's follow-up study into public houses in early modern Central Europe also calls for such an approach (3). The trend in the last ten years or so of research into public drinking houses has by and large still omitted literary texts from its focus.



Michelle O’Callaghan’s compelling research into the tavern societies of the Inns of Court only touches on the dramatisation of drinking houses. Similarly, Adam Smyth’s collection of essays *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth Century England* focuses on outlining the kinds of debates surrounding tavern culture, and more generally, public drinking, but not on the way writers used and constructed this culture.

The study of how literary texts understand, represent and articulate the experience of the early modern drinking house is an important one. Ballads in particular have been the source of significant research into the experience of the labouring poor, with both Mark Hailwood and Patricia Fumerton examining the alehouse within the wider contexts of male sociability and vagrancy respectively. That the drinking house is a male space is a claim championed by them both, something that reflects the assertions made by Clark and Wrightson about it being the “resort of the men” (132; “Alehouses” 7-8). The field of cultural geography has also revealed the ways in which early modern drama was concerned with space and place. Julie Sanders’ *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama 1620-1650* engages with the ways that inns were vital loci within a far-reaching network of circulation, and demonstrates the extent to which they were “social spaces that produced a significant set of meanings for early modern audiences” (134). Her work on the staging of inns and alehouses as focal points for “communication and exchange” has been invaluable (*Cultural* 152). Andrew McRae’s work on domestic travel alerts us to the way in which texts use inns and alehouses to grapple with “changing practices of mobility” and the placeless market (*Literature* 122). He argues that literary texts staged encounters in drinking houses in order to make some sense of the narratives of circulation and nationhood that writers sought to understand.

The plays I have chosen to analyse all represent examples of comedy; even *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, while clearly histories, establish a comic tone especially in the tavern scenes. While they are not strictly examples of city comedy, they are nonetheless related to that genre, dealing as they do with notions of the urban experience and landscape. Thus I also draw from the critical field that deals with this genre, bound up as it is with representations of the urban commercial world from which the drama of the time emerged; as Douglas Bruster writes, “London’s public and private playhouses came to stage scenarios which represented, reflexively, the market’s extensive cultural implications” (10). His study champions the influence of market forces on our understanding of how early modern dramatists articulated their experience on stage. For Jean E. Howard, space and comedy are interlinked, and her argument goes beyond the notion that drama merely mapped onto the city in which it was staged, but that it was a means through which Londoners made sense of their urban landscape. In terms of this thesis, her contention that it is “from the tavern that one gets a sense of the urban commercial world in which the London theater [sic] had its own existence” is compelling (*The Stage* 141). While I have not restricted myself to the examination of the urban tavern – indeed two of my chapters deal with establishments outside of London – the capital asserts itself in many of the texts dealt with here, and indeed invites us to question how far the non-urban drinking house space differs – if indeed it does – from its urban counterpart.

My approach is framed within this literary and historical context. There has yet to be a comprehensive and focused study of literary representations of taverns and inns in early modern drama, and that is the aim of this thesis. I hope to establish a sustained engagement with the drinking house as a site of exchange that has, up until now, been overlooked. The choice of texts with which I engage deliberately covers a

substantial period of time. The main body deals with the five plays I have mentioned, drawn from the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline eras, and spanning a period of around forty-four years. I have attended to texts that engage in a considerable way with the drinking house space, using it to stage particular tensions inherent in, concerns with, and notions of, the early modern culture of exchange. The thesis cannot and does not attempt an exhaustive survey of drama that features inns, taverns, or alehouses. Indeed, there are some aspects of the drinking house experience which the limits of the thesis mean I am unable to examine. The politics of (public) drinking, an analysis of gendered spaces, criminality and morality in the tavern are all alluded to only briefly. My focus remains the way in which the drinking house is used to make sense of credit relations and to explore networks of exchange, through the staging of encounters and the construction onstage of a material space.

There are, however, other valid avenues that this project might have pursued. Archival research might have yielded some interesting conclusions, especially in relation to the connection between the tavern space and material culture. Some of the non-literary material in the first chapter in particular lends itself to this kind of work and I am aware that such a focus would be useful to a wider study of the tavern space. I have decided to focus deliberately on printed sources, in order to trace how models of the drinking house were used and then re-used by playwrights during this period. Manuscript sources, however, might have proved valuable in what they could offer in terms of alternative and authentic experiences of the tavern. While I acknowledge in this thesis the usefulness of understanding the drinking house through the lens of direct experience in terms of how the space was used by writers, one possible avenue of research would be to examine, for example, parish constables' accounts, inventories, depositions and diaries. From the last category, for instance, the

seventeenth-century diary of Roger Lowe, an apprentice shopkeeper from Lancashire, reveals the extent of his recreational drinking – both in alehouses and private homes – as well as the care with which he recorded the money he spent on ale (Martin 95-6). James Brown's thesis makes use of the de Lamotte diary, an unpublished transcript of which can be found in the Southampton Records Office; the diary has several entries that deal with the kinds of guests that were accommodated by Southampton's public houses, including the Moroccan ambassador who lodged at The Dolphin (J. Brown 117-8). Financial and legal records – inventories, depositions etc – would also have allowed for a studied exploration of the experience of the drinking house and its position in relation to the wider spatial practice of the early modern subject. Exploring records such as these would necessarily have involved a much deeper engagement with archival research than this project has – purposefully – undertaken, but such an endeavour would widen the scope of our understanding of tavern culture. Indeed, the study of authentic and subjective experiences of the drinking house, and how people wrote about those experiences, would expand our understanding of the contestations over site's meaning(s). Nonetheless, while these opportunities presented themselves, I resolved to maintain a strict focus on the dramatic representation of this space, asserting an approach of literary analysis rather than treating the texts as social historical documents.

My decision to concentrate on notions of exchange within the drinking house space has necessarily committed this project to a relatively narrow field of enquiry. Despite the significance of the tavern in early modern culture, there are surprisingly few plays that are set extensively in the space. Many plays of the period have scenes set in, or that mention, alehouses, taverns and inns, but which refer to the space only in passing, perhaps featuring the character of a tapster or chamberlain, or the action of

drinking ale or wine. Other texts stage these but only briefly. The plays I examine stage an inn or tavern for a sizeable part of their action.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the level of interest in social and financial exchanges in these plays is so great that one might be excused for feeling that there is a deeper concern in the chosen texts for the implications that those exchanges have, not just on the individuals, but also on the wider networks within society.

I have also included a chapter discussing how certain popular literature texts, including ballads, jest books and rogue pamphlets, construct the drinking house space. This, of course, is not to say that the plays I deal with were not popular texts. I use the term ‘popular’ to define those texts which were deeply embedded in the commercial market, and which were consumed by a large and wide-ranging number of people. The decision to include these texts was prompted by the realisation that many of these texts are part of the wider literary tradition dealing with this space, and go some way to establish certain conventions and narratives that emerge elsewhere in the drama of the period. I do not seek to privilege any form of literature over another, and while the plays may to a certain extent present more complex appreciations of the drinking house, the writers of the popular texts nonetheless reward their examination with some fruitful discoveries.

My model of analysis is founded on extended close readings of both the popular and dramatic texts; Chapters 2 – 5 are each concerned with one play, or in the case of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, an inter-connected sequence of plays. This allows for a particularly detailed reassessment of the spatial and social politics of the plays, as I am able to engage with each text with great care as I analyse it within its own context. While I acknowledge that this thesis could have been organised in several

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<sup>1</sup> There are no alehouses in the drama I consider, although some of the popular texts featured in my first chapter do include them.

ways, devoting lengthy attention to individual texts enables me, I hope, to provide sustained expositions of the claims I make. Nonetheless, I seek to make connections between texts – most notably between *The New Inn* and *The Demoiselle* – and demonstrate that even over the significant period of time covered in this thesis, writers were using and re-using certain conventions of the onstage drinking house as part of a wider trend that encoded notions of exchange within this space. The drinking house emerges again and again as a textual space as much as a material one, that was created through the narratives and fantasies of particular characters.

While the dissertation is engaged throughout with questions of exchange and place, its methods of enquiry are motivated by close textual interpretation rather than a commitment to cultural theory. Doubtless, theory is influential in this field; the last twenty to thirty years have seen a surge of interest in spatial theory, most notably in the field of the cultural production of space. Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau have in particular focused on the analysis of how space is produced and practised in social terms, and their work has proved useful to many early modern cultural historians. Working more closely with spatial theory might indeed have led me in the direction of looking at the drinking house as a product of spatial interactions; specifically, that it could be a “[r]epresentational” space, “lived through its associated images and symbols ... [where] the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre 39). The cultural meaning of the drinking house to those who used it as a space of agency, through which encounters and relationship were negotiated, offers itself as a opportunity for further study. But spatial theory was never intended for application to literary texts and my own sense of its limitations for textual interpretation, plus my determination to work in a more empirical, text-centred

manner, prompted me to focus on the way the space was used on the stage, rather than the street.

Chapter 1 is organised around three central ideas that are consistently constructed in early modern popular texts that feature drinking houses: the host, the reckoning, and the tavern community. The host emerges as a figure subject to particular contestations, as he or she navigates the politics of commercialised hospitality with guests who require entertainment and who are required to pay. These kinds of negotiations are often rendered in a comic register, with the host frequently the butt of the joke where customers who evade payment are concerned. Nonetheless, the undoing of the host's commercial gain more often than not evokes a sense of anxiety, and, using a tale from Thomas Harman's *A Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566), I demonstrate the ways in which the host is aligned with a dynamic if unsettled model of circulation that requires careful maintenance. The rather precarious position of the host is often reliant on the payment of the reckoning, which I argue is a central notion through which we may understand the drinking house space. Drawing from the work done by Muldrew, the reckoning stands for, I suggest, wider patterns of exchange, and the concept of it as a settle-able contract becomes a way in which writers explored and questioned the cycles of circulation that existed in that period. In particular, the ballad *Come Hostesse Fill the Pot* (1625) posits a fantasy where the reckoning is never paid, and where the audience becomes implicated in the potential destabilising of the tavern economy. The chapter ends with a consideration of the wider forces of commercialised sociability, where the bonds of friendship are complicated by financial obligation.

Chapter 2 is focused on *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* (1597-1600). It analyses how Shakespeare uses the tavern to frame Hal's prodigality and eventual restoration

in economic terms. The tavern is established not simply as a space of festivity, but as a site of exchange. The characters frequenting the Boar's Head create a network of credit relations that speaks to the way in which society functioned in this period. In this context, I examine the use of the reckoning, which encapsulates in the tavern space the idea of a settle-able contract, and which is employed in the plays as a way to stage the fears and possibilities of early modern networks of credit. Specifically, I suggest that Hal uses the language of the reckoning in order to negotiate both his own identity through the building up and use of credit, and his political redemption, figured as it is in economic terms. Falstaff's non-participation in the tavern economy threatens the wider networks of exchange, and yet he remains an unavoidable aspect of the fluid model of circulation that the plays reflect. The civic incursions into the tavern seek to reassert its position within those wider networks, and, I argue, stage the anxieties surrounding the upkeep of a particular economic standard.

*Westward Ho* (1604) is the focus of Chapter 3. I situate it within a tradition that establishes Brentford – the location of Dogbolt's tavern in the play – as a locus of illicit behaviour. The town emerges in numerous texts of the period that deal with notions of the city and suburbs, between which early modern people travelled for the purposes of leisure. As a fringe space, Brentford, and the tavern there, offers certain narratives of mobility – and the anxieties they provoked – that complicate our understanding of the play. The second half of the chapter considers the play in more detail. I show how the tavern is defined as a space of transformation by its separateness from the domestic, the urban and the communal. I trace how two distinct lines of credit extend through the action, through which the language of credit is exploited to simultaneously destabilise and empower the errant wives in the play. I focus my attention on the emblematic use of two diamonds that alerts us to the ways



in which certain encounters are defined by financial as well as social obligation. While the ending appears contrived – and conservative – the play nonetheless offers a possibility of an alternative economic framework where women resist being positioned as commodities.

Chapter 4 considers Jonson's *The New Inn* (1629), and suggests that this late play of his is defined more by commercialism than by the romance genre. I focus on the way in which the play exposes the need for a dynamic economy based on circulation, in opposition to a more settled one based on ownership of land. The key question I ask of the text is to what extent the concerns of the inn affect and transform the characters within it. To go some way to answer this, I consider how the visiting group of aristocrats is integrated into a commercial world, mainly through their encounter with a cheating tailor and his wife, who appropriate goods for their own use. Moving away from their dependence on land, the group's interactions become increasingly characterised by the commercial impulses for which the inn stands. Emblematic of these irrepressible forces is the character of Fly, an enforcer of the space who the play asserts as the key figure in the inn's economic success. Himself subject to fantasies of ownership created by the Host, Fly is bequeathed the inn, in a final assertion of the cycle of circulation that he has maintained so carefully throughout the action. The Host, an aristocrat in disguise, continually asserts his agency over the space just as he treats it like a home. I suggest that the inn itself resists manipulation, and that the play champions the commercial trajectory of the space over any other concerns.

My final chapter considers *The Demoiselle* (1638). A play that works in often ambiguous ways, it nonetheless offers a dramatic vision of certain anxieties regarding commercialism and a shifting economic landscape. The central conceit of the play –

that an aristocrat disguised as an innkeeper is going to raffle off his daughter's virginity – stages a challenge to the unrelenting commercialism of the drinking house space that we have already encountered. Brome constructs the New Ordinary to subvert our expectations of the drinking house, and by engaging with *The New Inn*, he necessarily invites a consideration of how the two plays – and the two drinking house spaces – assert competing economies. The raffle, which is revealed to be a ruse, exposes both the easy commodification of women and the excessive consumption we witness from some of the characters, just as it simultaneously works to show us the positive potential of exchange. Through the scheme, families are reunited and restored to former fortune. While the drinking house exists temporarily as a space of transformation, it is nonetheless expendable in favour of a more settled, land-based economy.

Chapters 2-5 are organised in chronological order, although the dissertation does not aim to demonstrate any major developments across time in the experience of the early modern drinking house. Rather, it seeks to examine the theatrical use of the space by different dramatists before 1642. Part of its reach is to look at how those writers built on the work done by their predecessors in tackling certain questions about the commercialisation of hospitality and uses of credit. The precise historical context of each play is of less concern than the way in which the texts themselves reveal developments in the way the drinking house is staged. *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* are rooted to a certain extent with the jesting tradition that I examine in Chapter 1. They stage in the Boar's Head some of the tricks and pranks we see evident in jest books written in the preceding years, but also situate the drinking house in a more complex urban and political economy. Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho* has links to the sixteenth-century literary tradition based around the nature of Brentford, as well

as to the major genre of city comedy that was so prominent at that time. Moving forward some years, Jonson's *The New Inn* stages a drinking house space that embodies those same exchange-based connections, despite the growth of his interest in romance. Elsewhere, Brome, who to a certain extent viewed himself as Jonson's heir, builds on – and modifies – the theatrical representation of the drinking house that was established in *The New Inn* nearly ten years before his own play *The Demoiselle*. My concern with all these plays is based on their commitment to staging exchange and credit in the drinking house, rather than how they are embedded in their specific political and historical contexts. It is in this way that I examine the changes in the treatment of the space, rather than in the direct experience of it.

This thesis, then, proposes that when drinking house spaces were staged in early modern drama, they operated within a context of exchange. They were used by playwrights to expose and delineate socio-economic experiences, and while inns and taverns were easily staged and stageable spaces in the theatre of the period, they gave access to particular issues and tensions surrounding credit and commercialised sociability. When discussed in this context, such spaces complicate the ways we understand the plays under consideration, and offer new possibilities of interpretation.

## Chapter 1: The Drinking House in Early Modern Popular Literature

Towards the end of *A Caveat for Common Cursitors, Vulgarly Called Vagabonds* (1566),<sup>2</sup> Thomas Harman describes where the various rogues he has catalogued go to lodge for the night.<sup>3</sup> He references the “barns and backhouses”, where they often sleep, before mentioning that some of the rogues will only resort to these if they are “some distance from houses which be commonly known to them” (144, 145). These “houses” are quite clearly taverns or alehouses:

As Saint Quintens, Three Cranes of the Vintry, Saint Tibs, and Knapsbury: these four be within one mile compass near unto London. Then you have four more in Middlesex: Draw the Pudding Out of the Fire in Harrow-on-the-Hill parish; The Cross Keys in Cranford parish; Saint Julians in Thistleworth parish; the House of Pity in Northallparish. These are their chief houses near about London, where commonly they resort unto for Lodging, and may repair thither freely at all times. (145)

This catalogue, which locates genuine establishments in the South East of England, may at first give a sense of veracity to Harman’s survey of rogues. What is more

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<sup>2</sup> Hereafter I use the shortened title of *A Caveat*.

<sup>3</sup> The word ‘rogue’ first appeared in 1489 in Caxton’s *Fayttes of Armes*, and is cited once again in the *OED Online* before the date of Harman’s *A Caveat* (“Rogue”). Dionne and Mentz contend that it “was coined in the 1560s, possibly by Thomas Harman, to describe vagrants who used disguise, rhetorical play, and counterfeit gestures to insinuate themselves into lawful social and political contexts” (1-2). Linda Woodbridge argues that it was Harman’s use of the word that brought about its inclusion in *An Act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, and for the Relief of the Poor and Impotent* (1572), and which generated its use as a technical legal term up to and including the nineteenth century (*Vagrancy* 41-2). I use the term in this thesis not in any pejorative sense, but rather for simplicity’s sake, to refer to those characters described as rogues by the writers whose texts I am investigating.

significant, however, is not the importance he places on authentic spaces, but the creation and use of those spaces within the wider text to engage with particular socio-economic concerns. The name of alehouse, tavern and inn, becomes almost interchangeable, but it is the privileging of these spaces above all others – indeed, to the extent that there are no other significant spaces so consistently referenced in his text – that invites consideration.

Harman's text, to which I will return in the following pages, signals a careful use of the fictive space of the drinking house that is part of a wider literary phenomenon that this chapter seeks to establish. This emerging tradition engages with the drinking house space as a site through which some early modern writers sought to understand notions of exchange, circulation, and the complex relationship between financial and social obligations. The chapter will make use of rogue literature, ballads and jest books, and while a comprehensive survey of these texts is impossible within the limits of this thesis, I will argue that there are robust and useful connections to be made between the kinds of tavern spaces they utilise, and which are also then employed – and exploited – by dramatists writing at similar times. Such connections suggest a wider and more sustained engagement with the site of the drinking house than has hitherto been understood, and I contend that reading some of the popular literature of the time in light of this interpretation allows us to make fresh readings of these sometimes obscure and often opaque texts.

This chapter, then, considers how certain narratives of the tavern space emerge in a consistent way, and asks how those narratives allow us to form a better understanding of the kinds of social politics with which the texts are working. I shall structure this discussion by considering three different aspects of the texts that invite reflection in terms of the early modern tavern space: the figure of the host/hostess, the

tavern reckoning or bill, and the way commercialisation complicates the bonds of friendship in the tavern community. Not only are these themes to be found in many of the popular fictions sited in the tavern space, they also provide models that are staged again and again by dramatists working in the same period. Using these themes as a basis of my discussion allows me to examine the way in which the tavern space is presented as a literary construction, albeit informed by a contemporary experience of the drinking house. Equally, using a thematic approach means that the question of how writers situated the tavern as a site of exchange stays at the centre of my focus. In preparation for that discussion, the following paragraphs aim, firstly, to give a short introduction to the kinds of texts I will be using, which may seem very different from one another but which are in fact bound together by both their importance in the commercialised print culture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and their attendance to social politics imagined in the tavern space. I go on to review the critical literature that has helped to advance my approach and to propose my own position in relation to this historiography. I then briefly outline the methodology I use before embarking on a closer study of some of the texts themselves through the themes I have mentioned above.

Although ballads have a long history as part of an oral culture, dating back to medieval times, it is the “explosion of printed ballads in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” and how the form grappled with its place in the growing commercial print culture that is significant for my approach (Fumerton and Guerrini 1). Indeed, the sheer number of ballads that were printed in this period – Tessa Watt notes that over three thousand were registered at the Stationers’ Company between 1560 and 1700 – point to their prominent position on the literary scene (11). Their content was crafted in response to the demands of those interested in purchasing them, as Watt has also

suggested (199, 4). This commercial framework allowed for the expansion of their reach, finding their customers “in numerous ways ... pasted or pinned in public places on church and market-hall doors, on whipping posts and pillories”, as well as drinking houses (McShane 341). It is within this framework that we are able to see the ballad as a genre being re-shaped and appropriated by those professional writers wishing to engage with this commercialised – and mostly urban – landscape. “Ballad-writers haunted the taverns, alehouses, courts, and gallows for material”, writes Angela McShane (361). With this context in mind, we can imagine a context where writers were not simply responding to the cultural landscape in which they were working, but were also appropriating that landscape to shape their spatial narratives. In turn, we can then imagine how these very narratives were informed by what a more abstract fiction reveals about the politics – and tensions – of the experience that could be had there.

This model of how we might read the ballad can also be applied to the jest book. It too has a long history, with a place at the centre of the humanist tradition; the “first jest-book proper ... is normally reckoned to the *Facetiae*, the collection of jests made by Poggio Bracciolini, the great Humanist scholar” (Brewer 91). The tradition also in part derived from the medieval collections of *exempla*: Stanley J. Kahrl notes that as “one reads through the jest-books one is continually struck by the similarities in both style and content between the jests and their forbears the *exempla*” (66).

Garrett Sullivan and Linda Woodbridge argue that originally jest books were “often directed toward the elite” and during “the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance – from Poggio to Castiglione – jesting’s class valence was patrician”; it was only when the elite social class stopped producing jest books and started thinking of itself as more refined that the texts began to be seen as more populist (274-5). In terms of this study, however, it is the jest book that specifically emerges in the print culture of the

late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries that holds significance. It is a genre that engages in the urban, contemporary scene, and which is a product tied – like the ballad – to the commercial world that produced it. It was also a genre that concerned itself with verbal trickery as well as the sort of humour that appealed to the early modern reader. Admittedly, the scatological jokes and “repertoire of vulgarities” at times deflect from the complexities of the texts but the narrative voice, for instance, often reveals a more sophisticated creation, at once underlining and manipulating the appearance and performance of credit that is explored in these jests (Sullivan and Woodbridge 273).

In a more definite way than the two genres outlined above, rogue literature and cony-catching pamphlets were most certainly a distinct product of this explosion of print culture, constituting “a new form of writing for a new audience” (S. Clark 23). Emerging in the middle of the sixteenth century, with Gilbert Walker’s *A Manifest Detection of Diceplay* (1552), these texts “routinely claimed direct access to a ‘popular’ world of real beggars, thieves, prostitutes, con men, and other underworld denizens” often labelled as rogues (Sullivan and Woodbridge 279). While the first person narrators sought to “emphasise that they are documenting reality”, in actuality much of the material was copied from one pamphlet to the next, with a substantial amount of Harman’s – and then later Dekker’s – work taken from John Awdeley’s *The Fraternity of Vagabonds* (1561) and “ultimately the German *Liber Vagatorum*” (Raymond 17; Sullivan and Woodbridge 279). Woodbridge’s assertion that these texts should be read not “as protosocial history [but] as a subspecies of the Tudor jest book” underlines the need to approach rogue literature in terms other than as historical documents (*Vagrancy* 39). The texts, of course, “manufactured an imagined criminal underworld” and were written by educated, professional writers (Dionne and



Mentz 7). Indeed, previous readings have often neglected the comic tone of these texts, the persistence of which, combined with its manipulation and performance of certain narratives, means the rogue text resists neat categorisation.

Recently, critics have sought to reinvigorate the study of popular literature, seeking a more synthesised approach that moves away from specific – and often narrow – readings that have hitherto concentrated on the high/low cultural divide. Most significantly for my thesis, this has involved interrogating popular texts within a framework of sociability and community, a framework that, as suggested in my opening pages, is one of the lynchpins of my own approach. Woodbridge’s historicist work in particular has opened up the debate surrounding popular literature, and has developed a new way in which we may move towards a better understanding of how such texts can be read and interpreted. Her contention that we should read rogue literature, for instance, as a “creation of imaginative writers” rather than as historical documents underpins my own approach, that seeks to ask what early modern literature can reveal about how writers imagined and created the space of the tavern, rather than asking what these texts can reveal about real taverns themselves (*Vagrancy* 11). It is the sustained preoccupation with the fictive, imagined space of the drinking house that concerns me, and I will demonstrate that in these popular texts, the drinking house emerges as much a textual space as a material one (O’Callaghan “Tavern Societies” 46). The language of exchange, as we will see, is crucially often placed at the heart of the ballad or prose work.

Criticism of rogue literature has often been founded on a binary approach, where the rogue is read “as a historical figure who ‘reveals’ something about the real social conditions of early modern England” or on the other hand “as a cultural construction who ‘represents’ an imagined response to cultural stimuli” (Dionne and

Mentz 11). A more pragmatic approach would read the figure of the rogue in both objective and subjective terms, as part of a wider engagement with the idea of circulation where the boundaries between fact and fiction are porous. Dionne, in his essay “Fashioning Outlaws”, argues that rogue literature and cony-catching pamphlets should be situated within a mercantile discourse, where their function (alongside other products of the burgeoning print culture) was to “ameliorate ... economic and social divisions” as part of a self-reflective exercise of an urban culture (41, 40). Certainly, the way in which he figures the vagabond as a subject that “helped realign social relations from a feudal, domestic model of production to a corporate one” within the emerging capitalist system has been helpful in refining my thoughts on the how popular texts engaged with a shifting landscape of exchange (40). As Agnew has observed, early modern writers were grappling with how to describe the market in abstract rather than concrete terms (41-2). Such an understanding feeds into my contention that the fictions of exchange played out in the texts that follow are part of a wider trend where writers were seeking to make sense of changing notion of credit and debt.

More recently, the tavern has also emerged as space through which these popular texts examine fictions of identity, labour and community. Ballads in particular give access to an often self-reflective experience, as the form and structure allowed for both the practising of various social encounters as well as the performing of roles. Social historians Phil Withington and Mark Hailwood have made claims for the importance of the tavern space through which we may observe the emergence of notions of company, male identity, and the creation of fellowship. Patricia Fumerton has also argued that it is only through examining street ballads that we are able to “truly see the lower mobile orders ... [and] fully to inhabit the aesthetic space of the

itinerant working poor” (“Making Vagrancy” 204). Hailwood’s thoughts on the politics of company in the alehouse, in particular, have developed my own thinking when it comes to the way in which bonds of friendship are translated into those of financial obligation, while Fumerton asserts that ballads reveal the alehouse as offering a space where “the low could feel comfortable with relative peers” (“Sociability” 15; “Not Home” 494-5). Moreover, she contends that the space was “a *home operation*” where those of the lower social scale could enjoy a sense of domesticity (Fumerton “Not Home” 495, emphasis in original).

My position is that the tavern space is constructed in only quasi-domestic terms, the familial framework of which is complicated by the financial ties between guests and host. The tavern space consistently resists demarcation in terms that would reduce it to a domestic experience. Indeed, as Withington asserts, the community of the drinking house is based on “the relationship between agency and structure: between the subjectivities of the persons involved and the objective circumstances and resources in which and through which their involvement and interaction [takes] place” (303). I suggest that the agency of the individual is often subsumed or threatened by the nature of the encounters there, and vice versa. Indeed, the economic expectations and obligations placed on those within the space define the – often fluid – experience it offers. The texts I examine are grappling with the shifting loyalties and obligations of subject, community and space as they intersect with notions of exchange and circulation. Criticism of popular literature has thus far neglected to pay particular attention to the space of the drinking house and examine how that space is constructed in socio-economic terms, within a wider literary tradition. This is what I am concerned with. The works on which I focus offer opportunities to gain access to the kinds of concerns and tensions that arose when early modern writers used the

space of the drinking house in their texts, and to suggest that far from being separated by generic boundaries, they were engaged in a burgeoning literary tradition that saw the site of tavern as a way to negotiate the culture of exchange.

The rest of this chapter will work towards an analysis of some tavern spaces found in early modern popular literature. It does not aim to be an exhaustive survey of such spaces; rather it attempts to illuminate certain key tensions and ways of understanding that the site of the tavern draws out, via close readings of particular texts. In each section, I put forward a brief overview of how the theme is represented in certain texts, moving towards a longer analysis of one text that offers something significant for our wider understanding of the tavern space and its cultural representation. The first section introduces the figure of the host/hostess, outlining the various cultural functions attached to and expected of that character. I will demonstrate how the host/hostess navigates the expectations of hospitality in a commercial environment. This tension feeds into the subsequent section that deals with the motif of the reckoning, or tavern bill. Here I consider how writers use the payment (or non-payment) of the bill as a focus through which to explore wider notions of exchange and the use of credit. The cultural associations of the word “reckoning” are taken into consideration, as I discuss its implications in various texts. In the final section I offer an analysis of the tavern community, where expectations of friendship are complicated by the need to maintain individual financial responsibility to one’s fellow drinkers and to the establishment itself.

### **The figure of the host/hostess**

The host of the early modern tavern, writes McRae, “was a propertied man with limited power over his property” (*Literature* 127). The host could be either a man or a

woman, and he or she “was empowered by statute law and London ordinances to act as *paterfamilias* or *materfamilias* over both the household and the guests” assuming “legal responsibility for the good and honest behavior of guests, employees, and kin” (Hanawalt 105). Perhaps the most concise early modern description of the figure is provided by Thomas Overbury, who sees the host as

the kernell of a Signe: or the Signe is the shell, & mine Host is the  
 Snaile. He consists of double-beere and fellowship, and his vices are  
 the bawds of his thirst. Hee enterraines humbly, and gives his Guests  
 power, as well of himselfe as house. He answers all mens expectations  
 to his power, save in the reckoning: and hath gotten the tricke of  
 greatnesse, to lay all mislikes upon his servants. His wife is the  
 Cummin-seed of his Dove-house; and to bee a good Guest, is a warrant  
 for her liberty. He traffiques for Guests by mens friends, friends-friend,  
 and is sensible onely of his purse. In a word, hee is none of his owne:  
 for hee neither eats, drinckes, or thinkes, but at other mens charges and  
 appoyntments. (E1v-E2r)

“Overbury, like so many of his contemporaries, is fascinated by the translation within the inn of human bonds ... into mercantile terms” (McRae *Literature* 127). He alights on the inherent tension in the role of the host, where he entertains “Guests” and yet acknowledges they are required to pay him: his hospitality extends only within the bounds of his “purse”, and the power held over him by those frequenting his establishment is balanced (or perhaps unbalanced) by the power he holds over them in the form of the “reckoning”.

These tensions that arise from the “problematic” status of the host are further evident elsewhere (McRae *Literature* 127). The speaker in *Oh Gramercy Penny* extols the warm welcome he receives from his host, but laments:

If at an Inne-gate, I chance for to peppe,

And have not a penny about me,

The Tapster will frowne, and the Chamberlaines sweare,

And the Ostlers they will flout me.

My hoste will then scorne my companion to be,

My Hostes will looke farre more disdainfully,

Then tell me ist better to stay or to flye. (Magdalene College Pepys

1.218-9)<sup>4</sup>

The narrator works through the hierarchy of the workforce, from the lowly tapster to the host and hostess, with the increasingly extreme reactions to his lack of money reflecting its increasing significance to those working at the establishment. The first three characters are of course employed by the drinking house, and so we can assume, while they disdain the speaker, that they will continue to be paid whether or not he has anything to spend there; the host and hostess, however, are financially tied to the inn, and a customer with nothing to spend threatens their status as well as the success of the internal economy. We find a similar anxiety in the ballad “The Beggar Comes, the Beggar Comes”, which posits a narrative in which the consumer “who is openly embraced when he has money, can be as readily cast off when the source runs dry”

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<sup>4</sup> The *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (University of California at Santa Barbara) (<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu>) from which this ballad is sourced does not give line numbers. All quotations from ballads, unless stated, are from this online archive, which includes the British Library Roxburghe and the Magdalene College Pepys collections, among others.

(Fumerton “Not Home” 496). The speaker laments, “Our hostis’ maids did love me well, / when I had mony to my store” (*Shirburn Ballads* 141). We see the host/hostess reliant on payment, and while the relations with customers are defined in terms of affection when that payment is forthcoming, we can assume it is withheld in the opposite situation.

The contestations that we see featured in the ballad form are more often translated “into a comic register” in the jest book, where “the act of defrauding a host is invariably figured as a laudable demonstration of wit” (McRae *Literature* 127). This is represented, for example, in *Merry Conceited Jests of George Peele* (1607), which includes several tales of how the protagonist simultaneously fleeces and outwits the host. In one tale, Peele does pay his tavern bill, but recoups the five pounds by tricking the hostess into giving one of his men her good horse (377-8). A tale in *Tarltons Jests* (1613) shares a similar premise, where an innkeeper is tricked into thinking Tarlton is a Catholic priest, whereupon he is arrested and taken to London, avoiding the need to pay the bill – or for the journey – himself (D4v). While the second tale turns more specifically upon the requirement of innkeepers to pass on any information about suspicious travellers, both figure the host as a subject that can easily be outwitted and defrauded (McRae *Literature* 128). Superiority of wit may be treated as the marker of triumph, but the underlying value of both tales is the successful undoing of the host’s commercial gain. This, I suggest, points to attempts to create a narrative whereby the emerging “abstract market *process*”, in Agnew’s words, in contrast with the “late medieval *marketplace*”, remains challengeable (28). The fictions assert the ease with which the materiality of the tavern space and the host within it are undone, with the consequence that the more abstract notion of proper

exchange is also threatened, when in reality such contestations of wit would have been unlikely to succeed in the same way.

Elsewhere, we find Peele “had gone so far on the score that his credit would stretch no farther” (*Merry Conceited* 399). He occupies a room at an inn, and promises to pawn his belongings through a friend in order that he may have the money to pay his bill. He exploits the credit in a most extreme – and ridiculous – fashion by stealing the feather bed from his chamber (*Merry Conceited* 399). This is achieved, however, through a verbal trick where Peele assures the hostess that he will stay in his room, for “this seven nights do I intend to keep my bed” (*Merry Conceited* 399). She of course takes this to mean that he will stay for that period until he can recompense her, but his literalness costs her a genuine understanding of his intentions. The diminution of the inn’s materiality in terms of the stolen bed has implications not only for the operation of the establishment (the loss of the bed surely means no-one can stay in the room) but also for the financial security of the hostess. The relationship between the two is carefully maintained through the proper functioning of the drinking house economy, based as it is on the practice of exchange, with expectations on both sides fulfilled. Remembering Overbury’s host, whose hospitality is “predicated . . . upon an abandonment of control over his property” but whose financial success depends on his owning a property to which his customers have access, the treatment of the hostess in Peele’s tale becomes all the more unpleasant, as her relinquishing of control of her property becomes an excuse to steal (McRae *Literature* 127). The exploitation of the inn’s economic standing is figured in terms of the theft of the bed and the tale points to certain anxieties about the way that the normal pattern of financial and social exchange has potential to be disrupted by a customer. It is both the power of the hostess’ position and, at the same time, her



economic vulnerability that allow the joke to be performed in such a way as to undermine the legitimacy of her role and to poke fun at the conventions of the tavern economy.

The importance of the host/hostess in the wider tavern economy is asserted – rather strangely – in one of the tales in Harman’s *A Caveat*. In the tale of “A Rogue” two criminals visit an alehouse where they see the local parson drinking at one of the tables. The men stay so long drinking “pot upon pot” of ale that “they sat out all the company, for each man departed home about their business” (121). They approach the alewife to ask about the priest, and tell her – falsely – that they are his nephews and godsons. She describes his living arrangements, and then tells them to seek him that night, because he could offer them far better accommodation than she can in the alehouse. The hostess continues: “And yet I speak foolishly against my own profit, for by your tarrying here, I should gain the more by you” (122). The rogues ask for a “reckoning” and are described as “mannerly paying for what they took” (122).

The men go to the priest’s house and beg for charity at his window; when he offers some coins through the open pane, they grab his arm, telling him that unless he gives them three pounds, they will cut it off. The two rogues take “all the money he had, which was four marks” and make a further condition upon his release: the rogues tell him, “drink twelvecence for our sakes tomorrow at the alehouse where we found you and thank the goodwife for the good cheer she made us” (122). The priest is released, and faithfully goes to the alehouse the following day in order to “perform his promise” (123). He relates his experience to the alewife, including his pledge to spend twelve pence at her establishment. Her response to this is surprising, for in no way does she suggest the parson should not feel beholden to keep his promise made under duress: ““What, did they!’ quoth she, ‘now by the Marymass they be merry knaves. I

warrant you they mean to buy no land with your money” (123). The hostess then instructs the priest not to recount to anyone the story, because his parishioners will scorn him.

In this episode, we are confronted with several ways in which the tavern economy is negotiated. The rogues drink “pot upon pot”, and while we may expect them to try to evade the bill, both because of how they are identified by Harman as criminals, and because of the kinds of behaviour we have seen elsewhere in popular texts, they ask for the reckoning and pay it in full. While Harman is keen to show the criminality of these men, which occupies the heart of the tale, it is surprising to observe this encounter with the alewife, where the men uphold their obligations within the guest/hostess relationship. I suggest that there is tension at work between Harman’s desire to relay acts of criminality and the creation of a successful narrative in itself. The joke played on the parson would have no witty resolution if he were not made to uphold his promise to spend in the alehouse. By including that detail, the text insists upon that dramatic possibility, while simultaneously allowing for the encounter(s) to be figured in terms of the threat of vagrancy, where the rogues can be identified with the “laboring, unsettled poor” whom Harman was so keen to represent (Fumerton *Unsettled* 36).

What complicates this tale – and what makes it significant for this chapter – is the inclusion of the alewife’s reflection that by recommending the rogues go to the priest’s house, she effectively undermines her own pursuit of profit. So while the rogues pay for the ale they drink, their encounter with the hostess is forestalled. Her advice sits strangely, however, and we may well ask quite why Harman includes that sentence at all. To drive the narrative, the rogues need to seek out the priest’s house at night in order to perform the robbery. Moreover, with the story they tell the hostess, it

seems most sensible for her to suggest they stay with their supposed relative. Why, then, does Harman have the alewife acknowledge both the loss of profit and her responsibility for it when the option of accommodating them at the alehouse is superfluous? One answer is that the writer wants to construct a framework where the alewife occupies the position as the honest hostess, whose financial gain is ruled out by the verbal trickery of the rogues' tale. The encounter between the rogues and the hostess asserts the power of the men's fictions. The rogues win in every sense through superiority of their tale, which is achieved, one could argue, in the sense of the wider economy, at some temporary cost to the alewife. The final movement of the narrative, with the parson returning to the alehouse under obligation, then restores a form of circulation that, for all their criminality, the rogues are championing.

The way in which this kind of circulation works is hinted at earlier in the tale. The hostess' supposition that the rogues "mean to buy no land" with the parson's money suggests that the text is working in certain binary terms as far as economic values are concerned (123). While it sounds proverbial of nature, her comment alerts us to different sources of money and the tensions inherent in competing economic systems. The parson, we can assume, derives his money – including that which was stolen by the rogues – from the Church: parish priests were maintained "by a combination of tithe (a tax of a tenth of the produce of the people) and income from land" (O'Day 48). So when the hostess declares that the rogues will "buy no land" it follows that they are literally not buying into the older, established, medieval economic model where land "conferred status and power" as well as income (O'Day 25). Instead, they represent those involved in a more fluid, makeshift economy that sees, perhaps, a system based on land ownership as outdated. This is a tension that we see emerge in the tavern spaces of Jonson's *The New Inn* and Brome's *The*

*Demoiselle*, where those whose personal economies are based on land ownership find themselves at odds with a newer concept of exchange, a model insisted upon by the energies of the drinking house.

This is not to say the rogues are uncomplicated examples of a newer, more fluid economy that resists a more conventional land-based one. The latter is characterised by Sullivan as relying on an attitude of “stewardship”, harking back to a Peshurstian ideal of moral and economic maintenance, in comparison with “the slow and fitful reconceptualization of land as private (or absolute) property” that occurred in the early modern period (7, 232). Indeed, by not buying land, the rogues will be excluded from the opportunities offered by such a change in the land market. Nonetheless, by exploiting the priest, they promote a kind of economic fantasy that rejects the traditional duties associated with land ownership, and suggest that a more flexible – and unpredictable – system wins out.

Ownership of land or property then, emerges not as the economic pinnacle, but something with the potential of being restrictive. The rogues are the ones with the power, despite neither owning land nor seeking to purchase it. The priest, meanwhile, is left impotent, unable to resist the financial obligation put on him or tell the truth about his experience. Since the tale aligns the rogues with the hostess, we are alerted to the kinds of power she wields as well. It is unlikely (although possible) that she owns her humble alehouse, and yet it is she that profits at the end of the tale: again, ownership of property is not the definitive marker of financial success in this new economic landscape. Remembering McRae’s assertion that I mentioned above, regarding the host as a propertied person with less than absolute control over that property, the hostess’ status in this tale becomes clearer: it is based on participation in a more abstract network of exchange facilitated by the space. This is not to say that

the materiality of the tavern is inconsequential; as we will see in subsequent chapters, the actual machinery of the drinking house is crucial to the way in which it functions. Nonetheless, the importance placed on the more abstract market to the exclusion of land ownership suggests a preoccupation with the complexity of this exchange culture.

Furthermore, that same network of circulation, restored and maintained by the narrative, is the one endorsed by the hostess *rather* than that of the priest. The landed, settled economy seems only to absorb resources – the priest has to be made to spend his money at the alehouse – and this sits at odds with the values of circulation represented by the rogues and hostess. Dionne suggests that while rogue literature “promoted an image of otherness” to an emerging group of merchants and shareholders who were as yet only loosely bound together, it also provided a fantasy of economic freedom to those same merchants “whose own economic practices of investment and foreign trade maintained an ambivalent position in relation to the established medieval traditions of domestic production” (40). This theory is applicable to Harman’s narrative, finding as we do in the alignment of the rogues and hostess a new kind of economic stance, one opposed to the status quo and which endorses not only a more abstract idea of what the purchase of land might mean but also the opportunities that are afforded by financial enterprise. This kind of binary reading that the text invites may be a little unfair – the priest is, after all, a mere cipher when it comes to the broader picture of settled, landed economy. Nonetheless, the binary exists in order for the text to celebrate one economic model in place of another, older version, and reveals how some writers sought to make sense of the complexities of this broader cultural understanding of circulation and exchange.

The rogues' criminality may occupy a position at the extreme end of the economic spectrum, but that is not what defines their personal economies. Nor is the cosy fiction of an adherence to social conventions – in their 'rewarding' of the hostess' hospitality – the means by which their more fluid network is enfranchised. It is the way in which they maintain the economic space of the alehouse – and, more specifically – the status of the hostess who facilitated their plan that defines how we read them. The hostess is restored to her position within the network of circulation, even as the text has made us aware of the precarious living that it provides for her. Her guests appropriated the space for their own ends, and while she may benefit from the parson's spending, we are alert to the fact that her position is something to be carefully and persistently maintained. Indeed, those others present shape her position in the tavern space, and while the logic of the host/hostess role demands money to be handed over when shown a tavern bill, we shall see that it is not always the case.

### **The reckoning**

The bill – or reckoning – is mentioned frequently in texts situated in the tavern space. In these terms, a reckoning comes from the verb to reckon, which refers to counting out of money, an act that is founded on an oral custom: accounting for, telling or describing ("Reckoning"; "Reckon"). As Muldrew writes,

The verb 'to reckon' referred to the action of two people coming together to compare their respective debts, and to determine how much each actually owed the other. (*Economy* 108)

This description creates a foundation for a better understanding of how the reckoning is shaped by, and in turn informs, the site of the tavern. A tavern reckoning demands the host and customer perform an almost ritualistic action, of comparing and accounting for their debts, but one that falls short of the requirements of the original definition. By the nature of their transaction, there can be no comparison between what each one owes, because it falls to the customer to pay. Credit in this instance extends in only one direction, which unbalances the relationship between host and patron; to purchase victuals on account means that the host is reliant on the reckoning to avoid going into debt himself. More importantly, the reliance on an oral description to account for one's debts, in the context of some of these popular texts, is complicated by their preoccupation with verbal trickery.

The reckoning determines much of the interaction that we witness in the tavern space, and contestations over it might be read as further examples of writers grappling with changing early modern notions of exchange. The key question to ask of this motif is to what extent the texts use the idea of the reckoning to explore the concept of a settle-able contract or rather as a way to question the wider social relations beyond the tavern, where there exists a constant cycle of ongoing circulation and consumption that extended throughout society, as noted by Muldrew (*Economy* 95). The way the single reckoning materially encapsulates a specific act of exchange as well as more abstract anxieties about the extension of credit, means that it can represent many of the attendant tensions and energies of the site of tavern. The idea of a deferred payment with a promise (satisfied or not) to fulfil one's obligations shapes the understanding of the reckoning in the narratives that follow. Indeed, it is a notion that we shall see employed in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, and *The Demoiselle*, where

the consequences of a delay in the payment of a reckoning is embedded within much deeper and wider networks of relationships beyond the drinking house space.

Several texts figure the moral and social obligations inherent in the reckoning. The speaker in the ballad *A Health to All Good-Fellowes* asserts his duty to pay his reckoning, calling to be hanged if he refuses (British Library Roxburghe 1.150-151). The same expectation of honest behaviour is asserted in *A Mad Crue* where a refusal to pay the reckoning elicits a response from the Cook that the man “shall be tryd” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.444-445). In contrast, the “37<sup>th</sup> Jest” of Dekker and Wilkins’ *Jests to Make you Merie* (1607) is determined partly by the possibilities of non-payment. A group of young gallants find themselves “extreamely over-reckend”, which the narrator suggests is “the fashion” (C2r). They leave the tavern laughing about how they will never be able to “hold up their hands agen, at that unmercifull barre” but then joke to one of their crowd that they have indeed paid the enormous bill (C2v). This is a curious – and rather impenetrable – tale, but one that I think encapsulates the idea that the payment of a tavern bill is something to be contested. That the men find themselves “extreamely over-reckend” suggests that they overextended themselves from the start, and while it does seem that they settled the bill, the tale implies a consistency to this state of affairs, as it is “the fashion” to spend so much. It is significant, I suggest, that the writer figures their actions in terms of the reckoning, however, and not their spending, as if the bill itself shapes the circulation of money in the tavern. The onus to pay resides with them, rather than with the host to enforce collection, in a reflection perhaps of the frequent renegotiations and often unfulfilled obligations of the early modern credit economy that I mentioned above (Muldrew *Economy* 180). Indeed, joking that the bill remains unpaid when it is in fact the opposite seems indicative of a writer struggling to make sense of the ways that



financial obligations were on one hand a burden and on the other a necessary part of the culture of circulation.

In contrast, when Peele gathers together some friends for “a great supper” after which his companions call “for a reckoning”, it is their eagerness to offer up their share of the bill that defines the encounter (396). While Peele himself “swears there is not a penny for them to pay”, his friends dismiss this and each one contributes some money, “some ten shillings, some five, some more” (396). There is no reluctance to pay or attempt to dodge the bill by any of them. When they are then distracted by some music, Peele steals the money and runs away, and they are “forced to pay the reckoning anew” (396). Here, the jest is based on the willingness of customers to pay in contrast with Peele’s reluctance, and, as in the previous tale, the reckoning is settled. Nonetheless, the value of both Dekker and Wilkins’ and Peele’s jests is that they demonstrate how verbal unreliability is tied closely to financial dishonesty, with the motif of the tavern bill the focus of the anxieties of exchange. Indeed, the desire to gain financially (or at least, to evade payment) is entwined, if not synonymous, with the quest for superiority of wit that haunts these tales; of the Londoners found in jest books, Lawrence Manley mentions “their common pursuit of the last word or shilling” (*London* 120). Though he also writes that the texts in question demonstrate reconciliation “in the equality of laughter” I would argue that that view does not fully realise the complexities of the jest book dynamics, and that there is less a sense of reconciliation than of an unending cycle of contestation (120).

In terms of the question I asked above, of how far the reckoning figures a specific contract as much as it does a more abstract fluctuating cycle of circulation, the answer found in Peele’s text would suggest both. The joke relies on the willingness of his friends to pay up even when their friend has escaped with their

money. There is no doubt that these figures fulfil their function in the credit economy immediately and without misgivings. Nonetheless, and bearing in mind the way in which wit and exchange are so closely bound in this tale and others, then the lack of a deeper reconciliation would point to the conclusion that the reckoning does suggest a narrative of unending, and possibly irresolvable, circulation. This, as we shall see, is not always figured in negative terms, but can shape the kinds of transformative energies attendant in many of the staged drinking house spaces I interrogate later in this thesis. Indeed, the way the circulation of the tavern in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* requires careful monitoring and maintenance is one of the ways in which Hal then upholds the wider economy of the play as he shapes his notion of kingship. Similarly, the cycle of consumption that we see in *The New Inn* emerges as one of the ways in which the wider social and familial relationships are managed, as the characters learn from their exposure to the network of the inn.

The tensions, however, in many of the narratives in this chapter regarding the non-payment of the reckoning underline the very real anxieties surrounding the accumulation of debt in the early modern period (Muldrew *Economy* 174). While we cannot know for sure for how long many debts remained unpaid, large totals in inventories suggest the sums were not insignificant (Muldrew *Economy* 178). The payment of the reckoning, then, satisfies the demands of the tavern space but only in the resolution of the jest. The fictions staged here suggest that such outcomes were perhaps less certain in reality; moreover, they are determined by the competing forces of customer and host, pulling the texts in contrary directions. Non-payment (with a promise of future recompense) continues the cycle of circulation with all its attendant positive and negative outcomes, but immediate payment presents a momentary resolution that is hard to resist.

Such opposing energies are represented in the ballad *Come Hostesse Fill the Pot* (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283).<sup>5</sup> The speaker insists that “Good fellowes inrich the house” when they visit the tavern daily, but they must “deale in honest sort” and “not the man abuse” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). The facilitation of the tavern’s business and, from that, the creation of wealth comes only when a customer is both loyal in his attendance and trustworthy enough to pay his way. The enrichment of “the house” at the heart of the tavern community asserts the importance of the site in its material and social reality. The speaker, however, then recalls the anxieties regarding the moment “the reckoning comes to pay” because “we had rather gaine then loose” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). The possibility of “gull[ing] the Tapster” is aired more than once, with the seeming reluctance expressed in the phrase “exceeding loath” tempered by the excuse that he “doth fill his cans with froth” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). This same narrative of a tavern host cheating his customer by giving them less ale than they pay for is found again in *The New Inn*, where we are told by Goodstock that his retainer, Fly, is aware of such a scheme. In that drinking house space, Fly emerges as a figure irretrievably bound to the success of the inn’s economy; indeed, his actions are integral to the commercial function of the inn where the payment of the reckoning is unquestioned. Seen from the alternative perspective, however, the ballad offers a fantasy of non-payment in return for the ungenerous measures of ale.

This alternative outcome – where the speaker gets away without paying the reckoning – is constructed as a fiction, with the narrator envisioning a situation where a customer is neither able to pay, nor in a position to use his credit:

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<sup>5</sup> The ballad’s official title is *A very pleasant new Ditty* but in order to identify it more easily, I use its first line of “Come Hostesse fill the pot” as the title.

Suppose a young man spend,  
     and then have no money to pay,  
 He hath no credit, nor none youll lend,  
     but you will his Castor stay.  
 Yet still he will call for Beere,  
     with a full couragious note:  
 But when the reckoning he doth heare,  
 now marry he hath never a grote. (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-  
 283)

The hypothesis is left unresolved, and so while the main narrative has the speaker pay for his ale, the potential for leaving the reckoning unpaid remains powerful, with the “now” of the last line making it all the more immediate and possible.

Nonetheless, the refrain of the chorus underscores the inevitability of the speaker’s position within the network of circulation, insisting upon his payment just as he considers the opposite: “And after a while we have money, / And after a while we have none” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). The repetition of these lines seizes upon the dynamics of the tavern economy, hinged as they are on the reckoning being paid. The tensions implicit in a narrative that starts with the claim “a penny will never undo mee” and ends with the speaker asserting his presence even if he has “no money to pay” reveal, on one hand, the irrepressibly forces of consumption that act upon the tavern site as well as the dangers of unsupported spending. Remembering Muldrew’s description of a reckoning as the coming together of the parties and the comparison of debts, we might see the ballad itself as some sort of reckoning. The speaker and their audience are physically positioned to listen to the recurring

description of those gaining and losing money; when the narrator says “[h]e hath no credit, nor none youll lend”, we – the listeners – are implicated in this reckoning too (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283).

### **Commercialised sociability**

As Cedric C. Brown has observed, communal drinking often functioned as a way through which the bonds of sociability could be created. “The ritual welcome, creating the feeling of fellowship”, he writes, “is in drink” (6). O’Callaghan has also written of the way that taverns – especially at the Inns of Court – fostered “new forms of sociability among an urban elite”, while Fumerton, as I have already mentioned, has argued compellingly that the alehouse provided a “homey community” for the lower and often mobile classes (“Tavern Societies” 37; “Not Home” 494). The relations brokered in any of these drinking establishments, from inn to alehouse, were defined, as we have seen, through the careful financial negotiations by host and guest, centred on the payment of the reckoning. The community created in the tavern space, therefore, is based on a type of commercialised sociability, where “codes of private hospitality” are transformed by the economic demands and contestations of the tavern site (McRae *Literature* 122). Indeed, the relationships particular to the tavern space are, Fumerton argues, “unstable and estranged ones”, with the space itself making “few demands on its frequenters” apart from financial ones (“Not Home” 496-7). It is those financial negotiations to which I now turn my attention, drawing back from the specifics of the guest/host relationship and the tussles over the tavern bill to approach the wider community and the ties that bind it together, however temporarily.

It is worth noting the frequency with which many popular texts refer to a single customer being responsible for their own “lot” or, more regularly, “shot”, a

frequency that invites us to ask how certain narratives of credit obligations are constructed. The ballad *The Drunkards Dyall* describes a character that “mist his purse” but seeks reassurance from his friends that he has “paid for [his] lot” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.428-429). Similarly, in *Heres to Thee Kind Harry* the speaker insists that “Each man pay the shot / What falls to his lot”, while *It Is Bad Jestig with a Halter* tells of three ex-soldiers, one of whom attempts to trick his way out of “[h]is shot to pay” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.433, Magdalene College Pepys 1.440-441). In *Come Hostesse Fill the Pot* the examination of the tavern reckoning includes the speculation, “If thou has no money to pay the shot, / my Guest thou art welcome to me” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). It is a term found not only in ballads. In *The Discoverie of the Knights of the Poste* we observe Freeman giving his contribution to the bill, saying, “there is according to my promise, a crown towards the shot” and in Dekker and Wilkins’ *Jests to Make You Merie* a lawyer goes to a tavern, where his client is said to pay all of the shot (C3v, C3r).

What do these examples suggest, other than the term was used in numerous texts? I suggest that although there is some slippage between the words shot and reckoning, the former elicits a more specific meaning, one that denotes personal obligation when paying for drink in company. Indeed, a closer examination of Freeman’s attitude in *The Discoverie* confirms this reading. He says to his fellow traveller Goodcoll, “what with our supper and this shotte, I have but one groat left of my tenne shillings, for it is no reason my hoast should pay any thing at all, or this my friend either” (D4v). Freeman’s anxiety about paying his own way, without relying on the host or his friend footing the bill, suggests the negotiations surrounding payment in the drinking house space are shaped more by individual financial responsibility than moral obligation. This is not to say the honest customer is not lauded: numerous

ballads, for instance, attest to the fact that the “honest drunkard ... / is the chiefest fellow of all” (*Come Hostesse Fill the Pot* Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). But the kind of honesty expected is one of adherence to conventions of exchange, rather than that of a religious or ethical framework.

This is perhaps most apparent in Harman’s *A Caveat*, a text which Woodbridge has argued created such an effective discourse of vagrancy that it influenced the creation of early modern legislation stigmatising the mobile poor (*Vagrancy* 43-4). In the context of this reading, it is interesting to note the nevertheless healthy participation in the drinking house economy by the figure of the rogue, who, the text insists, is a constant and serious threat. Towards the end of *A Caveat* Harman provides a ‘translation’ of some dialogue where two rogues discuss their plans:

*Man. Why, hast thou any lour in thy bung to bouse?*

Why, hast thou any money in thy purse to drink?

*Rogue. But a flag, a win, and a make.*

But a groat, a penny, and a halfpenny. (151)

The men continue their discussion about how much they should pay for a drink and where they should go, culminating in the one saying:

*What! Stow your bene, cove, and cut benat whids! And bring we to Rome-vill, to nip a bung; so shall we have lour for the bousing-ken.*

What! Hold your peace, good fellow, and speak better words! And go we to London to cut a purse; then shall we have money for the alehouse. (152)

While Harman manipulates us to believe that we are being given privileged access to an unknowable space through the rogues' canting language, I suggest that the drinking house is less discriminating than he would have us think. The men in the dialogue may well be discussing the possibilities offered by criminal activity but the discussion centres on their having money enough – and very particular amounts of money – to spend in the alehouse. They are not seeking to destabilise the drinking house space by avoiding paying the bill, but rather attest to their participation in what the reader may accept is the normal mode of exchange. Moreover, the declaration by the Rogue that he has “*a flag, a win, and a make*” suggests an awareness of how much he would be able to spend without needing any credit (151). The drinking house space, then, is impelled not by moral concerns, but financial ones. Harman writes in his dedicatory letter that many “wicked persons” visit various “Tippling houses ... where they have succour and relief” but where “if they have neither money nor ware, they will be trusted; their credit is much” (112). The extension of credit, as Muldrew has taught us, is reliant on the economic trustworthiness of those involved in the negotiations, hence we can assume that despite Harman's misgivings about their wickedness, the people he describes nevertheless participate in the network of circulation (173).

Many texts take care to detail the specifics of this kind of personal economic responsibility that the site of the drinking house demands, and yet there remains a tension between acknowledging the necessity of such obligations and the fear that the



community of the space was in somehow undone by the commercialisation of fellowship. Like the delicate balancing of the guest/host relationship, the bonds between customers are situated in a framework that demands constant re-negotiation. Hailwood suggests that it is the labouring identity of those in alehouse company that underlines the requirement for honest payment and admittance to the alehouse community; nonetheless, it is clear that, even without a reading that anchors itself in the tensions between working hard and paying one's own way, participation in the economic and social circulation of the drinking house was fraught with difficulties (15). In *Heres to Thee Kind Harry* the ideal customer is one that “will freely call for drinke, / ... And never repine to part with his chinke”, characteristics that are tempered by the necessity “never ... to vary / From good fellowship” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.432-433). Numerous customers unwelcome to the drinking house – and to the community there – are listed, with the common factor being that none are willing to contribute financially. The “wenching knave” for instance is not wanted there, not because of any moral indignation, but rather that he is happy to “spend a crowne / upon his Lasse” while he is “unwilling / To spend a shilling / with us” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.432-433).

Meanwhile, a more hostile narrative can be found in the ballad *No Body Loves Me* (Magdalene College Pepys 1.431). The narrator describes the same kind of drinking house community, but this time it is he that is excluded when his money runs out. Where once he “flourisht with my friends” while his “quoyne lasted”,

Now that I have no C[hink]e,  
 With the Duckes may I [dr]inke,  
 All my friends from me shrinke,

Nobody loves me.

My Hostis with a smile would entertaine me,

Now like a varlet vile doth she disdain me

I had the Parlor before at [my co]mmanding,

Now in the kitchin I take up my standing:

Now all my revell ruffe,

Is turnd to kitchin stufte,

And I sing, Marry mufte,

Nobody loves me. (Magdalene College Pepys 1.431)

As Hailwood writes, the idea that those participating in the drinking house economy were somehow “false friends” is common, and yet he argues that there is evidence for a “less mercenary attitude” underpinning this notion of financial obligation (14). His reading is based on the determination of a labouring identity in contrast with idleness, and while this is compelling, I suggest that the economic energies of the tavern space are not so repressible (15). The lament of the speaker in *No Body Loves Me* finds no solace or defiance in working hard to increase his income, and while he claims he will “goe dig for more [money] and if I find it, / Like rich Cobs hand and foot, fast will I bind it” it is not a framework endorsed by the ballad, which by the end has the speaker fantasising about cutting the throat of his former friend (Magdalene College Pepys 1.431).

Such a narrative is also found in *A Pleasant New Song, Of the Backes Complaint, for Bellies Wrong* (Magdalene College Pepys 1.447). Here the speaker documents not only his exclusion from the community once his money has run out,

but also the loss of his good reputation. Now he has “to bid farwell good fellowship”, a line that encapsulates the tension at the heart of the text: the speaker still defines the drinking house community as one bound by “good fellowship” even as he describes his exclusion on financial terms (Magdalene College Pepys 1.446-447). The fiction he creates is one where he is embedded in a framework he calls “fellowship” as he simultaneously exposes the commercial impetus that seems, in part, to rob him of his agency. He goes on,

Thou thinkest good fellowes be thy friends  
 And what thou hast on them thou spends:  
 What thou by worke gainst all the weeke,  
       consumeth by good fellowship.

But when that all the money is gone,  
 And score nor credit thou hast none:  
 These friends from thee away will slipe,  
       and farewell all good fellowship. (Magdalene College Pepys 1.446-  
 447)

These lines further reveal the way in which this commercialised community threatens the individual subject. The speaker find himself spending the money he earns on those around him, but moreover frames it in terms of being himself consumed, just as their conspicuous consumption exploits his labour. The lines also point to tensions that arise when the networks of credit are not upheld; it is not only that the narrator cannot pay his way but also that he cannot access further credit which would allow him to

continue his participation in the drinking house space. While some of the literature I have mentioned points to the need to have ready coin, the ballad here alights on the need to maintain wider access to credit, a notion brought into focus by the speaker's own inability to participate in even the most normative part of the market (Muldrew *Economy* 95).

The ballad concludes in a way much like that of *No Body Loves Me*, with the speaker fantasising about various diseases and kinds of family breakdown that will befall those who “drink and gousell day and night” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.446-447). Moreover, he posits that those who participate are liable to lose their possessions, their “lands, & goods, oxe, horse, and sheepe” – all “wasted by good fellowship” (Magdalene College Pepys 1.446-447). This is, of course, an extreme narrative. It sets up the commercialisation of the drinking house community as something that threatens the wider economy rather than, as we have seen elsewhere, part of an energetic network of exchange. It hints, perhaps, at the broader fears about the loss of property and goods in a challenging market, where credit may be extended but also withdrawn. These “tangled webs of economic dependency” saw the creation of tensions “between economic rationality in credit dealings and the use of credit as an instrument of friendship or mutual support” (Hudson 54). Such tensions are alive in this ballad and other popular texts, alerting us to the wider implications of encounters within the site of the drinking house. Fumerton argues that it was precisely the “unbound provisionality” of the commercial drinking house that attracted people (“Not Home” 496-7). So while it provoked certain anxieties, the vitality of the site itself – both commercially and socially – resists containment of any kind.

## **Conclusion**

The early modern notion of company, Withington would have us understand, “suggests a politics . . . of social participation involving inclusions, exclusions and the construction of boundaries” (301). While he admits that such boundaries may be “less obvious” in the drinking house space, I suggest that they are evident in the texts I have examined in this chapter (301). This way of approaching such a space helps us to see it less as a component within the wider economy, and more as a site to be contested. The meaning it assumes in the texts above is based not upon an authentic experience, although of course it is informed by it. Rather the drinking house emerges in fictions that both conflict and concur with each other, necessarily because it means different things to different writers. So while the space often loses out in these texts – either by customers evading the reckoning, stealing its goods, fleecing the host or undermining the conventions of exchange – the commercialism it promotes remains intact when the fantasies of personal gain do not survive.

**Chapter 2: The Tavern, Reckonings and Creation of Credit in William  
Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV***

At the end of the first tavern scene in *1 Henry IV* (1597-8), Hal and Peto discover some papers in the sleeping Falstaff's pocket, which, upon reading, they discover to be a bill:

<i>Item a capon</i>	<i>2s. 2d.</i>
<i>Item sauce</i>	<i>4d.</i>
<i>Item sack two gallons</i>	<i>5s. 8d.</i>
<i>Item anchovies and sack after supper</i>	<i>2s. 6d.</i>
<i>Item bread</i>	<i>ob. (2.4.448-52)</i>

The Prince seizes the opportunity to mock his companion's dining habits – “O monstrous! But one half-pennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack?” – but more significantly, Hal explicitly states that the “money shall be paid back again with advantage” (2.4.453-4, 458-9). The care with which the tavern bill is itemised for us, and Hal's response to such a debt owed by Falstaff, is revealing of a sequence of plays in which terms of credit and financial liability are ubiquitous. The tavern in both *1 Henry IV* (1597-8) and *2 Henry IV* (1600) is more than a Bakhtinian carnivalesque realm, but rather a focal point of commercial exchange. Those who inhabit it pursue credit relentlessly, flee from debt, and are disturbed by their finances. The tavern space is at the very centre of the plays' economy, an urban marketplace connected by a network of exchange to a plethora of figures, from the King and the nobles, to ostlers and traders, to prostitutes and criminals. The frequent use of credit as both a

financial and moral concept suggests the complications of the market economy in a world where oral promises were often the height of contractual assurances. Moreover, the use of the tavern reckoning is central to the plays' interrogation of economic bonds, bonds which extend out into the wider social dramas onstage. Indeed, it is specifically through the repeated use of the reckoning as a dramatic emblem that we are better able to understand the space of the tavern as a potent site for the imagining of an early modern culture of credit.

This chapter will explore the ways in which the tavern environment provides a space where Hal can negotiate various key relationships: with Falstaff, Hotspur, and his father. Specifically, I will demonstrate how the economic model on which the tavern depends allows Hal to construct a framework where petty financial exchanges can be translated into exchanges of the familial, social, cultural and dynastic sort. I will trace how the tavern is presented to us as an economic space rather than simply an outlet of festive excess, the foundation of which is a delicately negotiated network of exchange practised by customers and the Hostess. Using this as a basis, the chapter will explore how the plays employ the reckoning, encapsulating in the tavern space a notion of the settle-able contract, to grapple with more abstract socio-economic issues beyond that setting. Indeed, bearing in mind how in Chapter 1 I demonstrated the way in which the reckoning determines much of the interaction in the tavern space, I will show how crucial it becomes in understanding how the wider dynamics of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* are shaped. I will argue that through the reckoning, the plays stage the idea that early modern networks of credit were based on a cycle of ongoing circulation and consumption, where deferred payment both promoted economic production and left those participating in it vulnerable to financial anxieties.

This focus will enable me to read *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* within a different critical framework from previous studies, which have tended to read the tavern space and its representation in these plays through the lens of Bakhtin's "carnavalesque" theory (10). C. L. Barber's *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959) explores the use of festive ritual to maintain community and asserts that Shakespeare "used the resources of a sophisticated theatre to express, in his idyllic comedies and in his clowns' ironic misrule, the experience of moving to humorous understanding through saturnalian release" (3-4). Festivity, for Barber, is used as "a term for structure" and he tries "to describe structure to get at the way this comedy organizes experience" (4). The structural model he uses, looking at how Shakespeare's plays move from chaos through release to clarification, is significant for this essay, which will apply an economic model to interpret the same movement. David Ruiter in *Shakespeare's Festive History* builds on the work of both Barber, and of Naomi Liebler. He argues that Bolingbroke "creates the appearance of class-kinship and the restoration of community ritual on his way to becoming King Henry IV" but because he usurped the throne, his son Hal "must also create a means by which to gain widespread public support, and he too will use a method that will play on the community's desire for a sense of kinship and ritual in its leaders" – and moreover a "kinship-through-shared-festivity" (69). Ruiter argues that to do this Hal seeks "to create a socio-political event that will ensure his kingship and unite the community" through word-play to project Falstaff as a figure of festivity through his blatant fatness and further as an emblem of feasting, which he calls the "Feast of Falstaff" (70, 83).

Nonetheless, the plays have been interrogated within a more economic framework. Sandra K. Fischer understands them as examining the definition of



“human value in the context of a quickly developing social-exchange mentality” in which Falstaff grapples with a “dilemma of conflicting contracts” (152, 159). She acknowledges the “pattern of language” that Hal needs to use in order for him to acquire the kind of pragmatism that will govern his style of kingship, with particular recourse to the “metaphor of indebtedness” (152-3). Nina Levine also places the *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* “within the specific context of early modern credit relations” and acknowledges that “the language of credit and exchange is central to Shakespeare’s staging of dynastic politics” (404). Similarly, Lars Engle’s work on the plays figures the “economy of credit and negotiation” in terms of royal power and its pragmatic application (108). Indeed, Engle’s examination of the frequent staging of debts has to some extent shaped my own argument, and I agree with his contention that Hal “understands what he does in economic terms” (107).

Critics have not, however, paid enough attention to the significant connections between the plays’ economic engagement and the specific space of the tavern. That is the purpose of this chapter. It is through that space, I argue, that the way in which the plays grapple with notions of exchange may be more fully understood. Admittedly, Engle demonstrates how closely Hal’s progression from prodigal prince to monarch is tied to his position in the tavern, but his argument points to a conclusion very different from mine. Engle suggests that it is Falstaff who is “dedicated to promoting circulation” and “fertilizing the market” with Hal resisting such “outflow” (109). I, on the other hand, argue quite the opposite. Hal is deeply concerned with the upkeep of the cycle of circulation, furthering his credit and insisting on the repayment of debts. Falstaff is at best a hindrance and at worst an obstacle to the forms of circulation that are fostered in particular by the tavern and more generally by the plays at large. More specifically, the link between Falstaff’s itemised tavern bill and

frequent use of the reckoning by Hal and others to frame and negotiate encounters has not as yet been analysed in the context of the wider tradition of the tavern space.

To better understand those encounters in the context of the early modern period, this chapter – as does the thesis as a whole – engages with the work done by Muldrew on the early modern culture of credit. Specifically, Muldrew’s understanding of the notion of the reckoning is crucial to my reading of the way it emerges in the plays. He writes, “[t]he verb ‘to reckon’ referred to the action of two people coming together to compare their respective debts, and to determine how much each actually owed the other” (*Economy* 108). The term “reckoning” as we have seen in the previous chapter was widely used to describe a specific tavern bill, as well as perhaps the more fluid but nonetheless concrete concept of paying off a debt. While the kind of encounter described by Muldrew above is staged in the Boar’s Head tavern, and relates directly to debts incurred there, we also witness it again in Hal’s interactions with his father and the rebels he faces in both plays. Indeed, the way in which the act of reckoning, as well as the concept of it, shapes the movement of the plays is the pivot on which our understanding of the social politics of the plays turns.

The chapter, therefore, will focus on a consideration of Hal and Falstaff’s positioning in the tavern environment and in relation to the wider community and nation via the language of credit that suffuses the plays. If we go back to Hal’s assertion that when he is King of England he will “command all the good lads in Eastcheap” we are able to observe his careful self-positioning in terms of both the tavern space and body politic (2.4.12). While he looks forward to his being crowned, and to a time when he has an authority based on monarchy, he alights on the disparity between the two spaces of the Court and the tavern, and yet simultaneously reveals his self-positioning in terms of the tavern network (“all the good lads in Eastcheap”

refers to his conversation with several tapsters that he mentions earlier in the scene). Hal will be able to command more than the apprentices he finds in the tavern, and yet he figures himself in relation to those in the tavern community.

My approach to *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* is one that accepts their textual separateness and yet acknowledges their implicit connections. Their genesis is rather complex. Giorgio Melchiori is persuasive in his argument that an ur-*Henry IV* existed, and was then rewritten as *1 Henry IV* as we know it because of the objections by various parties to the use of, amongst other things, the name of Sir John Oldcastle, a Protestant martyr celebrated by John Foxe in his *Acts and Monuments* (1563) (“Introduction” 9-16).<sup>6</sup> Similarly, there are textual quirks – such as the duplication of the name Bardolph for two different characters – that remain unexplained if the plays were planned as part of a sequence. We might assume that *1 Henry IV* was written as simply *Henry IV*, and was then subjected to substantial changes before it emerged as it stands now, with *2 Henry IV* written because the first play had been successful. Shakespeare then perhaps included material from an original ur-*Henry IV* in the new second part. In short, this chapter will treat *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* as sequential texts that intentionally engage with the same debates and discourses.

The chapter will be divided into four sections. Firstly, I offer a consideration of how the tavern network is created, reflecting the ways in which early modern drinking houses operated as economic spaces rather than simply outlets of festive excess, the foundation of which is a delicately negotiated network of exchange practised by the customers and Hostess. Secondly, I argue that Falstaff’s non-participation in the tavern economy suggests ways in which the plays engage with particular tensions that existed in the early modern culture of credit. Using this

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<sup>6</sup> For the full account of the ur-*Henry IV* see Melchiori (1994).

contextual framework, I offer a reading of Falstaff's character based on his being an unwelcome, yet perhaps unavoidable aspect of the network of exchange encapsulated in the tavern community. Thirdly, I offer an analysis of the way in which Hal's value is created by himself and others, a value which allows for a particular kind of engagement with the politics of the tavern, and which permits his later political redemption, figured as it is in economic rather than moral terms. I consider Hal's (self) positioning within the tavern network, based on the pursuit of credit and rejection of debt. I argue that Hal's economic encounters staged in this space are crucial to how he later negotiates his political and dynastic encounters. Finally, I use a different approach, moving away from character analysis, and examine the incursions of civic authorities into the tavern space. These stage the anxieties surrounding the tavern's position in a wider network of exchange and the need for it to assume a particular economic standard in order for it to function in the City of London.

### **The creation of a tavern economy**

In both *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, the tavern is presented to us as an urban commercial space, in which people not only buy food and drink but also lend and borrow money; the numerous instances of exchange invite us to ask how that economy works. Additionally, with the inclusion of a distinctly urban setting in the plays, Shakespeare draws on some aspects of the emerging genre of city comedy, which typified the dramatic engagement with drinking house spaces, to find new ways of understanding London and its economic negotiations within a wider framework of royal legitimacy. The tavern serves as a place of exchange, where the characters moving within it (and outside it) suggest a preoccupation with particular tensions and

issues that arose from the financial system that was materialising in London, itself undergoing “hypertrophic growth” (Manley *Literature* 5).

It is worth considering exactly what shape this system takes in the plays. Both Hal and Falstaff are part of a far-reaching and complex network of credit and debt, which, I argue, shows the engagement of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* with the peculiarities of the economic culture of the early modern period. This network is a subtle, but significant, factor in the plays’ social politics, because it goes some way to explain the structures of community and nationhood in the wider drama. This kind of early modern network encompassed all social orders, and has implications for the particular and the more general instances of exchange. Muldrew writes,

Every household in the country, from those paupers to the royal household, was to some degree enmeshed within the increasingly complicated webs of credit and obligation with which the transactions were communicated. Merchants traded on credit; tradesmen sold or worked on credit; and many of these people were in debt to the poor for wages and small sales, or work done. (*Economy* 95)

This network is staged in the tavern space, which in some respects acts like one of the households mentioned above, with its own internal economy and connected more broadly through Muldrew’s “complicated webs”; the network also extends out from the tavern, punctuated by encounters between debtors and creditors. The success (or otherwise) of the internal network of the tavern has consequences for its place within the city; similarly, the wider network of exchange has implications for the national structures of power. Shakespeare’s choice to stage Hal’s prodigality in a tavern setting

is crucial because it accommodates the significance of the real tavern space, as a cultural and economic nexus – a “centre point of a galaxy of commercial, governmental and leisure activities” – that produced a community bound only in part by communal drinking (P. Clark 14). More specifically, the language of credit, through which Hal positions himself in that setting, and the staging of the tavern reckoning in particular, reflects the way in which people were trying to negotiate and make sense of the phenomenology of early modern exchange.

Before moving on to examine the Falstaff and Hal in more detail, it is worth examining the modes of circulation and exchange that occupy the heart of the tavern space. The Hostess Mistress Quickly is central to this, acting as a kind of “entrepreneur” (Howard *The Stage* 142). It is also worth considering her in the context of Pamela Allen Brown’s description of drinking houses:

tens of thousands of women ran alehouses or worked in them, married couples drank together there, maidservants and young women gathered there, and lovers met and even held weddings there. ... As owners, customers, consumers, and as critics, women were deeply engaged in alehouse culture; there they heard and bought ballads, told jokes, danced jigs, hauled husbands home, and heard news of their neighbours and the wider world. Popular representations of jesting alewives and tippling gossips, including Noah’s Wife, Mother Bunch, and Long Meg, situated women as skilled players in the “neighbourhood theatre” that linked dramas of everyday life to dramas of the stage. (15-6)

The point of this is not to establish Mistress Quickly as some sort of authentic representation of an early modern hostess, but rather to determine that her character draws on the cultural associations of the figure of the host. This figure, as we saw in the previous chapter, is often found grappling with tensions inherent in the space of commercialised hospitality. Indeed, Mistress Quickly's character is in dialogue with the tradition of the alewife, with the female host in ballads and jest books, and with the thousands of women running such establishments, documented above, that the audience would have encountered in their everyday lives. It is worth remembering the alewife in Thomas Harman's tale of "A Rogue", a text I explored in Chapter 1. She is presented as a woman encapsulating the difficulties of the role of the tavern host, in charge of her property but financially dependent – even vulnerable – to those occupying that space.

In the context of these narratives, Mistress Quickly emerges as a businesswoman in her own right; a husband is mentioned cursorily but later she refers to "my house" and "mine own house", an indication, perhaps, of the fact that she owns her own property (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.73, 3.3.43, 45, 142, 49). Though "a poor widow of Eastcheap" she certainly enjoys "a degree of material success" (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.53-4; Howard *The Stage* 142). Chris Fitter, on the other hand, sees the Hostess of *1 Henry IV* as "a poor woman" and the tavern itself "redolent in several ways of the underclass fastness of the victualling house" (106). Nonetheless, I find Natasha Korda's argument that Mistress Quickly represented the figure of a *feme sole merchant* more compelling: "her economic activity during coverture would have been protected by a special custom of privilege of the City known as the *feme sole merchant*" whereby a married woman retained the rights of a single one and "retained [her] legal identity and right to own property" (109). So when we learn that she has

both plate and tapestries, we can understand the Hostess' female agency within both the urban environment, and more specifically, the tavern space, as implicit. Moreover, she is successful – and independent – enough to be able to lend Falstaff one hundred marks and employ a Vintner, Francis the drawer, as well as perhaps “three or four” more (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.124, *1 Henry IV* 2.4.4). The Hostess frequently refers to her “house”,<sup>7</sup> a term that of course suggests the domesticity provided in the tavern, but which also figures it as a concrete space, a building – a place as well as a space.

While it is useful to think of the way in which the tavern space is created in terms of Henri Lefebvre's observation that “social space is produced and reproduced in connection with the forces of production (and with the relations of production)” it is also crucial to acknowledge it as a constructed space, with the plays insisting on its tangibility as well as its energy (77). Only through the staging of both of these aspects of the tavern space does the narrative of circulation emerge, produced by the encounters within it and facilitated by property.

In this context, the Hostess is set apart from the rest of those we observe in the tavern both by virtue of this propertied status, and also by the fact that she is, as we have seen elsewhere, a figure complicated by bonds of friendship and commerce. While those who frequent the tavern as customers – Hal, Falstaff, Poins, Bardolph, Peto and Pistol – are connected to each other through the bonds of credit and debt the Hostess is the only character who also provides goods and a service. She may interact with them seemingly at a level of friendship, and even join in with their badinage (for example, in the “play extempore” in *1 Henry IV* 2.4.322-8), but we are in no doubt that their presence at the tavern works on the basis of exchange. Indeed, while it is unclear that the bill that Hal finds on Falstaff's sleeping body was submitted for

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<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the word “house” in reference to the tavern is repeated five times in *1 Henry IV* (2.4.214, 2.4.408, 2.4.434, 3.3.43, 3.3.79).



payment in the Boar's Head, it nevertheless reminds us of the arrangement that underpins the relationship between the Hostess and her customers. It is the tavern that provides the sack and capons that her customers desire (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.6). Indeed the construction of her character in this way reflects the translation of the bonds of hospitality into a commercial narrative that is evident elsewhere in the fictions of the early modern tavern.

### **Falstaff's bad debts and his destabilisation of the tavern economy**

Falstaff's first appearance in *1 Henry IV* quickly establishes his relationships both with Hal (one of affectionate verbal sparring) and with money (one of not paying his way). When Hal suggests a sexual undertone to Falstaff's praise for the Hostess of the tavern, he replies:

FALSTAFF. How now, how now, mad wag? What, in thy quips and thy quiddities? What a plague have I to do with a buff jerkin?

PRINCE. Why, what a pox have I to do with my hostess of the tavern?

FALSTAFF. Well, thou hast called her to a reckoning many a time and oft.

PRINCE. Did I ever call for thee to pay thy part?

FALSTAFF. No, I'll give thee thy due, thou hast paid all there.

PRINCE. Yea, and elsewhere, so far as my coin would stretch, and where it would not, I have used my credit. (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.36-44)

It is clear that Hal not only has to pay Falstaff's debts, but that Falstaff relies on him to do so; the implications that this has for Hal and his own pursuit of credit will be explored later in this chapter. It is, however, not only these two who are bound by the lending and borrowing of money. Falstaff, we learn, borrows money from the Hostess, and implicates at least Bardolph in such debts as well. Of course, we may understand this in terms of the early modern victualler's "relative liquidity" which allowed for the lending of "small coin" (P. Clark 137). The plays, however, only stage increasing debt between the Hostess and Falstaff, and the sums amount to far more than "small coin" as we shall see.

Payment of the tavern reckoning found on Falstaff by Hal early on in *1 Henry IV* is certainly never staged, and we can assume it never occurs. Muldrew writes that "[o]ffering credit on the alehouse score was necessary to keep customers" (*Economy* 293). Indeed, Engle points out that "the possibility of running up large unpayable debts" was a feature of early modern taverns expanded upon in the plays (124). While this observation may suggest that Falstaff's behaviour was not out of the ordinary in the context of early modern credit practices, the dramatic narrative insists upon the destabilising effect of such deferred payment, stemming from the way in which the economic fictions created by him resist inclusion in the kind of productive circulation that the tavern seeks to uphold. The tavern reckoning that lists Falstaff's expenditure is read only by the prince, who, as I shall demonstrate, appropriates it in the creation of his own economic narrative. Falstaff's fantasy of unending credit represents the more extreme end of the kind of fluid economy we encounter in the tavern, an economy that is incompatible with forces that the knight represents. Indeed, as we

shall see, Falstaff behaviour reveals the inherent conflict between outdated, unproductive modes of living and the more creative credit practices promoted by Hal.

We are alerted to this conflict partly by Falstaff's attempts to delegitimise the Hostess' position as the central trader of the tavern. The expansion of commercial endeavour in London at the time had particular implications for the women who took part:

Retail work also grew rapidly for middling sorts of wives and for unmarried women as the huge surge in London's population at the end of the sixteenth century caused comparable growth in the number of retail shops, inns, taverns, and cookshops within the city, all venues in which women played important roles. Those who sold goods could be suspected of also selling themselves, and the city afforded women numerous opportunities to lead public lives that involved being visible to many people, including strangers. (Howard *Theater* 128)

Exploiting her public position, Falstaff employs the discourse of prostitution to suggest that the Hostess is in some way sexually and therefore financially dishonest, just as Howard says: of selling herself as well as her ale. He tries to position Mistress Quickly as illegitimate, first by reducing the status of the tavern by saying, "This house [tavern] is turned bawdy-house, they pick pockets" and then by reducing the status of the Hostess herself, saying, "Maid Marian may be the deputy's wife of the ward to thee"; he reduces her even further to a "thing" (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.79-80, 91-2, 93). The opportunities she affords in her enterprise are covertly attacked by Falstaff's implications, in that the figure of the hostess – a propertied person nonetheless

vulnerable to the economic impulses of her guests – relies upon her honesty, as we saw in Chapter 1. Furthermore, by diminishing Mistress Quickly’s role to that of an object, Falstaff erases her person from the space itself, so she becomes even less than the easily outwitted host in other early modern texts; she is removed from any participation in the cycle of circulation that she would maintain.

Falstaff goes on to assault her role in the network of exchange within the tavern space. She tells him, “I bought you a dozen of shirts to your back” but he dismisses them as “Dowlas, filthy dowlas”, a course kind of linen much used then; he goes on to joke that the “bakers’ wives” who received the shirts from him “have made bolters out of them”, bolters being cloths used to sift bran from meal (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.53-5). In undermining the condition of the goods acquired for him, Falstaff removes himself from the network of exchange by refusing to pay his debt. Furthermore, as well as the shirts she bought him, the Hostess claims: “You owe money here besides, Sir John, for your diet, and by-drinkings, and money lent you, four-and-twenty pound” (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.57-8). The Hostess here alerts us to the fact that the reckoning has – still – not been paid, as well to the money she has otherwise lent Falstaff. It is worth reminding ourselves of the particular items of the bill that Hal reads out:

<i>Item a capon</i>	<i>2s. 2d.</i>
<i>Item sauce</i>	<i>4d.</i>
<i>Item sack two gallons</i>	<i>5s. 8d.</i>
<i>Item anchovies and sack after supper</i>	<i>2s. 6d.</i>
<i>Item bread</i>	<i>ob. (2.4.448-52)</i>

The tavern provides Falstaff with these consumables as well as the money with which he can – but refuses to – pay for them. The unpaid reckoning, however, becomes a shorthand for the contestations surrounding deferred payment to which the tavern space – here and elsewhere – alerts us. Much like in Dekker and Wilkins' *Jests to Make you Merie*, it is the bill itself which shapes the circulation of money in the tavern. That text, as I have suggested previously, insists upon the customer's responsibility to pay, rather with the host's responsibility to enforce payment. Deferring payment is a common theme in texts dealing with the reckoning, and the Hostess does nothing wrong in letting Falstaff rack up some debt. The problem arises with his sustained refusal to pay, a refusal that threatens to unbalance the system of circulation. Indeed, by the very fact that it is Hal who reads out the bill – in a staging of Muldrew's oral act of reckoning – Falstaff is presented to us as fundamentally disengaged from the accepted behaviour within the culture of credit.

Rather than paying his debt, or even acknowledging it, Falstaff tries to move the debt onto Bardolph, saying, "He had his part of it, let him pay", and he later blames Hal for his 'poverty' by wishing for "a fine thief of the age of two-and-twenty or thereabouts! I am heinously unprovided" (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.59, 156-7). Similarly, in *2 Henry IV* Falstaff asks his Page, "What said Master Dommelton about the satin for my short cloak and my slops?" and the Page replies, "He said, sir, you should procure him better assurance than Bardolph: he would not take his band and yours, he liked not the security" (1.2.21-5). Rather than admitting his previous bad debts have given him poor security, Falstaff's response is to insult Dommelton, calling him "a whoreson Achitophel" and a "rascal" and "knave" (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.27). He then expands his tirade to include all traders:

The whoreson smoothy-pates do now wear nothing but high shoes and bunches of keys at their girdles, and if a man is through [thorough] with them in honest taking up, then they must stand upon security. I had as life they would put ratsbane in my mouth, as offer to stop it with security, I looked a should have sent me two-and-twenty yards of satin, as I am a true knight, and he sends me 'security'! Well he may sleep in security, for he hath the horn of abundance, and the lightness of his wife shines through it ... and yet cannot he see, though he have his own lanthorn to light him. (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.28-37)

This episode is useful in that it reveals Falstaff's awareness to some extent that he is part of an urban community, and when he falls into debt or refuses to participate in the network of exchange, it has results for that community. That awareness, however, is achieved only through the application of Falstaff's own logic, of his tendency to transfer ownership, and thus responsibility, of debt onto someone else. His refusal (or inability) to offer the merchant any "security" and the defence of such a standpoint works only if we accept his inversion of the propriety of exchange. Just as he calls Mistress Quickly's shirts "filthy dowlas", Falstaff's accusation that Dommelton should have sent him "satin" but he received only "'security'" leaves us with the impression that it is Falstaff himself who has been hoodwinked, when it is in fact exactly the opposite.

When Falstaff leaves for the war, the Hostess fears that she is "undone by his going" having had to "pawn both [her] plate and the tapestry of [her] dining chambers" (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.17, 11-2). Falstaff's actions have reduced the Hostess materially. Following his verbal reduction of her, she even goes as far to say that "he

hath eaten me out of house and home” which reckons Falstaff as a monstrous figure consuming all that he encounters (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.56-7).<sup>8</sup> While the Hostess’ lamentations that she is “a poor lone woman” might on stage be presented histrionically, and her repetitious language may be risible, the Hostess is put at a genuine disadvantage by Falstaff’s actions (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.23). Remembering the tensions inherent in the figure of the host or hostess, we are able to appreciate that it is not only the debt accrued by Falstaff that makes her vulnerable, but also the effect it has on her position. Muldrew observes how alehouse keepers were forced into debt “by the immense amount of competition” in a “highly populated” trade (*Economy* 293). By situating once again Falstaff’s indebtedness both in the space of the tavern and in relation to the unpaid tavern reckoning – Mistress Quickly asserts his excessive eating as the ultimate misdeed – the text ties his financial unreliability to the Hostess’ ability to maintain her position in her own property. Moreover, if she loses her plate and tapestries, the materiality of the tavern is diminished, which, we can assume, will affect its commercial viability. While we can only imagine what fragrant promises Falstaff makes to Mistress Quickly when he takes her aside later in the scene, his instruction to Bardolph to “Go with her, with her, hook on, hook on” brings us up short in its cold-hearted expedience (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.126-7). The tensions arise in the text as we witness the competing forces of customer and hostess; and much like the jests in the previous chapter, the humour of the scene arises from the narrative of a customer getting away in the most outlandish fashion without paying his bill yet again. Nonetheless, as I mentioned above, the callousness underscoring Falstaff’s behaviour points perhaps to a more ruthless way of conducting credit relations, in contrast to the ordinary dealings that relied so heavily on trust and openness.

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<sup>8</sup> See also Doll’s description of Falstaff drinking “such a huge full hogshead” that he has “a whole merchant’s venture of Bordeaux stuff in him” (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.50-1).

In this way, then, Falstaff settles the argument even if not the bill, and emerges the victor because the Hostess eventually agrees to loan him some money again: “you shall have it, though I pawn my gown” (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.124). In other ways the economic balance is never entirely resolved. His treatment of the Hostess and her attempts at legitimate exchange (while he himself refuses to participate wholly or honestly in such interactions) remains a threat. Falstaff has delegitimised her throughout *2 Henry IV* as he did in *1 Henry IV*, using the discourse of prostitution to suggest that as a woman she cannot be a genuine dealer or participant in the exchange of money because she is a “quean” (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.35). While a prostitute may well offer a service in exchange for money, and participate in a network of trade, the Hostess is decidedly part of the urban community in a way in which a prostitute may never be, in that she has certain types of authority: of property, of ownership, and of status in the community.

In fact it is Falstaff who operates within a decidedly murky economic sphere. As well as the troubling episode of the robbery at Gad’s Hill, Falstaff is embroiled in further disreputable means of making money that disrupt the normal process of circulation. The plays show that money is being made (or shown to be made) through a trade of individuals who are drawn into his exploitative economic fantasies. While on the road to Coventry in *1 Henry IV* Falstaff admits that he has

misused the King’s press damnably. I have got in exchange of a hundred-and-fifty soldiers three hundred and odd pounds. I press me none but good house-holders, yeoman’s sons, enquire me out of contracted bachelors, ... and they have bought out their services.

(4.2.11-15, 19-20)



Falstaff here equates a certain number of men with a certain amount of cash. Indeed, he admits that he only presses those men rich enough to buy their way out. His contempt for civilians, calling them “warm slaves”, further reduces those being pressed to figures whose only purpose is to serve him (*1 Henry IV* 4.2.16).

Profiting in this way is shown again in more detail in *2 Henry IV*, where we find Falstaff in Gloucestershire recruiting for the army. His companion Bardolph is bribed by some of the men to escape service, and he then turns (some of) the money over to Falstaff. Bullcalf gives Bardolph “four Harry ten shillings in French crowns” which equals one pound; Mouldy then tells him that he “shall have forty”, which gives three pounds in all; but if we reckon Bullcalf’s bribe in pre-Elizabethan value it will be four in total, with Bardolph pocketing the spare pound (*2 Henry IV* 3.2.182, 190).<sup>9</sup> Not only is Falstaff acting like a tradesman selling freedom, but he is also a participant in a scheme that helps men evade military service. The extent to which here financial values are placed above all else suggests to me that in some ways Falstaff represents an extreme element of the network of exchange, an aspect of that network that can be exploitative rather than generative. While Engle suggests that Falstaff “rejoices in circulation for its own sake”, I find that such an interpretation belies the potential destructiveness of Falstaff’s economic power. In terms of the military, Falstaff calls his men in *1 Henry IV* “food for powder” (4.2.54). His blatant disregard for the individuals concerned (just as when he was pressing them to service) again leaves us feeling that his economic reasoning is at best unresolved and at worst manipulative. Indeed, it feels like an extension of his exploitation of the Hostess, or

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<sup>9</sup> Melchiori glosses Bullcalf’s lines in his edition thus: “An elaborate way of saying one pound, giving the impression that they are two. Bullcalf is offering to pay in French crowns (*écus*, worth four shillings each) the equivalent of four ten-shilling pieces minted in Henry VII’s reign; forty shillings are two pounds, but the ‘Harry ten shillings’ had been devalued and were worth only five shillings each, so that four of them were worth one pound, or five French crowns” (151n182).

even of Hal, whereby Falstaff positions himself in the tavern network not only as the ultimate defaulter, but also as the abuser of any credit offered to him. Indeed, the conversation between Falstaff and Bardolph totting up their sums and counting the men to be excused sounds very much like a distortion of Muldrew's description of the recitation of a reckoning. When Falstaff says, "I would to God thou and I knew where a commodity of good names were to be bought", he may well be talking in terms of reputation, but by the time we have seen him in action, we could have taken his words at face value (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.65-6). Falstaff functions here as a drain on the more productive elements of the economy, a disruptive force that reveals quite how generative other aspects of that economy can be in contrast.

While Howard writes that in sixteenth-century texts dealing with the economics of the time, "[m]any plays make the male debtor a figure of folly, constructing him as prodigal or fop and the prison as the place of his just humiliation", Shakespeare figures Falstaff as being more of a threat, albeit to particular kinds of order, but a threat nonetheless (*Theater* 71). Moreover, the construction of this threat in the character of Falstaff imagines the hazards faced in the early modern period by those resisting the network of exchange. Muldrew writes,

most buying and selling was done on trust, or credit, without specific legally binding instruments, in which an individual's creditworthiness in their community was vital. Second, this network of credit was so extensive and intertwined that it introduced moral factors which provided strong reasons for stressing co-operation within the marketing structures of the period. Individual profit and security were important, but neither could be achieved without the direct co-

operation of one's neighbours which trust entailed. As a result, buying and selling at this time, far from breaking up communities, actually created numerous bonds which held them together. (*Interpreting* 169)

Engle passes off Falstaff's "petty credits and debits, often the results of tricks or illicit transactions" as being linked to his embodiment of festivity (121). I suggest, however, that even at the level of petty finance the threat from Falstaff is significant. Despite Falstaff's behaviour, or because of it, we can assume that Hal is aware of this and supports him to try to maintain financial order. It is only when Hal moves from prodigal son to newly crowned king – which I shall explore in more detail in the next section – that he acts more resolutely to check the threat posed by Falstaff. Ruiters asserts that the rejection of Falstaff is because festivity has no part to play in the new regime:

Falstaff's time of empowerment is limited because his socio-political value is limited; the ultimate goal of festive release, to use Barber's formula, is to provide clarification of the established order. The Lord of Misrule helps relieve tensions for a limited time, but if he manages to seize ongoing control, the state will dissolve into disorder. (71)

If we assert Falstaff's financial position, however, as the owner of bad debts which can never be cured (he says himself, "I can get no remedy against thus consumption of the purse, borrowing only lingers and lingers it out, but the disease is incurable") then the rejection of Falstaff is a rejection of the way in which he interacts with the network of exchange (2 *Henry IV* 1.2.186-7).

One of the ways of understanding the rejection of Falstaff is to trace the emblematic use of the sum of a thousand pounds. We hear it first from Falstaff, who tells Hal that they “have taken a thousand pound this day morning” in reference to the robbery undertaken at Gad’s Hill (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.133-4). Later, the Hostess reveals that Falstaff had told her that Hal “owed him a thousand pound” (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.109-10). Hal himself promises Francis the drawer a thousand pounds for a “pennyworth” of sugar, while the sum is echoed again by Falstaff, first when he claims Bardolph’s bright nose “hast saved me a thousand marks in links and torches” and secondly when he imagines a bet: “he that will caper with me for a thousand marks, let him lend me the money and have at him” (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.50, 3.3.32-3, *2 Henry IV* 1.2.151-2). Indeed, Falstaff then goes on to ask the Lord Chief Justice for a thousand pounds “to furnish me forth” (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.175-6). The echoing of this sum through both plays is significant because it reminds us just how enmeshed by credit are those who participate in this environment. Moreover, it serves as a verbal sign of the momentum towards Falstaff acknowledging his indebtedness, which he does at the end of *2 Henry IV*. Having been rejected by Hal, Falstaff at last accepts his debt to Justice Shallow: “Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound” (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.69). Strangely revived from his holiday spirit by Hal’s exclusion of him, Falstaff’s sudden acknowledgement suggests perhaps that there has always been an awareness of his being in debt.

Nonetheless, the tavern reckoning remains unpaid by him, and the texts to some extent accommodate the fictions he creates that would allow such a fantasy of economic capriciousness. The logic of the plays demands some sort of payment for the maintenance of such a delicate network of exchange, a payment we shall see made in the economic narrative created by Hal.

### Hal's construction of identity

Hal's pursuit of redemption from earlier follies is most commonly suggested to be part of his negotiation of modern kingship.<sup>10</sup> His calculation is that the degenerate society he keeps will set off his eventual regal brilliance all the more:

So when this loose behaviour I throw off,  
 And pay the debt I never promisèd,  
 By how much better than my word I am,  
 By so much shall I falsify men's hopes.  
 And like bright metal on a sullen ground,  
 My reformation, glitt'ring o'er my fault,  
 Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes  
 Than that which hath no foil to set it off. (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.168-175)

A reading of Hal's redemption by charting his movement from prodigal son to monarch over the course of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, seen through his linguistic attempts to make sense of a world struggling between Hotspur's call for medieval chivalry and a new Machiavellian *Realpolitik* is certainly valid. I contend, however, that an interpretation that acknowledges Hal's development in terms of his engagement with the struggle between past economic obligations and a pragmatic commercial future is equally compelling. This is generated by his encounters in the tavern space and particularly through the emblem of the tavern reckoning. Hal's participation in the tavern's network of exchange is crucial to his ability to negotiate

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<sup>10</sup> For discussions of Hal's negotiation of power see, for example, Greenblatt (1985), Helgerson (1994), Holderness (2000).

the culture of credit, which in turn allows him to meet his political challenges. Indeed, while the plays at times insist upon the absolute standard of gold, Hal's identity is shaped more by a matter of negotiation and by the building up of credit networks.

Admittedly, the energies of the plays can pull us in different direction. Hal's perception of his own value can certainly be tested in terms of an absolute standard. His use of the sun as an emblem of his royal position – “herein will I imitate the sun” – recalls *Richard II* (1595) where kingship is frequently figured in terms of the solar (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.157).<sup>11</sup> It points us to the idea that there is a natural scheme that centres the King (as Hal will become) as the sun in the middle of a human solar system. To a large extent, Hal's birthright is in this way linked to his value by those around him. The usurpation by Bolingbroke of Richard's throne, however, counters the idea of the divine right of Kings, and the figuring of Henry IV by others as a “vile politician” complicates this framework: Hal's own belief in his right to succession, (which it must be acknowledged is in *Henry V* shown to be less than unquestioning)<sup>12</sup> and thus his intrinsic value based on birthright is subject to further contestations within the plays (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.238). Moreover, the very idea of intrinsic worth is questioned, through the frequent insistence upon credit as a more powerful means of creating identity.

Significantly, with Henry and Falstaff both asserting Hal's value in terms of something concrete rather than the more abstract notion of credit, there emerges a distinct divide between the emblematic and literal shaping of Hal's identity. When Hal tells Falstaff that he has used his coin and credit to pay his friend's debts, he receives the reply, “Yea, and so used it that were it not here apparent that thou art heir

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<sup>11</sup> In that play, Bolingbroke (soon to be Henry IV) says, “King Richard doth himself appear, / As doth the blushing discontented sun” and Richard himself asks of his reflection, “Was this the face / That like the sun did make beholders wink?” (*Richard II* 3.3.62-3, 4.1.282-3).

<sup>12</sup> Hal – now Henry V – prays the night before battle that God will “not think upon the fault / My father made in compassing the crown” (*Henry V* 4.1.267-8).

apparent” (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.41-46). Falstaff draws our attention to the importance of Hal being the heir to the throne and the value of that position, both to their relationship and a wider audience. There are frequent puns comparing the Prince with colloquial names for coins, such as “thou camest not of the blood royal, if thou darest not stand for ten shillings” and “make him a royal man”: a royal was a coin worth ten shillings (Fischer 162; *1 Henry IV* 2.4.114-5, 238). Furthermore, there is a physical representation of Hal’s value and his worth to others:

Hal has intrinsic “mettle,” as he himself often asserts. Because his face, when he becomes king, will be stamped on the coinage as a symbol of value, now its features themselves are a form of credit or I.O.U.-that is, an implied contract for payment. Falstaff’s intrinsic “mettle” is his wit, and this he must coin into an exchange value of multisignifying words. (Fischer 160)

Fischer would have us believe that the coin that Hal stretches is physically tied to him as the future monarch (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.43). Indeed, Falstaff employs a similar argument, exploiting contemporary fears about counterfeiting, when he tells Hal, “Never call a true piece of gold counterfeit. Thou art essentially made without seeming so” (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.409-10). Knowing the problems of counterfeiting that were endemic in Elizabethan England, these lines seek to remove Hal from any taint of illegitimacy that one would find in a counterfeit coin, and at the same time assert his real and true value to Falstaff. I contend, however, that Hal’s intrinsic value, as far as we believe it, is only valid in limited terms. While his father considers Hal’s brow stained with “riot and dishonour” and thus his value diminished (indeed, he compares

the princely attributes of Hotspur and his own Harry, valuing his son far below the nobleman), Hal's identity as far as he shapes it is not dependent upon such concerns (*1 Henry IV* 1.1.84). The credit he constructs for himself becomes the basis for an altogether more resilient – and more compelling – identity reliant on ongoing negotiations.

The way in which the plays bring Hal's identity into contestation is suggested perhaps most sharply with the episode of the Gad's Hill robbery. It is impossible to ignore the very real assertions within the plays of the significance of money in concrete terms. Quite literally, the theft from Henry's Exchequer by Falstaff, Peto and Bardolph sets in motion the inquiry of the Sheriff and thereafter the Lord Chief Justice. It is no mean sum – Falstaff claims he and the others took “a thousand pounds” while the Sheriff suggests it was “three hundred marks” – and important within the wider scheme of the plays that asserts the often harsh realities of a society where value cannot be underestimated (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.134, 436). We cannot hope to forget “[p]oor” Robin Ostler who died “since the price of oats rose” or the fact that it is possible to “buy land ... as cheap as stinking mackerel” (*1 Henry IV* 2.1.9-11, 2.4.296-7). So on one hand, we are able to see the amount stolen as representing the money that is actually circulating in the economy and on the other hand, in a more emblematic way, the economic power of the King. Much like the sum of the thousand pounds alerts us to Falstaff's indebtedness and the cycle of reckonings, in relation to Hal it reminds us of the different ways in which value is contested in the plays.

Similarly, when Hal first emerges from a tavern room where he has been talking with some of the tapsters, and tells Poinz that on his becoming King, he “shall command all the good lads in Eastcheap”, he claims it is because they see him as “a lad of mettle” (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.11-2). Like Falstaff and the King, his drinking



companions see in Hal an intrinsic worth, based not on his being Prince of Wales but on his being like them. What follows suggests that Hal's identity is not constructed in such a straightforward manner, and again the play asserts the contestations between different notions of value. Hal tells Poins that he has received a "pennyworth of sugar" from Francis, whose variety of speech constitutes but three phrases, one of which is "'Anon, anon, sir!'" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.18, 21). Hal's plan is to talk to Francis and meanwhile to have Poins call him, so that the boy's replies only ever amount to "'Anon'". While its comedic value is evident, poor Francis being torn between answering the Prince's questions and answering Poins' shouts, there is I think something more profound to be teased out, which reflects Hal's own position in the tavern space as opposed to his (future) position at Court. Hal's interrogation is concerned with the economics of Francis' situation and furthermore, the conversation sees the Prince consider the validity of an alternative economic system where apprentices may abscond from their duties. He tells Francis, "Five year! By'r lady, a long lease for the clinking of pewter. But Francis, darest thou be so valiant as to play the coward with thy indenture and show it a fair pair of heels and run from it?" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.38-40). What is more unsettling even than Hal's encouragement of Francis' escape, is the way in which Francis is prevented from accepting the money that Hal offers. The Prince tells him that for the sugar Francis gave him, he will give him "a thousand pound": "ask me when thou wilt, and thou shalt have it" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.52-3). Poins' shouts lead to Francis replying "'Anon, anon'" rather than answering Hal (*I Henry IV* 2.4.55). Poins himself invites us to query this episode by asking Hal, "what cunning match have you made with this jest of the drawer? Come, what's the issue?" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.79-80). Hal does not give an answer, and we are left with a feeling that things are unresolved.

This astonishment at the length of Francis' contract and the suggestion that he might have another option in life perhaps suggests Hal's uneasiness about his own princely apprenticeship and duty in the Court. If, however, we consider Hal's pursuit of credit, we might read this episode as him testing his commitment to the tavern's network. Hal's refusal to explain himself properly to the drawer is, bizarrely, a way in which he can uphold the community of exchange, through which Francis is economically connected to the Hostess, to her other employees, to the customers and the wider city. Furthermore, Hal contrasts the value of the emblematic – as we understand it – sum of the thousand pounds with the worth of the tavern economy, simultaneously upholding Francis' commitment to the enterprise and his own maintenance of credit relations. When he is finally alone, Hal comments that Francis' "industry is up-stairs and down-stairs, his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning" (*I Henry IV* 2.4.87-8). Francis is part of those credit relations, both literally as the drawer and figuratively as part of the circulation the tavern promotes. The reliance of one upon the other is borne out in this scene, just as Hal's affirmation of the way in which credit shapes identity – his and Francis' – is pitched against the ever-insistent thousand pounds.

In this world of exchange that Shakespeare establishes, the codes of identity recognised by Hal are more reliant on an engagement with negotiation to build his own credit, than on intrinsic value. Hal insists that the "money shall be paid back again with advantage" and tells Falstaff that his actions in doing so have repaired his relationship with his father (*I Henry IV* 2.4.458-9, 3.3.150). For Hal, however, as we shall see below, the conversation with the King represents more a commitment to his pursuit of credit than an agreement to behave better according to his value as heir, or even to pay back the thousand pounds. Indeed, as I will demonstrate, Hal uses this

speech to employ the language of the tavern reckoning in a movement that goes somehow to construct his identity in terms other than his essential worth and more his ability to connect through exchange.

When Hal, in his conciliatory meeting with his father, resolves to the King that he will be more himself it is not a reference back to that essential worth, but rather a reference to his credit-worthiness, which has only been achieved through his participation in the tavern's economy (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.93). Hal does think of himself as having an intrinsic value, but it is a value created only through economic negotiations. Stephen Greenblatt writes that “[t]o be oneself”, as Hal’s father also promises, “means to perform one’s part in the scheme of power rather than to manifest one’s natural disposition, or what we would normally designate as the very core of the self” (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.5; Greenblatt 33-4). If Hal’s selfhood is based upon the part he plays in the scheme of power, then it makes sense that his promise to be more himself should mean that he acts more like someone in the position of authority. Conversely, if his selfhood is based on the part he plays in the wider economy, as I think, then his promise suggests instead that he will pursue a repossession of his credit, based on understanding his own value to the tavern, and the nation, and not in and of itself.

The staging of Hal’s final redemption is certainly figured in those terms, albeit in an initially ambiguous way. His instruction to Falstaff – “[p]resume not that I am the thing I was” – and his claim that he has “turned away [his] former self” might seem inconsistent with his promise to his father to be more himself (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.52, 54, *1 Henry IV* 3.2.93). Both declarations, however, are reliant on verbs to define their meaning. The instruction to “[p]resume not” is an instruction to others to change their perception of him, and not a declaration that he has indeed changed.

Similarly, the turning away of his “former self” is actually a description of what “the world [shall] perceive” (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.53). In this way Hal is indeed finally accomplishing his initial strategy to “falsify men’s hopes” (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.171). Hal’s words, “I know thee not, old man” are a statement of non-recognition of Falstaff’s position regarding the network of exchange, and as he simultaneously places himself in a position where his former associates cannot recognise him (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.43). On becoming King, he finally affirms not his intrinsic value, which all along was too limiting and prescriptive a notion. The redemption he performed in *1 Henry IV* remained incomplete because his father yet lived. Now, however, he has paid “the debt [he] never promised” and can begin his reign fulfilling the requirements of the reckoning he set up for himself (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.169).

### **Hal’s pursuit of credit**

By staging Hal’s apparent recklessness in the tavern, Shakespeare frames the Prince’s profligacy, and then his recovery, in terms of economic exchange rather than as a revelation of his “true” worth. When Hal tells Falstaff that he has used his credit to pay the bills from the tavern “and elsewhere” he reveals, firstly, his need for credit (because he only relies upon it when he cannot stretch his “coin” any further) and, secondly, that he is not able to accumulate it for future employ because he is having to use it immediately (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.43). It makes sense then that Hal figures his own redemption as repaying a debt and increasing his credit; the explanation of his soliloquy in that scene turns on the phrase that he will “pay the debt I never promised” (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.169). Having heard him say earlier in the scene that he

supports Falstaff's spending habits with cash and credit, we can see a correlation between his concrete use of credit to pay off debt and his abstract intentions to pursue it in moral terms, recognisable from a culture where oral promises were often the height of contractual assurances. While Falstaff creates debts without expecting to pay them, Hal calculatedly uses debts to later appear worthy of his credit when he eventually settles them.

More specifically, Falstaff's unwillingness to pay the itemised tavern bill that opened this chapter is contrasted with Hal's determination to settle it, a movement indicated by the fact that he reads it aloud when his companion refuses even to acknowledge it. Hal's settling of that particular bill is not a literal act, but rather the way in which he creates fantasies of credit for himself, and manipulates encounters in such a way as to position himself as an honest participant in the network of exchange using the language of the reckoning, insists upon a narrative of economic reconciliation. The notion of the reckoning itself, as we saw in the previous chapter, encapsulates a single settle-able contract and a larger cycle of ongoing circulation and consumption. I suggest that in this way, the reckoning shapes Hal's narrative and is dramatically embedded in the encounters he experiences beyond the tavern.

The connection between Hal's actual participation in the repaying of debts and the economic figuring of his moral redemption continues throughout the two plays. Engle argues that Hal "pays or repudiates debts in order to remove himself from circulation" (127). Rather, I think that he does the very opposite: Hal's involvement in the community of exchange is integral to how he realises his future monarchical politics. He is very much part of that circulation, and occupies a position within it that reveals Falstaff's absence in contrast. When Henry rebukes his son for the company he keeps and accuses him of having the potential to "fight against [him] under Percy's

pay”, the King is charging Hal with participation in an alternative and rebellious economic system, with Harry Percy rather than Henry IV as sovereign (*I Henry IV* 3.2.126). Hal’s response is one in which he swears allegiance not only to his father but also to the system which his father governs, and his declaration that on the battlefield he “will redeem all this on Percy’s head”, “call him to strict account” or “tear the reckoning from his heart” is indicative of his intention not only to pursue the possession of credit in the authorised financial system at the same time as demolishing the opposing one, but also figuratively settle a reckoning previously unpaid (*I Henry IV* 3.2.132, 149, 153). We cannot help but connect Hal’s words to his experience in the tavern, and the discovery of the bill that opened this chapter. If Hal intends to “tear the reckoning” from Hotspur’s heart, he is seeking simultaneously to determine how much he and Percy might owe one another, and to deny Percy’s ability to claim for a debt by tearing the reckoning (or right to a reckoning) away from him. If we approach the text with the understanding of early modern reckonings, then Hal’s attitude to Hotspur can be traced directly to his self-positioning in the tavern, and additionally relates to the wider concerns at the time about one’s fiscal responsibilities and the need to account for one’s debts. Hal’s insistence on paying back Falstaff’s tavern debts, and his declaration to his father that he will repay the haul from the Gad’s Hill robbery, can now be seen as the basis for his interaction with Hotspur. Nonetheless, the use of the reckoning poses a challenge, in that, using Muldrew’s explanation, it remains at once a conclusion to a process or encounter between two people, and only one stage in an ongoing cycle of circulation and exchange. The reckoning that Hal is determined to take from Hotspur may prove deceptive, as his struggle for legitimacy and authority remains ongoing. The narrative of the rebellion

is also shaped by the framework of an account that must be immediately settled, and yet the plays challenge the idea that such contestations may ever be resolved.

Henry accuses Hal of being “under Percy’s pay” in an alternative economic system, and Hotspur himself constructs a world in which the King is in his debt for his family “[b]eing the agents” through whom he ascended the throne (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.126, 1.3.163). Strikingly similar to Hal’s impassioned promise to his father to call Hotspur to account, Hotspur’s own appeal to his uncle demands firstly redemption for “banished honours” and secondly that the King “[must] answer all the debt he owes you, / Even with the bloody payment of your deaths” (*1 Henry IV* 1.3.178-9, 183-4). Hotspur’s scheme of debt is important when we follow Hal’s own formation of credit extending out of the tavern, because the two Harrys are destined to meet in economic as well as narrative terms. It makes sense of Hal’s promise to “tear the reckoning” from Hotspur because they each have a debt to compare with the other (*1 Henry IV* 3.2.153).

The battlefield redemption of Hal realises his earlier promises made to his father. The scene at Shrewsbury finds Hal confronting Douglas with an explicit declaration of his policy of positive credit: “It is the Prince of Wales that threatens thee, / Who never promiseth but he means to pay” (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.41-2). Here Hal is unequivocal that any financial undertaking of his will be upheld. The last time Hal mentioned fulfilling a promise was when he revealed his intention to one day pay “the debt [he] never promisèd” (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.169). We might recall, however, Hal’s position in the tavern regarding Falstaff, and how the Prince assumes responsibility for his friend’s debt. Declaring on the battlefield that he intends to wreak vengeance on Hotspur in terms reliant on an understanding of the culture of credit, it is yet another instance where Hal’s negotiations with Falstaff emanate outwards into his

relations with others. One might read that assertion as an abstract verbal flourish, part of his calculations to show the world how much better he is than he appears to be; instead, he uses the economic term to frame an intention, even an objective that he means to reach in a hazy future. Conversely, his use of the present tense in Act 5 Scene 4 establishes a sense of immediacy and a dynamism that is missing from the earlier scene. He is now acting on the earlier promise to pay.

The reckoning becomes immediately settle-able, a far cry from the constantly deferred payment we witness in the tavern space. Confronting Douglas on such terms in front of the King (whose life is in danger) sees Hal complete the reconciliation that was begun two acts previously. Henry declares, “Thou hast redeemed thy lost opinion, / And showed thou mak’st some tender of my life / In this fair rescue thou hast brought to me” (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.47-9). While it might be suggested that Henry’s words mean Hal has some care to keep him from harm, an alternative definition of “tender” offers a fresh interpretation of the exchange between the two men. The *OED Online* advises that “tender” can mean “[a]n offer of money, or the like, in discharge of a debt or liability, *esp.* an offer which thus fulfils the terms of the law and of the liability” (“Tender”). The *OED Online* also gives an example of this definition being used as early as 1542 in some government publications and then in *Littleton's Tenures* in 1574. What this means is that the monetary definition of “tender” existed when the play was written, and that the “tender” to which Henry refers could well imply that Hal’s actions are similar to the discharge of a debt. In making a tender, Hal would have to possess credit, but it is the action of promising to pay at that very moment, of offering himself (or his value) in place of his father (and his value) on the battlefield that creates the credit he enjoys. In doing so, Hal affirms “his father’s place and worth as king” (Fischer 162).



The King's worth has been subject to scrutiny during the battle, due to the policy of Henry having "many marching in his coats" (*I Henry IV* 5.3.25). When Douglas kills Blunt, it is because he believed he was the King. Douglas comes across the real King a scene later (when Hal protects him in the manner I described above) and asks him: "What art thou / That counterfeitest the person of a king?" (*I Henry IV* 5.4.26-7). Douglas fears that he is "another counterfeit" though he bears himself "like a king" (*I Henry IV* 5.4.34-5). When Hal's attack leads Douglas to flee the field, it is another act of affirmation, and more so, a verification of the King's true worth. Accordingly, the King's own worth is upheld, just as Hal – as I have suggested above – resists similar identification.

When but a few lines later, he faces Hotspur, Hal affirms his own status in a way we have not seen before. Hotspur's greeting leads Hal to say, "Thou speakest as if I would deny my name", the conditional of which refutes the denial even as he speaks it (*I Henry IV* 5.4.59). Where Hotspur refers to him as "Harry Monmouth", Hal submits his own name as "the Prince of Wales" and calls Hotspur only "Percy" to underline their difference in rank (*I Henry IV* 5.4.58, 62). This is the act of reckoning which Hal swore to his father he would perform, and Hal's defeat of Hotspur in single combat might lead us to the conclusion that he is irrevocably redeemed and has gained the credit he has been pursuing for the whole of *I Henry IV*. Hal's victory sees him as the remaining Harry (of the two), with no rival reign with which to contend. Hotspur tells Hal, "thou hast robbed me of my youth" (*I Henry IV* 5.4.76). Hal, who of all his associates could not participate in the robbery at Gad's Hill, is now figured as a thief who confiscates the Hotspur's titles. Indeed, he even seizes the opportunity to finish Hotspur's dying words of "And food for—": "For worms, brave Percy" (*I Henry IV* 5.4.85-6).

The narrative arc of *2 Henry IV* does not take up where the first play left off; instead there is a similar cycle of prodigality and redemption in Hal's movements. The redemptive action of Hal on the battlefield at Shrewsbury seems all but forgotten, and although he admits that his "heart bleeds inwardly" that the King has fallen ill he also acknowledges that he is still "keeping such vile company" and that if he wept for his father "[i]t would be every man's thought" that he were a hypocrite (*2 Henry IV* 2.2.36-7, 41-2). Even as far into the play as Act 4, Hal is described by his brother Clarence as dining in London with "his continual followers" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.51-3). It is in that scene, however, that Hal's redemption is revisited, and refigured in terms of his being provided with the credit for which he has been searching. Hal mistakes the King's sleep for death, and takes the crown lying beside him. When Henry awakes and discovers the missing coronet, he accuses his son of wishing for his death, saying, "Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.221). Like Hotspur, Henry depicts Hal as a thief, who, "hast stol'n that which after some few hours / Were thine without offence" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.230-1). The "tender" that Hal made for the King's life is now substituted by Henry's conviction that Hal's "life did manifest thou lovedst [him] not" (*1 Henry IV* 5.4.48, *2 Henry IV* 4.2.233). Indeed, Henry describes Hal as the archetypal prodigal who will, "swear, drink, dance, / Revel the night, rob, murder, and commit / The oldest sins the newest kind of ways" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.254-5). It is significant that Henry figures Hal's profligacy as an exertion of expenditure, with Hal spending money on drink and prostitutes ("[t]he oldest sins") and resorting to theft. Indeed, he had said to his other sons on discovering Hal had taken the crown, "See, sons, what things you are, / How quickly Nature falls into revolt / When gold becomes her object!" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.194-6). Henry's comment reveals his belief that Hal is no more than a common thief, that his actions have answered in the affirmative

Falstaff's question in "Shall the son of England prove a thief?" (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.338-9). Moreover, it reminds us that the King still places importance on the essential value of things, in this instance, the crown. For Hal, he is able to see an emblem for what it is. Henry's concern that Hal be honest is connected to his concern that Hal respects material value. When they have reconciled, Henry tells Hal of the "by-paths and indirect crooked ways" through which he came to sit on the throne (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.312). There is a suggestion that he sees himself as having stolen the throne (although he does seem less inclined to blame himself than his friends "[b]y whose fell working I was first advanced") and he fears that Hal will maintain this situation (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.334).

Significantly, Henry's thinking changes during his speech and he describes his installation as King as something that was "purchased", something that he hopes will fall on Hal "in a more fairer sort" (*2 Henry IV* 4.2.327-8). If we remember Hal's avowal to pay "the debt [he] never promised" in terms of performing what will be required of him as King one day, Hal's own debt seems extraneous (*1 Henry IV* 1.2.169). Henry's suggestion is that his dying has paid the debt, and so Hal will be under no further obligation. This attitude neglects the need – and Hal's commitment to – the pursuit of credit and ongoing circulation. Indeed, it upholds the discrepancy between an honest acquisition and the omission of payment that we understand in Falstaff's unpaid tavern bill. We might see, in fact, that Hal's insistence on the proper functioning of the credit system in the tavern allows him to later negotiate the idea of credit in more moral terms within the Court, and not fulfil Henry's fears that Hal will simply re-enact his father's legacy.

It is in Henry's death that Hal does find his redemption, and his credit. He explicitly frames the setting aside of his previous behaviour as connected to his father's death:

My father is gone wild into his grave,  
 For in his tomb lie my affections.  
 And with his spirits sadly I survive  
 To mock the expectation of the world. (2 *Henry IV* 5.2.122-5)

If that "expectation" was that he should have to pay some debt for his wayward youth, Hal is clear in his repudiation of such a course. Hal's affirmation of his crown and the conduct which his new role requires is played out in his speech to the Lord Chief Justice. Not only does Hal adopt the use of the *pluralis majestatis* from line 133 ("call we our high court of parliament"), and endorse the Lord Chief Justice, but he also looks forward to a new civic order:

Now call we our high court of parliament,  
 And let us choose such limbs of noble counsel  
 That the great body of our state may go  
 In equal rank with the best-governed nation (2 *Henry IV* 5.2.134-6)

The Justice is no two dimensional emblem of Morality (as Tillyard would have us believe, with Hal choosing between disorder and misrule, in the "Morality pattern" of the *Henriad*) but a figure of civic authority, required to put into practice the reining in of the excesses of the network of exchange (268, 269). As King, Hal now commands

a new network, which includes, unlike the tavern, the civic authorities from the outset in an attempt to temper the network from within.

So, when Hal says to Falstaff, “I know thee not, old man”, it is more than a retraction of friendship, or even a rejection of him as an individual (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.43). It is a statement that Hal does not recognise Falstaff’s disruptive position regarding the network of exchange. It is the culmination of the growing tension between Hal’s development of credit, and the steadfast refusal of Falstaff to check his excesses, to acknowledge the impact and cost of his high living. Hal’s speech depicts Falstaff as the ultimate consumer; he addresses him as “surfeit-swelled”, “gormandizing”, and “the feeder of my riots”, and as such, suggests to what extent that Falstaff represents only the unproductive side of the cycle of circulation (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.46, 49, 58). Falstaff’s unwillingness to “[d]o nothing but eat and make good cheer” as Silence sings is shown to have consequences, namely that Hal believes his “grave doth gape” three times wider than for others (*2 Henry IV* 5.3.13, 5.5.49-50). But Hal’s logic goes further: the grave is an abstraction, just as Falstaff’s corpulence is a fact. Falstaff and his associates will be given sufficient allowance, “[f]or competence of life” so that they do not resort to “evils” because of a “lack of means” (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.62-3). Hal is trying here to negotiate them into some sort of genuine – though limited – involvement in the network of exchange. Indeed, as I mentioned earlier, it is only now that Falstaff acknowledges his debt to Justice Shallow: “Master Shallow, I owe you a thousand pound” (*2 Henry IV* 5.5.69). Falstaff’s admission can perhaps be read as a response to Hal’s manipulation. We can also see the cycle of the reckoning come to bear on the knight at this point, and while the original tavern bill is never settled by Falstaff, he is unable to resist the financial obligations that the tavern space champions. Payments may be deferred, but in the end they must be made.

It is only because Hal rejects Falstaff in this very specific way that the latter can acknowledge his indebtedness. Hal goes further than manipulation, however. His decree that Falstaff and his associates must not “come near our person by ten mile” is compounded by the Lord Chief Justice’s most particular order to “carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet” (2 *Henry IV* 5.5.61, 84). The Fleet was a notorious prison, dealing mainly but not solely with debtors. Significantly, Shakespeare diverted from his sources here: *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* sees Hal “abandon and abolish” the company of Oldcastle (the Falstaff figure, with the name originally used by Shakespeare) but not imprison him (D2r). Neither does Stow mention Henry V sending anyone to the Fleet in his *Chronicles* (1580).

It is significant that in *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth* we find the Prince’s man Cuthbert Cutter, arrested for robbery and sentenced to death by the Lord Chief Justice. In that play, Hal attempts to persuade the Judge to let him go, and when his efforts are ignored, he boxes the Judge’s ears. For this, Hal is arrested and sent to the Fleet prison (B3r-4r). Shakespeare’s decision not to include this subplot has implications for how we see the Prince and his place within the culture of the tavern. In *The Famous Victories* Hal’s challenge to the judicial system and his disregard of its mandate leads him to be punished by the civic authority while in the Shakespearean text, we are never granted the opportunity to see him disciplined by anyone other than his father, and certainly not in an official manner.

In sending Falstaff to the Fleet, as opposed to a Counter, Shakespeare also distances the play from the context of the Counter stories, featured in many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century city comedies, yet still roots him in a specific London location. The Counters (on Wood Street and Poultry) were the main debtors’ prisons in London, under the control of the London sheriffs. They were open all night

and anyone caught by the watch would be brought there and held until morning. In theory debtors' prisons were holding pens rather than places of incarceration, until the prisoner's debt was paid (Howard *Theater* 75-6). Although many of the plays that feature the Counters were written some years after *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* of 1599 "established a powerful template for representing debtors and their incarceration within the Counter" (Howard *Theater* 83). It would be tempting to assume that by the time Shakespeare had written *2 Henry IV* he was aware of Jonson's play. The Counter in *Every Man Out* is a place where Fastidious Brisk gets his come-uppance: he is a "Frenchified dandy" whose social climb is marred by his being committed to the Counter (Howard *Theater* 87). When he wails, "Oh God, I am undone!" it is the cry of a fop who deserves his end (*Every Man Out* 5.3.557). Thomas Nashe's *Strange Newes* (1592) also made light of time spent in one of the Counters; he writes, "I vow if I had a sonne, I would sooner send him to one of the Counters to learne lawe, than to the Innes of Court or Chauncery" (11v). We might be persuaded with not much difficulty that Shakespeare was aware of such debates going on at the time that suggested the Counter had some comedic value. Indeed, Falstaff tells the Lord Chief Justice's servant "if thou takest leave, thou wert better be hanged, you hunt counter: hence, avaunt!" (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.71-2). The implication is that the servant will end up in the Counter for disturbing Falstaff with the Justice's requests for an interview, but the result is comedic because of its context.

In choosing to send Falstaff to the Fleet, then, Shakespeare invites us to consider a more complicated ending. Falstaff is censured for his financial misbehaviour; even if he is not rehabilitated, he is part of the economic system (in being punished by it) without being part of the economic community. The way in which he is defined is no longer slippery. Falstaff's imprisonment leaves the audience

disconcerted. There is no triumph in his punishment; he was never a social climber to be brought down by a debtors' prison, nor was he a naïve youth to be schooled in the ways of the world. The seriousness of rendition to the Fleet avoids the context of the Counter tales and imports a sense of gravity hitherto unfelt about Falstaff's future. He is simultaneously being reclaimed by the commercialism of London and excluded from the society he wishes to keep. While I say there is no triumph, neither is there surprise, but there is still ambiguity. The ambiguity at the end of the play, however, is not whether Falstaff should be rejected or not, for there is never any question that he could play any part in the affairs of state alongside Hal as King. Nor could we imagine his honest participation in the economy of the tavern after rehabilitation. The ambiguity lies rather in the nature of Hal's involvement with Falstaff. One interpretation of the plays might suggest that the frequent evocation of the Morality Vice figure, and the disgust and paranoia at Falstaff's physical grotesqueness, are there to mock the idea that we could ever eject Falstaff at all, that anyone, even Hal – in fact, particularly Hal – could remain closed off from him. Indeed, we might say that one of the reasons why Falstaff resists reduction to a social evil that needs to be expelled is that he is repeatedly framed in this way, by himself and others. One of his essential qualities is his blatancy. As Hal says of Falstaff when he is boasting of his exertions at Gad's Hill: "These lies are like their father that begets them, gross as a mountain, open, palpable. Why, thou clay-brained guts, thou knotty-pated fool, thou whoreson, obscene, greasy tallow-catch –" (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.189-91). This preoccupation with Falstaff's physical nature becomes such a distraction for Hal that he believes the physical distancing of him might serve to remove his destabilising force from the marketplace. Yet this rests on the assumption that Falstaff does not represent, as is the case, an unavoidable aspect of the network of exchange. Trying to



remove bad debts from circulation by removing the debtor in person will not succeed. Falstaff's logic is based on a fundamental double meaning, that while he creates debt, and is aware of the value of money, he simultaneously represents an extreme, perhaps corrosive, but inevitable part of the economic community.

### **The tavern must be checked – economic impulses and punishment**

While much of my argument that the tavern space in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* is based on an analysis of the characters and encounters within it, this final section brings to the fore the materiality of that space within a more civic and social framework. As I hope will become clear, the plays address the way in which the tavern is organised from within and imposed on from without, in a series of episodes where its very fabric is emphasised again and again. There are three instances where the tavern is threatened by external powers. All of these demonstrate a physical incursion by a character or characters eager to control that space and the figures within it, governed by a city-focused agenda which seeks to reassert a particular economic standard, which I suggest is required for the tavern to function successfully within a wider network of exchange. In this way, the plays engage with certain anxieties regarding the vulnerabilities of credit networks and how, perhaps, particular spaces were conceived as bases of circulation.

It is tempting at first to read these incursions in terms of the wider anxieties of the period regarding the drinking house space. Clark traces the increasing efforts at regulation, from thirteenth-century manorial courts and a medieval licensing system of sorts to the more centralised efforts of the 1495 Beggars Act which bound alehouse-keepers to good behaviour, and later Parliamentary statutory licensing, including the 1552 Act, which “denounced the proliferation of popular drinking

houses and required that all alehouse-keepers should be licensed on bond, with the recalcitrant sent to gaol” (P. Clark 169). As I mentioned in the Introduction, above, in 1577 a government survey listed well over 17,000 drinking houses in the 30 counties visited, and governments were alert to the threats posed by the disorder that might arise in such spaces (P. Clark 2-3). While the tavern in the plays is no breeding ground for serious civic disorder in terms of vagrancy, religious subversion or victualling misdemeanours (anxieties regarding which are evident in Proclamations issued in this period),<sup>13</sup> the impulsion of civic authorities to control this space is, I argue, staged by incursions into the fictive space in attempts to impose specifically economic order.

While the interruptions by the Sheriff and then the Lord Chief Justice in *1 Henry IV* were written and performed before Mistress Quickly’s attendance in front of Master Tisick the Magistrate in *2 Henry IV*, it is worth noting how she describes the accusation of keeping a disorderly house:

‘Neighbour Quickly’, says he, ‘receive those that are civil, for’, said he, ‘you are in an ill name.’ Now a said so, I can tell whereupon. ‘For’, says he, ‘you are an honest woman, and well thought on, therefore take heed what guests you receive; receive’, says he, ‘no swaggering companions.’ There comes none here. You would bless you to hear what he said! No, I’ll no swaggerers.” (*2 Henry IV* 2.3.71-6)

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<sup>13</sup> See *Tudor Royal Proclamations. Vol. 2, The later Tudors (1553-1587)*. Ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969. In particular Proclamations 118 and 186, for example.

The Magistrate endorses the Hostess' position as trader but also urges her to maintain control of what amounts to her marketplace. Her fear that Pistol – the potential “swaggerer” – will disrupt the tavern is more than just a fear of ‘bad’ company, but a fear that she cannot preserve order. “To swagger” is not to be merely insolent, but “[t]o influence, force, or constrain by blustering or hectoring language; to bring into or out of a state by blustering talk” (“Swagger”). We see it used in this way in *King Lear*, when Edgar (in his disguise as Tom) tells Oswald, “An ’ch’ud ha’ swaggered out of my life, ’twould not ha’ been zo long as ’tis by a vortnight” (4.6.234-5). Oswald’s “swaggering” is fatally threatening to the blind Gloucester and his son, and Edgar’s wish for him to swagger “out of his life” suggests the way in which he has “swaggered” into it. Falstaff’s assertion that Pistol is “no swaggerer” may be true, but the fear remains that someone can enter the tavern and influence – or force – the agenda (*2 Henry IV* 2.4.77). There is a need for the tavern to function effectively as its own community of exchange in order for it to be part of the wider urban community. Falstaff’s efforts to opt out of legitimate exchange, by failing to pay his debts and by encouraging the Hostess to pawn her possessions in order to lend him more money, disturbs the tavern network, and despite Hal paying his bills, the disruption that Falstaff causes moves outwards into the City.

There are several instances where the City authorities endeavour to curtail these problems, or try to (re)direct the course of the tavern’s network. Reading these incursions in the light of how those authorities try to negotiate the instabilities of the tavern economy is crucial to how we are then able to interpret Hal’s character, or rather how his character and others are set within a framework of exchange. If we bear in mind how Hal constructs an economic identity based on the creation of credit and formulaic paying back of debts, then it makes sense to read the attempts by

outside forces to regulate the tavern space in much the same way as we see attempts made by the Court to regulate Hal's own behaviour. I suggest that the way in which the King seeks to reintegrate Hal into the world of the Court, and wrest him from the economically dynamic – yet unstable – tavern network is mirrored in the way in which the City authorities pursue the reintegration of the Boar's Head into the London economy. Both endeavours are carefully ordered, and although Hal's restoration is due to his own decision to reject debt (and Falstaff) while the tavern is forced to adhere to the requirements of the wider economy, the energy of the plays suggests that the end result is what matters – and is the same in both cases. Crucially, of course, the tavern is the environment in which Hal constructs his position of indebtedness, in order to be able to repay it later. The final – and only successful – incursion of the tavern by City authorities comes in the scene immediately before Hal's entrance as King, and then his rejection of Falstaff.

The first occasion when a civic power tries to maintain the tavern's order comes when London's "Sheriff and all the watch" demand to enter to search for several men – one of whom is "[a] gross fat man" – who have committed the Gad's Hill robbery (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.407, 426). The Sheriff significantly has only an ambiguous authority at this point. Falstaff tells Hal, "If you will deny the Sheriff, so; if not, let him enter" (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.412-3). This could be taken in three different ways: either that Falstaff is encouraging Hal to prevent the Sheriff from entering, or that he is urging Hal to reject his authority in a more abstract sense, or that Hal must contradict him. The ambiguity in these lines only serves to emphasise the ambiguity that arises from the Sheriff's presence. Hal orders the Hostess to "[c]all in the Sheriff" and he is invited into the tavern, but it is unclear whether or not he has the authority to enter without that invitation (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.420). The Prince denies to him that

Falstaff – the “gross fat man” for whom they are searching – is present in the tavern, and his “farewell” is undoubtedly a command (*1 Henry IV* 2.4.426, 438).

The Sheriff’s attempt to impose some civic order onto the tavern fails in one respect in that he is not the one to do it. Nevertheless, Hal, who we know recognises the threat that Falstaff poses even at this petty level of exchange, restores stability on the Sheriff’s behalf. He tells Peto that “[t]he money shall be paid back again with advantage”, a movement that re-establishes the proper flow of money, originally on its way “to the King’s exchequer” but diverted by Falstaff “to the King’s tavern” (*1 Henry IV* 2.2.458-9, 2.2.42-3, 44). Fitter notes that following the Sheriff’s attempts to find Falstaff, the scene ends with the Prince rifling through his friend’s pockets, “[p]reserving amid the humour the figure of intrusive surveillance ... [Hal] silhouettes a sheriff’s man” (113). In this way, Hal’s actions protect the tavern’s integrity, the King’s financial power and his own credit; the repayment brings about a rapprochement with his father, with whom he becomes “good friends ... and may do anything” (*1 Henry IV* 3.3.150).

The Gad’s Hill robbery, however, returns to haunt Falstaff – and the tavern – in *2 Henry IV*. The Lord Chief Justice tries to talk to Falstaff, but is without fail frustrated by the latter’s verbal equivocation. The Justice accuses Falstaff of having “misled the youthful prince” but accepts that his “service at Shrewsbury hath a little gilded over [his] night’s exploit on Gad’s Hill” (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.114, 117-9). The proverbial wisdom of “wake not a sleeping wolf” is given as the reason for the Justice not pursuing Falstaff for the robbery, but this conventional and rather stilted adage has the effect of suggesting that the opposite will happen (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.122). Falstaff stubbornly refuses to remain quiet after the Justice’s decree that “all is well” and insists on some verbal sparring long after his adversary has come to the end of his

interview (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.122). He refers to “these costermongers’ times” and makes a joke of the Justice’s description of him as Hal’s “ill angel” saying, “your ill angel is light”, referring to the nickname of a gold coin, which we assume from this has been debased, reflecting the ongoing devaluing of coins in this period (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.134, 130, 131). As Nugent writes, “[c]ounterfeiting ... posed an increasing threat to the foundation of trust upon which credit relations relied” (208). All is not well in the community of exchange, even as the Justice is telling us the opposite (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.122). Furthermore, Falstaff tries to include the Justice in his destabilisation of the network by asking him, “[w]ill your lordship lend me a thousand pound to furnish me forth?” (*2 Henry IV* 1.2.175-6). The Justice, however, is perfectly aware of Falstaff’s inability to repay his debts or to be responsible for money, telling him that he is “too impatient to bear crosses”, crosses being silver coins marked with a cross (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.177). Falstaff exits the scene with the lines: “A good wit will make use of anything: I will turn diseases to commodity” (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.194-5). This overconfidence in his financial abilities, in the light of the Justice’s accusations, cannot but result in economic failure. Moreover, Falstaff’s desire to turn a profit, despite the “consumption of the purse” from which he suffers, is something that might require his participation in the community of exchange for it to have a chance to be fulfilled (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.186). Having seen his individual logic at work in the conversation with the Justice, we might well wonder how he could possibly prove productive to the wider network because Falstaff’s own profitability is privileged at the expense of all others.

The second incursion into the tavern, after the incident with the Sheriff in *1 Henry IV*, comes when the Lord Chief Justice is invited by the Hostess to arrest Falstaff “at [her] suit” (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.33). This is significant, because it is the tavern

(represented by the Hostess) that looks to the civic authorities (the Lord Chief Justice) to re-establish the network of exchange that has been disrupted by Falstaff, who is refusing to honour his obligations. The Hostess takes the Justice's question, "For what sum?" to mean less than that for which she claims (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.55). She puns, quite obliviously, but rather tellingly, on "sum" in her answer: "It is more than for some, my lord, it is for all – all I have; he hath eaten me out of house and home, he hath put all my substance into that fat belly of his; but I shall have some of it out again" (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.56-8). Falstaff is such a devastating consumer, and his demand so overwhelming, that he threatens to crush the tavern's delicate balance of purchaser and supplier. Mistress Quickly requires the Justice to keep that consumption in check before the tavern's network collapses; Muldrew writes that, "[i]ncreasing consumption and investment in the expansion of production meant that household debt grew to levels at which financial failure was an increasingly common experience" (*Economy* 16-7). Again, if we think of the tavern as a sort of household (although not a truly domestic space), growing levels of debt will only result in the collapse of its network. Indeed, the financial failure is only avoided when the Hostess submits to Falstaff's persuasion (which we do not hear) and agrees that he should have another loan "though I pawn my gown" (*1 Henry IV* 2.1.124). Financial failure has not been averted; rather it has been postponed. The economic result of the Hostess' pawning is that the debt grows with no counterbalance of honest credit, so there can be no future certainties.

The final confrontation between the tavern network and the civic authorities comes when the Beadle arrives to arrest the Hostess and Doll Tearsheet. There is no debate about whether or not to allow – or invite – the Beadle into the tavern space; he merely enters as if the once unbreachable perimeters have been dissolved. The charge

he levels at the women is that the man that they and Pistol “beat” has died, but meanwhile he discovers the Hostess and Doll at work pretending that the latter is pregnant (*2 Henry IV* 5.4.15). Doll threatens consequences if “the child I go with do miscarry” and the Hostess (mistakenly) says, “I pray God the fruit of her womb miscarry” (*2 Henry IV* 5.4.7, 11-2). The Beadle outwits them: he is aware that it is all a ruse, and says that if Doll does “miscarry” she “shall have a dozen of cushions again: [she has] but eleven now” (*2 Henry IV* 5.4.13-4). If it is indeed a ruse to obtain a pecuniary reward or recompense from Falstaff (as the supposed ‘father’), then it is tempting to see it as a consequence of his previous financial transgressions: the women are so far into debt because of his dishonesty that they too have to rely on deceit to try to recover their earlier positions. If we do not believe that they are trying to trick Falstaff, but merely attempting to distract the Beadle, then it is significant that Shakespeare chose such a manner for them to do so. The “dozen of cushions” to which the Beadle refers is clearly an indication – like her plate and tapestries – of the Hostess’ material assets. In misusing those possessions, and the credit relations that offered the opportunity to obtain such goods, the Hostess has herself deconstructed the tavern as a community of exchange, and the Beadle, as a figure of urban authority, is now required to enter the tavern to restore its economic equilibrium.

In our final view of Mistress Quickly and Doll, their hysterical words to the Beadle are quick to expand on what they see as the implications of the Beadle’s physical nature:

DOLL.           Come, you rogue, come, bring me to a justice.

HOSTESS.       Ay, come, you starved bloodhound.

DOLL.           Goodman death, goodman bones!



HOSTESS. Thou atomy, thou!

DOLL. Come you thin thing, come, you rascal!

BEADLE. Very well. (*2 Henry IV* 5.4.22-7)

The Beadle's short response seems to confirm their readings of what he represents in the scene, a figure of non-consumption, utterly the opposite of Falstaff, of whom the Hostess had previously complained had "put all my substance into that fat belly of his" (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.57-8). The women's revulsion at the Beadle's thinness is their revulsion at the fact that Falstaff is absent and another man is now the determiner of their fate, as the Hostess cries, "O the Lord, that Sir John were come!" (*2 Henry IV* 5.4.10). However, Falstaff's absence is less apt to produce anxiety than his presence, and his past behaviour, especially his delegitimising of the economic practices of the tavern, has in fact left the Hostess and Doll in more trouble than before.

It is significant, then, that Hal's inclusion of the Lord Chief Justice in a new civic order comes at the rejection – and ejection – of Falstaff from the network of exchange. Falstaff remains, in a strange way, within the community because he has been censured by it. He is not relegated to an obscure end but placed in a specific urban location, the Fleet prison. His substitution by Hal for the Lord Chief Justice – and the incursion by the Beadle into the once unbreachable Boar's Head – suggests the need for balance between instability and order both in the tavern and City. The Justice's previous attempts to bring order to the tavern – and to Falstaff – are dramatically endorsed by his inclusion by Hal.

## **Conclusion**

The complexity of the representation of credit relations in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* reflects the complexity inherent in the early modern culture of credit. The attention given to all manner and levels of exchange, from Kings and nobles, to tavern owners and drawers, to ostlers to prostitutes, suggests more than a preoccupation with the networks of credit and debt. *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* are to some extent an exercise in making sense of the commerce and commercialism of Shakespeare's world. Most significantly, the tavern emerges as a potent site of those experiences in the early modern period. By shaping the economic negotiations of the plays through the lens of the reckoning, Shakespeare stages an attempt to make sense of the concrete and more abstract notions of credit and exchange, which in turn allows us access to the site-specific tensions of the culture of credit. Understanding the staged space in this way allows us to read the negotiations within the playtext as a response to the wider anxieties of the urban experience as well as modes of economic and political power.

By admitting the compelling nature of Falstaff, and yet positioning him as some sort of threat to the network in the tavern and then to the wider community, Shakespeare acknowledges the intrinsic difficulties of one's position in the network of exchange. We know that Hal must rid himself of Falstaff, but there is still pathos in that rejection. Hal may well find himself free of debt and in possession of credit, but does it come at a cost? That question remains open, in an expression of the very nature of how we negotiate credit relations. While the stability of the tavern – and the state – must be maintained through a delicate balance of open exchange and active maintenance of trust, it is in the ongoing act of balancing, in the creation of credit and debt through a continual movement of exchange, that stability is achieved. Much like the eventual reconciliation of the reckoning, payment may be deferred but it must be made to ensure the ongoing cycle of circulation and consumption.

The Epilogue of *2 Henry IV* goes some way suggest this constant repositioning as a near-resolution. The playwright steps out of the narrative, and asserts the generative aspect of the negotiation of credit relations, relations which can produce creativity just as they can produce tension. The speaker – perhaps “our humble author” – addresses the audience directly (*2 Henry IV* Epilogue 21). He says:

Be it known to you, as it is very well, I was lately here in the end of a displeasing play, to pray your patience for it and to promise you a better. I meant to pay you with this, which, if like an ill venture it come unluckily home, I break, and you, my gentle creditors, lose. Here I promised you I would be, and here I commit my body to your mercies: bate me some, and I will pay you some, and, as most debtors do, promise you infinitely. (*2 Henry IV* Epilogue 6-12)

The speaker refers to an earlier play, the “displeasing” nature of which has put him in a position of debt to the audience. The play they have just seen – *2 Henry IV* – is the “venture” with which he hopes to pay his “creditors”, and the invitation to “bate me some” a request for a discount, or perhaps for an advance of credit. This in turn “means that he is bound to produce more plays just as the audience is bound to attend and, in a playful turn on credit relations, to pay” (Levine 429). The creation of debt – in the sense of owing the audience a new play – is the impulsion behind more creativity, but the promise of payment is the incentive. Like Hal needing the existence of debt to fulfill his promises of redemption, the playwright needs to be obligated to his audience in order to fulfil his promise of “a better” play: the debt will be paid.

The tavern, then, like the playhouse, may be a source of anxiety but also of seductive power, of verbal richness, full of the possibilities of exchange. There may be instability but there is also economic vibrancy. For the wider network of exchange to function, this part must be checked, but for Hal to pursue credit, debt must exist. It is in the negotiation of these credit relations that we find the balancing, if not resolution, of this paradox.

### Chapter 3: Lines of Credit in the Fringe Tavern Space: Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho*

Towards the end of Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (1604),<sup>14</sup> Mistress Clare Tenterhook finds herself alone with her two friends, having come to Brentford with a group of gallants who are intent on seducing them. The gallants having gone to another room to smoke, Clare addresses the other two wives: "So: are they departed? What string may wee three think that these gallants harp upon, by bringing us to this sinfull towne of *Brainford?* ha?" (5.1.146-8). These lines immediately identify Brainford – or rather, Brentford in Middlesex – as a site of iniquity, a place to which the wives have been brought to separate them, literally and figuratively, from their husbands. The lines are also more widely indicative of a play that is concerned with how the patterns of exchange are used to negotiate particular encounters, most notably in Act 5 that is set in its entirety in Dogbolt's tavern in Brentford.

*Westward Ho* – and the dramatic responses that it elicited, *Eastward Ho* (1605) and *Northward Ho* (1607) – stages the tavern space outside of the urban landscape. That tavern space utilises the same traditions of the drinking house that emerged in the popular literature of the period but also offers to the dramatists a way to explore particular anxieties rooted in the City of London, at a certain distance from it. This chapter will examine the way in which the dramatic trajectory of the play moves outside the City walls to a drinking house located in a sort of fringe location, a movement that is also echoed in the later *Ho* plays; it will analyse the lines of credit

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<sup>14</sup> *Westward Ho* is thought to have been first staged in 1604 (Leinwand 46). In his Textual Introduction, Fredson Bowers writes that it "was entered in the Stationers' Register by Henry Rockett on 2 March 1605" and goes on to say that the "first and only quarto appeared in 1607" (313).

which draw the characters into that space; and it will assert the transformative nature of the drinking house as it simultaneously adapts and reasserts a new understanding of exchange. It will also assess how Dekker and Webster's staging of the tavern space in Brentford uses existing literary constructions of that location and how notions of marriage and ownership are complicated by encounters based on sexual exchange.

*Westward Ho* follows the fortunes of Justiniano, an Italian merchant, who, believing his wife to be untrustworthy, pretends to be bankrupt and to leave the country. His wife, thinking herself abandoned and unable to provide for herself, is forced to consider the sexual advances of a lecherous Earl as a way to keep herself from penury. The bawd Birdlime acts as a go-between for the Earl, bringing Mistress Justiniano various gifts to tempt her. Meanwhile Justiniano, disguised as the tutor Parenthesis, teaches three wives – Clare Tenterhook, Judith Honeysuckle and Mabel Wafer – to write. Unbeknownst to the husbands who employ him, Justiniano facilitates contact between the wives and their prospective lovers, the gallants Sir Gosling Glow-worm, Frank Monopoly, Master Linstock and Captain Whirlpool. Monopoly is arrested for an unpaid debt at the behest of Tenterhook, whose wife vouches for him using two of her husband's diamonds, and has him kept at the house of the Sergeant who apprehends him. The gallants arrange with the wives to visit Dogbolt's tavern at Brentford – called "Brainford" in the play – presumably to consummate the relationships. Justiniano, who has been convinced of his wife's fidelity and who has rescued her from the Earl, reveals this plan to the husbands, and they all set off to Brentford to confront the wives and gallants. The wives meanwhile have locked themselves in their room at the tavern under pretence of illness, with no intention of sleeping with the gallants. When the husbands arrive, they discover their wives have remained faithful, and are chastened by their own behaviour. Birdlime

appears with the two diamonds that she has received from the Sergeant via a circuitous route that places Tenterhook at her brothel, and is at the receiving end of the other characters' abuse, despite having gone to Brentford with the intention of helping the wives. They try, without success, to persuade her to stay away from London, and the couples return to the capital.

Much of the criticism of *Westward Ho* and the plays written as responses to it is focussed on the idea of collaboration (Stage *Producing* 68n1). *Westward Ho* is indeed perhaps most notable for instigating a dramatic response in the form of Chapman, Jonson and Marston's *Eastward Ho*, which was entered into the Stationers' Register in 1605, and which in turn invited Dekker and Webster's answer in the play *Northward Ho* (Van Fossen 4). The play has been considered very much in the shadow of Chapman, Jonson and Marston's compelling example of city comedy, and Dekker has in particular been singled out for criticism. Larry S. Champion notes that the evaluation of Dekker "as a dramatist is an extremely difficult task because his work is so diverse in kind and quality and because so much of it was written in collaboration"; in reference to *Westward Ho* he describes a "reversion to one-dimensional characterization and situational comedy" (251-2). The "structure of *Westward Ho* is fundamentally flawed and contributes directly to the quality of dramaturgy that makes Dekker such an easy target for both historical and literary critics" (Champion 56). Cyrus Hoy states that the play "has never enjoyed much favor among students of Dekker or Webster, who have tended to regard the play as something of an embarrassment to the reputation of both dramatists" (159). He goes on to trace the ways in which critics such as T. M. Parrott and M. C. Bradbrook found the play morally reprehensible (159-162).

It is only relatively recently that *Westward Ho* has become the focus of research that examines it on its own terms. Theodore B. Leinwand in *The City Staged* interprets the play in terms of a wider investigation of the character types in city comedy – gallants, merchant citizens, whores and widows, for example – and how they reflect and refract different ways in which the audience thought about themselves and London. He argues that this genre is “informed by the social and economic reality in which playwrights found themselves” and his study of how the women of the play are treated in social and economic terms will prove useful for my own argument regarding the way in which the citizens’ wives are both located in and exploit a framework of credit and exchange (3). Similarly, Simon Morgan-Russell’s 1999 essay alights on the fact that the women in the play are thought of in term of commodities, and how they themselves – through the agency of their proto-feminist alliance – resist such categorisation (80). His wider argument has also proved most useful for my chapter: his extended reading of how the literary tradition regarding Brentford affects the play’s own staging of that location as a “locus” for adultery has helped to crystallise my own thoughts on how Dekker and Webster utilise the actual place as a dramatic opportunity (70). While he does not go as far as questioning how specifically the tavern space in Brentford is used by the dramatists to navigate the play’s model of exchange and its inherent tensions – which is the focus of this chapter – his argument that the trip out of London offers a release from civic governance and an opportunity for female alliance has been crucial in the crafting of my own approach. Similarly, Michelle Dowd’s interrogation of the play’s presentation of female consumerism, while heavily focused on the threat that that poses to the household, offers an intriguing vision of the economies available to and crafted by the wives and by Birdlime.



My contention centres on the dramatic use of the tavern space – at least in part – to reassert the urban household and its attendant lines of credit, admittedly after that space has effected some sort of transformation on those within it. It focuses on *Westward Ho* as an independent play, although I mention *Northward Ho* and *Eastward Ho* briefly. Much like my treatment of *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, while the complicated production of such texts means that there is no neat way to study such a play in isolation, there is every reason to approach this particular text on its own terms.

The chapter will be shaped by, first, a consideration of how the idea of Brentford was constructed in numerous texts from the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and second, a more focussed examination of the play text. The first section will ask: in what ways does Brentford emerge in relation to the idea of the City and its suburbs, and to what extent are we able to define it in terms of the urban landscape? It will trace the similarities between Brentford and other locations, such as Barnet, in relative proximity to London, and suggest that certain connections may be made between the use of these places in early modern texts. Using London's suburbs and Liberties as reference points, I ask how we may place Brentford and the kinds of encounters it offered, including the illicit behaviour with which it is most notably associated. With this context in mind, I move onto the play in more detail, examining how we might understand Dogbolt's establishment in Brentford in terms of the conventions of the tavern space and of its Brentfordian fringe location. I suggest that it is determined by its separateness from domestic spaces, the urban environment and codes of community. The way in which the tavern offers an opportunity to the wives to break away from a framework of neighbourly surveillance and pursue their own agency is counterbalanced by the husbands' assault on the fabric of the tavern, in

an effort to reintegrate it under a civic standard. I then trace the two distinct lines of credit that are constructed in the play, between the Justinianos and the Earl, and between the husbands, wives and gallants. I argue here that the language of credit is exploited in various ways, at once to better construct female economic dependence and to craft female economic authority. The playwrights use the emblem of two diamonds to mark the credit-based encounters, following their movement throughout *Westward Ho*. The final confrontation between the potentially disloyal wives and their pursuing husbands allows for both a reassertion of the household network and an exploration of an alternative economy in which women are participants rather than commodities.

### **Brentford: locus of the illicit**

Brentford (also called Brainford, Breyntford and other variations) is located about eight miles west of central London on the confluence of the Rivers Brent and Thames, and on important routes to southwest England (Sugden 73). Morgan-Russell notes that the map of the Hundred of Isleworth, drawn up by Moses Glover in 1635, shows Brentford “consisting of a single street punctuated with a few landmarks such as inns, wharves, and its market”; the town’s importance as an economic centre is registered by “Norden’s renaming of New Brentford as ‘Market Brentford’ in his 1593 description of the country of Middlesex” (73).

I shall return to the particular mapping of Brentford as a quasi-suburban location within *Westward Ho* later in this chapter, but it is worth examining its topography in relation to London in the wider context of how the town became known as a place of escape. Morgan-Russell describes Brentford as a location different from the suburbs, in terms of what it offered in illicit behaviour that was distinct from

suburban prostitution, and Kelly J. Stage contends that Brentford was “decidedly not a suburb” (73; *Producing* 89). Yet the literature of the time offers a less definitive analysis of the locale. In fact, I argue that it occupies a position as neither suburb nor town in its own right, at least in terms of its character if not its exact setting. Much of the early modern literature that features Brentford considers this question of its geographical identity, and it is to that which I now turn.

In *Penny-wise, Pound Foolish* (1631), Dekker describes a merchant called Ferdinand who, with his mistress, visits Brentford but also goes on, “then to *Barner*, to lye there, then to *Bow* to be merry there, then to *Black-wall* to see the Ships there, and hen [sic] to *Bloomesbury* to [unclear] themselves there. And so to all bawdy *Bees* lying neere and about *London*” (B4r). All of these locations occupy a similar topographical position in relation to the City of London: often no more than ten miles in distance from the centre, and situated on the main thoroughfares out of the capital. Sanders has noted, for example, that Barnet was, in the early seventeenth century, “rather further removed from the city’s edge, an important staging-point on the old post road”, much like Brentford (“Day’s Sports” 551). Such locales, then, enjoyed easy access and, as Ferdinand’s descriptions suggests, facilities to accommodate and entertain visitors.

We find a similar tale to that of Ferdinand in Henry Peacham’s *Coach and Sedan* (1636), where the voice of the Sedan explains the benefits of travelling in a litter like itself, as opposed to a coach:

wee are of an easier charge, our journeys are short, we carrey no  
Lackquies, Foot-boyes, when we are emptie, nor have we to doe with  
D[...] *Turn-up*, and *Peg Burn-it*, your silken wenches of *Hackney*, to

cary them to the *Red-Bull*, and other Play-houses, to get trading, or Citizens wives to *St. Albanes, South-mimme, Barnet, Hatfeild, Waltham, Ilford, Croidon, Brainford*, and other places, under a colour of seeing their children at nurse to banquet with their sweet-hearts and companions, the match being agreed upon a moneth before. (C1r-C1v)

Considering the nature of the sedan – a type of litter – we can assume that visitors could be carried in this mode of transport to these locations, the distance not being insurmountable to travel on foot. Much like the Sedan in Peacham’s text, Ferdinand’s travels take him to various places near enough to London for it to be convenient (one supposes) and far enough away to enjoy a comfortable separation from the capital, but he and his mistress enjoy the comfort of a coach.

The increased use of such vehicles was a cause for concern in early modern England, so much so that by 1636 the Privy Council moved to restrict access to them (Sanders *Cultural* 157). It was not simply that they threatened the livelihood of the watermen working on the Thames, although John Taylor was particularly vocal in that regard, complaining that their use had “undone” his trade and that lower social classes should not have access to them (A2r, B3v). The enclosed nature of coaches was more troubling; the sedan pictured on the frontispiece of Peacham’s text shares this sense of being hidden, displaying a covering that afforded complete privacy to those inside. Sanders writes that the “potential for illicit activities in the concealed space of a coach ... was a subject for many contemporary bawdy allusions” (*Cultural* 161). In *Westward Ho*, this medium of transport is suggested by Captain Whirlpool as a way of getting to Brentford but is rejected by Clare Tenterhook because she does not like being “jolted” (2.3.69). The connection between coaches and sexuality, however, is

maintained by Mabel Wafer who jokes, “most of your Citizens wives love jolting” (2.3.70). This association surely finds a place in the reputation – which I will document below – of Brentford as a site to which people travel in order to behave in a less than upright way. In the context of its location near London, however, the use of a stagecoach to travel to Brentford has connotations of increased mobility and agency, of “social circulation” and exchange (Sanders *Cultural* 161). The act of travelling there is a declaration of intent: to, however briefly, inhabit a sort of intermediary place where normal codes of community are disrupted.

We might understand Brentford, then, as somewhere offering an alternative – for however short a time – to the capital. Indeed, Sugden imagines that its location meant that it “was a favourite resort of Londoners out for a day’s excursion into the country” (73). It is useful to note that by Brentford having day visitors, it perhaps stood at the very edge of the distinct topographies of country town and suburb; as one of Dekker’s places “neere and about London”, it offered an experience beyond both of those locations, a sort of post-suburban encounter. This rather unquantifiable characteristic also emerges from Leinwand’s analysis, because while he interprets the movement west as a momentum away from the cityscape and into the countryside, he still defines the drinking house we find in *Westward Ho* as “suburban” (47). Indeed, there is something particular about these spaces in terms of their distance from London, a distance that governs their relationship with the capital and, to some extent, the experience that can be enjoyed within their boundaries. Of Barnet, Sanders writes that “it might be argued that ‘suburban’ is an anachronistic usage”, and that it is important “to stress that the proximity of Barnet to the metropolis is central to its operations and allure” (*Cultural* 152, 152n57). The way we think about the spaces and the boundaries of locations like Barnet and Brentford is key, because it is the

simultaneously porous and fixed boundaries of London that in turn affect how these non-urban locations were understood in the literature of the time. Recently, Brentford has been labelled as a “satellite” town, in order to accommodate this approach (Stage “Plague Space” 63). In this thesis, however, I will use the term ‘fringe’, distinguishing it from a city environment while also acknowledging its separation from the suburbs.

One of the questions I will be asking of the tavern space in *Westward Ho* is whether its value in being located in such a place as Brentford might be in the way it is set free from the associations of locality and community that we have seen insisted upon in texts elsewhere. Sanders describes Barnet as one of the kinds of sites – that surely also included Brentford – that had “become by the 1620s popular resorts for Londoners seeking temporary refuge from the cramped and noisy conditions of the city, as well as all the opportunities for covert social and sexual activity, as well as personal role play, that a space outside of the everyday enabled” (*Cultural* 152-3). As we saw in Chapter 1, tavern and alehouse spaces emerge in many early modern popular texts as models of sociability and “company”, through which the kinds of neighbourliness that we see in the work of Keith Wrightson is practised (Withington 297-307; Hailwood “Sociability” 10-7; Wrightson *English* 51-7). I shall return to how these particular concerns are staged by Dekker and Webster in *Westward Ho* later on, but it is helpful to consider the way in which places like Brentford and Barnet were set adrift from conventional ideas of community, providing their visitors with the experience of a space away from home. If Brentford attracted visitors coming for just the day, as Sugden suggests, then it is easy to imagine it as a destination for new types of recreational travel (of the kind that Sanders mentions above), with people deliberately exploring a location just about distant enough from their familiar environment. Such acts would come with expectations of apparent freedom: the

separation from one's community and the avoidance of the kinds of neighbourly surveillance that underwrote it (P. A. Brown 38-41).

John Stow certainly makes a connection between living outside of the City walls and the movement away from traditional values of community. Admittedly, he is writing in the context of the suburbs, but I think it is relevant to our reading of Brentford and the other fringe sites. They have more in common with his understanding of the suburbs than other locations further away – such as Windsor, which appears very much as a site of “bourgeois community” in opposition to the disrupted community of Brentford – which emerge in the same kinds of texts (Bruster 52). Stow considered the loss of common grounds north of the City something to regret, a phenomenon that came about due to the increasing size of the suburbs:

these fields were never hedged, but now we see the thing in worse case than ever, by means of inclosure for gardens, wherein are built many fair summer-houses; and, as in other places of the suburbs, some of them like Midsummer pageants, with towers, turrets, and chimney-tops, not so much for use of profit as for show and pleasure, betraying the vanity of men's minds, much unlike to the disposition of the ancient citizens. (381-2)

Brentford, of course, was much further away from London than the suburbs about which Stow is writing in this instance, but nonetheless I think it is useful to consider the way in which he describes the thinking behind such an expansion beyond the City walls and the implications it has for understanding the community. The melancholy that Stow expresses reaches its zenith not at the point where he describes the

materiality of the changes but rather when he suggests how the modern attitude privileges “show and pleasure” above all else, including social bonds. It is this element that we also see in the portrayal of Brentford in texts written around the same time, finding it a resort, a place of holiday, where perhaps the limits of the City, in every sense of the word, are put to one side, even briefly. Stow’s passing reference to “Midsummer pageants” underlines the idea that an accusation of ‘holiday’ is reserved for places of suburban iniquity. Moreover, the contrast he draws between his own contemporaries and the “ancient citizens” points to a loss of neighbourliness that the word “citizens” denotes.

Such an analysis contrasts the ideals of the London community with a more individualistic agenda. Indeed, Manley considers Stow’s attitude towards the suburbs as part of his fear of the “individualized withdrawal from the community” (*Literature* 161). When we read about husbands and wives going to Brentford for the purposes of adulterous assignations, it is surely the height of the individual putting him or herself above the community, echoing that which I wrote above regarding how the location disrupts the notion of localised sociability. Morgan-Russell contends that Brentford is distinct from suburban life, because of this very kind of behaviour: “[i]nstead of suburban prostitution, Brentford provided a location for the extramarital assignation” where adulterous couples could conveniently spend the night, perhaps pretending to be married (73). I, on the other hand, argue that it is this very type of behaviour that *does* mark Brentford as having suburban-like qualities, while it simultaneously resists a suburban definition.

In this context, Brentford has something in common with the Liberties of London. Steven Mullaney writes, “the margins of the city were places where forms of moral incontinence and pollution were granted license to exist beyond the bounds of a



community they had, by their incontinence, already exceeded” (ix). If we think of Morgan-Russell’s reading of Brentford as a place where extra-marital assignations rather than prostitution were the order of the day (a reading which he argues marks Brentford as a non-suburban place) Mullaney’s description of the Liberties as a place to which “citizens retired to pursue pastimes and pleasures that had no proper place in the community” would conversely align Brentford with those marginal areas (22). I am not suggesting this alignment in any absolute terms, only that the ambivalence we have seen in the early modern descriptions of Brentford’s location position it as an ambiguous site, unclaimed by city or country (or on the other hand, perhaps claimed by both).

It is, of course, the consistent reminders of the illicit behaviour that went on in Brentford that help to define it in this way. Brentford emerges from the popular literature of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries as a place very much in keeping with Mistress Tenterhook’s description that started this chapter. Morgan-Russell writes, “the frequency of its mention in this context testifies to the town’s reputation in the popular literature of the period” (73). The jesting tradition that featured in Chapter 1, above, is where Brentford emerges most particularly both as a site of iniquity and a source for scatological humour. In Robert Copland’s poem *Jyl of Braintford’s Testament* (1567), the alewife bequeaths farts in her will to her curate in payment for writing it and to “those who drink without paying”, a rather pointed punishment to those I wrote about in Chapter 1, who resist their responsibilities in the tavern (Lamb 142; Levack 137). Thereafter, Gillian becomes a popular figure of jest with a “considerable currency in the 1590s” (Helgerson *Adulterous* 205n28). She appears in, amongst others, Nashe’s *Summers Last Will and Testament* (1600), where she is held up “as reflecting inferior literary taste”, and Downton and Rowley’s lost

1598 play, which is mentioned in *Henslowe's Diary* as “fryer fox / & gyllen of branforde” (Lamb 142; Helgerson *Adulterous* 205n28; Levack 137; Henslowe 104). Shakespeare makes reference to “the fat woman of Brentford” and “the witch of Brentford” in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, when Mistress Ford and Mistress Page dress Falstaff up as her to allow him to escape their house (4.2.60, 80).

Gillian emerges again in Kinde Kit's *Westward for Smelts* (1620) – the title being a line that is used in *Westward Ho* – this time as a fishwife who “led the rout” and “sometime[s] [dealt] / With flesh exchange” (A4v). We see in this description the familiar features attributed to behaviour in Brentford; although the fishwife's escapades in the text centre on Windsor, she is said to dwell in “*Brainford*” (A4v). This is just one of many other textual references from the period where licentiousness and sexual looseness were associated with this particular location. This notion of the “flesh exchange” will be central to my reading of the tavern economy in *Westward Ho*, emphasising the close relationship between sex and commercialism that the text insists upon in the staged space of the drinking house. Moreover, the use of the line from the play for the title of *Westward for Smelts* suggests a positioning of Brentford within a literary tradition as a place to be imagined and constructed textually – a wider trend that, I suggest, Dekker and Webster appropriated and used in their drama.

We are perhaps reminded of Gillian's “flesh exchange” when Luke Frugal in Philip Massinger's *The City Madam* (1632) accuses the errant apprentice Goldwire of having “kept your punks at livery / In Brentford, Staines and Barnet”, exemplifying the way in which the locations were associated with, if not conventional prostitution, an economy based on sexual activity (4.2.85-6). This is also evident in Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611). While the play again insists upon the town's general associations with loose behaviour – Laxton suggests to Moll that they go there

to do “[n]othing but be merry and lie together” – it also constructs the idea that Brentford’s famous market, noted by Norden, is founded on sexual exchange (3.255). In Scene 9 (which according to David J. Lake was written by Dekker rather than Middleton) Mistress Gallipot not only refers to the cry of “*Westward Ho!*” but also to “sinful Brentford” where Openwork is accused of keeping a whore (Lake 55; *The Roaring Girl* 9.130, 196). Furthermore – and this is where we see Brentford’s illicit economy emerge – Mistress Openwork challenges her husband’s behaviour:

MISTRESS OPENWORK. Is’t market day at Brentford, and your  
ware

Not sent up yet?

OPENWORK. What market day? What ware?

MISTRESS OPENWORK. A pie with three pigeons in’t, – ’tis  
drawn and stays your cutting up. (9.131-  
5)

Morgan-Russell reads this argument as confirming “the function of the town as a flesh exchange” and suggests that it worked as such because “it presented a market outside the City’s saturated economy of flesh” (74). In *Westward Ho* Tenterhook uses the same framework to understand the predicament in which he stands with his fellow citizens, but of course in that instance, it is the husbands who imagine they have been exchanged for newer, more fashionable models (5.4.14). In *The Roaring Girl* it is Openwork who is accused of “casting out his net to catch fresh salmon at Brentford” (9.78-9)

In terms of my wider thesis, what is particularly significant about this vision of Brentford in both plays – and what the Openworks’ dialogue throws into relief most sharply – is that the locus for this behaviour is centred on the Three Pigeons Inn. In the later play, Moll has already been accused by Laxton of being “suited for the Three Pigeons at Brentford” when she arrives to meet him dressed as a man (5.51-2). Mistress Openwork recounts the tale told by Goshawk that her “husband . . . went in a boat with a tilt over it to the Three Pigeons at Brentford, and his punk with him” (9.25-7). With these instances in mind, when Mistress Openwork imagines her husband’s infidelity in terms of cutting up a pie of three pigeons, the reference would not have gone unnoticed by the audience.

The inn also appears in *Merry Conceited Jestes of George Peele*, a text we encountered earlier, with the narrator writing:

to come to my honest George; who is now merry at The Three Pigeons in Brainford, with sack and sugar, not any wine wanting, the musicians playing, my host drinking, my hostess dancing with the worshipful justice . . . My gentle hostess gave him all the entertainment her house could afford. (376)

We see here the same tropes of the drinking house space that emerge elsewhere in late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century popular literature and again in the dramatic texts of the period: the importance of plentiful victuals, the need for a generous and merry host, the fostering of a relationship between host/hostess and patron. The Three Pigeons really existed. When, in *The Alchemist*, Subtle tells Dol they will “turn [their] course / To Brainford” and “tickle it at the Pigeons”, the lines reflect, perhaps, the fact

that the drinking house was a “favorite suburban resort of Jonson” (5.4.77, 89; Hutton 177).<sup>15</sup> Indeed, Sugden describes the Three Pigeons as “a famous hostelry ... kept at one time by John Lowin, one of the first actors in Shakespeare’s plays”, while Robert Nares describes it as an “inn, formerly the resort of low people, sharpers, etc” (Sugden 73; Nares 807). In using the space of a real drinking house, these texts link most definitively the location of Brentford as they knew it with the Brentford that was textually constructed; the variations on its name – Brainford, Braintford, Branforde etc – reflects the way the town was imagined in different ways on the page and perhaps how Brentford was emerging in the late sixteenth century.

Moreover, knowing that Brentford “provided an abundance of inns – more, in fact, than elsewhere in the parish”<sup>16</sup> means that its reputation as a place of iniquity is firmly rooted in the space of the drinking house (Morgan-Russell 73). Gillian, its most famous export, was not simply a widow obsessed with making scatological demands, but a “widow”:

Honest in substance & full of sport

Daily she could with pastime and Jests

Among her neighbours and her guests

She kept an Inne of right food lodging

For all estates that thither were coming. (*Jyl of Braintford’s Testament*

3-8)

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<sup>15</sup> Morgan-Russell notes, however, that Hutton “gives no source for this information” (74).

<sup>16</sup> Morgan-Russell does not say which parish.

She appears here much like the hostess in Peele's tale, full of good humour towards her customers and providing a generous space where guests from all sorts of backgrounds – from “all estates” – would be welcome.

It is this context that will help us to better understand the social and economic politics of *Westward Ho*. When Clare Tenterhook describes the gallants as “setting pursenets to conycatch us” she echoes the language of the sixteenth-century cony-catching pamphlets: I suggest it is a deliberate nod by the dramatists to the popular literature that sought to make sense of the drinking house and the tensions relating to notions of exchange (5.1.158). In choosing Brentford – rather than, say, Barnet (as in *The New Inn*) or Ware (as in *Northward Ho*) – Dekker and Webster sought to utilise not only the idea of “Brainford” as a place between countryside and suburb, but also the tavern space with which it was so closely associated. Dogbolt's inn may not be the Three Pigeons, just as the playhouse's “Brainford” is not itself the true Brentford. But both the general location of the town and the specific location of the drinking house offered to the dramatists an imagined space where they could work through ideas about the urban environment and the formation of “webs of credit and obligation” (Muldrew *Economy* 95). For the remainder of this chapter, I will endeavour to show how the staged tavern space is very much part of a wider topographical trajectory of *Westward Ho*, and how Dekker and Webster use the tradition of Brentford's liminal position as neither town proper nor suburb of London to define the encounters within Dogbolt's tavern.

### **The fringe tavern space**

*Westward Ho* is a play particularly alert to the staging of spaces. Dekker and Webster dramatise the households of both Justiniano and Tenterhook, a Rhenish wine house at

the Steelyard, the Lion tavern in Shoreditch, and Dogbolt's tavern in Brentford; we are left to imagine St. Paul's Cathedral and the tavern at Blackfriars, although the situations imagined in those spaces are most evocative. The momentum of the play builds from enclosed, quasi-domestic urban spaces towards the more ambiguously private and non-domestic, non-communal, non-urban space of the tavern in Brentford in order to stage the test to which the wives, gallants, and citizens are exposed, separated from both London and the conventions of their community.

In my opening chapter, I suggested that the tavern space in early modern popular literature emerges as a quasi-domestic space, complicated by the financial ties between guest and host. Indeed, the texts examined throughout this thesis offer an experience of that space that resists easy classification and that grapples with shifting expectations and obligations. So while domesticity is a term that can at times be helpful to an interrogation of the tavern space, it is part of a much larger – and more fluid – structure of understanding. In *Westward Ho*, the London drinking house sites admit some form of domesticity, albeit one complicated by those ties I mention above. The tavern in Brentford, however, while enclosed and private, “is not a domestic space ... but an extra domestic, extramural space” (Howard “Women” 162). It is only through the characters' exposure to this setting in Brentford that they are able to work through the threats to the household and to the network of exchange to which they belong. Similarly, I use the word communal to denote the ways in which the urban taverns were rooted in their community and locality, whereas the Brentford tavern is both separate from these and able to disrupt them. Elements of that tavern community are evident in each urban drinking space. At the Rhenish wine house, the wives and gallants gather in a private room to share wine and buns and Monopoly boasts of his evening spent at the Lion with Whirlpool and Linstock amongst the

“company” there (2.3.23-4; 3.2.14). Dogbolt’s tavern, however, as I will demonstrate shortly, offers no such sense of community.

Elsewhere, the two urban drinking house spaces share some similarities with Dogbolt’s tavern in Brentford, and they all assume certain characteristics of that space that, as this thesis argues, are used and reused again and again. We can see the jovial host in the character of Hans at the Rhenish wine house, described by Mistress Honeysuckle as an “honest Butterbox”, and in the figure of the helpful chamberlain at the Brentford tavern (2.3.11). Dogbolt himself never appears on stage, and his name points to a certain ambiguity, being a term of abuse, but he is described as “guzzling” with Sir Gosling, which to some extent suggests the conventional characteristics of the host figure (“Dogbolt”; 5.1.20). There is generous provision of alcohol in all three: Hans offers “[o]ld vine, or new vine”, Monopoly is drunk at the Lion, and Sir Gosling drinks so much at Dogbolt’s that he can hardly walk (2.3.6, 3.2.26, 5.1.20-3). The material space of each site – suggesting a certain economic vibrancy – is also clear. Sir Gosling draws the curtains of the Rhenish wine house to give them privacy, and when Justiniano enters, he calls out, “[w]hich roome”, of presumably several, to find the wives and gallants; Dogbolt’s tavern, meanwhile can accommodate the wives’ request for three rooms and there is enough space for them to keep separate from the drunk Sir Gosling (2.3.26, 5.1.139). The Brentford space initially seems, then, to fit in with a more conventional model of the tavern. Indeed, when Linstock suggests the visit to Brentford, he conjures up an image of the ideal drinking house space: “Lets to mine host *Dogbolts* at *Brainford* then, there you out of eyes, out of eares, private roomes, sweet Lynnen, winking attendance, and what cheere you will?” (2.3.73-5).



The tavern's Brentford setting, however, and the specific way in which it emerges as a decidedly non-domestic and non-communal space means that it is held in opposition to these earlier examples. Howard argues that the women's increasingly frequent contact with the gallants sees them meet in public spaces – at the Cathedral and in the “back rooms of taverns” – buoyed on by their tutor (“Women” 158). Although I agree with her point that “the empowered women become transgressive” in such meetings, I would argue that the public/private dichotomy is not the main paradigm at work here (“Women” 158). All the spaces in the text insist upon privacy in some way: the curtains are drawn and the door is locked at the Rhenish wine house; the women are told to be masked and hide behind the pillars in St. Paul's nave; the Greyhound in Blackfriars where they rendezvous for the journey west is described as “some Taverne neare the water-side, thats private” after which they will “take a Boate at Bridewell Dock most privately”, a suggestion that hints at those concealed journeys made in coaches that I mentioned earlier (2.3.1, 2.1.220-2, 2.3.103, 108). Even at this in-between stage – mid way between the Rhenish wine house and the Brentford tavern – we see the increasingly powerful idea of that privacy, a notion that ensures the wives remain chaste (a decision they, rather than any of the men, make) just as they move out of the City towards a dramatic ending that promises the opposite. Remembering Linstock's eagerness to visit the “private roomes” of Dogbolt's tavern, it is the closed features of the drinking house that so excites him rather than promise of transgressions in a public sphere (2.3.74). So, rather than being figured through the loss of privacy, as Howard would have us believe, it is the domestic/non-domestic, communal/non-communal and urban/non-urban quality of these spaces that marks the topographical trajectory of the play, insisting upon the Brentford tavern as the model of everything that the London spaces are not.

Turning first to its non-urban location, I suggest that the experience offered in the Brentford tavern situates it in opposition to the London drinking houses, drawing on the tradition of Brentford as a fringe location, full of sinful behaviour, that I documented above. Without wishing to repeat myself, I think it is worth noting the specific instances in the play that support this contention. When the wives and gallants discuss what they will do until the musicians play, Whirlpool suggests they “[d]rinke burnt wine and Egs then?” (5.1.113). Mistress Honeysuckle replies, “That’s an exercise for your sub-urbe wenches”, immediately identifying a Brentfordian alternative to her and her friends’ conduct (5.1.114). “Burnt wine” may refer to a sort of mulled wine or to brandy; either way, Judith’s dismissal of it as a drink more suitable for those who come from outside London suggests the wives may be prepared to indulge in neither the offerings nor the behaviour practised in this location. Furthermore, Clare Tenterhook instructs the other wives regarding the gallants that they will “out strip twenty such guls”, and while they may eat and drink with them, “tho we lye all night out of the Citty, they shall not find country wenches of us” (5.1.160, 169-70). These lines allude to the tradition of Brentford being a site of sexual looseness. Moreover, they highlight the experience fantasised about by the gallants: that the act of moving the women from a London tavern to a non-urban one might affect their characters. Although they travel not by stagecoach, like Dekker’s merchant in *Penny-wise, Pound Foolish*, rather choosing to go on the river, the gallants are intent on finding somewhere outside the walls of London that will fulfil their desires, with suggestions including Blackwall (where Ferdinand also goes with his mistress) and Limehouse (2.3.71).

Mistress Honeysuckle’s use of the word “sub-urbe” echoes a moment earlier in the play, when Justiniano, dressed as the writing tutor, Parenthesis, describes why

he, if he were a woman, would not chase after one man: “Marry because the Suburbes, and those without the bars, have more priviledge then they within the freedome: what need one woman doate upon one Man? Or one man be mad like *Orlando* for one woman” (2.1.163-6). It is Justiniano, then, who introduces the idea to the wives, long before Linstock’s suggestion, that the suburbs provide an alternative way of living to that which they experience in the City. Significantly, in the same scene, he encourages Mistress Honeysuckle and her friends to meet their lovers “through *Paules*: every wench take a pillar, there clap on your Maskes: your men will bee behind you, and before your prayers be halfe don, be before you” (2.1.220-2). The experience of the urban meeting seems all the more clandestine, with the masked women meeting the gallants behind the pillars of St. Paul’s Cathedral, especially in comparison with Justiniano’s vision of the freedom to openly pursue more than one lover that is afforded by the non-urban location. It is not the space itself that is less private, however, but the experience within it. His play on the “freedome” of the City of London, which fosters a sexual experience actually less free than in the areas beyond it, anticipates the need for a “release from civic ordinance” that we observe when the characters move from London to Brentford (Leinwand 47). Moreover, it sets up the idea of economic “priviledge” in Brentford. Freedom of the City of London “entailed economic, political, and legal privileges. Freemen enjoyed the right to engage in retail trade, the privilege of pleading and being sued . . . and the right to vote in elections for ward officials” (Archer 61). Indeed, life outside the freedom often meant economic hardship and social marginalisation (Archer 61-2). Stage reads Justiniano’s lines in terms of tensions between personal and civic freedom (*Producing* 84). While this is persuasive, I suggest that when Justiniano couches the women’s sexual negotiations in these terms, he establishes the idea that Brentford offers

economic, as well as social, strength in opposition to that of London. This is a notion to which I shall return shortly.

We see this same movement in *Eastward Ho*, when the potential adventurers meet in the Blue Anchor Tavern in Billingsgate, ahead of their planned journey to Virginia. While Chapman, Jonson and Marston draw on those same tavern conventions that we have seen in *Westward Ho* – the drawer is amenable and generous, the wine plentiful – the non-urban tavern space provides a chance of release from the structures of the City. In terms of the constraints of normal behaviour that it disrupts, the playwrights use the Blue Anchor to give a tantalising glimpse of what might happen if the bonds of marriage are not maintained. The old usurer Security unknowingly panders his own wife to Sir Petronel Flash, an episode taken up again in Dekker and Webster's own dramatic response *Northward Ho*. In the latter play, Luke Greenshield is tricked into offering his own disguised wife to the merchant Mayberry in the tavern in Ware (5.1.133-4). Indeed, both these episodes fit in with Leinwand's assertion, with reference to *Westward Ho*, that the journey out of the capital "generates a sexual-social topography: citizens sleep with their wives and their whores in the City, but citizen wives sleep with their lovers in the country" (47). While I will return to the fact that in *Westward Ho*, the wives do not ultimately sleep with the gallants (and nor is Security cuckolded in *Eastward Ho*, although Kate Greenshield is indeed revealed as having been unfaithful), it is, of course, the fantasy of such a liaison that impels the group to Brentford.

Significantly, that fantasy only becomes more than a possibility because of the absence of "the ward's close watch over the morality of city inhabitants (Leinwand 47). It is here that we begin to see evidence of the non-communal quality of the Brentford tavern. When Linstock promises access to "private roomes", he also tells

the wives that they will be “out of eyes, out of eares” (2.3.74). While the wives and gallants enjoy seclusion behind the locked door of the Rhenish wine house, Justiniano easily finds them there. Furthermore, he threatens them with the idea that there are “Peepers: Intelligencers: Evesdroppers” watching them, and that their “husbands heads are knocking together with *Hans* his, and inquiring for you” (2.3.43, 47-8). This kind of monitoring might seem malicious, but actually underscores the way in which, as Leinwand points out, an urban moral code is maintained. The kind of neighbourly observation about which Justiniano warns the wives calls to mind Brown’s concept of gossip, which she argues was used in the early modern period to sustain a “system of control” where, with the right knowledge, women could be “instrumental” in bringing wrongdoers to justice yet also be subject to their neighbours’ tales (P. A. Brown 39). On one hand, “[c]losely watched streets formed the breeding ground for much slander litigation” and on the other, women “acted powerfully by taking responsibility for the lives of their neighbors” (P. A. Brown 39, 43). Laura Gowing writes compellingly about defamation suits, which reveal similar patterns:

While the words of insult might not necessarily be related to any actual incidents, their stress on disordered households, economies, and neighbourhoods does provide a distorted reflection of the concerns over which urban and rural communities fell into dispute. (117)

I will analyse further how *Westward Ho* stages the relationship indicated here between the disordered household and disordered economy (and wider neighbourhood community). For now, it is important to stress the kinds of early modern

neighbourhood culture with which the play engages, and how such an engagement pushes the play to stage the move westwards in terms of a break from community.

When we first see the wives all together, they exemplify this kind of gossip, with Clare Tenterhook disclosing her attraction to Monopoly and Judith Honeysuckle complaining about her husband (1.2.84, 110-1). Their shared confidences bring the wives together, an association that is staged by their shared lessons from Justiniano dressed as the tutor Parenthesis. The relationship between the three women gives a sense of the local community that Wrightson talks about, “held together less by dense ties of kinship than by relationships of neighbourliness”, as they discuss their husbands, the politics of breastfeeding and learning to write (*English* 61; 1.2.101, 116-24). When we consider Wrightson’s contention that community is “a quality in social relations which is, in some respects, occasional and temporary”, needing “periodic stimulation and reaffirmation” through village rituals and customs and “the daily round of informal recreation—as when the neighbours met in the numerous alehouses to drink, talk, sing, play at bowls”, then the idea of removal from that framework offers the possibility of all kinds of alternative behaviour (*English* 62-3). It is this framework of gossip and community that Dekker and Webster stage in the early parts of the play, and it is the distance from it that is offered in the space of Dogbolt’s tavern, where the wives are assured by Linstock that they will be neither seen nor heard by others. Indeed, in the act of leaving London as a group of three women, accompanied by the gallants, the wives disrupt not only Brown’s system of control by disappearing from their own community, but also disrupt it from within, being the very women who would speak out about the behaviour in which we anticipate they will indulge. If they are all in it together then they cannot bear witness against each other. Similarly, if they attend a tavern that is far enough outside their

own locality – requiring travel by coach or ferry – and renounce the drinking house community that they enjoy in London, the rituals of community that Wrightson insists need consistent attention will be ignored. The distance between the City and Brentford affords Dekker and Webster the chance to stage how the wives undergo this challenge where they are separated from the ties of community. We shall see later on in this chapter how the three women negotiate this test, through the manipulation of a framework of credit in which they have been labelled as commodities by both the husbands and the gallants.

The space of the Brentford tavern, then, is founded along non-urban, non-domestic, and non-communal lines. Working from this position, an interpretation of the attempts by Justiniano and the husbands to demolish the fantasies of the space and retrieve their wives through the manipulation of their own topographical understanding is compelling. In particular, their assaults on the non-urban quality of the tavern make for a convincing argument that understands the citizens' efforts to win back their wives through the general denigration of Brentford itself and specific denigration of the machinery of the tavern.

When the husbands arrive in Brentford with Justiniano, they are also accompanied by Sergeant Ambush. He was employed by Tenterhook (admittedly at the behest of Clare) earlier in the play to arrest Monopoly for failing to pay a debt. Ambush finds Monopoly outside the Lion tavern in Shoreditch, and without entering the space, successfully takes him into custody despite the gallant's pleas. In Brentford, however, he is immediately brought inside the space and is sent to "scowte in some back roome" until the husbands give a sign to come out (5.4.1-2). It is perhaps useful at this point to recall the ways in which the tavern space undergoes similar incursions in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*. Outside forces in the figures of the

Sheriff and Lord Chief Justice are initially unable to penetrate the boundaries of the space without invitations to enter it; they seek to impose both civic and economic order onto the tavern economy which Falstaff is destabilising. Nonetheless, while the tavern network remains intact, they are unable to impose their own economic codes. It is only the final confrontation between the tavern community and the authorities that sees the once unbreachable boundaries of the Boar's Head falter, when the Beadle enters to arrest the Hostess (2 *Henry IV* 5.4.14-5). I suggest that we read the way in which the husbands use the Sergeant in *Westward Ho* in light of this. It is tempting to think that Monopoly's arrest outside the Lion reveals the tavern's resistance to debtors; similarly, the fact that the Sergeant does not enter the Lion means that the integrity of the space remains intact, and maintained from within, the civic authorities not being required to impose order.

Dogbolt's tavern, however, emerges within the play as a space created, textually, by the fantasies and fears of those within it. The husbands contest what it offers by bringing the Sergeant to restore what they understand to be conventional urban behaviour in their wives but also intend to draw on Brentford's own civic authorities. Tenterhook suggests that he and two of the others will go into Brentford to bring the Constable "and his Bill-men" to punish the gallants (5.4.24). This is both an attempt to bring Brentford back under a fantasy of civic ordinance in order to uphold the domestic bonds it has disrupted, and a way in which the husbands try to undermine the nature of the location, by imposing the model of civic authority that works in London. Tenterhook claims that they will bring the gallants "before some Country Justice of *Coram* (for we scorne to be bound to the Peace) and this Justice shall draw his Sword in our defence, if we finde 'hem to be Malefactors wee'le ticle 'hem" (5.4.29-32). Tenterhook's fantasy of Brentford differs wildly from the gallants'



vision of the same location as a “Towne of iniquity”, imagining that the same structures that he exploited to arrest Monopoly for failing to uphold his credit will enable him to reinstate his own line of credit in the form of his wife (5.1.213). I ask later in this chapter how Tenterhook’s suggestion is part of the way that the citizens seek to re-establish the urban network of exchange, but in terms of the tavern space, the moment demonstrates how Tenterhook is at pains to impose order on the Brentfordian character of the drinking house. Much like when the Hostess seeks Falstaff’s arrest for destabilising her position through his devastating consumption and debts, Tenterhook believes his own suit will result in the punishment of errant behaviour (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.33). Furthermore his wish to “set the towne in an insurrection” and “in an uprore” suggests employing that type of communal self-governance of which Brown writes, but which I contend is lacking in Brentford anyway (5.4.23, 36).

We are, however, denied the opportunity to witness either event because the energy of the play demands a different standard in terms of the governance of the tavern space. While there is a sense here that Brentford itself has its own social and moral structures (in the form of the Constable and Bill-men) to which Tenterhook could appeal for help, Dekker and Webster refuse to stage such an intervention. The ambiguity of its fringe location means that the tavern resists its inclusion, literally and figuratively, into the City of London and its modes of behaviour. Justiniano identifies the inevitable failure of Tenterhook’s plan and describes the way in which it would set ablaze tensions between city and countryside rather than quietly encasing Brentford in a metaphorical urban sprawl:

will you make the Townes-men think, that Londoners never come hither but upon Saint *Thomases* night? Say you should rattle up the Constable: thrash all the Countrey together, hedge in the house with Flayles, Pike-staves, and Pitch-forkes, take your wives napping, these Westerne Smelts nibbling, and that like so many *Vulcans*, every Smith should discover his *Venus* dancing with *Mars*, in a net? wud this plaster cure the head-ake? (5.4.37-44)

This speech positions the Londoners as those who would bring disorder to Brentford, who would “rattle” and “thrash” in an effort to discover their wives with their lovers. It also appeals to the idea of community that Tenterhook longs for when he imagines the town coming to their aid, but instead implies that the husbands will achieve a bad reputation as rabble-rousers who only impose on the town once a year.

Justiniano offers an alternative plan to help the husbands, a plan that includes an assault on the machinery of the tavern space. He tells them: “Take my counsell . . . bar our host: banish mines hostes, beate away the Chamberlin, let the ostlers walke, enter you the chambers peaceably, locke the doors gingerly, looke upon your wives wofully, but upon the evill-doers, most wickedly” (5.4.83-6). Why does he suggest this rejection of all the trappings of the tavern? I would argue that by identifying the tavern space and the machinery through which it operates as the framework that is keeping the husbands from their wives, Justiniano’s scheme places the drinking house at the centre of Brentfordian escapism. His refusal to allow Tenterhook and Wafer to call the Constable suggests an acknowledgement that, like the Boar’s Head, Dogbolt’s is unassailable from civic authority while the tavern itself functions successfully.

Justiniano’s strategy would dismantle the tavern space and seeks to alter the codes of

behaviour from within, rather than by imposing codes of civility from without using the Sergeant and Constable, as Tenterhook hoped.

Justiniano suggests that the wives will come out of the tavern “cursing *Brainford*” and begging forgiveness from their husbands, who will now stand “either as Judges to condemne ’hem, beadles to torment ’hem, or confessors to absolve ’hem” (5.4.91-4). Positioning the husbands as those who will impose civic authority means that the men’s agenda of imposing a patriarchal set of codes is insisted upon yet again, despite Justiniano’s initial rejection of this plan. It seems that even he shares an implacable belief in the assertion of the City over Brentford, claiming that the citizens’ victory will have them “cry hay for *London*” in what will be a return to the familiar and controlled structures of marriage and the household (5.4.96-7). The play, however, insists upon a different way for the Londoners to negotiate their exit from the tavern space, a negotiation based on lines of credit and the creation of a new network of exchange, which may indeed partly result in the reassertion of their urban, patriarchal codes, but which also, I will argue, offers a compelling glimpse of an alternative way of understanding the social politics of both Brentford and the City of London.

### **Women and diamonds: tokens of exchange**

From the first scene of *Westward Ho*, Dekker and Webster stage the negotiations of the characters within a framework of exchange. Specifically, this is evident through lines of credit that we may trace through the movement of certain commodities. We find Birdlime the bawd waiting outside the Justinianos’ house with presents of a “gowne” and “Jewels and Pretious Stones” sent from the amorous Earl for the merchant’s wife (1.1.1-2). She goes on to dismiss her companion the tailor’s ideas

about the differences between “a Lady and a Citty dame”, effectively collapsing any distinctions between them by identifying their shared positions as powerful consumers:

I tel thee ther is equality inough betweene a Lady and Citty dame, if their haire be but of a colour: name you any one thing that citizens wife coms short of to your Lady. They have as pure Linnen, as choice painting, love greene Geese in spring, Mallard and Teale in the fall, and Woodcocke in winter ... they have a tricke ont to be sick for a new gowne, or a Carcanet, or a Diamond (1.2.24-34)

Dowd has made a compelling case for reading *Westward Ho* in terms of how it figures the urban housewife as a consumer, tracing the wives’ spending and asserting that “they do not participate in productive labor in their husband’s [sic] shops or elsewhere” (226-7). Working from this standpoint, and building on Morgan-Russell’s argument that “the play characterizes ... sexual relationships as economic transactions”, I suggest that the frequent insistence by the text on images of consumerism, on acts of purchasing and on the importance of goods is part of the way in which the playwrights stage the construction of a network of exchange (71). This network facilitates the language and the opportunity that allow the characters of the play to negotiate, firstly, their relationships with each other, and secondly, their spatial encounters. Within that network of exchange lie two distinct and yet interconnected lines of credit, between the Earl, Justiniano and his wife, and between the wives, their husbands and the gallants. Each of these groups finds in the Brentford tavern space some sort of reconciliation figured in economic terms.

I wrote earlier that the breakdown of the domestic space in the play is instigated by Justiniano leaving his wife. The merchant, however, does not simply abandon her because of his (unfounded) belief that she is having an affair with the Earl; he also undermines her economic standing. He mitigates his actions by exposing as he sees it the impossibility of anyone bypassing a sexually available woman, as if a shopkeeper would let “his customer passe his stall” (1.1.170). His conflation of the behaviour of “women, and Tradsmen” serves only to throw into relief his wife’s earlier claim to Birdlime that her “husband and his whole credit is not worth my apparell”, in which she positions herself to some extent as a commodity rather than someone with the power to sell such goods (1.1.73-4). Indeed, when her husband finally confronts her with his intentions, she asks him:

What would you have me do? all your plate and most part of your  
Jewels are at pawne, besides I heare you have made over all your  
estate to men in the Towne heer? What would you have me doe?  
would you have mee turne a common sinner, or sell my apparel to my  
watscoat and become a Landresse? (1.1.175-9)

Her desperation at the thought of entering into the market as someone providing a service – a “Landresse” – and her husband’s dismissal of such a scheme, means that while she has to seek her “owne maintenance”, she “has discovered the economic basis of women’s dependence and social inferiority” (1.1.205; Leinwand 151). She offers herself to the Earl because she is forced into “a position of financial dependence” by her husband, in contrast with the wives who “act out of positions of consumer control” (Dowd 232).

It is Justiniano's debts, however, which precipitate his wife's positioning as a commodity, and if we trace an imaginary line of credit through her encounter with the Earl and eventual restoration as wife, then we are better able to recognise the economic patterns that the play reveals. Mistress Justiniano is only forced into thinking she must become a commodity, not when her husband claims he has been made cuckold, but when she herself acknowledges the material signs of their wealth – their plate and jewels – “are at pawne” (1.1.175-6). The credit taken up by her husband through mortgaging his estate does not extend to her. Remembering the moment when the Hostess of the Boar's Head is reduced materially by being forced to “pawn both [her] plate and the tapestry of [her] dining chambers”, the action of Justiniano reduces his own wife in the same way, but she has no business on which to rely nor is she able to invite the authorities to help her reclaim her goods (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.111-2). Her economic agency is totally dismantled and she begins to think of herself as the goods to be recovered. Moreover – and in terms of the domestic space that I discussed above – the space of the household has been assaulted from within, through the fiction of Justiniano's bad debts.

When she finally comes to meet the Earl, Mistress Justiniano has adopted the same language of credit that her husband used to manoeuvre her into such a position. Having been told that her “credit would go farre”, she now entertains the possibility of sleeping with the Earl if he is able to “cleare [her] of a debt that's due” (1.1.180-1, 2.2.112). She essentially becomes the goods that are passed between two men and simultaneously the payment that is due. In fact, Birdlime imagines her in the same way; when the bawd recounts to the Earl the cost of bringing Mistress Justiniano to his lodging – she has paid for clothes, a coach, livery and so on – and he gives her some money in return, she tells him: “I do receive it with one hand, to pay it away

with another, I'me but your Baily" (2.2.50-1). I suggest that we might understand these lines in terms of Birdlime's own treatment of the merchant's wife, acting as a conduit for her transaction from wife to mistress.

Mistress Justiniano is only recovered by her husband (in an elaborate ruse where he dresses up as her and then has her pretend to die to invoke the Earl's shame) when she begs forgiveness, but more importantly, when he declares, "I have yet three thousand pounds in the hands of a sufficient friend, and all my debts discharged" (3.3.102). No longer in debt himself, he seeks to restore the commodity he lost when he broke up the household economy, in the same way that he has in his possession again that which he "made over" to his friends (1.1.224). He then figures the retrieval of his wife in the same economic terms. Confronting the Earl, Justiniano accepts her chastity but also her "slaverie" and in a final transaction that restores wife to husband accepts payment in the form of half the Earl's living (4.2.106, 116-7). This act of reimbursement by the Earl restores both Justiniano's solvency and the materiality of his credit in the form of his wife.

This line of credit that extends between the three figures of the merchant, his wife, and the Earl comes to an end before the action of the play moves to the Brentford tavern. It does, however, provide a model that will help give us fresh insight into the economic negotiations that are staged in that space. The exchange of the female body is also more widely figured here in economic terms, but the wives resist the attempt by both the gallants and their husbands to define them as commodities, and instead position themselves as traders in their own right. Using the tradition of the Brentford market that we saw emerge elsewhere, the wives upend Gillian's notion of the "flesh exchange" and become, like Openwork in *The Roaring Girl*, agents in their own sexual encounters. It is only in the tavern space that we see

the wives take charge of their own credit, and while they return to their husbands in an act restoring the disrupted household economy, their experience in the tavern allows them to better utilise their own value when they return to the wider urban economic network. Suspension from the urban community seems to allow, I suggest, for an opportunity through which the wives recognise their economic positions in relation to their husbands, and avoid the fate that Mistress Justiniano experiences albeit temporarily.

Moreover, this particular line of credit is privileged in the play through Dekker and Webster's emblematic use of Tenterhook's two diamonds. The circuitous movement of these precious stones establishes both a literal and figurative economic network, where their possession suggests both credit (in terms of their value) and debt (in terms of to whom they really belong). I contend that there is a connection made by the play between the physical representation of these notions in the use of the diamonds and the economic negotiations demanded by their circulation.

The dismantling of Mistress Justiniano's financial agency because of her husband's suspicions makes the commodification of the wives' pursuit of their lovers by the same man all the more disconcerting. It also reveals his own economic fantasy of the dangers of female consumerism. Having dismissed his wife's idea of "sell[ing] [her] apparel" as a way to support herself, Justiniano encourages Judith Honeysuckle to exploit her ability to spend as an excuse to leave the house: "You must to pawne to buy the Lawne: to Saint Martins for Lace; to the Garden: to the Glasse-house; to your Gossips: to the Powlters: else take out an old ruffe, and go to your Sempsters: excuses? Why they are more ripe then meddlers at Christmas" (2.1.214-8). Dowd reads this as indicating the wives "have regular access to money", access that she sees "poses a danger to the patriarchal family" through their ability to manipulate their



purchasing power in order to leave both family structures and the cityscape itself (228). This reading seems, however, rather unrefined: the play demonstrates the resourcefulness and essential decency of the wives, and thus pulls in different directions. Justiniano's lines actually serve to introduce his own fears about female economic power rather than present to us an image of Judith's own tendencies.

Indeed, rather than succumbing to the way in which Justiniano would figure the wives, they go about taking on the debt of others in order to augment their own credit. For instance, Clare Tenterhook's fear that she will no longer be able to see her lover Monopoly once he has repaid his debts results in a scheme whereby she wrests economic control of their relationship (1.2.53-4). She manipulates her husband into looking at "the booke of bonds" that are owed him, noting the bond belonging to Monopoly: "I finde by the booke of accounts here, that it is not canceld" (3.1.2, 3.1.6-7). She then asks her husband to "enter an action against him" (3.1.11-2). This results in his arrest outside the Lion in Shoreditch at Tenterhook's behest, but rather than allow the debt to belong to her husband, Clare ensures that Monopoly ends up owing her: he acknowledges, "I am beholding to you" (3.4.20). This is a particularly compelling reading when we also consider Morgan-Russell's interpretation:

As Monopoly's name suggests, the expected outcome of the rendezvous is the passage of the women-as-commodity from husband to gallant, so that the gallant "has the monopoly" on the transacted commodity. But this system of sexual exchange is disrupted by the citizen wives who refuse to circulate as commodities and instead assert a different economy in which they participate as the *transactors* rather than the *transacted*. (80, emphasis in original)

Moreover, the wives are able to operate in the way he suggests because not only do they resist commodification themselves, but they also have access to financial resources, here staged in the form of the diamonds.

The diamonds, emblems of credit and debt and suggestive of a joke that undermines patriarchal assumptions of authority, mark the first transaction of a new network of exchange that will come to define the wives' transformation within the tavern space. Clare tells the Sergeant, pretending she is related to Monopoly, "I must needs have my Cosin go alittle Way out of Town with me, and to secure thee, here are two Diamonds, they are worth two hundred pound, keepe them til I returne him" (3.4.33-5). The diamonds' value, though noted here at two hundred pounds, is made into the collateral for the secured loan – Ambush himself notes them as "good securitie" – with Monopoly as the commodity (3.4.36). It is worth noting here just how far the diamonds travel within the play and how many characters they come into contact with. Following their transfer to Sergeant Ambush guaranteeing Monopoly's exit with Clare, the Sergeant then gives the game away to Tenterhook (4.1.203-7). The citizen takes back the gems, only to lose them to Luce when he visits the prostitute at Birdlime's brothel. She boldly claims them for herself, telling her client: "Ile keepe these Diamonds tell I have my silke gowne, and six els of Cambrick" (4.1.215-6). This is a reference to a discussion only moments earlier that revealed Tenterhook had promised Luce "seven Elles of Cambricke" (4.1.87). Luce herself is in debt (Birdlime describes her as "very poore, all her gowns are at pawne", although we might doubt the veracity of this statement considering its use in luring in Wafer to give her money), but the removal of the diamonds from their rightful owner for a second time only serves to emphasise the way that they are used by Dekker and

Webster to stage the possibilities of – and fantasies about – female economic power (4.1.113-4).

In much the same way that Justiniano imagined Mistress Honeysuckle's purchasing potential would facilitate her sexual transgressions, Dekker and Webster seem to indulge in a narrative that imagines not only how female characters might utilise newfound economic power, but also more radically, how that power might be wrested by women already occupying a network of sexual exchange. We might ask, what are the implications of Luce and then Birdlime being in positions of credit, as they move from the space of the urban brothel to the fringe space of the Brentford tavern? Luce knows very well the value of the diamonds; their value, however, transcends the two hundred pounds mentioned earlier. While Tenterhook begs for their return, promising other recompense to her because he has "Credit", Luce remains silent onstage (4.1.222). Her impassive position renders any economic negotiation futile, while Tenterhook has nothing with which to bargain. Her silence after Tenterhook's second accusation (that she is "a dam'd filthy punke") is surprising, and while Christina Luckyj's argument that "silence in the theatre may ... provide unique opportunities for audiences and actors to share in the same auditory space" may relate more to complete silence onstage, it is helpful to consider in our reading of Luce in this scene (4.1.224; 78). Luckyj argues that an early modern audience might have perceived "radical decentring" in silences, recognising "subversive energies" in such staging (78).<sup>17</sup> Although the moment when Luce would have argued with Tenterhook's charge passes quickly, her silence only serves to

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<sup>17</sup> Of course, Luce would have been played by a male actor, and so the figure of the silent woman – however briefly it occupies the stage – is complicated by early modern theatrical culture which privileged the male. Nonetheless, as Luckyj points out, women were able to appropriate and reshape silence for their own purposes (116).

emphasise the transgressive power of her position of credit, which decentres Tenterhook's own ability to occupy the same.

Like Monopoly, he is now "beholding" to the woman (although now a different one) in possession of the diamonds. The fact that Dekker and Webster stage this shift in economic power twice, with both episodes featuring the transfer of the diamonds, means that when Birdlime takes hold of them, we are alert to the implications. Indeed, at the very moment this happens, the bawd announces, "the getting of these two Diamondes maie chaunce to save the Gentlewomens credit" and she resolves to go by water to intercept them if she can (4.1228-9). "Credit" here is used in terms of both reputation and economic standing. In terms of early modern economic relations, "it was credit, above all, which dominated the way in which the market was structured and interpreted" (Muldrew *Economy* 95). The narrative of the Justinianos' line of credit and the way in which the wives frame their pursuit of the gallants in credit-based terms push the drama towards this point, towards the Brentford tavern as a locus for the production of credit and the staging of this very market. It is Birdlime, however, who facilitates this course of action, forcing the confrontation between the husbands and wives to become more than a narrative of sexual infidelity into one in which the way in which we understand those marriage bonds is complicated by narratives of credit and ownership.

The husbands finally confront their wives at Dogbolt's tavern, and while the wives remain behind a locked door – to which I will return – the husbands are concerned only with their fidelity or otherwise. Once their fears of cuckoldry subside, it is the whereabouts of the diamonds that dominate the scene. Indeed, the first thing with which Tenterhook addresses his wife is, "*Clare* Where be your two ringes with Diamonds?" (5.4.189). Monopoly tells Tenterhook (falsely) that he has discharged his

debt but in doing so mentions that the Sergeant had the diamonds with him (5.4.199-200). Tenterhook demands the truth from Ambush: “Sargant *Ambush*, I charge you as you hope to receive comfort from the smell of *Mace* speake not like a Sargent, but deale honestly, of whome had you the dyamondes” (5.4.205-7). While Ambush yields Clare’s name immediately, Monopoly also puts in a claim on the diamonds, asking, “Where are my Jems and pretious stones that were my bale” (5.4.212). At this point, Justiniano (in league with Clare Tenterhook following an offstage whisper) offers to take on Monopoly’s debt to Tenterhook, using the diamonds as collateral, in an echo of Clare’s earlier strategy. It is only when Birdlime enters that the competing stories of where the diamonds might be are halted.

It may seem rather literal minded to spend so much time tracing the movement of these stones, and the debts which they signify, but their appearance at the Brentford tavern, in the possession of Birdlime, has consequences for both the reconciliation of the drama and the topographical fictions created by the characters. Indeed, in a narrative concerned so much with the integrity of the household and the maintenance of marriage bonds, it is the presence of the diamonds that threatens the negotiations between the competing social codes of the urban and fringe spaces. While the adulterous alliances that are threatened throughout the play are never consummated, the line of credit that extends from Tenterhook, through his wife to Monopoly, to Luce and Birdlime, is irrevocably disrupted; while the marriage bonds are reasserted; the economic bonds remain fragile and subject to change.

We may remember Tenterhook’s desperate exclamation on the party finding itself at Dogbolt’s: “Wee are abuzd, we are bought and sold in *Brainford* Market” (5.4.14). While he goes on to address the misuse of family ties (because it was the lie that Wafer’s child was ill that took the wives to Brentford), it is significant that

Tenterhook frames the situation in which he and the other husbands find themselves in terms of an economic violation. Bearing in mind the narrative of the citizens' solvency in contrast with the gallants' spendthrift behaviour, this is all the more damaging. The destruction of their male agency – that they have become the commodities exchanged for newer models – is figured in terms of the Brentford market, reminding us of Gillian's "flesh exchange" and Openwork's "market day", but where men and not women are exchanged. Tenterhook's lines also echo Justiniano's description of his wife's "slaverie" to poverty that made her seek out the Earl for financial support (4.2.106). We glimpse an alternative market where it is the men who perform the commodified roles normally reserved for women. Moreover, it is "*Brainford* Market" that locates this fantasy, removed from the urban economic fictions by which the husbands defined themselves (as creditors and debtors) and yet recognisable enough for the vision to be merely disrupted rather than dismantled. It remains a space constructed along the same codes of circulation that we saw in London – Monopoly complains that he is "accurst to spend mony in this Towne of iniquity" just as he did in the capital – but its liminality allows for the possibility of other kinds of exchanges (5.1.213).

And while it is Brentford's location that offers the playwrights the opportunity to stage such a market, it is the space of the tavern that serves as locus for these economic tensions. We might remember Clark's observation that, "in England inns and taverns not only performed important victualling services but also acted as the centre point of a galaxy of commercial, governmental and leisure activities" (P. Clark 14). Dogbolt's tavern is, as I demonstrated earlier, unlike other drinking house spaces, but I would argue that in choosing a tavern space to end a play that has so frequently insisted on encounters staged in economic terms, the playwrights were deliberately

drawing on the way that notions of credit and exchange were site-specific to drinking houses. The fabric of the tavern space – its ample number of rooms and the people who work there – is inseparable from the way it operates as a business. The Chamberlain tempts the group of fiddlers inside with the promise of gold from customers, telling them that they “shall put something into their eares, whilst I provide to put something into their bellies”, making clear the link between two separate lines of business (5.2.4-6). Sir Gosling refers to his “bill of *Items*” (5.3.81). Dogbolt’s tavern already functions at a commercial level, and it is this commercial space, made more complicated by the fringe location of Brentford, that then facilitates the challenge we see made to the existing lines of credit. Indeed, Tenterhook’s repeated requests for the Chamberlain to leave them – “Leave us good Chamberlaine, wee are some of their friends: leave us good Chamberlain: be merry a little: leave us honest Chamberlain –” seems to be an attempt to rid themselves of the tavern machinery that has allowed a competing line of credit, in the form of the wives’ alliance, to function (5.4.11-3).

With this in mind, I now return to the final confrontation in the tavern space between the two competing economies. On one level, the tensions between the wives and the husbands erupt in terms of the disordered household and the clash between male and female alliances. Morgan-Russell sees the wives’ victory in the construction of a female homosocial alliance that threatens “male-dominated institutions” (83). The wives withhold sex from the gallants by locking themselves in a room and pretending that Mistress Tenterhook is ill, going as far as to parody the never-staged sexual congress that the gallants imagined would take place: Clare cries, “Pray let my clothes be utterly undone, and then lay mee in my bed” (5.1.222-3). To some extent I agree, but I do not believe Morgan-Russell’s reading goes far enough. It is through

the careful positioning of themselves in positions of credit that the wives are able to negotiate their way out of the situation and outwit both their husbands and the gallants.

Let us recall Mistress Honeysuckle's words at the end of their evening in the Rhenish wine house, when Clare Tenterhook leaves to meet Monopoly: "A reckoning: Breake one, breake all" (2.3.131). Her use of "reckoning" surely calls to mind both a tavern reckoning and, as we have seen in the previous chapters, "the action of two people coming together to compare their respective debts, and to determine how much each actually owed the other" (Muldrew *Economy* 108). This reckoning is staged when the wives finally emerge from their locked room; their chastity intact, the men then wrangle over the diamonds and their debts to each other, effectively performing the act of reckoning that had been promised earlier in the play, but which inverts our dramatic expectations. The women, meanwhile, are in debt to no one and – Clare also having negotiated with Justiniano to take on Monopoly's debt to her husband – occupy positions of solvency in comparison with everyone else.

Dowd writes that "the wives' control of money has put them in a position to either buy or sell sex, [but] in the end they do neither", suggesting that despite holding positions of financial influence they remain strangely disengaged from the market that has been constructed in Brentford (234). However, I think that this reading to some extent misses the point of their economic negotiations throughout the play and, more importantly, their encounter with Brentford. I suggested at the beginning of this chapter that the literary construction of Brentford was rooted in the jesting tradition, and it is here that we see the play engage with that culture. While the diamonds may reside with Birdlime, it is the wives who own something more valuable in terms of their return both to the urban landscape and to their marriages. At the very moment



the wives take up residence in their private room, physically separated from the gallants but also separated from their husbands by being in Brentford, Clare Tenterhook announces: “tho we lye all night out of the Citty, they shall not find country wenches of us: but since we ha brought em thus far into a fooles Paradise, leave em int: the Jest shall be a stock to maintain us and pewfellowes in laughing at christenings, cryings out, and upsittings this twelve month” (5.1.169-73). This speech reveals that the wives never intended to sleep with the gallants anyway, but more importantly it places them at the centre of their own economies: they will have “a stock to maintain” themselves – and their communities – that will provide entertainment for their “pewfellowes” at various social rituals and festivities. It was, as I wrote earlier, that very community that would have sought to discipline the transgressions of the wives had they been seen with the gallants, a threat which provided the impetus to move the group “out of eyes, out of eares” to Brentford (2.3.74). This reinvigoration of community ties provokes their rejection of extramarital sex, and not necessarily any loyalty to their husbands.

The notion that the women are now in possession of a “stock” that will maintain them is, in terms of the play’s ending, the more perplexing and the more transgressive idea. It asserts that even when – and now it is when and not if – the wives return to their husbands, they will remain in positions of, or rather they will position themselves as having, both credit and ownership. It is a vision of community-based independence, framed economically, moving away from the household economies which had defined their domestic settings earlier in the play. It also offers a glimpse of an alternative urban economy where women are not traded as commodities but participate in acts of exchange, as Morgan-Russell writes, as “*transactors*” (80, emphasis in original). Others have read this in rather less affirming

ways. Leinwand sets this notion aside as merely the wives “join[ing] together for their chief comedy” while the action of the play “furnishes the women with a good story” (152-3). Dowd goes one further and reads this gathering of jesting “stock” as an act that does not empower the women:

The wives have consciously decided to reduce their potentially threatening activities to a more easily contained act of storytelling. Dekker and Webster have converted action into narrative; the wives voluntarily choose to abandon the dangerous consumer fantasy of the play’s first four acts. (234).

This ignores the tradition of jest that so suffuses the play and that informs the construction of “Brainford” as a textual space; furthermore, it disregards the possibility of a continued female alliance that is maintained by similar economic urban codes used by the men, in the kind of community that Brown imagines, and which Ruiters has described as “kinship-through-shared-festivity” (69). It is not simply a “witty triumph of wives over importunate lovers and jealous husbands” (Hoy 162). Rather it presents an alternative economy in which the wives may be active participants and genuinely preserve some of the agency that they have constructed.

While the wives return to London and to their husbands (the physical act of leaving Brentford underlining this reconciliation), the transformative power of the tavern space has altered how they will figure their economic status in the future. It is not an unconventional comic model to dramatise how people respond to a test, to risks, to alternative ways of organising their lives while choosing to operate within conventional standards. Dekker and Webster ensure the possibility, however, of a

more radical way of living, and even if the more conservative attitude is overtly championed, the weight of the play's engagement with licentiousness and economic freedom undermines this contrived ending. The presence of Birdlime, and the ultimate whereabouts of the diamonds, underlines this dramatic vision. Now in possession of the precious stones, she "occupies a precarious space between consumer power and financial powerlessness" (Dowd 233). It is her presence at the end of the play that questions whether the bonds of marriage will indeed be reconciled if the bonds of credit – in the form of the diamonds – can be so misappropriated.

Birdlime becomes the scapegoat of the many financial negotiations of *Westward Ho*, and when the flaws and mistakes of the gallants, the wives, and their husbands are laid bare, they turn on her to undermine her place in the economy and topography of the play. Instead of reprimanding each other, they figure her as a token of the exchanges they have made in their own relationships. Justiniano says to her, "you that can loose and find your eares when you list, go, saile with the rest of your baudie-traffickers to the place of sixe-penny Sinfulnesse the suburbes" (5.4.244-6). The desire to remove her from the urban landscape and make her stay in the fringe spaces that foster sexual looseness is part of the way in which Justiniano and the husbands want to rewrite their own urban and domestic environment following the threats of female economic power. The price the merchant puts on the suburban sinfulness with which he aligns Birdlime only serves to show his own misdirected belief in her economic power. As a prostitute, she can never be part of the community that the wives return to, with their "stock" of jests. Her ownership of the diamonds means that she becomes almost an emblem rather than a character: the figure of uncompromising exchange, which accommodates neither the ambiguous reckoning achieved by the husbands nor the fluid economic position of the wives. It is worth

noting that her leaving with the diamonds – the “stones” – is itself emblematic of the way in which the women of the play have to some extent castrated the patriarchal authority of the City (5.4.212). Birdlime’s declaration that she will “take a paire of Oares, and leave” suggests, in a play on words, that she would rather take the explicit commodity of a whore – whatever it is worth – than enter into further economic negotiations with the Londoners (5.4.273-4).

In the character of Birdlime, Dekker and Webster stage the uncomfortable position that pure commercialism occupies in both the urban and the Brentford landscapes. It is this which binds the two locations together, which collapses the distance between urban and fringe space, and which suggests the eventual inclusion of Brentford into the suburban experience, however much the other characters believe they are competing against each other in terms of social and ethical codes. While the breakdown of the household and the unfulfilled exercise in adultery move the action of the play forward, it is the tavern space in, and not the journey to, Brentford that provides the moment of release both in the theatre and in the text. The final moments of the play see the wives, husbands and gallants singing a song:

Oares, Oares, Oares, Oares:

To London hay, to London hay:

Hoist up sayles and lets away,

For the safest bay

For us to land is London shores.

Oares, Oares, Oares, Oares:

Quickly shall wee get to Land,

If you, if you, if you,

Lend us but halfe a hand.

O lend us halfe a hand. (5.4.309-18)

Howard reads this as “underscoring that even in its conclusion this play cannot quite assent to the fiction that any space is impermeable to the admixture of the low, the foreign, and the illicit” (“Women” 164). I would argue instead that it attests to the irrevocable and incontrovertible inclusion of the kinds of exchange espoused by *Birdlime*. If, for the second time, the play on oars/whores suggests the sinfulness of the suburbs is able to penetrate the urban landscape, then so too must be the kinds of credit forged in the tavern space be accommodated there.

### **Conclusion**

It is tempting to read the space of Dogbolt’s tavern as offering a kind of festive retreat, where Brentford as its locus “provides both an escape from and a return to everyday routine; it would not be holiday if its festive impulse were not thus hedged by everyday” (Mullaney 49). Justiniano claims as much in his last words as they leave for London, tidily summing up a narrative that has at times seemed chaotic, confusing, and contradictory:

for you see your Wives are chast, these Gentlemen civill, all is but a merriment, all but a May-game; she has her Diamonds, you shall have your money, the child is recovered, the false Collier discovered, they came to *Brainford* to be merry, you were caught in Bird-lime; and therefore set the Hares-head against the Goose-giblets, out all your

instruments in tune, and every husband play musicke upon the lips of his Wife whilst I begin first. (5.4.277-84)

Justiniano is at pains here to elide the fractious encounters of the previous scene, and, like the playwrights themselves, he attempts to stage the fiction that he has created, of chaste wives, festive company, and stable households based on the sexual solidity of marriage. He even goes as far to tell the rest of the group that the story of he and his wife – who has been hidden from their sight – is “as an olde wives tale” that will keep them occupied on their way back to London (5.4.291).

This brief reference to the narrative of his wife’s abandonment and subsequent foray into quasi-prostitution calls to mind the “stock” of jests that the wives plan to take back to tell their friends at church. It demonstrates both the transitory and subjective nature of such fictions, and reminds us that despite the wives’ victory over the men in their lives and the agency that we imagine they have constructed in the tavern, the underlying narrative is one of male-authorship. The playwrights have nonetheless staged a credible challenge to the normative economic model, and in *Birdlime* there remains the suggestion of alternative positions where credit resides. Moreover, it is the tavern space that remains fixed in Brentford, materially intact and unpenetrated by outside forces, a space of transformation. The opportunities offered here by the Brentford tavern space find echoes in the dramatic responses to *Westward Ho*, in Billingsgate and Ware, at or outside the City walls, defined by and yet resisting inclusion in the urban economic landscape. The transformative power of the fringe tavern also resonates in the location of Barnet, where we find Jonson’s the Light Heart Inn, to which I will turn next.

#### Chapter 4: Ownership and Circulation in Ben Jonson's *The New Inn*

In the last scene of Jonson's 1629 play, *The New Inn*, the aristocratic Lovel responds to a series of revelations with the questions:

Is this a dream now, after my first sleep?  
Or are these phant-sies made i' the Light Heart,  
And sold i' the New Inn? (5.5.120-2)<sup>18</sup>

Lovel's questions are more incisive than doubtful, as he of all the characters has been primary witness to the commercial incentive that pervades the Light Heart. They may be framed in the imagery of the romance genre, spoken by the nostalgic and melancholic hero, but they encapsulate the imperative that underlies Jonson's vision for the play. What is clear from these lines is the positioning of the inn as a commercial operation, where characters and encounters are as much dependent upon the economic framework of the establishment as the provision of wares and services.

This chapter is concerned with interrogating that framework, and will consider whether the play exposes the need for commercialism in opposition to a more settled, landed economy, when participating in the modes of exchange facilitated by the inn. My aim is to demonstrate how this model can be used to illuminate the social politics of this play. Bearing in mind Bruster's argument that London theatres "came to stage scenarios that represented, reflexively, the market's extensive cultural implications", I will ask how commercialism underpins the familial and community negotiations, and hope to demonstrate that the energy of the play is essentially more economically

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<sup>18</sup> All quotations are taken from Hattaway's edition of the play. I refer to Sanders' edition where stated.

radical than conservative (10). The inn emerges as dynamic economic space in its own right, and while this means that it can to some extent accommodate competing economic fantasies, the play asserts the need for a new type of circulation.

The action of *The New Inn* takes place over the course of a day, entirely within the confines of the Light Heart, an inn in Barnet on the staging route north out of London. The inn is run by the Host, Goodstock, accompanied by his retinue of ‘below stairs’ servants, including Fly, a character who appears to ensure the smooth operation of the business through various illicit – yet commercially successful – schemes. Staying at the inn is the above-mentioned Lord Lovel, secretly in love with Lady Frances Frampul, a landed and wealthy heiress who visits the Light Heart with her friends intending to spend the day indulging in festivity. Frances is very handsomely living off her estates, an action of which Lovel disapproves. Frances’ chambermaid Pru is nominated Queen of the “day’s sports” and it is Pru who instigates a ‘Parliament of Love’ where Lovel speaks on matters of honour and valour in an attempt to woo the object of his affection, which in the end he does (1.6.44). We finally discover that the Host is in fact Frances’ long-lost father Lord Frampul, who has unwittingly been residing in the same place as his abandoned wife (disguised as an Irish nurse) and second daughter, Laetitia (disguised as a serving boy, Frank). Into this mix Jonson brings a London tailor, Stuff, and his wife Pinnacia, who are themselves visiting the inn to indulge in a sexual role play that involves a dress intended for Pru, which results in heavy punishment from the aristocratic crowd. The disguises of the various members of the Frampul family are removed, and Goodstock bequeaths the inn to Fly.

*The New Inn* was badly received when it was first performed at Blackfriars in 1629, and has suffered from critical neglect, for the most part, until relatively



recently. Anne Barton's *Ben Jonson Dramatist* (1984) has been important in repositioning *The New Inn* as Jonson's response to his reading of Shakespeare's *First Folio* (1623), but there are limitations of such a reading. In fact, part of this chapter will challenge Barton's studious disregard for the 'below stairs' community and its importance in not only the maintenance of the inn, but also eventual transformation of the aristocratic group of revellers with which it comes into contact. More recent studies have alighted on the play's wider engagement with political and spatial issues. Martin Butler has argued compellingly for a reading that rejects Barton's and David Norbrook's assertions of "late Jonsonian radicalism" and understands *The New Inn* within a framework of "rapprochement or accommodation" towards the court ("Late Jonson" 167, 172). He suggests Jonson used the romance genre to offer "a fable about the loss and recovery of a traditional aristocracy" that alerts us to the changes at court following the assassination of Buckingham in 1628 and the expectations of the 1629 Parliament ("Late Jonson" 172). The conservatism of Jonson attested to in this reading is not necessarily at odds with my own position, although I do argue for a certain radicalism within the economy facilitated by the inn. I suggest that the final transformations occur due to the accommodations allowed by such an economy, accommodations that we find in Butler's own political reading.

The political context of the play is also the concern of Sheila M. Walsh, who suggests that its commercial setting should be read in terms of the heraldic practices that identified aristocratic households, alert to the demands of the Court of Chivalry and contemporary concerns that Charles I was purchasing titles (227-8). For the purposes of this chapter, her assertion that Jonson constructs the inn as a fluid space, shifting between domestic and commercial concerns, is pertinent (230). Indeed, the reading accommodates the transformative qualities of the inn that are central to my

own contention, but my position rests more firmly on the way in which the characters negotiate the dynamics of ownership and capital, than on questions of heraldic visitations and agency. Other recent studies have explored the play in terms of narratives of exploration, and civility and religion respectively (Rebecca Ann Bach 1997; Glenn J. Clark 2004). Important connections have also been made by Jonathan Haynes and Julie Sanders to the significance of clothing in the play, and how Jonson carefully negotiates the psychology of dress.

More recently, *The New Inn* has enjoyed particular attention in the field of early modern mobility and circulation. McRae and Sanders have written compellingly regarding the way in which the Light Heart invokes ideas about domestic travel, rootlessness and vagrancy. McRae suggests that Jonson's evident championing of "principles of property and placement" is "undermined in part by his interest in the inn itself" (*Literature* 135). He goes on to argue that one of the key tensions of the play is how, despite the way in which commerce defines the space of the inn, Goodstock is presented as trying to transform it "into a version of home" (*Literature* 137). Similarly, Sanders raises the issue of the Light Heart appearing "as a kind of anti-household" through the conflicting narratives presented by the Host (*Cultural* 141). Goodstock, she argues, tries to recreate the inn "as a micro-estate" (*Cultural* 142). Certainly Jonson positions his characters as negotiating particular anxieties relating to the source of their social and economic currency; a shadow is cast in the play by the issue of land and property. Within that framework, the play asks to what extent the domestic and commercial imperatives offered up by the inn are in competition with one another, and indeed if they are compatible with the requirements of those who inhabit the space.

Jonson's decision to set the play in the Barnet establishment is to some extent a pragmatic one, allowing for the site-specific opportunities afforded to those who went there (McRae *Literature* 135; Sanders *Cultural* 152-3). Such a setting of course also engages with the traditions and energies of the drinking house space. Moreover, the location of the inn on the road north out of London is significant in terms of it being at a nexus for travelling and communication. As I suggested in my previous chapter, Barnet, like Brentford, emerges as a satellite town "on the margins" of country and city – non-urban, non-suburban and certainly liminal – "rather further removed from the city's edge, an important staging-point on the old post road" (Sanders *Theatrical* 151; "Day's Sports" 551). Indeed, as I also mentioned previously, while Sanders herself describes the Light Heart as "suburban", she also notes that "it might be argued that 'suburban' is an anachronistic usage" and that her "intention is to stress that the proximity of Barnet to the metropolis is central to its operations and allure" (*Cultural* 152, 152n57). Just as we can read the Brentford tavern as a creation accommodating the fears and fantasies of those who temporarily leave the City of London, we can similarly read the Light Heart as a site that facilitates certain commercial encounters between those who have (temporarily) left their estates. Furthermore, the location of Barnet is crucial to how we interpret the episode with the Stuffs, who make an excursion from London in order to fulfil certain sexual desires. Their punishment – being made to walk back to the capital – is necessarily entwined with the notion of porous sexual and topographical boundaries.

This chapter will interrogate those commercial encounters, and will ask to what extent the concerns of the inn affect and transform the characters within it. I argue that in learning how the commercial world functions, and then by upholding its structures, the characters of *The New Inn* demonstrate the extent to which they are

bound up in that world, despite both initial resistance and claims to the contrary that the site can be controlled in domestic terms. Furthermore, in examining the different fictions of ownership that are invoked, the play exposes key tensions between competing narratives of capital and circulation. I suggest that the action of the play traces a movement away from concrete notions of wealth, and suggests that the community of the Light Heart becomes part of a wider economic community, basing its interactions on a model of commercial exchange. There is a sense that once they participate in such an economy, there is no absolute return to the kind of nostalgic Penshurstian ideal from which they originated, and that while they may offer resistance to this new model it will, in the final throes of the play, triumph.

### **Ownership and transformation**

This section will trace how the aristocratic community ensconced in the inn is influenced and finally integrated into the commercial world represented by the Light Heart, as opposed to the world of their estates that they have left behind. It will demonstrate that by facing the challenge – in the form of the cheating tailor and his wife – to the commercial values that they seem at first not to uphold, Frances and her party come to recognise the extent to which the economy of the inn is in fact representative of a wider network, and in order to function in both they must admit its authority. I will demonstrate how the commercial imperatives of the inn seep into the other kinds of social negotiations that we witness. All the resolutions within the play are dependent upon a series of transactions, some of which are explicitly commercial, and those of which are not, I will argue, continue to be influenced by the inn's impulse towards commercialism.

Despite the extent to which Goodstock would have us believe that the Light Heart functions as a quasi-domestic space, from the outset the play constructs a decidedly commercial operation. The number of employees situated in the inn reflects Clark's observation that such establishments "usually had a bevy of maids, tapsters, chamberlains and ostlers to serve the multitude of guests" (P. Clark 7). Not only does Goodstock have Fly as his chief operator, but during the course of the play we also meet Jordan the chamberlain, Jug the tapster, Peck the ostler, and we hear about several others. As discussed in the previous chapter, Barnet is conveniently situated on the road out of London, and the Light Heart offers both accommodation for those wishing to make a day's excursion (like the Stuffs) and, we can assume, those travelling further afield. Despite the household fictions created by the Host – to which I shall return – Goodstock himself acknowledges the inn as a space that offers the opportunity to spend. The sign of the inn not only suggests the joys of a light heart, but also implies it is facilitated by a "heavy purse" (1.1.14). And while Goodstock may see in the establishment a space in which he may "imagine all the world's a play", he still accepts Lovel's charge that an inn will supply drink to "every jovial tinker, for his chink" (1.3.128, 113). Much like the drinking houses we have previously encountered, the Light Heart operates within a framework of commercialised hospitality, where Host and customers alike are bound by the financial responsibilities and demands imposed upon them by the space itself.

When Frances and her company arrive, then, and are overheard discussing their plans to "throw / The house out o' the window" there is a sense that the new arrivals are immediately positioning themselves in opposition to the material space (1.6.7-8). Hattaway, in his edition, notes that this phrase is proverbial for "riotous merry-making" (*The New Inn* 85n7-8). Nonetheless, if we consider that we have seen

in other texts the tavern space described as a house, not least by the Hostess in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, and moreover, that Goodstock is anxious about his moveable property being spoiled, I suggest that the aristocrats' behaviour is more than a little threatening. Goodstock cries, "Cushions and carpets, / Chairs, stools, and bedding? Is not their sport my ruin?" (1.6.10-11). His words recall those of Mistress Quickly, who is "undone" when she has to "pawn both [her] plate and the tapestry of [her] dining chambers" (*2 Henry IV* 2.1.117, 11-2). There is a sense here that the visitors put no store by the things of the inn nor of ownership in general, and like Peele who tried to steal the feather bed from his Hostess, the exploitation of the inn's standing is figured in the attempt to defenestrate the furnishings.

This makes more sense when seen within the wider context of Frances' behaviour. Frances, like Cokes in *Bartholomew Fair*, is accused by Lovel of being an unchecked consumer, with enormous funds at her disposal, a charge that ties her to an economic system based on inherited estates. Lovel tells Goodstock that she "takes all lordly ways how to consume it / As nobly as she can: if clothes and feasting / And the authorised means of riot will do it" (1.5.78-80). Her enjoyment of her wealth also includes having a "multitude of servants" (1.5.53). The materiality of the inn's operation, then, and its place within a cycle of circulation stands at odds with Frances' own economic values. Indeed, ownership of land emerges in this instance as a means to an end, the end being the ability to spend. Lovel actually draws a comparison between the errant Lord Frampul (who is, of course, disguised as Goodstock) and his daughter: "The mad Lord Frampul! And this same is his daughter, / But as cock-brained as e'er the father was!" (1.5.65-6). We are then invited to consider Frances' own attitude towards her land in much the same way that the narrative of the father disappearing to "lie and live with the gipsies" encourages us to see Lord Frampul

evading responsibility (1.5.63). Furthermore, as McRae points out, Frances' shirks the duties of her status "on multiple levels", when we find her appointing her chambermaid Pru, as the overseer of the day's festivities and its Parliament of Love (*Literature* 138). The play "positions her as someone in need of the conjoined disciplines of patriarchy and place" (McRae *Literature* 138). It is tempting to see, perhaps, the play posit the idea that female inheritance is inherently problematic, were it not for the narrative that has Lord Frampul similarly wastes his inheritance by absconding. Nonetheless, Frances' initial behaviour offers an economic model that is consistently challenged by the play, which, as we shall see, insists upon the need for a deeper engagement with a commercial world.

The movement of the play suggests that Frances and her party have set themselves adrift from that world typified by the aristocratic estate of the kind seen in Jonson's poem "To Penshurst". Their arrival at the inn – although defined by the attempt to assail its materiality – suggests a need to engage with a space that is defined by commercialism rather than one based more on land and feudal ties. Pru's fear that Frances has come to a public inn without any female company bar her chambermaid aligns her mistress with a society concerned with conventional hierarchies (2.1.46-49). Frances, however, claims that she wishes to break out from those very bonds: "As if I lived / To any other scale than what's my own, / Or sought myself, without myself, from home" (2.1.58-60). Pru, in fact, has already sworn to Lovel that she will hold up a mirror and show Frances "where she hath erred" (1.6.77). Lovel takes this to mean that his past conflicts with Frances may be smoothed over, but I suggest that embedded in this narrative is a sense that Frances' visit to the inn will result in a transformation as she breaks away from her former life.

As such, Hattaway's suggestion that *The New Inn* represents a space which "serves as the anti-type of Penshurst ... a place where [sic] all men may lodge but no man dwells" is compelling (22). This contention is based on a belief that Jonson's play fundamentally laments the loss of that sort of Penshurstian household. Indeed, Hattaway suggests that the playwright "inserts a panegyric of the world that had been lost, of the chivalric education that had been acquired by men of good stock in the houses of the old aristocracy", a reference to Lovel's speech in the first act which celebrates the life that a page could expect (22). While this is persuasive, I suggest that *The New Inn* does not construct the inn space in such a way as to indulge in nostalgia. I agree with the idea that the Light Heart represents an alternative to that sort of estate culture, and more specifically, to that kind of household, but I suggest instead that it is an alternative based on economics. The Light Heart operates on a different economic level, and holds different economic values from that of the kind of estates that one might say are represented by Penshurst. Although we never hear about the characteristics of the Frampul estates, the play insists upon them as crucial to our understanding of both Frances and Goodstock, and as such, the movement away from that kind of living inevitably presents a challenge to that way of life (McRae *Literature* 138).

As I wrote earlier regarding *Westward Ho*, it is not an unconventional model for early modern plays to stage how certain characters and behaviours are exposed to tests and alternative ways of organising their lives, before resorting to a conventional model of living. *The New Inn* dramatises such a test for the aristocrats in the encounter with the errant tailor and his wife, but, as I hope to demonstrate, such a test results in an irrevocable change to the more landed, settled economy represented by Frances and her retinue. The London tailor Nicholas Stuff and his wife Pinnacia



arrive at the inn disguised as a footman and the countess whom he serves. The aspiration of Pinnacia to hold a noble rank is revealed by Barnaby, a hired coachman, who tells Jug and Jordan that his hat had been blown off in the wind, but he had been instructed by his lady to leave it, and he was made to “drive bare-headed i’ the rain” (4.1.17). Jordan remarks that this is because “she might be mistaken for a countess” whose servants would have been without headgear (4.1.18). Pinnacia is seen on stage wearing a gown intended for Pru, and she is eventually discovered by the aristocratic retinue; the couple are humiliated and punished in a specific way, to which I will attend in a moment. It seems at first that it is the socially transgressive element of the couple’s behaviour that is responsible for the reaction of Frances and her followers, especially if we consider the lengths to which Pinnacia has gone in order to misrepresent her social status, the truth of which is betrayed by her behaviour. Lord Latimer mocks Pinnacia for “answer[ing] like a fishwife” while dressed as a lady, and Frances calls the offence “’gainst the sovereignty”, a reference both to the misappropriation of Pru’s gown, and the overturning of accepted hierarchies (4.3.31, 85). Nonetheless, this interpretation, however compelling, overlooks the frequency with which the commercial implications are mentioned, and does not go far enough to address the transgression made within the framework of exchange in the play. Furthermore, the competing narratives of ownership that are given voice in this episode reveal the way in which the wider play – and the inn itself – accommodates fluid, and sometimes illicit, notions of exchange.

The tailor’s policy of exploiting his commissioned work for his own gratification is revealed by his wife’s confession:

When he makes any fine garment will fit me,

Or any rich thing that he thinks of price,  
 Then I must put it on and be his countess  
 Before he carry it home unto the owners.  
 A coach is hired and four horse; he runs  
 In his velvet jacket thus to Rumford, Croydon,  
 Hounslow, or Barnet, the next bawdy road;  
 And takes me out, carries me up, and throws me  
 Upon a bed – (4.3.66-74)

Pinnacia's description recalls, as I discussed in my previous chapter, fears surrounding increased access to coach travel and, as a result, locations near to the capital that offered occasion for illicit behaviour. The places she mentions are all situated close enough to London to be accessible for a day's excursion, and it is clear that she and her husband take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by such travel. They not only indulge in a sexual fantasy, but they also engage in a class pretence where they simultaneously act up (Pinnacia becomes a countess) and down (Stuff becomes a footman). Sanders writes, "[Pinnacia] stands in the play as a literal embodiment of anxieties about the new mobility of the lower classes" and her punishment – stripped and made to walk back to London – "is a grim inversion of the freedom to travel which she has elsewhere asserted" (*Cultural* 154). Taking this reading even further, the impossibility of curtailing the mobility represented by the Stuffs, as McRae points out, is also figured in their punishment, as they are loosed "into the anonymity of the highway and the city" (*Literature* 140). Consequently, the tailor and his wife come to stand for those forces that the play insists upon as uncontained and uncontainable.

On one level, then, the encounter between the Stuffs and the aristocrats would have us believe that such forces are rejected by Frances and her company just as Jonson figures them as irrepressible. On another level, however, I suggest that the encounter is one of the central events of the play in terms of Frances' economic rehabilitation. The space of the inn not only facilitates their meeting through the kind of hospitality it offers to all who can pay, but also allows for a renegotiation of the narratives of ownership fantasised by Frances. If we consider the Stuffs' actions through a framework of ownership, credit and circulation, we are better able to understand the complexities of the episode. The 'above stairs' community of the inn accuse Stuff not only of sexual transgressions, of sleeping with a "succuba" in his customers' "names", but more importantly, in their "credits" and "at all their costs" (4.3.81, 82). "Credits", as Sanders suggests, refer to the credit notes issued to a tailor for materials they were given to make up into garments (*The New Inn* 276n82). These references to the financial implications of Nick Stuff's wrongdoing frame the incident in terms of a disordered exchange, whereby the customer (Frances) is deprived, albeit temporarily, of the wares for which she has paid and of which she believes she is the owner. Stuff has disrupted the logic of his trade, which in turn threatens to destabilise the wider financial system in which it functions. His acknowledgement of Frances as his "best customer" means that, although he begs forgiveness, it is an action which cannot be forgiven, because he has broken the trust – abused her "credits" as well as transgressed socially (4.3.48, 50).

This reading makes sense of the tension between the way the Stuffs are treated for using the dress and the fact that Pru is also given one of her mistress' dresses to wear. As Sanders writes, "Pru is considerably troubled by the social implications of dressing in her mistress's attire" ("Day's Sports" 547). McRae sees the difference

between the two women in terms of how much they stay loyal (Pru) or not (Pinnacia) to “the codes and structures” of their social superiors (*Literature* 140). If we consider, however, the way in which ownership is understood by Frances and her retinue, then this emerges as less of a contradiction than first thought. The dress lent to Pru, as Sanders notes, can be sold on after it has been worn to a theatre company, in the hope that it will “yield” a financial reward for the chambermaid (“Day’s Sports” 547; 2.1.37). In comparison, the only reward Frances imagines for the Stuffs is severe punishment (2.1.19). I suggest that Frances sees Pru’s dress as something material that can be owned and exchanged, as part of a cycle of circulation, while the dress Stuff borrows has been withheld from such an action. This is underlined by Pru’s accusation that tradesmen are wont “[t]o swear and break: they all grow rich by breaking / More than their words; their honesties and credits / Are still the first commodity they put off” (2.1.10-2). This suggests that one’s credit should be seen as a commodity belonging to the individual, a commodity worth preserving in order to function within the wider economy. The dress is also Stuff’s commodity to be exchanged, although he never truly owns it and appropriates it for a specific length of time. Framing Stuff’s transgression in terms of commodities he has misused within a cycle of circulation that he has denied, means that the staging of his punishment takes on a different meaning.

The specifics of their treatment are peculiar to the penalty given to prostitutes or at least “unruly women” (Hattaway *The New Inn* 170n98-9; Sanders *The New Inn* 277n97-9; McRae *Literature* 140). Lord Latimer calls for Stuff to “beat the basin afore” his wife, stripped to her underclothes, as they are sent on their way (4.3.99). That Pinnacia is punished as a whore suggests that her transgression is in part a disruption of the sexual codes, which the aristocrats claim to uphold. The illicit

behaviour of the Stuffs echoes that which we saw in the previous chapter, where men and women escaped to locations such as Brentford and Barnet to indulge in sexual fantasy. Those fantasies, however, are not punished in *Westward Ho*, where even Birdlime the bawd escapes sanction. Indeed, bearing in mind Stuff's assurances that Pinnacia is his "lawfully begotten wife, / In wedlock", the "ferocity" of the aristocrats appears strange (4.3.55-6; Haynes 55). The play here pulls in different directions, and I suggest that there are certain tensions that cannot be resolved. Nonetheless, Frances' accusation that Pinnacia is a bawd – she calls her "immodest woman" – means that to a certain extent the tailor's wife is aligned with the business of illicit exchange (4.3.74). As we shall see later in this chapter, the forces of the inn accommodate a careful "balance of legal and illegal business" (McRae *Literature* 142). The porous boundary between the Stuffs' operation and the enactment of their own pleasures is too much for the aristocrats to accommodate at their "costs" (4.3.81). Frances may take her money from her lands, but the play nonetheless aligns her with the forces of honest consumption.

If we widen the scope of this reading, I suggest that the severity of the reaction to the Stuffs reveals not only the extent to which commercial values are upheld by the play, but also the importance of trustworthy ownership. The accusation of whoredom directed towards Pinnacia is interesting because it frames her in commercial terms, and yet it associates her with illicit behaviour. In using the specifically commercial language, which I detailed above, to denunciate them both, the aristocratic party reveals their reliance on codes of honesty within commercial exchanges, and, more importantly, their relationship to the competing notions of economic opportunity. The aristocrats depend on the world that Lovel recalled, the world bred in "nurseries of nobility", but in an economic as well as a social way (1.3.51). The crux of this is that

when Frances and her party condemn the Stuffs in the most economic of terms, they are passing judgement on the way the tailor and his wife are making money, as well as the way that they are slipping through social boundaries. What is at stake is the manner of the profit gained by the Stuffs, whether it is a more abstract one defined in sexual terms, or a more concrete one, where they take payment for dresses never delivered. I suggest that the tension in this episode is crucially to do with the encounter between ‘old’ and ‘new’ money, or, rather, between the traditional economic values found in the aristocratic estates, and the more capitalist model of the Stuffs. This is not to say that Frances, and indeed Lord Frampul, are uncomplicated representations of an ideal of estate living. The play admits that both of them wasted or abandoned their lands. Nonetheless, the narrative ties them to that economic model in a way that maintains a hold over the play.

While the aristocrats may initially identify themselves with the old economic values, and take a hard line with those who attempt to find a new way to operate in the wider economy, the play’s energy insists upon their participation in a more commercial, exchange economy. In fact, I suggest that the expulsion of the Stuffs from the inn can be read more widely in terms of their expulsion from the text, as an indication of the play’s contention that to function within an economic system that prizes ongoing exchange above all, certain economic standards must be upheld. Alighting on Beaufort’s accusation that the tailor has exploited Frances’ “credits”, we can see how the attitude of the Stuffs is one that transgresses the boundaries of honest commercialism (4.3.82).

The insistence on the commercial values that are misused by the Stuffs marks a change in the economics of the inn’s community, and is, I believe, crucial to how the characters work toward specific ends within the play. The first sitting of the

Parliament of Love, where Lovel is bid to give a definition of love, ends with Frances bestowing a kiss, ordered by the ‘court’, described by Pru as “a debt and due” (3.2.239). Despite her chambermaid figuring this act in terms of financial payment, Frances herself remains reluctant to embrace such terms, and expresses her kiss as a contractual obligation, which she “tender[s]” (3.2.244). Following an adjournment, in which time the Stuffs are discovered, and Frances and her party uphold in the strictest terms the rights – and rites – of commercial exchange, the second sitting of the Parliament of Love requires Lovel to characterise valour. At the end of this address, the type of language used by Frances is markedly commercial, and this positions her within a network of exchange previously unseen: “Well, sir, you must be paid and legally” (4.4.245). This insistence on payment and legality is a direct response to the non-payment and illegitimacy inherent in her encounter with the Stuffs. She may claim to be “changed” and “translated” through the power of Lovel’s first speech about love, but we see that change only in terms of her feelings towards him (3.2.170, 171). Her behaviour, however, is only transformed after the discovery and punishment of the Stuffs, which crucially gives her the opportunity to witness how damaging to the community is the failure to participate honestly in the network of exchange. By transforming the upstairs room of the Light Heart into a temporary alternative household, Frances is able to translate herself not only in terms of her relationship with Lovel but also in terms of how she behaves. Her intention may be at the start to play with Pru and tease her followers, but the commercial space of the inn both allows for her transformation and informs it.

At the end of the play, we may now recall Lovel’s comment to Goodstock that Frances is “as cock-brained as e’er the father was!” (without realising of course that Goodstock is “the father”) (1.5.66). By aligning her with the Host, there is a sense that

Frances' identity was always bound up with the commerce of the inn, before the audience – or Lovel – even realised her true relationship with Goodstock. Indeed, the ultimate resolution of Frances' movement through the play comes when the Host reveals himself to be her father, and transfers the ownership of her person to Lovel (5.5.117-8). Goodstock may couch this with the proviso, “with her consent”, but Frances herself becomes one of his wares to be sold in the inn (5.5.118). The insistence by the play on Frances' commercial transformation up to this point is contracted in this last scene, and it might be argued that her position within the network of exchange is reduced through Goodstock treating her not as a participant but as ‘stock’.

Nonetheless, I would argue that while the play is ambiguous in this respect, it insists upon the importance of commercial negotiations to resolve other non-commercial relationships. As Walsh has noted, even the revelation that the boy Frank is really Frances' sister Laetitia is coded in terms of commerce. She writes of the girl's mother:

While the “production” of a girl child as grounds for abandonment was suspect, however, it is clear that by bringing her daughter to the Light Heart to have her/him sheltered, educated to the extent that Frank/Laetitia speaks flawless school Latin, and apprenticed to service in the hostelry trade, she is not only recreating the family domestic sphere in a commercial space, but doing so in such a way as will ensure for the younger child an upbringing that will obviate her dependence on land or inheritance. (246)



Both Frances and Laetitia are now heirs of Lord Frampul, but the family recede as the play draws to a close. If we remember the bestowal of the inn to Fly by Goodstock, it is clear that property being transferred is still the defining feature of the end of the play; it is how things are resolved, and how families are reunited. While the community may praise Pru's character – Goodstock describes her as “best deserving / Of all that are i' the house, or i' my Heart” – she is still subsumed by the power of the narrative of ownership (5.5.130-1). Goodstock and Beaufort each offer her two thousand pounds for her dowry, to be matched by Lovel, but Latimer, who has fallen in love with her over the course of the action, refuses this considerable amount of money set down for her (5.5.134, 136, 38). At first glance this may appear to be entirely high-minded, but I suggest that, in contrast, Latimer, like Goodstock, is abiding by the rules of a commercial transaction rather than altruistic motives. He still insists on calling her “a dowry” in herself and whether or not this is because she is “self-sufficient in her virtue and manners” is beside the point (5.5.143, 144). Latimer's description of her relies on the basis that she herself is something to be owned, and that by marrying her, he is profiting. His inability – or refusal – to break out from using a commercial lexicon to describe Pru undermines the trajectory of romance that the revelatory ending would have us understand. Instead the play continues to assert the essential quality of commercial enterprise within the familial negotiations that we observe.

Lovel's words that opened this chapter, which talk about the “phant-sies made i' the Light Heart, / And sold i' the New Inn”, reveal the extent to which the romance is defined by commerce (5.5.121-2). McRae writes, “The point is that his fundamentally pragmatic attitude towards the inn in the opening scenes has been modified, as this particular room within the inn has been transformed into a space of

family. It is almost, though not quite, a space of home” (*Literature* 138-9). This is compelling, although I suggest a slightly different reading. Lovel’s words do indeed indicate a shift in his stance on the inn, but I would not go as far as seeing the space transformed into a domestic one. I read Lovel’s words to suggest that commercial pragmatism wins over everything, and that the “phant-sies” of romance are simply yet another iteration of the wares available there. Ownership still matters – and we shall see this again with Fly – in a space that insists upon a narrative of commercialism. It is significant that he uses the same word – “phant’sie” – that he used to describe Frances to Goodstock early on in the play (1.5.51). Frances is indeed the “phant’sie” that is sold in the inn, just as she aligns herself with the economy that would sell her.

#### **In “every cup and company”: Fly as enforcer**

Central to my argument of the importance of circulation in *The New Inn*, is the character of Fly, “the parasite o’ the house”, who occupies a liminal position in the inn’s community but who is nevertheless integral to its economic sustainability (2.4.4). While he may to a certain extent stand for the forces of rootlessness that occupy the play, I suggest that he is just as emblematic of the forces of circulation and commercialism. At the action’s close, when Goodstock/Frampul bequeaths him the Light Heart, the play insists upon the necessity of Fly’s position as a character who navigates the albeit porous boundaries of “legal and illegal business” (McRae *Literature* 142). The movement that ends with the inn under Fly’s control situates him within a framework of ownership upon which the play frequently insists. Indeed, Fly is frequently subject to fictions of ownership himself. The key tension, I argue, is that, as I have shown in my previous chapters, the drinking house emerges in many early modern texts as a space that cannot be controlled in such a way, requiring a constant

negotiation between host and customer. Nevertheless, the consistency of Fly's presence, and his ability to participate in activities both 'below stairs' and, to a certain extent 'above', demonstrates the play's contention that Fly is at the heart both of the material space, and of the inn's economy. Moreover, the community 'below stairs' is central to the commercial imperatives of the space, which affects the rest of the characters. In tracing the ways in which Jonson positions Fly as a shifting and ambiguous character, a character aligned with the cycle of circulation for which the inn stands, we are better able to see how the play moves away from the settled, landed economy of the aristocrats.

We are first alerted to Fly's presence by Latimer and Beaufort, two of Lady Frampul's suitors, who immediately label him "parasite" in accordance with Jonson's own description in 'The Persons of the Play':

LATIMER.	What
	Then o' this parasite?
BEAUFORT.	O, he's a dainty one,
	The parasite o' the house. (2.4.3-6)

While the parasite may be a stock figure in early modern comedy, I do not want to neglect how this particular word relates to Fly's position economically. Indeed, I suggest that Jonson uses Fly to redraw a stock comic figure, in a play that is freshly concerned with context as much as character. In this way, the play draws on that which Haynes writes of late sixteenth-century comedy: "realism ... not of subject matter but of the relation of subject to environment" (25). Fly's name is no mere accident, as Barton has extensively argued, but to suggest it points only to the "sub-

human ... qualities” that mark out the ‘below stairs’ crowd where “people are nothing more than their names” is to take a reductive stance (273). Fly remains elusive and ambiguous, a character that, I suggest, resists the notion of the stock figure just as he accommodates certain qualities inherent in that role.

Considering Fly’s label as a “parasite”, the *OED Online* not only defines the term as “[a] person who lives at the expense of another, or of society in general” but suggests that the word’s early use means “a person who obtains the hospitality or patronage of the wealthy or powerful by obsequiousness and flattery” (“Parasite”). The assumption is that Fly performs the part of someone who lives off others, in this case Goodstock. By outlining this characterisation from the outset (in the printed version of the play at least), Jonson creates an expectation that Fly’s identity is bound up both in the context of the stage parasite, and also in the economic sense that he will leech from the inn. Barton reads Fly’s behaviour throughout the play in this manner, writing that he acts as “a familiar” with all its connotations of the succubus (274). This reading, however, neglects the way in which the play – albeit perhaps grudgingly – admits the fluid nature of Fly’s character. Even at this early stage, Goodstock confirms Fly’s presence and importance in the inn, but also asserts Fly as his property, positioning himself as the manipulator of all characters within the space. Yet we shall see that Fly is a more pervasive, and sustaining presence than Goodstock himself. The suggestion that such a person would obtain hospitality at the expense of another conflicts with Fly’s providing of hospitality to customers of the Light Heart. I shall return presently to the play’s distortion of the inn’s expected process of exchange, but it is important to consider Fly in the light of such characterisation.

This tension between Fly’s name and attendant qualities helps to explain the inconsistency in his initial presence. Beaufort asks Goodstock, “How came you by

this property?" to which he replies, "Who? My Fly?" (2.4.9). The Host's use of proprietorial language to describe their relationship fits with Fly being a dependent of the inn, someone who obtains that "patronage" which the *OED Online* mentions, but conflicts with the suggestion that Fly obtains hospitality at someone's expense ("Parasite"). If he belongs to Goodstock, then it seems unlikely that he should exploit his owner, especially when that owner insists upon his own controlling presence (a point to which I shall return). Moreover, Fly's silence in this scene, though we can assume his presence on stage, reinforces the objectification of him by the other characters, as they continue to assign his character the qualities of the parasite's performance. Indeed, Goodstock reduces Fly to a mere possession:

I had him when I came to take the inn here,  
Assigned me over in the inventory  
As an old implement, a piece of household-stuff,  
And so he doth remain. (2.4.16-19)

These lines evoke the idea that Fly is as much a stage property as a piece of property belonging to the inn itself. Bruster has written about the way in which the early modern stage mirrored the "growing cultural preoccupation with commodity and materiality" and how stage properties "not only serve as floating signifiers between individuals ... but become a focus of interest in themselves" (64). If we recall the importance placed on the things of the Light Heart – the things that Frances wanted to throw out of the window – then the idea of Fly being one of them situates him in a very different way to the inn from any other character.

Indeed, it is worth considering how Bruster develops his point to show how stage properties “intersected with the socially constructed *concept* of property” (65, emphasis in original). He uses the term “commercial inscription” to apply to the “determined project of identity construction based in the market and directed towards objectifying the female (and objectifying the male identity in ‘feminized’ objects)” (65). While Bruster writes that Renaissance comedy uses “a reifying process ... [that] marks objects with human identity”, in *The New Inn* I contend that the convention is upended by the Host as he marks Fly with an objective identity (65). I suggest that this is because Jonson is concerned less with the personification of commodities and more with the commodification of personalities (Bruster 65). This is not to say that we should assume that Fly was ever ‘human’ or that he can be treated as a three-dimensional character and not a stock comic figure, but rather his presence is commodified, in a theatrical representation of the relation of subject and commercialism.

Nevertheless, the reification of Fly, and the attempts to position him as part of the material establishment, are resisted by his own actions and encounters with the other characters, including those who would initially have him perform a more limited role in the inn. While Goodstock may at first materially reduce him, he contradicts himself when he acknowledges Fly’s agency. Goodstock admits that

The school, then, are my stables or the cellar  
 Where he [Fly] doth study deeply at his hours  
 Cases of cups, I do not know how spiced  
 With conscience, for the tapster and the ostler: as  
 Whose horses may be cozened, or what jugs

Filled up with froth. That is his way of learning. (2.5.34-9)

The vague quality of Goodstock's understanding of precisely what Fly gets up to undermines his vision of the "piece of house-hold stuff" just as it suggests a more potent authority at work. By the very nature of Goodstock's inexactness, we see his own qualities as Host reduced as he attempts to do the same to his 'property'.

The way in which Jonson positions Fly, then, is indicative of the contradictions inherent in his character and the wider play. As a parasite, he stands as a figure emerging from a pre-social realist theatrical tradition, a tradition, as Catherine Belsey writes, that offered a "representative human being" which had "no unifying essence" (18). It is perhaps this aspect of him upon which Barton alights, seeing the "sub-human" characteristics of Fly and his compatriots (273). On the other hand, Fly emerges as an anti-stock figure, realist in the way that Haynes writes of Jonson's "*demonstrative* realism" which can be found "displaying and pointing to its objects" (9, emphasis in original). Haynes suggests this type of realism "can contain elements of the fantastic and of parody", a reading that is particularly appropriate to *The New Inn*. It is a realism that must accommodate different expectations and codes of characterisation.

The tension between the two versions of Fly with which we are presented goes some way to explain his ability to navigate the difficulties of the inn's economy. There are various conflicting stories about how Fly came to the Light Heart. Goodstock asserts that he was part of the inn's "inventory" but contradicts his story later in the play that Fly was his "fellow gipsy" on his travels before he came to that establishment (2.4.17, 5.5.127). Fly himself confesses to Tipto, who has asked how he came to be "committed / Unto this inn?", that it was "Upon suspicion o' drink" that he

was brought by the tapster and “under-officers” and “so deposited” (2.5.23-4, 26). Tipto’s word “committed” has associations of incarceration, and we might question whether Fly is “imprisoned” here as Sanders’ gloss suggests (*The New Inn* 223n23). Sanders uses the terms “homeless ‘inmate’” to describe Fly, suggesting that *The New Inn* invokes certain notions “of vagrancy and mobility as a kind of anti-household” (*Cultural* 141). We cannot possibly know whether Fly has freedom outside of the inn – indeed the outside world appears to be indistinct for all the characters – but it is intriguing to compare this supposed enforced employment with the Fly who in turn enforces the processes of the inn. This is not to read the multiple narratives of Fly’s history in terms of realism, but rather we should read their inconsistencies as part of the way in which Fly’s character works within the play. I would also argue that the transformation from enforced to enforcer can be traced to Fly’s arrival at the inn, and that his integration into the commercial enterprise required him to perform a different social function from that which he fulfilled in his previous existence.

In Fly’s case, his transformation is less explicit than that of the aristocrats, but the language used to describe him certainly demonstrates the change he has undergone if we remember his own account of his life before he came to the Light Heart. Jonson’s description of Fly in the ‘Persons of the Play’ is the “inflamer of the reckonings” (57). As Sanders notes in her edition of the play, “inflamer” also points to how “Fly exaggerates customers’ expenditure to his host’s benefit” (*The New Inn* 187n44). This finds an echo in Goodstock’s account of Fly’s “calling”: “Only to call in, / In flame the reckoning, bold to charge a bill, / Bring up the shot i’ the rear, as his own word is” (2.4.25-7). Hattaway’s edition describes these lines as employing “a series of military puns” (*The New Inn* 102n25-8). While they set up the idea of Fly’s ‘below stairs’ “militia” encompassing the ostler, tapster, drawer and chamberlain, it is



also tempting to see how Goodstock's words affect the positioning of Fly's identity (2.4.31). To "call in", as Hattaway notes, is to "withdraw and shout orders", "inflare" to "set on fire and augment", and "shot" a "soldier armed with a firearm and tavern reckoning" (*The New Inn* 102-3n25-8). The incorporation of such language into the description of Fly's commercial responsibilities means that he is not simply the facilitator of supply and demand within the inn, but also its enforcer. Moreover, it seems at odds for Goodstock to describe Fly such authority having, only lines before, condensed his identity to that of a piece of furniture: Goodstock uses the same phrase of "household stuff" to describe his "[c]ushions and carpets, / Chairs, stools, and bedding", which Lady Frampul's party attempts to throw out of the window (1.6.10-1).

I suggest that the contradictions in how Fly is understood by the characters around him are in response to the blurring of Fly's identity – and the boundaries between his licit and illicit activities. In fact, the model by which we might understand how he is perceived can help us to recognise more fully how Fly gets away with certain behaviours. While he may be "perpetually buzzing, [and] soaring" around the stage, as Barton writes, there is, crucially, purpose to that movement which she ignores (274). He can be part of the inn's materiality, part of the background, but also the character with enormous commercial purpose. Goodstock muses on the various names given to Fly – "Some call him Deacon Fly, some Doctor Fly, / Some Captain, some Lieutenant" – but ultimately he is "Quartermaster Fly" the officer of procurement (2.4.33-5, 2.5.1). When Beaufort questions whether Fly is in "every dish and pot?" the Host answers that he is, "In every cup and company, my lords, / A creature of all liquors, all complexions: / Be the drink what it will, he'll have his sip. (2.4.11-5). Fly's being in "every cup and company" may well remind us of Barton's

phrase and yet he is more than that, a focal point of all interaction, both commercial and communal. Moreover, when the Host says, “he’ll have his sip” it means that Fly takes his cut, that he has agency within the operation rather than being a passive part of the establishment (2.4.15).

It is here that we begin to see how the play moves towards a championing of this circulation, in contrast to that more settled, landed economy that provides the Frampul fortune. Indeed, if we remember the way in which I have previously written how the reckoning determines much of the interaction in the drinking house space, the insistence on Fly bringing reckonings to account situates him in the centre not only of the action of the inn but its finances. In *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV* we saw how Shakespeare employed the tavern reckoning as a dramatic emblem through which he could stage the conflicting notion of a settle-able bill, nonetheless vulnerable to non-payment. In contrast, *The New Inn* does not stage the reckoning, and indeed this is the only reference in the whole play. Nonetheless, it remains an important concept in the inn’s economy – and to the position of Fly. The very idea that it falls to Fly to require payment of reckonings in the Light Heart means that he is aligned with both specific acts of exchange as well as more the abstract credit obligations that the reckoning encapsulates. Moreover, as I wrote earlier, many early modern texts use the reckoning to construct narratives of unending and often irresolvable – yet still positive – circulation. Drawing on that tradition, *The New Inn*, while denying us any staged act of reckoning, still offers up a fantasy of that circulation. The potential for leaving the reckoning unpaid is only fleeting, with the insistence on Fly’s position as enforcer suggesting the inevitable retrieval of the bill.

The narrative of circulation, and Fly’s place in it, is all the more powerful considering the way in which the play accommodates and champions the various –

and often ambiguous – ways of making money. Fly’s agency is rooted in his ability to negotiate the distorted boundaries between criminality and the expected operation of the exchange economy. We might remind ourselves of Goodstock’s account of Fly studying “[w]hose horses may be cozened, or what jugs / Filled up with froth. That is his way of learning” (2.5.38-9). While Fly may be the one to bring in the tavern bills, he is also responsible for the provision of diluted, frothy ale and horses that are cheated out of their food. It is here that we begin to understand how Fly is both the least stable of all identities and yet also the most open. One of the contradictions of the play, of course, is how the Stuffs are stigmatised for their misappropriation of goods, while Fly goes unpunished for doing something similar. He too is using the resources of the inn for at best mischievous, and at worst, illegitimate reasons, and yet he receives no punishment and is in fact rewarded heartily for his efforts. The Stuffs, however, created a fantasy of ownership through the borrowing of the dress, while Fly never claims ownership of anything for nearly the duration of the play. Even when he is given the inn, he remains silent on the subject, a point to which I shall return.

In terms of the goods of the inn, Bruster discusses the same type of manipulation of resource in relation to Marston’s *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604). In that play, Malheureux accuses the vintner of being a “mangonist”, a term the *OED Online* glosses as relating to the “[t]he action of furbishing up inferior goods for sale” (1.1.97; “Mangonism”). Bruster argues that “[t]he fear of adulterated commodity distinguishes much of the drama after 1598”, specifying the addition of lime to ale in order “to disguise its flatness or impure state” (88). He makes reference to the incidence in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* in which the Host tells Bardolph, having volunteered him to play tapster, “Let me see thee froth and lime” (1.3.9-10). Bruster’s inclusion of this line supports the argument that anxieties about a commodity’s source

and authenticity relates to generally held worries about marriage and society, specifically in relation to the adultery/adulterated goods in *The Dutch Courtesan*. I suggest, however, that the lines do more to illuminate *The Merry Wives of Windsor*'s engagement with the fluidity of the inn space and what it is able to offer its patrons in terms of exchange (88). Bardolph, playing the tapster, is encouraged to fulfil a ritualised process of diluting the ale to disguise its adulteration, thus increasing the possibility of selling more drink than the tavern has originally procured.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Goodstock's reference to Fly studying his "[c]ases of cups" in order to fully comprehend the extent of how many cups have been "[f]illed up with froth" is an acknowledgement of how entrenched that system is of deploying substandard goods to the Light Heart's customers (2.5.36-9). It seems that the Host in *The Merry Wives* shares a policy with Goodstock of affirming his wares while secretly endorsing the mischievous tampering of them.

Fly only gets away with his studying of ways to trick the customer because, although illegitimate, the process bolsters the economic functioning of the inn. Goodstock may look the other way ("I do not know how spiced / With conscience") because he is detached from the minutiae of the inn's operation, a point to which I shall return later (2.5.36). Fly, on the other hand, is the orchestrator of the illicit tactics through which the inn makes money: in effect manipulating the way in which capital is accrued, and making possible Goodstock's elaborate performances of hospitality and largesse. As we shall see, the reliance Goodstock puts on the possession of capital is central to the way in which he performs his role as host. One of the play's key tensions is the way in which for some characters, the inn represents a

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<sup>19</sup> I say ritualised because the Host instructs Bardolph to "follow" him as if they are acting out a rite, with the Host taking the lead and Bardolph copying him (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.3.9-10). The direction given by the Host, as well as his calling Falstaff "Hercules", "Caesar", and "Hector" in the lines preceding this interaction, suggests an awareness of the performativity happening in this scene, with the Host acting as director (*The Merry Wives of Windsor* 1.3.4, 6, 7).

kind of alternative environment where they may indulge in social and economic fantasies, temporarily suspended from their lives in their estates. The irony is that the economic demands and contestations of a space defined by commercialised sociability triumph over those narratives of personal, settled wealth.

Those demands and contestations are nonetheless fraught with anxiety. The play intellectualises the process of Fly organising the proscribed activities for those around him: he is said to “study” the activities “for the tapster and ostler” (2.5.35-7). It recalls the same kind of preparation seen in some early modern ballads: in *Come Hostesse Fill the Pot* the customer’s sole aim in visiting the tavern is to “fleece” the tapster (Magdalene College Pepys 1.282-283). Upending this conceit, Jonson suggests that the machinery of the inn itself is far more ambiguous than perhaps we have seen before. Although we witness in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the Host’s instruction to Bardolph to put froth in the cups and add lime to the ale, Fly’s position is something new: Bardolph is a customer and his involvement in the drawing of ale is so the Host can “entertain” him (1.3.10). In *The New Inn*, however, the customer is not complicit and therefore the process is somewhat threatening.

We see more than a possibility of this threat when Peck describes to the ‘below stairs’ crew the altercation he has had with an old horse he has been stabling:

A plague of all jades, what a clap he has gi’en me!

.....

As sure as you live, sir, he knew perfectly

I meant to cozen him. He did leer so on me,

And then he sneered as who would say, ‘Take heed, sirrah’;

And when he saw our half-peck, which you know

Was but an old court-dish, lord, how he stamped! (3.1.57, 60-4)

This encounter with the ill-tempered horse is a way in which the play presents a fantasy of the same kind of encounter between Peck – or indeed any of the militia – and a customer he has cheated. The way that Peck creates a fiction to describe the horse’s expressions and gives voice to his warnings suggests he is working through an imagined encounter where he is challenged on his behaviour. Fly alights on this and reveals it as such when he says, “You are to blame to use the poor dumb Christians / So cruelly”, suggesting people rather than animals (3.1.70-1). But it is Fly who, despite his satirical response, is responsible for this culture. When Pierce questions who ordered Peck “To steal the hay / Out of the racks again” it is Fly who counters, “I told him so” (3.1.13-4). Nevertheless, Fly’s pragmatism is such that he realises when to cheat and when to hold back. Employing Peck’s euphemism again, he warns his compatriots to:

have care of understanding horses,  
Horses with angry heels, nobility horses,  
Horses that know the world; let them have meat  
Till their teeth ache, and rubbing till their ribs  
Shine like a wench’s forehead. They are divels else,  
Will look into your dealings. (3.1.159-164)

We can safely assume that Fly is not talking about how to deal with horses here, but rather which kinds of customers one can risk cheating, and which must be left alone. Again, the play shies away from staging an encounter with a customer, and we must

rely on Fly's veiled warning. It does, however, reveal both the importance of Fly's activities (his "dealings") and how his character is able to function. His ability to sidestep such hazards is worth far more to the inn than Peck, for example, who is "found out" in his cheat (3.1.120). Fly is able to navigate the inconsistencies of the inn's economy in order to accrue further capital for the business – bestowed in the form of the inn itself. Moreover, the initial threat of the illicit activities is undermined by the economic success they provide. Yet again, the commercial logic of the inn, over and above moral concerns, shapes the encounters and exchanges that occur in the drinking house space. Much like the two rogues in Harman's *A Caveat*, the alignment of an ambiguous but financially successful character with a new kind of economic stance, opposed to the status quo of a landed economy, is part of the way in which *The New Inn* grapples with the possibilities of a more fluid model.

Despite the play's assertion of such a model, Fly's position is at times challenged. If we think back to the commodification of personalities, the true value of Fly is not what he is but what he can do: his ability to sustain the inn's economy. Nonetheless, there are times when the play stages the confrontations between these competing economic visions. Goodstock, for one, insists on his possession of Fly as a piece of property, through which he may wield his performance of hospitality. Sir Glorious Tipto attempts the same sort of thing when he tries to persuade Fly that he should be placed "with a fair lady"; in fact he admits that "I shall redeem thee, Fly" as if he were a token to be cashed in for his monetary value (2.5.27-8). Tipto further misunderstands what Fly's value is when he cries that Pru "shall wear thee there, / A fly of gold, enamelled, and a school-fly" (2.5.32-3). The knight is trying to fit Fly to his own logic that comprehends worth in the value of the thing itself, rather than in its possibility, a failure which falls to Pru to make as well but for very different reasons.

Presented by Tipto as the “Professor of the inn”, Fly is refused on the grounds that there is “[n]othing more troublesome, / Or importune” and he (with his champion) is sent “down to the dresser and the dishes” (2.6.60, 74, 80). Sanders reads Tipto’s dismissal as a sign that he inhabits “a new society where [he] must grow accustomed to repulses of this nature, unless he be prepared to change and listen to the opinion of the court” (*Theatrical* 161). I suggest that his suit is also refused because he tries to put a value on Fly which does not reflect his worth to the inn. Fly’s true value, of course, is the way in which he is able to manipulate the inn’s economy. Pru’s inability to recognise Fly’s use beyond his appearance – when she herself has been promoted above her station – is because he has been bejewelled by Tipto, presented in a way assumed to be palatable to an aristocratic audience (like Pinnacia in her Countess’ dress). In the same way that the politics of dress undid the Stuffs when they encountered Frances, Fly is positioned in opposition to Pru’s sovereignty. Of course, the play stages his opposition in economic terms as well, and while Pru may undervalue him because of his appearance, it is clear that their respective economic models are also incompatible.

While there are those who would figure Fly in their own narratives of value and ownership, he consistently resists such manoeuvrings. Neither Fly’s maintenance of the inn nor the eventual outcome for the community within the Light Heart is affected. His suspension ‘below stairs’ amongst his militia allows him to act in a way that will result in the culture of the inn encompassing the wider social encounters of the play. Barton’s claims that the ‘below stairs’ environment “exists primarily to express the chaos of society when it does not admit the ordering influences of true valour or true love” and that the games we observe are “utterly devoid of wit and energy” are flawed (272). I suggest that the ‘below stairs’ community is in fact central



to both the material success and “the vitality of the commercial forces that define” the inn (McRae *Literature* 139). Such forces eventually affect the ‘above stairs’ characters too, in drawing them away from their landed economy towards a more dynamic model of circulation. Butler would have us believe that by the end of the play, many characters, including the servants, “remain stubbornly untransformed” (“Late Jonson” 176). In the economic framework I propose, the ‘below stairs’ crowd have no need of transformation: they are so aligned with the inn’s commercial forces that they are part of the transformative power of the space. The physical marshalling of the militia by Fly, rather than Goodstock, denotes the economic authority that belongs to him alone: but it is an authority divested in part by the servants. Fly’s strategy of being in “every cup and company”, not the Host’s policy of insisting upon the purity of his stock, maintains the inn (1.2.18-22). As McRae writes, the illicit activities “are performed beyond Goodstock’s authority or awareness”, the consequences of which I shall attend to later in this chapter (*Literature* 139).

The economic energy of the Light Heart is generated in the cellar, in a way that the estates belonging to the Frampuls could never foster. There is no sense here of passivity, of sourcing capital from a landed economy and spending it. Fly may direct the workers to make no distinction between licit and illicit ways to operate, but there is an agency to his behaviour that energises the inn’s network of exchange. Peck’s fears about having a close call – “I meet with such a brush to mollify me” – are met by Fly not with a request to reform but with a suggestion to moderate his behaviour in order not to jeopardize the operation (3.1.83). If only Peck could be “content to steal but two girths, / And now and then a saddle-cloth”, Fly believes there would be “some hope” (3.1.88-9, 91). There is trouble, however, when Peck “mistake[s] whole saddles, / Sometimes a horse” (3.1.92-3). It is suggested by Fly’s

“I’ll talk with you anon” that this matter has not been entirely resolved, and that Peck’s disastrous overindulgence in the stables will have to be rectified at a later date (3.1.94). Nevertheless, Fly remains the instigator of the cheating culture; Pierce says of the wine, “I can recite your fables, Fly”, referencing the classical origins of the wine he is serving, but revealing, I suggest, their dubious genesis (3.1.102). The “pranks of ale and hostelry” extend throughout the inn’s business, from the frothy drinks that Goodstock mentioned, to filling horses’ feed racks with rotten hay (3.1.125, 135-6). Sanders notes that the discussions centred around the stabling of horses – and the way that Peck runs his scams – is particularly pertinent to how the play engages with issues and anxieties surrounding mobility and travel (*Cultural* 156-7). The amount of money that travellers would have to spend on such a service was not inconsiderable (Sanders *Cultural* 156). In a wider sense, then, the central scene ‘below stairs’ not only alerts us to the kinds of behaviour that has only previously been hinted at, but also insists upon the very real amounts of money that Fly’s enterprise generates for the inn. Furthermore, what was staged as a banishment downstairs – a decision that prompted a furious reaction from Tipto – comes to stand for something far more dynamic. Fly may not attend to Sovereign Pru, but it is all too clear to see where the play situates the authority of the inn.

Tipto’s wish, then, that Fly would “[q]uit [the] light sign of the Light Heart” so he does not play second fiddle to Goodstock misses the point (3.1.47). The Host insists upon his ‘good stock’ and the integrity of the inn, and yet it is Fly who “alone fully understands its operation” (McRae *Literature* 142). When at the end of the play Goodstock, now revealed as Lord Frampul, bequeaths the Light Heart to Fly, it seems entirely appropriate that the character who has understood and managed the space throughout the play will now maintain it. Indeed, Fly is defined by the space of the

inn in a way that the figure of Goodstock/Frampul never was, and the logic of the play suggests that what economically sustained the inn during the action will uphold it after it ends. Having throughout the play resisted those who would figure him within their fantasies of ownership, Fly now comes into property in his own right. His silence, however, means that his role of “master ... o’ the inn” remains ambiguous (5.5.125). *The New Inn* is not a play that allows us, despite our expectations, to fulfil a promise of resolution. To the end, Fly’s position cannot be fixed. Sanders suggests that allusions to his supposed gypsy life pre-the Light Heart have him stand “as an example of a placeless or homeless ‘inmate’ until the close of the play, when he is gifted the property in its entirety” (*Cultural* 141). However, as I have demonstrated, Fly’s character pulls in often conflicting and opposing ways. The discrepancies between accounts of his former life mean that he does indeed represent a kind of mobility, but they also insist that he cannot be defined in one specific way. I would argue that Fly is not just an indicator of rootlessness, but also simultaneously of a rooted, site-specific commercialism. Fly stands in the play as an embodiment of the fluid economy demanded by the inn space.

### **The owner of the inn?**

While Fly’s enlistment as the “master” of the Light Heart invites a reconsideration of his role in the inn, and indeed of the play as a whole, Goodstock’s revelation in the same scene that he is the Lord Frampul disguised, calls for a similar interrogation (5.5.125). For the duration of the play, he has asserted himself as the Host, drawing on the traditions – and stereotypes – of the role, and declaring his agency within (and deriving from) the materiality of the inn. The discovery that he holds a noble rank

complicates his previously held status, however, because it is suddenly apparent that the basis on which he asserted these fictions is no longer valid. While Frances is accused of ignoring the estates that she has inherited in order to have a day of pleasure at the inn – we may remember Lovel says that she, “takes all lordly ways how to consume” her lands, “if clothing and feasting / And the authorised means of riot will do it” – they in fact, with Goodstock’s disclosure, are revealed to belong to him (1.5.78-80).

In this section, I shall trace how Jonson both affirms the status of the Host of the Light Heart and yet also undermines it, exploiting the gap between Goodstock’s own perception of his role and the audience’s expectations of it. Recognising that the ‘character’ of the Host requires certain behaviours that are evident in Goodstock’s performance, I shall demonstrate that these traits are part of the way in which the audience is positioned by Jonson to assume a role of interpreting a context that it knows well, a position which is renegotiated. His alignment with the commercial enterprise of the inn is complicated by the revelation that he is indeed Lord Frampul. Like Frances, he enjoys an ambiguous relationship with his estates, having abandoned them years before. Nonetheless, his eventual exposure as a man of capital means that the narrative he creates about his role of the Host is undermined. If we remember the way in which many early modern texts reveal the figure of the host to be routinely contested, then the audience of *The New Inn* would expect Goodstock to be subject to certain challenges. The bonds of commercialised hospitality, as we have seen elsewhere, require careful management in a site where financial obligations are often disputed. This play, however, positions Goodstock as being caught between two competing economies: as Host he is aligned with the cycle of circulation for which the inn stands, and as Lord Frampul with the landed, settled economy of estate living.

While I suggest the play asserts the necessity and power of the former, it is ambiguous whether Goodstock/Frampul is reconciled to either of the two models. The concept of capital and its movement can be used to understand the Host, and how his relationship with the inn pulls the play in directions which are never entirely resolvable.

To a substantial degree, the relationship between Goodstock and the material inn defines the Host's role. Much like Mistress Quickly in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, he frequently uses possessives to describe the space: "my house", "my sign", "my grounds" (1.1.2, 20). He goes as far as to say that his discontent is also felt by the house, a suggestion which in the first two lines of the play aligns the character and establishment in a projection of oneness, where Goodstock is speaking for the both of them because the sigil on the inn-board is incapable of vocalising such a lament: "I am not pleased, indeed, you are i' the right; / Nor is my house pleased, if my sign could speak, / The sign of the Light Heart" (1.1.1-3). The perception of oneness asserted by the Host, however, is not borne out by the play itself, where the space of the inn remains both elusive and independent from him. While Goodstock's claim is linked to the Host's belief in his own agency within the establishment, a point to which I shall return, it is also there to promote his status as the honest Host, a figure who speaks for and with the inn.

Indeed, Jonson's preoccupation with that construction so early on in the drama foregrounds the extent to which the audience is invited to consider their expectations of the character. The lengthy discussion between Goodstock and Lovel about the respective responsibilities of host and customer identify the ways in which Goodstock seeks to create a home out of a space defined by "commercial hospitality" (McRae *Literature* 136). His characterisation draws on the traditions embedded in the idea of

the host, a figure whose conceptualisation, as we have seen, proved challenging to many early modern writers. The role required an adherence to notions of hospitality and an appreciation of (especially homosocial) bonds, and yet the business of the drinking house insisted upon a commercial relationship; this proved to be a particular concern to early modern writers, who sought to reconcile these apparently contrasting and often conflicting obligations. It is worth reminding ourselves of Thomas Overbury's description of the host as, "the kernell of a Signe: or the Signe is the shell, & mine Host is the Snaile. He consists of double-beere and followship, and his vices are the bawds of his thirst. Hee enterraines humbly, and gives his Guests power, as well of himselfe as house" (E1v-E2r). It is tempting to think that Goodstock's construction of his identity as Host in relation to the sign of the Light Heart is drawing on the same kind of conventions seen in Overbury's character portrait: that Goodstock himself is "the kernell of a Signe", claiming as he does that he "will maintain the rebus 'gainst all humours / And all complexions" (1.1.9-10).

Overbury's portrait, as I established in Chapter 1, goes further in revealing the essential paradox of the host's status as master of his home in a space essentially not his home; and that an insistence on the connection between the host and the material establishment, such as the one claimed by Goodstock, is one based not on a personal bond but on financial necessity. McRae writes, "there is something ... at least unsettling about the host's transparent performance of personalized bonds in the interest of commercial gain. In the inn, 'mirth' has a market value" (*Literature* 126). Goodstock, however, as McRae also argues, attempts to control the space of the inn in much the same way as one of his estates: he dwells in the Light Heart as one might expect the family to dwell in Penshurst, and resists giving his house over to his guests as Overbury describes. Indeed, when he describes towards the end of the play his

travels around the country, his “discourse is framed in the terminology of the landed estate” (Sanders *Cultural* 142). The way in which Goodstock defines himself according to both of the two economies available to him is one of the key tensions of his character.

The kind of material vulnerability that we saw exposed in many early modern popular texts is carefully staged in *The New Inn*, when we hear from Ferret that Frances and her followers, having arrived at the Light Heart, are intending “[t]o throw / The house out o’ the window!” (1.6.7-8). Goodstock’s response betrays his reliance on that materiality, and the fear of material loss that we saw take place in the narrative of Peele’s Hostess whose bed was stolen:

Brain o’ man,

I shall ha’ the worst o’ that! Will they not throw

My household stuff out first? Cushions and carpets,

Chairs, stools, and bedding? Is not their sport my ruin? (1.6.8-11)

I suggest, however, that this fear of “ruin”, financial in origin, is a way in which Jonson has Goodstock performing his role as Host. At this moment in the text, Goodstock’s cheerful exterior is indeed far more fragile than he would normally reveal, and it demonstrates the importance of the material space to the performance of the role of the Host. Nevertheless, as we shall see, Goodstock’s lack of involvement in the minutiae of the inn’s financial machinery suggests that in fact, he is more careless of such concerns that he might appear to be, and at times it is tempting to see his benign neglect of the Light Heart is similar to the way in which he treated the Frampul estates.

We see this tension in Goodstock's suggestion to the melancholic Lovel that he should remove himself to an alternative inn if he should continue to be less than good-humoured; the Host is relying on the tradition that is based upon an expectation of collaborative hospitality, where the customer is required to be pleasant, as the host is required to be honest. By Lovel's reticence in that aspect, Goodstock suggests that he might be better suited to an establishment where they serve only,

A poor quotidian rack o' mutton, roasted  
 Dry to be grated! and that driven down  
 With beer and butter-milk mingled together,  
 Or clarified whey instead of claret! (1.2.19-22)

The "scandal" of this is not just that Goodstock apparently disapproves of such economies, but that Lovel's lack of propriety as a patron might suggest that Goodstock is similarly cheap (1.2.18). He insists that Lovel, his melancholy guest of a fortnight, improve his mood: "Sir, set your heart at rest, you shall not do it – / Unless you can be jovial. Brain o' man, / Be jovial and drink, and dance, and drink!" (1.2.12-4). Despite Goodstock's humorous demands for Lovel to be merry, there is an underlying seriousness to his tone. His claims regarding the neighbouring inn go "against [his] freehold, [his] inheritance", and his own provision of wine "that glads the heart of man" should guard against a "sullen guest" (1.2.23, 27, 31). Lovel's pensiveness is implied therefore to disrupt the inn, which Goodstock claims is "the house of wine", a space that should be merry (1.2.28). When Lovel describes him as a "[h]umorous host", Goodstock replies, "I care not if I be" (1.2.32-3). It seems that



Goodstock is restricted by the needs of the inn; his claim that he does not care if he is a humorous host is at odds with the language he uses to encourage his guest.

If we consider, however, the commercial imperative inherent in the host's position, then it makes more sense to read Goodstock's jollity as a necessary performance for the inn's existence. When he utters the proverbial-sounding phrase, "A heavy purse makes a light heart", it may seem that he is joking with Lovel about the relationship between host and guest, but it also reveals his awareness that the ability to spend is central to the maintenance of the inn (1.1.14). Moreover, Goodstock's description of the community of the inn may rely on images of merry customers and workers, but is underpinned by the model of an agrarian business enterprise: "I must ha' jovial guests to drive my ploughs, / And whistling boys to bring my harvest home, / Or I shall hear no flails thwack" (1.1.22-4). Again, Goodstock's reliance on the model of a landed economy to define the contrasting commercial space of the inn challenges our expectations of him as the Host of the Light Heart. While the audience is yet to discover his true identity, we are alerted nonetheless to the conflicting economic fictions that he creates about himself and the inn. The "jovial guests" in his fantasy work solely for him, whereas in the Light Heart, those who enter the space are drawn into a more open, commercial circulation.

One could assume that because of Goodstock's claims of ownership and control, he places less importance on that commercial model of the inn that requires that he is reliant on his customers. He certainly disagrees when Lovel calls attention to the way in which he as Host is essentially at the mercy of his customers, who he says, "cry, 'Mine host, to crambe! Give us drink! / And do not slink, but skink, or else you stink!'" (1.3.114-5). Indeed, Goodstock's riposte places him within the

construction of “the idea of the inn as theatre” (Sanders *Cultural* 153). He imagines the foundation of his honesty is underscored by the theatrical quality of the inn itself:

If I be honest, and that all the cheat  
 Be of myself, in keeping this Light Heart,  
 Where I imagine all the world’s a play:  
 The state and men’s affairs, all passages  
 Of life, to spring new scenes, come in, go out,  
 And shift and vanish; and if I have got  
 A seat to sit at ease here, i’ mine inn,  
 To see the comedy; and laugh and chuck  
 At the variety and throng of humours  
 .....  
 Why, will you envy me my happiness? (1.3.126-137)

It is again the performance of his role that demands Goodstock effectively deny the commercial imperative that shapes his relationship with Lovel. Nevertheless, to perform that role of an honest and cheerful host is less to do with Goodstock’s understanding of the requirements placed upon him by the establishment, than it is to do with the creation of an alternate identity, because he is performing such a role on two levels, both as Host and as Lord Frampul. We find the character pulling in different directions, revealing a gap between Goodstock’s own perception and his staged position.

Goodstock to a considerable degree moves in and out of the stereotypes of that context, between the good host and the gullible host and a character performing both

of these roles. He is all and none of these, overseeing a financially successful establishment, the honesty of which is undermined by his own admission (and facilitation) of the behaviours of Fly and the ‘below stairs’ militia. While I have demonstrated the distaste felt by Goodstock for the neighbouring inn that serves below standard wares, and the belief he has in the quality of his own provisions (emphasised of course by his own metonym), the Host is nonetheless reliant on the suspect goings-on – the dilution of ale and the cozening of horses – that underpin the operation of his own inn (2.5.37-9). It is this tension between, as I said, Goodstock’s own perception and the reality of his position that invites the audience to reconsider its response to him, and question quite how he attempts to reconcile these two seemingly irresolvable contentions.

To understand this tension between Goodstock’s performance as Host and his actual material status, I suggest that it is useful to ask to what extent he is created in terms of the notion of capital. Through the character of the Host, the play exposes again the need for certain kinds of capital – and access to capital – in order to participate in the modes of exchange facilitated by the inn space. While I argued in my previous section that Fly was the more sustaining presence of the inn’s economy, here I want to attend to the ways in which Goodstock’s possession of capital – in the form of his sustained connection with his landed estates – leave him free to create a world and certain fictions within it, and to use them to manipulate others and the space itself. In some ways, when Goodstock transfers ownership of the Light Heart to Fly, the parasite is aligned with the idea of capital (although, as I have said, his silence on the subject renders this narrative ambiguous). Goodstock on the other hand has capital of a different sort throughout the play because not only is he owner of the inn, but he is also Lord Frampul in disguise.

This means that the construction of ‘Goodstock’ is based substantially more on the possession of capital, and by extension, on the alignment with a landed economy, than on commercial circulation. When the Host gives away the inn to his employee, it is from a position of authority that that capital brings. I shall return to this moment of transfer shortly, but I want to give some space to the way in which Jonson establishes the Host’s character in this way. The ‘Persons of the Play’ (which was printed in the 1631 Octavo edition) introduces us to “GOODSTOCK, the HOST (played well) alias Lord Frampul” a description which not only affirms the performative aspects of the Host’s role which I outlined above, but also the fact that those aspects are performed by a man of noble rank (*The New Inn* ‘Persons of the Play’ 57). This is also clear in the dialogue between Lovel and Goodstock, where the former claims to “easily suspect” that the Host was born to a position somewhat above an innkeeper (1.3.96-7). Lovel’s observation suggests that there are clues to Goodstock’s rank that might be apparent to the audience as well. If he can “easily” believe keeping a hostelry is below the natural position of the Host, it is compelling to think that Jonson is himself inviting the audience to assume the same position. Indeed, Lovel bases his assumption on the fact of Goodstock’s “language, treaty, and . . . bearing”, indications perhaps of the way in which the actor played Lord Frampul playing the Host (1.3.99). We see this again in Pru’s advice to Goodstock that he “[s]peak the host’s language!” when he momentarily forgets his duty to act in a way demanded by his role (2.6.8).

Nonetheless, I do not think that it is the social rank of the Host in disguise that leads him to believe in his own agency, nor to occupy a neglectful (though benign)

position in the inn's economy,<sup>20</sup> though it does of course inform the construction of his character. He does in fact own the Frampul estates – and that material status informs the way he behaves, though not entirely rationally. There are different forms of reason evident on the stage: we see Fly who is too carefully and self-interestedly involved in finances on a petty level (although those petty gains add up), and then Goodstock who operates within different rules and with a different agenda. Goodstock, however, has the authority that capital brings, an authority that is not always resolvable in the movement of the play, where the relationship between capital and wit is never direct, but even so allows him to behave in a way that fosters his own agenda. While it may be a happy accident that Frances and her retinue visit the inn, and the space of the inn facilitates the revelations of the Frampul family, it is still Goodstock who appropriates that space for his own ends. He can create certain fictions which allow him to perform his role, and which suggest a privileging of possession and accruing of capital over familial success.

We see this most particularly in his plan with Fly to marry the 'boy' Frank to the unsuspecting Beaufort, who throughout the 'Parliament of Love' has forgotten his devotion towards Frances, and in imitation of Lovel's kiss, bestows one upon the fictional Laetitia. By the beginning of Act 5, it is apparent that Goodstock is, if not the instigator of the romance, the facilitator of its consummation. He tells Fly, "Now show thyself an instrument of price / And help to raise a nap to us out of nothing. / Thou sawst 'em married?" (5.1.5-7). Hattaway suggests that "raise a nap to us out of nothing" is "equivalent to 'weave the threads of the story together for us,'" an imperative demonstrating both Goodstock's use of Fly to achieve his ends and also his intention to create a fiction out of "nothing" (*The New Inn* 187n6). Moreover, his

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<sup>20</sup> Fly describes Goodstock as "spin[n]ing like the parish-top", suggesting a labourer being kept out of mischief through entertainment (2.5.43; Hattaway *The New Inn* 106n43).

instruction to Fly to be “an instrument of price” suggests the motivation behind such an action is reliant upon the need to bring a kind of profit to the Host: by figuring Fly’s behaviour in terms of “price”, Goodstock exposes his underlying financial rationale. These manipulations of course reveal Frank to really be Laetitia, the long lost daughter of Lord Frampul, and Frances’ sister, but familial reconciliation is not their aim here. Goodstock’s actions reveal a partiality towards the sustaining of the inn, not perhaps in the sense that we see Fly’s illegitimate behaviours benefit the inn’s economy, but rather that they will achieve the “mirth” that the Host demands of the space (5.1.24). His complaints that follow demonstrate the importance that Goodstock places on his guests behaving in the way he desires:

all fails i’ the plot.

Lovel is gone to bed; the Lady Frampul

And sovereign Pru fall’n out; Tipto and his regiment

Of mine-men all drunk dumb; from his whoop Barnaby,

To his hoop Trundle: they are his two trophies.

No project but to rear laughter on but this,

The marriage of Lord Beaufort with Laetitia. (5.1.27-33)

Although it might seem that Goodstock’s agenda is one of fostering entertainment, I suggest that it relates back to the maintenance of the inn’s materiality. The scene preceding this, at the end of Act 4, sees Goodstock exclaim to Frances, who has rejected Lovel, “would you follow him / And make my house amends!” (4.4.335-6). Goodstock’s projects for his guests, be they facilitating Pru as sovereign or allowing Tipto the fiction of his own militia, come back full circle to his role as Host, but as we

have seen that is a performance in itself, any reading of Goodstock's character must seek some other way in which to find, if not resolution, but some fresh interpretation. Goodstock's capital in the materiality of the inn is fundamentally informed by his belief in his wider capital as Lord Frampul. His insistence on performing the role of the Host means that he can never *be* the Host, and the way in which Jonson constructs his and other identities on a basis of social and geographical mobility means that his presence there seems transient.<sup>21</sup> It is only through the capital of the establishment, and more than that, of Goodstock's true position as owner of the Frampul estates, that we can understand his role.

Furthermore, the play's events invite us to consider the transfer of that capital, and its implications for the social politics of the community residing in the Light Heart. Kate Chedgzoy writes that in *Every Man In His Humour*, the early scene in front of Knowell's house focuses "on masculine familial relations", where the "father-son and cousinly encounters are shaped by expectations concerning the transmission of property between male kin, a process which was crucial to the social functioning of the early modern patriarchal household" (256). I think it is useful to compare this with the encounter(s) between Goodstock, Fly and Lovel, who are similarly bound by inheritance at the end of the play. Goodstock's decision to give the inn to Fly – "you're master now ... I give it you" – immediately follows his bestowal of Frances to Lovel: "But take your mistress first, my child; I have power / To give her now with her consent" (5.5.125-6, 117-8). Neither Lovel nor Fly comment on this transfer, the action turning to the conferral of a dowry on Pru, and her subsequent betrothal to Latimer. This suggests, perhaps, that such transfers are expected within the movement of the play, and that the two recipients are neither surprised nor indebted because it is

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<sup>21</sup> For discussion of this see McRae (2009) and Sanders (2011).

simply inevitable. Both of Goodstock's instructions are, however, defined by his continued belief in his own authority. Using Chedgzoy's model of male expectations of property to read this episode, I suggest that Goodstock's relationship with his male 'heirs', if we can call them that, is central to the final moments of the play, and the continued importance of capital to the politics of sociability. Indeed, Goodstock privileges the accruing of capital over familial success, as he insists upon the space of the inn as somewhere to do business, to create those fictions based on possession, and to affirm his own agency. The household, we imagine, can only function, as Chedgzoy writes, using a framework of capital expectations, albeit manifested in various forms.

Nevertheless, I do not think that the energy of the play and the determination of capital within it mean that Goodstock's attempts to control the space are in vain, while they may be unresolved. The tension between the Host and his guests, between the inn as a business and as a community is never resolved, and the relationships defined by it are constantly renegotiated. The importance placed by Jonson in the construction of Goodstock's character on the performance of capital and possession means that their eventual transfer has consequences for his role, although of course the play ends at that very point. Indeed, I think it is *because* the inn space encourages different kinds of exchange – within families and between communities – that Goodstock's belief in his own agency is not entirely flawed. The inn can foster a movement towards financial accommodation, towards restoration of capital and familiar structures, without fully endorsing those end-points.

## **Conclusion**



When Goodstock describes his long journey through England that followed the abandonment of his family, he reveals a similar pattern of manipulation to that we have witnessed in the Light Heart:

I am he  
 Have measured all the shires of England over,  
 Wales and her mountains, seen those wilder nations  
 Of people in the Peak and Lancashire;  
 Their pipers, fiddlers, rushers, puppet-masters,  
 Jugglers, and gipsies, all the sorts of canters  
 And colonies of beggars, tumblers, ape-carriers,  
 For to these savages I was addicted,  
 To search their natures, and make odd discoveries (5.5.92-100)

While it is certainly compelling to read these lines in terms of Goodstock's "personal flaw – an addiction – rather than a legitimate process of enquiry", I think they can also be read in terms of his desire to possess (McRae *Literature* 137). The ownership of these experiences in language – which after all, if we acknowledge the futility of any attempted "process of enquiry", have gained him nothing until this point when he uses them to explain his absence – point to a deeper tendency of Goodstock to want to possess and manipulate the people he comes across.

The space of the inn accommodates this and other fantasies, and essentially becomes a contested site through which competing models of living may be tested. What triumphs at the end of *The New Inn* is the commercial impulse of the space, asserting as it does notions of circulation and exchange. Despite the Host's

revelations, there is no staged return to the Frampul estates and no suggestion of the family dwelling there. Indeed, the only movement is towards bed, with Fly providing “lodgings” for those, we can assume, already lodged there (5.5.124). So while the play can be read as restoring a conservative view of family unity, I suggest that the more unsettling and dynamic energies of the inn remain untamed.

**Chapter 5: Value, Cost, and Commercialism: Richard Brome's *The Demoiselle,*  
or *The New Ordinary***

At the beginning of Act 3 in *The Demoiselle* (1638), much of which is set in the space of the New Ordinary, Wat, a young gallant, tries to persuade Frances, the demoiselle of the title, to sleep with him.<sup>22</sup> To convince her of the sincerity of his promise to marry her at a later date and to try to seduce her, he uses the analogy of promising to pay a tavern bill:

Heart! If a man bespeak a tavern feast  
For next-day dinner, and give earnest for't  
To half the value – as my faith and troth,  
I think, is somewhat towards your marriage payment –  
To be tomorrow, will not the hostess give him  
A modicum o'ernight to stay his stomach? (3.1.421)<sup>23</sup>

The attention this speech pays to Wat's promise to pay a bill, linked as it is with the promise of marriage, is indicative of a play that interrogates the complexities of the relationship between financial and moral exchanges. Furthermore, these lines point to the play's insistence on the importance of upholding financial responsibilities and the need to be aware of the value of such arrangements. The space of the New Ordinary is more than simply a venture through which Dryground, disguised as the innkeeper

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<sup>22</sup> For discussion of the dating of the play, see Kaufman 31, Shaw 27, and Steggle 121-2. The victualling house is never named, other than being called the ordinary. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall use the name given in the subtitle of the play to identify it.

<sup>23</sup> The most recent edition of the play can be found online at *Richard Brome Online* (<http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/brome/viewTranscripts.jsp?type=MOD&play=DM&act=1>). All quotations are taken from the Modern Text on this site and, since the edition does not give line numbers, the reference refers to the speech number, which is given instead.

Osbright, hopes to reclaim his friend Brookall's fortunes, through an elaborate and extraordinary scheme of raffling off his daughter's virginity (a plan that is revealed to be a ruse). It is a site through which Brome engages with anxieties about commercialism and shifting economic models. Those who frequent the New Ordinary and its environs are preoccupied with credit and debt, with the spending and saving of money, and with the material goods for which that money can be exchanged. Brome's use of the raffle as the mechanism through which the characters play out their financial narratives suggests the extremes to which the market economy can be stretched.

*The Demoiselle* follows four patriarchs – Dryground, Brookall, Vermin and Bumpsey – and their children, through their complex financial and familial connections. Vermin, a usurer, is responsible for ruining the fortunes of Brookall, and the play opens with him, Vermin, receiving a mortgage contract for the last of Dryground's land. Dryground, however, resolves not to squander the money he obtains, but rather to invest it in a scheme both to restore his fortune and make amends for misdeeds committed in his younger years. Dryground and Brookall had been rivals in love, the former being victorious and marrying the woman that they both adored. After the death of his wife, however, Dryground then pursued Brookall's sister Eleanor, but abandoned her after her seduction; as the play opens, she has not been seen for many years. Dryground's "project" involves taking on the disguise of a tavern-keeper, Osbright, and opening the New Ordinary (1.1.16).<sup>24</sup>

It is here that we meet Frances, a French maiden, whose virginity Dryground intends to raffle off to the highest bidder. What is not revealed until the very end of the play is that Frances is, in fact, Brookall's son Frank, whose lack of money has

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<sup>24</sup> Dryground refers to his "project" in numerous places throughout the play, for example: 1.1.22, 3.1.426, 442, and *passim*.

forced him from his studies in order to join with Dryground to restore himself and his father. Frank also wishes to bring down Vermin, whose daughter Alice he goes on to marry (her dowry bringing, of course, the money Vermin has taken from his debtors). It is to Frank that the money Dryground has raised through the raffle – at £20 a man – will go, thus simultaneously reinstating both Brookall Senior and Junior. The money is gathered despite Dryground revealing the raffle to have been a ruse; those who contributed agree to its being used for another, supposedly more moral, purpose, and merely walk away. Working in conjunction with Dryground is Wat, Vermin's prodigal son, who has absconded from his father's house with Alice, his sister, to save her from a marriage to an old, miserly knight, Sir Amphilus. The ending of the play suggests that Wat will marry Phyllis, Dryground's real daughter, the product of his relationship with Eleanor. Bumpsey, meanwhile, is a self-made man, an old Justice, whose daughter Jane has married Dryground's son Valentine before the play starts. His preoccupation with thriftiness contrasts with the other patriarchs, and he bestows half his fortune to his new son-in-law, with the challenge that whatever Valentine does with the money, he shall mirror it: if he spends it, Bumpsey will do the same; if he saves it, Bumpsey will eventually leave him the second half intact. We watch both men spend excessively until the end of the play, when they return to more thrifty ways.

Much of the criticism of Brome's work has been founded on his position as Jonson's servant. It is in evidence as early as 1675, in Edward Philips' description of Brome as "a Servant suitable to such a Master" receiving "Instructions ... from his Master" (157). Matthew Steggle traces this perception of Brome through Colley Cibber, who maintains the "rhetoric of Brome as the servant to Jonson the master" to J. A. Symonds' review of an 1873 edition of Brome's play which again used "his

class origins against him”, and Herbert Allen’s study which emphasises Brome’s “lack of breeding [and] status as a servant” (2-3). While R. J. Kaufman’s seminal 1961 work did much to re-energise the study of Brome’s plays, it too relies on the idea of Brome’s inferior status in comparison with Jonson; Kaufman writes that, “[t]he shadow of Jonson falls strongly over Brome” and he indulges in a lengthy discussion of the exact nature of their master/servant relationship which itself casts a shadow over his analysis of the playwright (20-6). As recently as 2010, O’Callaghan still identifies Brome as Jonson’s “protégé” in the context of the literary society of The Apollo Room, the “effect [of which] is to intensify affinity and to naturalize dependency” (“Friends” 54). Steggle, however, suggests that there is a clear movement within the Brome/Jonson relationship towards rivalry and friendship that belies the master/servant dichotomy. With that in mind, this chapter will in part consider the way in which *The Demoiselle* is in dialogue with Jonson’s *The New Inn* and the ways that it challenges the triumph of commercialism in the earlier play.

To date *The Demoiselle* has largely been read in terms of the contexts of usury and law, which indeed occupies much of the drama. For Kaufman, the play is a re-examination of the “bonds of human relations” within an “anti-usury tradition” (138, 150). He insists that the “burden” of *The Demoiselle* – along with Brome’s slightly earlier play, *The English Moor* (1637) – “is the exposure of usurious motives” (136). Catherine Shaw goes further than Kaufman, to argue that Brome is here working to expose “any false sense of values”, which includes usury, but also “false superiority” and, moreover, the legal system (59-62, emphasis in original). Butler is also concerned with this aspect of the play, suggesting that it is “a sweeping broadside against the systems of usury and law” in which the victims are to be especially pitied (*Theatre and Crisis* 210-1). Indeed, Butler contends that the legal satire of the play

was politically sensitive, and he suggests that it was a nod to Charles I's use of the courts "as a means of enforcing policy, developing legal devices as fiscal expedients, and appealing to judicial opinions as a substitute for a sanction he could not rely on parliament to provide" (*Theatre and Crisis* 214).

*The Demoiselle* has proved to be a challenging text, and despite the patterns which some critics have drawn from it, is often contradictory. While Kaufman sees it as "more thoughtful and better constructed" than other of Brome's plays, Shaw contends that it "strikes out diffusely at various targets in its many episodes" (Kaufman 138; Shaw 74). The play, I suggest, struggles to some extent to accommodate conventions of the romance genre within an economic realm, as they were more successfully in a play like *The New Inn*. Butler's critical approach acknowledges the type of realism working in the play, writing of Brome in this period that he "is searching for new forms to his conceit, starting to effect a transformation in dramatic form to order and articulate his changing perception of his society" (*Theatre and Crisis* 210). Indeed, he goes on to note the "emblematic style of Brome's friends" that is evident in the play, and also suggests that it is peopled "emblematically" (*Theatre and Crisis* 211-2). This contention, however, only partially answers the difficulties posed by the play's dramaturgy. Brome is in fact not operating in a completely different tradition from that of Jonson, nor in a pre-realist fashion, but rather in a way that interacts with it and stretches the bounds of realism.

In this context, I am going to approach the play aware of its particular dramatic tensions and alert to the difficulties they pose. Despite the inherent contradictions, however, I suggest that there remains an underlying concern with certain types of circulation and the anxieties arising from them. *The Demoiselle* remains an important text within my thesis: the play's wider trajectory begins to make

more sense when we examine the specific ways in which Brome uses the drinking house space to stage economic encounters. Moreover, the play's direct engagement with Jonson's *The New Inn* means we can draw some useful conclusions in terms of how Brome uses previously staged drinking house spaces and the commercial conventions of the early modern tavern.

The plot concerning Dryground, in his tavern-keeper disguise, has been somewhat passed over, both in terms of the particular space of the New Ordinary that is utilised for this raffle, and also of the relationship between the economy of that space and the wider system of exchange. Butler mentions it only as a "subplot" which echoes a sixteenth-century social morality and the genre of "popular ballad and complaint" (*Theatre and Crisis* 213). In fact, the raffle in the New Ordinary represents the heart of the drama, although the way in which it plays out stretches our credulity, even bearing in mind the romance conventions at work. While *The New Inn* employed similar generic tropes, such as the separated generations and disguised family members, which worked in a context much like that of *The Winter's Tale*, *The Demoiselle* pulls us in ambiguous and sometimes bizarre directions. The economic realm of the play makes the romance conventions seem dramatically inconceivable: Brome asks us to believe that men who would pay for a girl's virginity would be just as happy to see their money go towards the financial redemption of someone they have never met.

My approach in this chapter will be to pay particular attention to the space of the ordinary and the encounters therein, and to the ways in which that space is used by Brome to negotiate wider debates regarding exchange of money and property. As we have seen before, onstage drinking house spaces provided not only "dramatic possibilities", but an opportunity for "the analysis of tendencies and trends in



contemporary society, not least ideas of sociability, and ... mobility” (Sanders *Cultural* 170). Moreover, while the theme of usury is indeed central to the play, I contend that we might only understand the wider implications of that practice by looking more closely at the relationship between money and value that the drinking house space stages.

In terms of this thesis, research that places Brome’s work within the field of cultural geography has proved most useful. Space and place are central to Steggle’s recent study (Steggle 8; Hansen 113). Sanders similarly asserts Brome as “a playwright acutely conscious of place and the connotations of particular sites and spaces” (*Cultural* 109). While Kaufman suggested that such place-realism was one of the “fads” of Caroline drama witnessed in Brome’s own work, this view neglects the ways in which Brome’s use of particular spaces and places goes further than an attempt to portray accurately the urban environment of his time (16). Indeed, it is more useful to consider Brome’s use of space within the terms of Butler’s argument. He contends that Brome is among the Caroline playwrights who were

dramatizing the conflicts and tensions at work in their society, embodying men’s dilemmas and voicing their grievances, anxieties and frustrations ... Their drama was not merely the product of its society but was itself part of the historical process, an agent of change as much as a mirror of change, a participant engaged *with* its society’s compromises and not merely an observer *of* them. (*Theatre and Crisis* 281, emphasis in original)

Butler argues that, like James Shirley, Brome's drama "depicts a known and named environment", and while his criticism focuses on the scenes in the Temple Walks, I use the same approach to understand the drinking house space in the play (*Theatre and Crisis* 212).

Placing *The Demoiselle* within a context of debates surrounding the landed gentry and fears regarding the loss of estates is also crucial for the broader conclusions of this chapter. *The Demoiselle* sits to some extent within a wider literary tradition that examines the relationship between the landed gentry and town living. This tradition is evident in plays like *The New Inn* (where Lovel comments that Frances is neglecting her estates), *Epicoe* (where there is an influx of wealthy migrants to the capital who seek a fashionable lifestyle), and Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (where Allworth and Wellborn lose their positions and estates to the manipulative Sir Giles Overreach). For the most part, this tradition relied purely on stereotypes, employed by social commentators who liked to expound upon the apparent phenomenon of the loss of estates and the increasing pervasiveness of urban commercialism. They often declared themselves to hold one of two perspectives: William Harrison is one who praised the great wealth of English merchants and their ability to replenish the ranks of landed society, while others, such as Sir Thomas Smith and Edward Chamberlayne, were to say how dreadful it was that the proper distinctions between ranks were being eroded (Harrison 115; Smith 39-40; Chamberlayne 413, 478).

The literature of economic history suggests that the landed gentry were in reality doing quite well in the inflationary period after 1560, because as landowners and food producers they saw profits and rents rise in value ahead of prices. Peck points out that it was partly due to rising agricultural rents that the landed gentry had

larger disposable incomes, incomes that were then spent in London (*Consuming* 14). I have been indebted to Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes' research in understanding certain anxieties surrounding the possible loss of country estates and the tensions between countryside and urban modes of living within the gentry experience (22-3, 140-1). They point out that while the gentry should have been financially successful during this period, due to the rise in prices of agricultural commodities, the realisation of such expectations would happen only if the landowner concerned managed his estate well (101). McRae's study of the changing attitudes towards land and property has also proved useful in understanding the ways in which the country landowners of *The Demoiselle* are part of the wider shift of agrarian England "from a site of manorial community and moral economy towards a modern landscape of capitalist enterprise" (*God Speed* 7). As with previous chapters, I will refer to Muldrew's work on the networks of credit and debt in early modern England.

In this chapter I will explore the different sorts of exchange evident in the text with the aim of offering fresh interpretations of the play. I suggest that the play challenges the commercialism that we have seen staged in previous tavern spaces. While the ending offers a glimpse of the kind of enterprise and cycle of circulation that we have begun to expect of the drinking house, the weight of the engagement with a more settled ideal undermines the drift towards commercialism, and a more conservative way of life is championed. This is in direct contrast to the drinking house spaces I have previously analysed in this thesis, which, despite accommodating certain elements of conservatism, for the most part have staged the triumph of more fluid notions of exchange and ways of living. I argue that *The Demoiselle* subverts the conventions of the drinking house space as a potent site of circulation, and presents us with a tavern that works in opposition to our expectations.

In its creation of the New Ordinary, *The Demoiselle* appropriates and exploits existing notions of the drinking house; through examining the onstage construction of this irregular space, we are better able to understand the dynamics of the community that inhabits it, and how their interactions outside of the space are influenced by the demands of commercial hospitality placed on them. The restoration of a more conservative way of living comes at the price of the drinking house space, in a movement that contrasts with *The New Inn*. The space is constructed by Brome from the outset as an atypical and unconventional establishment, which plays neither by the normal rules of hospitality nor by the established modes of commercialism: food and drink is initially served for free, which undermines the conventional means of exchange through which the community of the space is bound, and which we have seen in many other texts. With no emphasis on the paying of one's own bill, there exists no responsibility either on the proprietor to advertise his honesty, nor is there an onus on the customer to hold any loyalty towards the establishment. I will further explore how the performance of the raffle is linked to aristocratic Dryground's performance as the ordinary-keeper Osbright (much like Frampul's performance as the Host in *The New Inn*), as well as Frank's performance as 'Frances', the demoiselle of the title. Bearing in mind the links with *The New Inn*, I will argue that Brome's distortion of the practice of marrying daughters off to the highest bidder in Osbright's raffle and the subsequent revelation that there is no woman to raffle off are ways in which he engages with both the commodification of women and the potential that commercialism holds for corruption.

The use of the raffle as a plot device allows the playwright to examine concepts of consumerism, value and sociability. When this scheme is revealed at the end of the play to have been a trick to collect money to restore the ruined Brookall's

fortunes, Brome denies the audience the chance to disapprove of the project at the same time that he mocks the female commodification it exposes. Through the appropriation and modification of the conventions of the drinking house, and through the use of the raffle as a conceit through which to explore concerns about commercialism, the space is simultaneously reasserted as a place of transformation (like the Light Heart in *The New Inn*) and exploited in order to reinstate a gentleman's estates. Indeed, the conflation of the New Ordinary and the demoiselle, with both being performed and exploited, suggests that Brome is challenging the ways in which the drinking house and commodities (i.e. the virgin) are appropriated and used for supposedly generous means. Finally, I will explore how the model of commercialism seen in the ordinary can help us to understand Brome's inclusion of financially unreliable gentlemen and the perilous nature of their country estates. The chapter will ask what the implications are of the separate spheres of countryside (and gentrified) estate living and fashionable, capitalist town life being forced into dialogue with one another, and how the loss of the former may influence the latter.

### **The strange space of the New Ordinary**

We first hear the details of the New Ordinary, the enterprise that will support the "project" of which Dryground spoke, from Oliver and Ambrose, two young gallants (1.1.16, 22). Oliver expresses astonishment at the unconventional running of the establishment:

What, that there can be in the world an ass  
 (Wert thou a fool to cred it) that would keep  
 A house, by way of public ordinary,

For fashionable guests and curious stomachs,  
 The daintiest palates, with rich wine and cheer,  
 And all for nothing, but all's paid and welcome? (2.1.179)

As we have seen in other texts, the site of the drinking house consistently asserts the need to abide by financial obligations, for which the reckoning stands as an emblem. The suggestion in these lines, however, goes further than just mistrust of a space that refuses to charge for food or wine, and questions how it can fine an establishment it can be if it is doing so. The conspicuous consumption and images of discerning customers evident in Oliver's description imply the presence of significant spending power: the fashionable clientele, perhaps wearing the latest styles, hoping to sample new tastes and desirous to drink good wine ("rich" must surely describe both the quality and the value of the drink) make it seem even more outlandish that the proprietor should refuse to charge for his provisions. There is also a hint that such a system might not work in the most harmonious manner. The rather awkward construction of Oliver's last line, split as it is into two phrases with the repetition of "all", in fact makes us question that "all" as a concept of inclusion. There is no need for the "but" after the "all for nothing" and it simply introduces a sense of doubt into the second phrase that is supposed to underline the positivity of having food and drink *gratis*. Moreover, that "all's paid and welcome" is, as Lucy Munro suggests in her edition, a typical expression used in the context of victualling houses: its proverbial nature underlines the less than dependable nature of its wisdom (n6044).

This first description of the New Ordinary, then, sets it up as a space that, while seemingly attractive to those not wanting to spend much, might actually induce more anxiety than we expect. As we have seen in both early modern ballads and

rogue literature, as well as in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, one's ability to pay one's own tavern bill is crucial in both allowing entry into the tavern community and upholding the bonds of commercially-led hospitality that govern that space. The circulation of money and goods, which is insisted upon in the drinking-house tradition, is disrupted by the non-payment policy of the New Ordinary. Oliver accuses the old Justice Bumpsey of being a "free-cost drunkard", meaning that he is someone who only drinks when it costs him nothing (2.1.183). He goes on to call him "mad", which suggests that his portrayal of Valentine's father-in-law is certainly pejorative and not simply descriptive, and that drinking at another's expense is deemed undesirable (2.1.183). If we apply this logic to the wider customer base of the New Ordinary, it would seem that non-paying patrons are not to be trusted. We have seen previously how narratives of non-payment underline particular anxieties regarding the racking up of debt in the early modern period. Even when there is no reckoning to pay, the notion that one need not discharge a bill invokes suspicion.

From the start the ordinary is constructed by Brome in terms of how it might not function as a typical drinking house space. We are led to think of the space – before we have even encountered it onstage – as somewhere not entirely to be relied upon. Oliver's further comments that the complimentary victuals might actually be an elaborate trick, much like ones he has heard about which consist of tradesmen being sent to visit animals in the belief that they are real customers, underline the apparent instability of the ordinary. While Ambrose has assured him of the truth of the situation, he also names Valentine as the "author" of the information (2.1.182). While this may indeed be a straightforward word to describe the originator of the facts about the ordinary, it simultaneously suggests the authorship of a particular narrative regarding the mechanics of the operation. If Oliver is right, and the customers are

attracted to such an establishment in the same way that the tradesmen were attracted to fictional clients, then the ordinary is nothing but a farce. In fact, Oliver's questions assert the reliance of drinking house spaces on the particular rules of exchange, of the need for customers to receive a bill and pay their way.

The first scene set in the ordinary itself quickly takes up this theme, in Wat's lines that open this chapter. He insists on the bonds of hospitality as the benchmark for trust, telling Frances that if he were to order a tavern feast and only pay for half, the hostess would trust him to such an extent that she would advance some of his food by a day (3.1.421). This comparison is meant to seduce Frances ahead of any marriage. Frances' response is delayed by a conversation between Dryground (disguised as Osbright the Host) and Alice, Vermin's daughter, to whom he has confided all regarding his "project" (3.1.426). When the scene returns to Wat and Frances a few lines later, we only see her astonishment and fury at the gallant's suggestion: "Fie! Can you be so lewd? Is that your reason?" (3.1.427). I am not suggesting that Wat's comparison between a tavern feast and Frances' virginity is not in some way outlandish, drawn by a man on a sexual mission. Rather I suggest that Brome deliberately places such an exchange of words at the very moment that we first see the ordinary onstage, in an attempt to undermine the notion of trust in the bonds of commercial hospitality. At one level, Wat's words uphold this bond as the ultimate in credibility, using it as a marker of his own personal sincerity. Nonetheless, we are invited to question this. Firstly, the audience would surely have been aware of how the prospect of the reckoning invoked certain anxieties about deferral of payment. Secondly, the suspension of Wat's conversation with Frances allows us to be reminded of Dryground's own dishonesty in performing the role of the host, which then serves to undermine Wat's example of integrity. If the Host is not reliable, we



may ask whether the conventional bonds of commercial hospitality can be enforced in this space?

Much like Goodstock in *The New Inn*, who insists that his agency as the Host derives from a relationship with the materiality of the inn, Dryground (under the *nom de plume* Osbright) asserts his authority via disguise and the hiring of the building of the New Ordinary:

I took this house,  
 And in this habit here turned pimping host,  
 To make the most of her, and find a husband  
 To take her with all faults. (3.1.462)

I will return to the complications of the scheme itself and how it affects Dryground's model of exchange later in this chapter. What is interesting here is that the Host places some weight on the materiality of his surroundings that appear to give him credence. Unlike Goodstock, however, whose noble rank, revealed at the end of the play, undermines the fictions he has carefully constructed to trick both the community of the inn and the playgoers themselves, Dryground's performance as Osbright is only a secret to a select few characters, and not to the audience. Indeed, he is eager to reveal his true identity and purpose, going as far as to tell Ambrose that he is "a gentleman decayed in fortune" and only being frustrated in giving away any more by Ambrose's premature anger towards the raffle (3.1.514). Dryground tells Oliver,

You had discovered more if his impatience  
 Had not prevented me. But now I am dumb to you

In all but this: if you'll be pleased to sup here.

I shall afford you welcome. (3.1.521)

In this way, Dryground's performance of the host is highlighted by Brome in a way that is not seen quite so overtly in *The New Inn*, and it has a bearing on how we go on to read the functioning of the ordinary itself and the scheme of the raffle that is executed within that space. Moreover, a key tension emerges with Dryground asserting his authority over the space as a host – drawing on all the traditions of that figure – while the space itself undermines the framework of commercialism in which the host is normally situated.

For the moment, however, I would like to attend to the ways in which a further comparison between *The Demoiselle* and *The New Inn* might help us better understand the ways in which Brome is working. I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter that historically, criticism of Brome has emphasised his relationship with Jonson. The limits of this thesis are such that an extended examination of this narrative is not possible, but I would suggest that *The Demoiselle* is a text through which this relationship plays out. The subtitle – *The New Ordinary* – cannot help but recall Jonson's play *The New Inn*, performed less than ten years previously at the Blackfriars Theatre, not far from the site of Brome's dramatic home of the late 1630s, the Salisbury Court.<sup>25</sup> Steggle records how, following the failure of *The New Inn*, and the success of Brome's *The Love-Sick Maid* (1629) in the same year, Jonson's "Ode to Himself" contained "an ungenerous comment on Brome" (17).<sup>26</sup> By 1631 Jonson

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<sup>25</sup> Brome had been the principal writer for the King's Men, based at the Globe and at Blackfriars, from 1629 until about 1632; he started writing for the Salisbury Court in 1635. For further discussion of the relationships Brome forged with different theatres see Steggle 16-21, 43-45, 67-71.

<sup>26</sup> See Steggle 17-20 for an insightful analysis of this tension and how it affects the critical stereotype of Brome.

had edited his verse to exclude the mean-spirited reference (Steggle 18). Before that date, however, the following lines substituted “There” in line 27 with “Brooms”:

No doubt some mouldy tale  
 Like *Pericles*, and stale  
 As the shrieve’s crusts, and nasty as his fish–  
 Scraps, out of every dish  
 Thrown forth and raked into the common tub,  
 May keep up the play-club:  
 There, sweepings do as well  
 As the best-ordered meal.  
 For who the relish of these guests will fit  
 Needs set them but the alms-basket of wit. (21-30)

This is not merely a literary anecdote, but rather, I suggest, part of a narrative – and dialogue – that includes both Jonson’s and Brome’s staged drinking house spaces. Even with the later amendment, I contend that several years later the younger writer would have remembered his counterpart’s response to the badly received performance of his play (Steggle 18).<sup>27</sup> Indeed, by choosing to stage a similar space in an unfamiliar way, Brome was perhaps trying to engage with – and play with – his mentor’s drama.

The echoes of *The New Inn* go beyond the title. Let us remind ourselves of the similarities. Both involve an aristocratic man, who for several years has abandoned

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<sup>27</sup> For further discussion of the apparent failure of *The New Inn* on stage and its subsequent life in print see Hattaway’s introduction to his edition of *The New Inn* 8-14, and Sanders’ introduction to her edition 167-9.

his dependents (his family in *The New Inn*, his lover and daughter in *The Demoiselle*). Lord Frampul disguises himself as Goodstock, and Dryground as Osbright, and both set themselves up as an innkeeper. In *The New Inn*, there is a boy who lives in the Light Heart, Frank, who is dressed up as a girl and marries Lord Beaufort, only for ‘him’ be revealed as a girl, the long lost daughter of Goodstock/Frampul. In *The Demoiselle*, Frances, whose name surely recalls Lady Frances Frampul in Jonson’s play, pretends to be Osbright/Dryground’s daughter, but is eventually revealed to be Frank, Brookall’s son.

Such parallels in plot and character are not simply interesting observations, but deliberate echoes of the earlier play, through which Brome invites comparison between the two onstage drinking house spaces. It is tempting to suggest that Brome was deliberately exploiting the audience’s expectations regarding how this sort of space functions. Admittedly, such plot devices and characters cannot be found in other drama of the period. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the relationship between the two playwrights and the overt similarities of the two texts, I maintain that Brome engages with Jonson’s drama in order to appropriate and modify certain ideas regarding the drinking house space that were determined there, such as the materiality of the establishment, the unrestrained commercialism, and the essential quality of the circulation of the inn that I demonstrated in Chapter 4.

I have already demonstrated how the New Ordinary subverts the rules of commercial hospitality that we have witnessed in other onstage drinking house spaces, the refusal to charge for food or drink being at the heart of this. *The Demoiselle* plays on certain established notions of these spaces – and the space of the Light Heart in particular – in order to then distort them, and it is this gap between our expectations and the reality of the drinking house space that Brome exploits in order

to explore the relationship between money and value. The way in which the New Ordinary engages with the notion of circulation in only a very limited way – despite our expectations to the contrary – is one example of this distortion. Midway through the play, Dryground instructs Frances to pay some tradesmen. He tells Frances (although he calls her “Frank”): “[d]ischarge the butcher’s and the chandler’s bills. / They wait below. The baker and the brewer / I have made even with” (3.1.450). A “vintner”, “bottle-man” and “tobacco-merchant” are also mentioned, and the suggestion here is that there is a wider economy with which the ordinary is interacting, through the circulation of goods, and that in turn the circulation of money is not quite so frustrated (3.1.451-2). It is worth remembering here Muldrew’s observation: “It was merchants and shopkeepers who were owed the largest number of debts, and these were mostly for small amounts due from their retail customers” (*Economy* 96). Such a model argues for the connectedness of these kinds of enterprises, bearing in mind the pervasive “webs of credit and obligation” that Muldrew demonstrates existed in this period (*Economy* 95). If we think of the New Ordinary in these terms, it sits at a juncture between suppliers – those merchants mentioned above – and the customers, and we glimpse a situation where the New Ordinary is part of a wider urban economy.

This idea, however, is hereafter completely ignored to the extent we might wonder at its initial inclusion. Admittedly, Dryground refers in the final act to the “three day’s [sic] housekeeping” which he has paid out in return for the wealth he accrues from the raffle, but he does not make this a point in its own right, rather using it to display his revelation that Frances is Frank all the more acutely (5.1.1004). Previously, I have demonstrated how the Light Heart (and to some extent, the Boar’s Head) is emblematic of a wider exchange economy, as a space thoroughly invested in

the concept of circulation. In *The Demoiselle* that circulation is conspicuous by its absence.

In fact, despite these two instances, the logic of the play shies away from the model of circulation we have seen dramatised elsewhere. The “commodity” of the ordinary remains Frances’ virginity (3.1.486). When Dryground entertains the gallants, he extols the qualities of the wine he offers, saying,

Full six and thirty times hath Luna waned  
The strength she got in six and thirty growths  
From Phoebus’ virtuous beams, into this juice,  
To make it nectar for Phoebean wits.

’Tis this that inspires their brains with fire divine (3.1.508)

This is reminiscent of Goodstock’s careful boasting of the “good wine” to be found in his “house of wine” (*The New Inn* 1.2.26, 28). Lovel calls him a “[h]umorous host!”, which reinforces the efforts that Goodstock has been making to portray his establishment, based on particular bonds between guest and host, as a space of merriment (*The New Inn* 1.2.32). While in that instance, the Goodstock’s use of such rhetoric is encouraged by his customer’s answer, here Oliver’s response does not adhere to the kinds of reaction expected by the conventional bonds of commercial hospitality. In fact, it undermines both the host/guest relationship and what we might expect to be of import to a customer in an ordinary. Oliver quickly pierces Dryground’s elaborate description of the wine offered, and concentrates on the only provision of the ordinary in which he is interested:

Your meaning is good sack, and three years old.  
 To put your beverage and your bombast,  
 I will nor drink, nor talk of other thing,  
 But the choice thing of things, your daughter, sir. (3.1.509)

The repetition of “thing” here not only reduces Frances to an object, but also emphasises the difficulty that Oliver has in denominating quite what the ordinary offers. If Frances (the “daughter”) is the only item that Oliver has in mind to purchase – or is the service he expects to enjoy – he still seems to think of her in terms of other “things” that are, or should be, available to purchase at the ordinary. When considering this, we might remind ourselves of the tavern bill belonging to Falstaff:

<i>Item a capon</i>	<i>2s. 2d.</i>
<i>Item sauce</i>	<i>4d.</i>
<i>Item sack two gallons</i>	<i>5s. 8d.</i>
<i>Item anchovies and sack after supper</i>	<i>2s. 6d.</i>
<i>Item bread</i>	<i>ob. (1 Henry IV 2.4.448-52)</i>

One of the definitions offered for an ordinary is “[a]n inn, public house, tavern, etc., where meals are provided at a fixed price” (“Ordinary”). If Falstaff’s bill was issued by the Boar’s Head tavern, where the primary focus is on the consumption of wine, then we might assume that the New Ordinary would offer at least similar kinds of provisions, or even more. So when Oliver is unable to articulate precisely what is on offer at the ordinary (apart from Frances), his words resonate with a sense that, again, the space is, in some way indefinable, using terms we have previously understood

from the drinking house space. Moreover, Oliver's retort suggests an unwillingness to acknowledge even the free drink in the establishment. He equates Dryground's "beverage" and his "bombast" as if the former were also simply an example of the Host's expansive rhetoric, as if he refuses to acknowledge the ordinary as anything other than artificial (3.1.509).

Indeed, in relation to the conventional drinking house space, the financial logic of the New Ordinary is far harder to pin down because of this artificiality. There is no network of exchange to create or to maintain, as we have observed in other dramatic texts. Brome constructs a community in the ordinary but the bonds we would initially expect to find do not bind them together in the same way. Dryground might have bailed Wat from prison, telling him, "I have, you know, released you from your thralldom / Upon condition you should steal your sister / To be at my dispose", but we do not find in this relationship the narrative of financial obligation that we see revealed, for example, between Hal and Falstaff, or even Goodstock and Fly (3.1.454). The only brief sense we have of the community created in the New Ordinary is the group of gallants, led by Oliver and Ambrose, who pursue Wat in apparent fury at Dryground's scheme. In this way, it shares more similarities with Dogbolt's tavern in *Westward Ho*, where the errant husbands seek the local constable to restore some civic authority. In a similar way, we find in *The Demoiselle* the staging of apparent moral indignation towards the drinking house space is both fleeting and frustrated.

The enraged reaction of the gallants occurs despite their initial interest in buying into the raffle, and only comes about when they realise that Frances knows



nothing of the scheme.<sup>28</sup> Ambrose asks, “Was ever such an outrage!” (3.1.551). He and Oliver arrange to meet Wat in the Temple Walks supposedly to give over their money as part of the raffle, but instead they meet him with a rabble, who chase him crying, “To the pump with him! To the pump, to the pump!” (4.1.655). While this community has undoubtedly been created through the experience of the drinking house, it is of course pitted against that establishment, here in the form of Wat, whom they blame for Dryground’s project. It is significant that once the rabble have been sent on their way, Ambrose kicks Wat and says,

Go, get thee hence, insufferable villain.  
 I could e’en kick thee into twenty pieces  
 And send thee to thy master, for my stake  
 Soon, at his rifling. (4.1.675)

The “twenty pieces” here of course refers to the amount each man has been asked to pay in order to take part in Dryground’s scheme. Ambrose’s use of this sum to insult Wat not only seeks to undermine the only financial obligation undertaken at the ordinary but also hints at a narrative we will see played out later in the drama of the conflation of people and their value. In respect of the network of the drinking house in *The Demoiselle*, however, it is revealing once again of Brome’s efforts to frustrate what we expect to find. So while the action in Act 3 would suggest the construction of some sort of network based on the gallants’ participation – Dryground mentions he has a “full hundred” such contributors – the staging at this juncture challenges that very notion (3.1.476).

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<sup>28</sup> ‘Frances’ of course knows nothing, but is simply an act performed by Frank who knows everything.

The New Ordinary, then, simultaneously offers glimpses of and resists the conventional tavern space. Brome offers us a fantasy of a tavern – one where there is no reckoning to be paid nor financial responsibility to shoulder. That fantasy, however, comes at a price, and the strangeness of the space, to a certain extent, sits uneasily within the economic framework of the play. Of course, the privileging of the ordinary as a fiction, even within Dryground’s narrative, means that Brome invites us to consider how the space works and to question its operation. Bearing in mind how the New Ordinary disturbs conventional commercial operations, and how it resists the internal network of exchange that normally goes hand in hand with the materiality of the drinking house, I think it is worth considering for the moment quite how the money works within this space.

### **Circulating money**

One of the ways in which the circulation of money in *The Demoiselle* is focused is through raffle in the ordinary. Nonetheless, before attending to Dryground’s scheme in more depth, it is worth asking how Brome manages the movement, if not the circulation, of money in the play. We know that the ordinary’s customers are not required to pay for food or drink, and the various suppliers seem to be paid off in full. Before the conclusion of the play, however, where Dryground uses his gains to ensure the future of Frank and his father, there is a consistent movement of money, which I would suggest is different from the circulation of it in an economy. Dryground uses some of it to bail Wat out of prison in order that he might bring his sister Alice to the ordinary: Bumpsey mentions to Vermin that his son’s bail would cost him not “much above a hundred pound” (3.2.587). Furthermore, Dryground sends his own son with cash to relieve the destitute Brookall. Valentine tells him that it is from his estranged

son Frank who sends it from France: “If this be gold / He lives and sent it to you: forty pieces” (2.1.380). Later in the play, Wat calculates that one piece is worth twenty shillings, and Lucy Munro notes in her edition that forty pieces would therefore be worth £40, “roughly equivalent to £3400 in today’s currency” (3.1.477, n6536). We have no idea how much Dryground spent on the hiring of the building, nor on the suppliers such as the vintner, chandler et al., but the money forwarded to Brookall represents 4 per cent of the money Dryground received from Vermin. This may seem a negligible sum in those terms, but it remains an impressive amount to a man in “poverty” (1.1.22).

So while the play is not explicit in how the exchange of money is facilitated by the drinking house, there is evidence that it is not simply an operation of stasis, and the model of the New Ordinary insists upon how money can be used, rather than on its circulation. The site remains one that is engaged with different notions of exchange without itself creating a network thereof. Indeed, if we remember that initial sum of money that Dryground received from Vermin for his mortgaged property, we might be better able to trace how the particular model that operates within the ordinary extends outwards. The play opens with Vermin telling Dryground, “You have your money, full a thousand pound” (1.1.3). This sum of a thousand pounds resonates throughout the play. The same amount is used emblematically by Shakespeare in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, where it becomes a verbal sign of the momentum towards Falstaff acknowledging his indebtedness. In *The Demoiselle*, however it becomes a marker of the exchange of money and the difference between value and cost that we see examined. I take the value as that which is attached to a sum of money, a value which may be subjective and to which a use is assigned, whereas the cost is the purely financial definition.

We see this most clearly in the discussion between Bumpsey and his new son-in-law, Valentine, who has married the old Justice's daughter, Jane. Bumpsey is cross about this love-match, and laments that his daughter has married into a family of good name, yet one without land – a tension which I explore later in this chapter (1.2.116). The proposal he first makes to Valentine is that he will give the dowry his own wife brought with her – “Only one thousand, I confess, my wife / Improved my fortune with” – to Jane, so that she may “endow” her own husband with this money (1.2.129). Valentine meanwhile offers to buy favour with his father-in-law with this same sum:

I would make this my suit –  
 .....  
 That you would take  
 With re-acceptance of this thousand pound  
 Your daughter and me into your family. (1.2.143, 145)

This scene demonstrates “how explicitly the play is couched in terms of money and property” (Kaufman 142). Taking such an analysis further, I suggest that it also reveals the different values that characters attach to money, and consequently asserts the idea that value does not necessarily equal worth. To Bumpsey, the thousand pounds represents a sum of money that he himself has not earned, which sits at odds with the rest of his estate of “ten thousand pounds” achieved through “thrifty industry” (1.2.129). It is more valuable to him to give it to Valentine and Jane to make them independent from him.

To Valentine, however, the thousand pounds represents the possibility of acceptance into his wife's family, but more than that, as the mechanism through

which he may later obtain the greater part of his father-in-law's estate. He says to Bumpsey,

Give us but meat and lodging for't ...  
 .....  
 And as you find my regular life deserve  
 Your future favour, so extend your bounty,  
 When age shall call upon you to dispose  
 Of all your fair possessions. (1.2.147, 149)

For Valentine, then, the thousand pounds might be seen as an investment by which he hopes to make a considerable amount of money when Bumpsey becomes too old. The Justice's scheme to give half of his money to his son-in-law takes Valentine's idea of investment and return, and distorts it in order to teach him thriftiness:

I'll give him instantly the free possession  
 Of half I have. Now mar: if you increase  
 Or keep that half, then, doubtless, I shall do  
 As well with t'other for you. If you diminish  
 Or waste it all, I'll do the like with my part. (1.2.160)

Bumpsey's attitude reveals an awareness of the uncertainties of such an investment, through which the anxieties surrounding an economy of circulation emerge. His scheme invites us to consider the different potential outcomes of such a venture, and to question the reliance that is placed on financial agreements when others use money

in opposite ways. It is a question that Brome expands upon with the model of the raffle and that we see expressed in relation to the drinking house space of the play. The text invites us to consider this, however, in less than commercial terms, with Bumpsey himself likening Valentine's potentially uneconomical attitude to his playing the game of "ducks and drakes" with coins rather than stones (1.2.164). Here Bumpsey equates extravagance in personal finances with a ridiculous competition in which money is conspicuously wasted, alerting the audience at this early stage to the porous boundaries that will be drawn between competing fantasies of circulation.

Bumpsey stays true to his word, and when Valentine begins immediately to spend his portion, his father-in-law does the same. Valentine gives the following description:

I'll tell you how he runs at waste already:  
 This morning the French tailor brought a gown home,  
 Of the fashion, for my wife; he bought one  
 Straight, ready-made, for his old gentlewoman,  
 That never wore so rich in all her life. (2.1.193)

Similarly, once Valentine mentions buying a coach, Bumpsey does the same (2.1.195). His spendthrift ways continue to the extent that his wife Magdalen accuses him of "wear[ing] the purchase / Of a pawned fortune", although equally she seems to revel in her new mode of living (3.2.569). The comic effect of Bumpsey's spending should not be disregarded and through him the play draws a contrast with Vermin's attitude to money, and by extension, his children (Kaufman 142; Shaw 59-60). Neither should we ignore the serious side of the old Justice, who, Steggle notes,

“comes across as considerably shrewder and more moral than one is led to expect by first appearances” and whose partitioning of his estate is an “ingenious” deal much like Dryground’s (136).

Nonetheless, I suggest that Bumpsey is a character who resists a simple reading. On one hand, his values are such that they occupy – at least at first – the moral heart of the play. His satirical comments to Vermin about the loss of his daughter – “perhaps for want / Of hufty-tufties, and of gorgets gay” – turn the usurer’s policy of equating his children with financial worth upside down (3.2.585).<sup>29</sup> Bumpsey gives money to the beggar girl Phyllis, and could be credited with providing Vermin the push towards his eventual conversion, telling him, “Spend you the rest of your estate yourself / And save your heirs the sin” (4.1.775-7, 3.2.587). Shaw writes of this last speech that, “the Justice succeeds (where, up to a point, Dryground has failed) in making Vermin look ridiculous. . . . Bumpsey provides [this push towards repentance] by lightening Vermin’s villainy, at least briefly, by making him appear more foolish than the Justice is garrulous” (61). I would suggest, however, that such a straightforward reading of Bumpsey’s behaviour neglects the more ambiguous ways in which the character works.

Bumpsey’s deeds, in fact, are often based more on self-interest than a sense of goodwill. Firstly, his charity towards Phyllis is staged as a competition with Valentine, where they attempt to outdo each other in their generosity and, at the same time, infuriate Vermin (4.1.775-7). The benevolence shown to the beggar girl emerges, therefore, as a fiction of charity, with the encounter privileging the men’s spending over Phyllis’ receiving. Admittedly, the result is the same, and she benefits

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<sup>29</sup> Vermin had told Alice, “Note my care, / Piled up for thee in massy suns of wealth” and states that if Wat were to be bailed from his prison cell, he would “force him to a trial for his life / For the two hundred pieces that he pilfered / Out of my counting-house” (1.1.35, 43).

more from Bumpsey and Valentine's rivalry than if they had each been alone in their donations, but the episode is indicative of the play's shifting attitude toward spending. Secondly, the excessive kinds of circulation not staged in the space of the ordinary are really only seen through the characters of Bumpsey and his wife Magdalen. The challenge to Valentine, that they would use their own money in the same way that he uses the portion bestowed on him, sees the older couple become spendthrifts despite any "sense of values" that they may hold (Shaw 60). It is worth noting that their conspicuous consumption far outweighs any consumption that is facilitated by the ordinary itself, despite what we might expect from such a space: we know that Bumpsey buys his wife fine French clothes and a coach (3.2.568). Moreover, Bumpsey claims to be able to be "as well provided" as any of the gamesters in the ordinary, producing several purses to show Valentine: "And here it is. And here it is, and here, and there, and here it is. [*Produces five purses*]" (4.1.754, 745).

While he does help to bring reconciliation between Vermin and his children, and between Dryground and Phyllis, Bumpsey's spending suggests that we cannot simply write him off as the figure that holds together the bonds of fellowship within the play. Indeed, he resists such an interpretation, much like many of the ways we expect the play to work; the logic is not always clear to see. While Bumpsey admits that he has become "half sick of this condition" of his spendthrift behaviour, the play does not altogether endorse this sentiment (4.1.803). He asks Valentine, "what's the next vagary", as if he is not satisfied by the extravagance he has already shown, having already claimed he would "make one w' ye at your new ordinary" (4.1.799, 4.1.747).

With this last line, the New Ordinary, then, again becomes the focus of money in the play, and yet simultaneously exists as a site where extravagance will be



frustrated. Bumpsey's wife Magdalen arrives there with Jane at the beginning of Act 5 ostensibly to learn French manners from Frances. Magdalen's behaviour belies her earlier conduct as an older matron, as she gets more and more drunk on the (free) wine served; Dryground observes, "All her wine showers out in tears" (5.1.940). This loucheness, however, has only sprung from her husband's changed ways of spending, and we might connect her desire to learn French manners with the purchase of her French gown; equally it is stopped, just as Bumpsey's spending halts, at the end of the play, when Magdalen declares: "Think me not drunk, good Bump. A little fashion-sick, or so" (5.1.1037).

The subplot of Bumpsey and his wife is one of the ways in which the logic of *The Demoiselle* works rather ambiguously; the extravagant spending, which is at times so ridiculous, is never reconciled with the original plan of tutoring Valentine in financial propriety. Bumpsey even suggests that he is not subject to the "disease" of excess from which his wife suffers (5.1.1036). I suggest that it is indicative of the way in which Brome handles the dramaturgy of the play as a whole, linked as it is to how he appropriates notions of the drinking house space – most notably from *The New Inn* – and constructs a neo-tavern, unconventional in both the bonds that support it and its function. By creating a space that is hard to pin down – both for the customers within it, and the audience watching it – there emerges a disparity between our expectations and our understanding, which Brome exploits. In fact, the play insists upon a vision of dramatic excess – seen here in the episode with the Bumpseys but also more widely in the staging of the ordinary as artificial – and while Butler's analysis that the play can be read in emblematic terms has an appeal, it is nonetheless more compelling to think about the ways in which *The Demoiselle* stretches the realistic tradition of Jonson

(*Theatre and Crisis* 212). Let us, then, consider the most obvious model of this excess: the raffle.

### **The raffle: a model of exchange?**

Ambrose, one of Valentine's friends, first makes the link between the ordinary and gambling, when he makes a wager with the gallant, Oliver: if it is proved false that the new establishment charges nothing for its services, he will "pay all ord'naries and tavern reckonings" that his friend raises for a year (2.1.180). This of course also serves to remind us that the New Ordinary is unique in asking for no reckonings to be paid. Oliver says that he has been told that at the establishment, "there's no gaming, so no cheating, / Nor any other by-way of expense / By bawdry, or so, for privy profit" (2.1.204). Despite these apparent rules, we learn from Valentine that there will be, that night, "some great rifling for some jewel / Or other rare commodity they say; / I cannot name 't. 'Tis twenty pound a man" (2.1.205).

This is, however, no ordinary gaming. It involves no "dice, nor cards", according to Valentine, and the proprietor's "own only daughter" is the only woman seen in the house (2.1.207). The gallants discuss how this daughter – who we learn is Frances – is able to "give instructions to our courtliest dames" in "French behaviour" (2.1.211). We are yet to discover that she is in fact the prize of the wager, that Dryground/Osbright will claim to hold her virginity as the stake of the game; we learn this after Wat has fallen in love with her and Dryground explains his scheme:

DRYGROUND.        This I have designed to put her off –  
                                  I mean her maidenhead – at such a rate  
                                  Shall purchase land.

WAT.                   How, good Sir Humphrey, how?

DRYGROUND.        She shall be rifled for.

WAT.                   How! Rifled, sir?

DRYGROUND.        Yes, rifled Wat; the most at three fair throws,  
                           With three fair dice, must win and wear her,  
                           Wat.  
                           You'll take her with all faults? (3.1.468-472)

There are several things to consider here. Firstly, Wat – much like the audience – is still under the impression that Frances is really a woman, and his desire for her means that he intends to marry her even after her exploitation; Dryground tricks him into thinking that the scheme will raise her dowry (3.1.473, 460). Secondly, the notion of Frances' value to Wat and her cost to Dryground (even though the proposed dowry is a deception) feeds into Brome's interrogation of wider issues of value and cost that I will return to shortly. Thirdly, as we have seen in other texts of the period, the notion of purchasing land emerges as a particular concern. I will return to this final point.

For the meantime, let us consider the term used by Dryground to describe the game through which Frances can be won: she will be "rifled". Munro notes in her edition that this word means "gambled" but also that the *OED Online* offers alternative definitions, which Brome plays on here. "Rifle" means both, "To play dice; to gamble, esp. for a stake" and, "To offer as a prize in a raffle" ("Rifle"). We also find the latter used in Dekker and Webster's 1607 play *Northward Ho*, where Bellamont tells Greenshield, "if you like not that course but do intend to be rid of her: rifle her at a Taverne" (5.1.314-5). This is the earliest example of such a term in the *OED Online*, and it is tempting to think Brome, if not directly referencing the drama

(bearing in mind it was printed over twenty years before *The Demoiselle* was staged), was engaging with a – perhaps comic – notion that women could indeed be “rifled” off in this kind of space. Of course, in Brome’s drama, the rifling is not designed to get “rid” of Frances, as in Bellamont’s suggestion: we know that Wat, while he believes her to be a woman, intends to marry her after the event “with all her faults” (3.1.472). Rather the emphasis here is on how much money the offer of her body can raise. It is in this action that we see Brome hinting at alternative definitions of “rifle”: “To carry off as booty; to plunder; to steal” and, “To caress or fondle sexually; to engage in sexual activity with (a person, usually a woman)”, both of which were in use at the time that Brome was writing (“Rifle”). What we can take from this multi-layered term is that the raffle for Frances’ virginity is fraught with underlying questions of morality just as Dryground uses the expression quite openly to describe the gambling process.

We are alerted to his tension through the various responses to the raffle that are given voice. The gallants Oliver and Ambrose only find themselves in opposition to Dryground’s scheme when they discover that Frances is not aware of it (although she of course is only a character being performed by Frank). They initially have no reservations about the offering of a woman as a prize, and Oliver asks Dryground, “May not we / Come in adventurers? Here are twenty pieces” (3.1.513). It is the connotations of plundering that they find objectionable; when Wat tells them that she has “[n]ot the least inkling of it”, Ambrose responds with, “Bless me Heaven!” and, “Was ever such an outrage?” (3.1.546, 547, 551). As Shaw reminds us, Vermin’s covetousness is unsurprising “when he also considers his daughter merely a part of his goods” (57). Can we draw a comparison with this attitude and Dryground’s own ploy to raffle off Frances’ virginity? I would argue that this is exactly the kind of

comparison that Brome seeks to make, but that the “rifling” of Frances is complicated by the fact that ‘Frances’ does not exist.

In fact, we are alerted to this early on in the play when Dryground conflates her with the ordinary, a space that is constructed to be explicitly artificial: he asks Wat, “How like you your new mistress here, the new ordinary – / The *demoiselle*, or what you please to call her?” (3.1.442). The slightly awkward phrasing here, with Dryground referring to both the space and Frances at the same time, hints at the indefinable quality that they share, a theme that is taken up by Oliver when he is unable to articulate the “things” available there – including Dryground’s daughter (3.1.509). Even though we ultimately discover that the “rifling” is not real, its narrative is linked to the way in which Brome stages the tension between value and cost that we see most notably in the Bumpsey subplot. The conflation of Frances and the New Ordinary in the lines above, I suggest, invites us to consider the way that Brome challenges how both the drinking house and the figure of the *demoiselle* are appropriated and exploited for supposedly generous purposes. Kaufman would have us believe that Dryground “unifies the efforts of all the characters towards the conversion of Vermine to decency and generosity”, but we might ask whether the value of the appropriation required for this end corresponds to its cost (141).

The amount required by each man to submit to Dryground in his guise as Osbright in order to take part in the “rifling” is enormous: “twenty pieces” (3.1.474). According to Munro’s note in her edition, this would be £1700 in today’s money (n6061). With a “full hundred” men taking part, the money raised is a fortune of “[t]wo thousand pound” (3.1.476-7). Such an amount wagered indicates, surely, that the prize is of great value to those participants, and although this kind of narrative is not unheard of in early modern drama, there is something distinctive and excessive

about the raffle. Moreover, the risk of significant loss is all the greater with such a high level of investment made and the numbers of “gamesters” involved (3.1.475).

We may read Dryground’s “project” as a reference to the “legal monopolies and ‘projects’ to which Charles [I] turned as a means of indirect taxation” (Butler *Theatre and Crisis* 214). The argument that the play engages with the controversy over Ship Money, “a legal expedient which enabled Charles to impose emergency taxation directly on the country, ostensibly to pay for the navy, without reference to Parliament”, is compelling (Steggle 131). The implications that this analysis has for Dryground’s scheme is that “it shows that projects have a right and a wrong use, and that when used to exploit, as Dryground’s apparently is, they are both illegal and inhumane” (*Theatre and Crisis* 214). However, I take an opposite approach to understanding the scheme within this framework. Brome may well have had in mind these royal ventures when he uses such language to describe Dryground’s raffle, and Steggle’s reading of Vermin’s description calling to mind “Caroline macroeconomic manoeuvres” is persuasive (132). Nonetheless, surely the revelation to those involved that the raffle is indeed a farce means that it is not quite the straightforward “sham” that Butler would have us believe because any exploitation of his customers is revealed to them. Furthermore, the revelation at the end of the play that Frances is in fact Brookall’s son in disguise means that Dryground’s raffle is based not on inhumanity towards his ‘daughter’ but on the certainty that consumerism will always win out.

The logic of the play refuses to be bound so strictly and resists demarcation along the moral lines that Butler and Steggle perceive. Although those participating in this contest might well be subjected to moral outrage by the audience, the reasoning behind it is of course more complex. In the very first scene, as Vermin lends

Dryground the money, he asks if its purpose is “to drain the Goodwins? To be lord / Of all the treasure buried in the sands there?” (1.1.21). Dryground replies to the usurer that his “project” is not simply a way to make money but for the “relief” of his friend Brookall (1.16, 24).<sup>30</sup> As Shaw comments, Dryground “is willing to become as decayed in fortune as he had been in moral honesty; the regaining of the second is much more important than the first” (57). This demonstrates not only the moral impulse of Dryground’s venture, but also the way in which he hopes to use the money in ways we might not expect. The raffle – as we shall see – can be read as an extreme form of commercialism, as the scheme only works if Dryground ‘invests’ the money he obtains from Vermin to make a profit, but it also something more than that. The project is not straightforward charity, and it relies to some extent on commercial expectations, although, as I have shown, the bonds of commercial hospitality in the New Ordinary are at the same time consistently undermined. Indeed, the very fact that the ordinary resists a conventional framework of commercialised hospitality means that the play highlights the raffle as the emblem through which we are now to understand the space. Nonetheless, the purpose of the money that Dryground borrows from Vermin is to reinstate the position and fortune of Brookall and his son in recompense for previous wrongs done to their family. The scheme finds success through the bonds of sociability rather than the bonds of commercial hospitality. This tension is at the heart of the raffle, and it is a model that extends throughout the dealings that the characters have with the ordinary.

The raffle also invokes the more extreme excesses of an economy of circulation. It “exposes commodification in its crudest form”: that of women (Findlay

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion about how Vermin’s words invites comparison with *The Devil is an Ass* and *The Sparagus Garden* see Steggle 132.

209). Findlay draws a parallel between Frances and the beggar Phyllis, who benefits from the competitive charity of Valentine and Bumpsey:

the raffle and the begging scene seem to reverse Marx's theory of commodity relations where 'commodities are things, and therefore lack the power to resist man', because they show that man lacks the power to resist commodities, no matter what their price. (211)

On the whole I agree with this, and with her view that *The Demoiselle* is "proto-feminist" in its critique of the pervasive commodification of women (209). Frank's performance of bastardy (remembering that *Dryground* presents Frances as his daughter out of marriage) can be connected to the way in which female characters (played by boys in a further twist of gender performance) are excluded from a position of power in this kind of exchange. Frank is identified with *Dryground*'s real bastard – Phyllis – through their shared position of having to beg for money from men. The links that I have demonstrated between *The Demoiselle* and *The New Inn* further underline Findlay's argument that the position occupied by Frances/Frank feeds into the idea of dispossession in a male-dominated economy (210). At the end of Jonson's play, Frank, the boy living in the Light Heart who was dressed up as 'Laetitia' is married off to Beaufort in a comic ruse intended to humiliate the aristocrat. It is soon revealed that she is a girl, but Beaufort, believing her to be poor, opposes the match because he thinks, "beggars match with beggars" (*The New Inn* 5.5.45). We soon discover, however, that Frank is really Laetitia, the long lost daughter of Goodstock/Frampul; the marriage is valid and the wife is no longer a beggar. This is mirrored in *The Demoiselle* in the marriage between Frank and Alice,



whose dowry brings to her husband his own father's lost fortune. The revelation that Frank is no bastard daughter not only frustrates Wat's desires to marry the character of Frances whom he had bought with service to Dryground, but also integrates him into a system of exchange from which he had previously been excluded.

We may well ask, is five hundred pounds – the amount raised by the raffle – the value placed on Frances's body, considering Findlay's take on the episode, or the cost of Frank's reintegration into the wider economy? As I wrote above, Findlay finds Frank dispossessed by a "corrupt economy of homosocial exchange" but this dispossession is surely eradicated when his true character is revealed and he is able to look forward to owning his father's lands, thanks to the scheme of the raffle (210; 5.1.1004). Throughout the play, the tension between value and cost has been examined, and Brome does this most consistently in terms of people. Alice's aside when Wat comes to her in disguise as the despised Sir Amphilus' serving-man betrays how little she thinks of someone in that position through the language of value: "This fellow talks not like a serving-man, / A forty-shilling-wages creature, but / Some disguised spokesman" (1.1.70). Similarly, Brookall resists the idea that his own value is equal to the cost of his reconciliation with Dryground when Valentine tries to give him £40. Brookall refuses the sum at first, accusing Valentine of having "com'st to make thy peace, / Presuming on my poverty, with money" (2.1.403). When finally Brookall does accept the money, Valentine comments,

Was ever given gold so weighed and tried?

What lawyer, nay, what judge would be so scrupulous?

No want corrupts good conscience, nor excess

Allays, in bad, the thirst of cov'tousness. (4.2.835)

Bearing in mind these instances, we might assume that the raffle is designed by Brome to question the very notion of placing a value on the body.

I suggest that *The Demoiselle* takes up this situation to expose the ridiculous notion of fathers selling off their daughters in a play where another father – Vermin – genuinely believes his daughter Alice to be one of his possessions to marry off to whoever he pleases (1.1.49). Brome not only satirises the idea that Dryground could ever genuinely raffle off his daughter, but also that Wat could ever be promised a wife on the condition that he aids the knight in disguise. *The Demoiselle* prizes a love-match over all, with all four families – the Drygrounds, Brookalls, Bumpseys and Vermins – brought together by three marriages based on affection rather than cost. This is not to forget that it is Alice’s dowry that is prized by Dryground and Frank as well as her character. The actual sum of money made by the raffle is five hundred pounds, and this may seem rather unprofitable at first, considering that Dryground mortgaged his land to Vermin for a thousand pounds at the start of the play. In these terms the “project” actually makes less money for the Brookalls than if he had simply given them that initial sum. We must remember, however, that the scheme was designed to bring Frank and Alice together, and it is through this marriage that the Brookall fortune is restored via the dowry she brings. She is figured in terms of value just as Frances is.

I would argue, however, that the raffle is not simply a device through which Brome questions this kind of behaviour, but that it provides a far more subtle commentary on the theme of commercialism. It is worth remembering that those men who contributed to the scheme, on discovering that is all a ploy, are, for the most part, happy for Dryground to keep the money. The raffle, then, works not simply as a satire

on the commodification of women but also as a model to show the positive possibilities offered by exchange. The raffle, we ought to note, is highly successful at achieving the aims set out by Dryground in the first scene of the play (i.e. to restore Brookall's fortune through the pursuit of profit). In the final act, Dryground announces to those gathered in the ordinary that he has made "five hundred pounds",<sup>31</sup> an amount, Munro notes in her edition, equivalent to £42,900 today (5.1.974; n8674). When he reveals Frances to be Frank, he declares that the "project" has "[p]ut half a thousand pounds in's purse, besides / A fair pull for his father's land again" (5.1.1004). In this conclusion to the play we might glimpse a network of exchange that has been frustrated and obscured by the unconventional machinery of the ordinary. The raffle, I suggest, is an extreme form of commercialism, and much like the financial behaviour of the Bumpseys, allows the play to reference a wider economy that has been absent in the dynamics of the drinking house space. Wat mentions the different sorts of men who had entered the venture about half way through the play:

All must be nameless. There are lords among 'em.  
 And some of the civil coat, that love to draw  
 New stakes at the old game as well as they;  
 Truckle-breeched justices, and bustling lawyers  
 That thrust on with their motions; muffled citizens;  
 Old money-masters some that seek the purchase;  
 And merchant venturers that bid for the

---

<sup>31</sup> Admittedly, this is much less than the £2,000 that Wat calculates they will make when Dryground gives him an update on the project earlier in the play, bearing in mind that each man was asked for £20 and there were originally a hundred participants (3.1.474-7).

## Foreign commodity as fair as any. (3.1.550)

It is a group of men that we might expect to frequent a conventional drinking house, especially of the elite sort that we have seen elsewhere onstage in the Light Heart and the Boar's Head, spaces that facilitate the mixing of customers from all walks of life.

Nonetheless, it is through the success of the raffle and the social experience of gambling, rather than through this mingling of classes, that in the last act we see this group figured in terms of a network of exchange. Like the other drinking house conventions that Brome subverts, this network is achieved through the process of the raffle, which creates a sort of sociability that would have been found in other staged drinking houses through commercial bonds. In *The New Inn*, there is a fascination with “the translation within the inn of human bonds, such as those of fellowship and friendship, into mercantile terms” (McRae *Literature* 127). In contrast, I contend that *The Demoiselle* has a fascination with how mercantile bonds are translated into those of fellowship. Kaufman reads this in terms of Brome's satire on usury: “By showing that usury subverts the family and hierarchy of loyalties which makes for the good community Brome resurrects the ideal of brotherhood” (150). I would argue that it comes about through the use of the raffle as a model of exchange that is more congruous with the seemingly illogical ordinary, due to the fact that normal commercialism is rejected. It is a model based on elements of that commercialism – the contribution of money, the trust in the Host of the ordinary to fulfill his role, and provision of a “commodity” – and also elements of the kind of sociability that we have seen insisted upon by *The Demoiselle*: reconciliation (between Dryground and Brookall, between Dryground and Phyllis, between Vermin and his children),

responsibility (that Dryground has for Frank, that Wat has for his sister, that Phyllis has for her mother) and reform (of Vermin, of Wat, of Bumpsey).

For the play suggests that the service that was originally offered is exchanged for one more acceptable and perhaps more valuable within a wider economy. This is not suggested in terms of the immorality of the original scheme (although we might wonder at this) but in terms of how the restoration of Frank will fit in with it.

Dryground explains how he revealed the truth of the raffle to its participants:

when they understood the honest end  
 My project aim'd at, which, by oration  
 Well charged with virtuous sentences, I forced  
 Into the nobler breasts, they all recanted  
 The barbarous purpose, and as freely left  
 Their money for that charitable use,  
 To which I pre-intended it. The rest  
 Pursued theirs again. But yet I have collected  
 In this odd uncouth way five hundred pounds  
 That was laid down at stake for a virginity,  
 To make an honest stock for Frank. (5.1.974)

I will return to the plausibility or otherwise of this momentarily, and will for the time being concentrate on the way this fits into the narrative of exchange. Dryground's lines figure the real purpose of the raffle in terms of honesty, virtue, and nobility, all contrasting with the "barbarous" offer of Frances' maidenhead, but the trajectory of his argument aims towards the "honest stock", which we are told has been raised for

Frank. This chapter will end with a consideration of how this kind of reference is part of the play's wider engagement with notions of land and estate living, but in the framework of the raffle, the "honest stock" is an indication of that which was prized in previous onstage drinking houses. Remembering Goodstock's pride in the purity of his stock, Dryground's use of the word here references this convention of the space as well as suggesting that Frank's fortune has taken its place as priority in the space of the New Ordinary (*The New Inn* 1.2.18-22).

The action of the play certainly seems to pull in different directions, at once undermining the commercial machinery of the New Ordinary and yet insisting to some extent upon the need for the pursuit of profit in certain circumstances. Kaufman would have us read *The Demoiselle* as a vindication "against unnatural attachment to goods only" but I suggest the logic of the play refuses any such straightforward delineation (149). Certainly, the impetus is not towards the circulation of money and goods, as we have seen, and profit has been both pursued and justified for its own sake. Alice's response with the simple aside, "Your money", to her father's complaint that her brother is "a wolf / That tears my very bowels out", suggests the gathering of wealth is not altogether a policy to be recommended (1.1.40, 39). Nevertheless, Dryground's project in the last scene makes a positive use of the "profit" he intended to make back in the opening one (1.1.18). The "riflers" have been cleared from the establishment, perhaps indicating that they are now excluded from the space once their spending power is no longer required, but those brought together by the raffle remain, in a tableau symbolising the translation of those mercantile bonds into ones of fellowship (5.1.973). The four families stand together, connected by marriage, disguises thrown off and friendships restored.

The raffle is of course a performance, linked to Dryground's performance as Osbright and the performance of the ordinary as a whole. While Findlay notes that the system that facilitates such a scheme is "disgusting", I would argue that it is part of the vision of dramatic excess which I suggested earlier, and which invites us to suspend our reason for it to work onstage (209). The play not only asks that we accept the notion that a raffle for a girl's virginity would have many willing participants – "A full hundred" says Dryground – but also that, when the raffle is revealed to be a trick to raise money for the insolvent Brookall, many of the 'investors' happily refuse to take their money back (3.1.476, 5.1.974).

It does seem utterly implausible that any man willing to submit twenty pounds for the chance to take a girl's virginity would be so generous as to forgive the subterfuge involved in such a trick, and moreover, leave his money with the man who tricked him, all to restore the fortunes of someone he has never met. The logic of the play here is hard to untangle, but it seems to me that because Brome has already undermined the conventional bonds of commercial hospitality that would have normally cemented the relationship between host and guest, we can no longer interpret the action in those terms. Indeed, the play yet again offers conflicting visions, suggesting at once that the bonds of sociability and brotherhood are in the best of health (as Kaufman would have us believe) and simultaneously that the destabilisation of the drinking house space, which has such chaotic effects in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, is to be credited with this joyful outcome.

I suggest, however, that the foregrounding of Dryground's performance as the ordinary-keeper makes for a slightly different reading. The ordinary is not real; Brome's repeated references to the artificiality of the Host frequently remind us of the fact. While Goodstock also performed the role of the Host, drawing parallels with

Osbright, the Light Heart was a functioning business that encouraged the circulation of money and goods; the only “business” that concerns Dryground is his scheme of the raffle (1.2.171, 3.1.483, 521). This contrast sits strangely with the end of the play, where Dryground bizarrely asserts the ordinary as the kind of space that it has resisted throughout the drama: “Come, gentlemen, your ordinary stays, / ’Twill prove good fare (I hope) though no rich feast; / And acceptable to each welcome guest” (5.1.1051). This resonates with the end of *The New Inn*, where Goodstock asked all the guests to stay the night, with the suggestion that the Light Heart will continue after the play has finished. Dryground’s request implies the same: that the New Ordinary will continue after the end of *The Demoiselle*, and moreover, that he now occupies the role of the merry host in his own name rather than under the veneer of Osbright. The incongruity of such an ending, however, is not as similar to that of *The New Inn* as we might expect, but rather echoes Jonson’s play in order to underline, once and for all, both the artificiality of the space, and its fundamentally unfixed nature. The quality of the space that allowed for the transformation of so many characters and their positions is now redundant. While it is tempting to see, perhaps, the drinking house conventions, resisted for so long, reasserting themselves, the impulse towards commercialism is not endorsed by the play. Indeed, a settled economy is privileged over a fluid one, and a return to estate living, to which I now turn, remains the stronger trajectory of the play.

### ***The Demoiselle*, the landed gentry and the loss of estate living**

While I suggest that *The Demoiselle* is fundamentally concerned with notions of value and cost within the space of the ordinary and how that relates to the wider social politics of the play, it also locates itself within the context of estate living, and its



potential failure, from the very first scene. Dryground's first appearance in the play quickly establishes his relationship with both land and money: we know that he has squandered his country estate for cash, relying on moneylenders such as Vermin. Moreover, his conversation with the usurer, who is lending him a thousand pounds, reveals the link between money and land upon which the wider play enlarges: Vermin says "You spirited men call money dirt and mud" (1.1.7). The casual description of "dirt and mud" underscores the carelessness with which it appears Vermin's debtors treat their property, and yet Dryground's future depends upon the value that is placed on the very thing he considers disposable.

Vermin says in reference to the mortgaged estate, "This parcel of thy land, I'll keep from wetting" (1.1.31). According to Munro's gloss, "wetting" means "being drenched with, or converted into, alcohol" (gg3898). Vermin is here suggesting, perhaps, that that is one of the problems of the gentry: that they sell their land in order to buy goods, but goods that are transitory, and that lack any quality of further investment. Vermin's words also conjure an image of land collapsing into liquid, frustrating its agricultural promise. The need for water to make land profitable is upended here, because the liquid Vermin refers to is of course alcoholic, the dependence on which drains rather than cultivates. I wonder if we might draw a link with "the recovery of 'drowned land', or fenland, an issue of enormous concern throughout the seventeenth century" (McRae *God Speed* 105). McRae reads Meercraft's attempt to cheat Fitzdottrel out of his lands in Jonson's *The Devil is an Ass* as a way in which a "fraudulent project ... epitomizes the exploitation of a pre-existent rural order by the acquisitive ethos of the city" (105). We may see echoes of this in Dryground's admission in the last scene, when he describes his urban way of life, removed from, and in exploitation of, his estate living, as his "wildness" that,

drew me through the ways of careless pleasure,  
 By riotous expense, that mine estate  
 And credit ran at waste, and was nigh spent,  
 Until my trespass cried against my conscience  
 To render satisfaction. (5.1.996)

Indeed, Wrightson notes that this very conduct was indicative of this period, where there existed “the habit of spending landed revenues on the more sophisticated lifestyles afforded by the town” and that commentators only a century later considered there to be “rising consumption among landowners” (*Earthly* 185).

Bumpsey describes how Valentine has a portion of money entailed to him as heir of the Dryground estate: the only reason for this small amount to have been saved from his father’s profligacy. The extravagant lifestyle of the older man is all the more reckless because he spends the money that he does receive

In a proportion of smoke and sack  
 To wash your mouth with after, where you live  
 Confined in Milford Lane, or Fullers Rents,  
 Or who knows where (1.2.124)

David Allen mentions the existence of taverns in Fuller’s Rents (a shortening of Fulford’s Rents), albeit in the Restoration period and Munro asserts that the area was “mainly occupied by taverns and inns, and was a haven for debtors and other fugitives” (570; *Demoiselle* n6007). Bumpsey’s accusation that Dryground is

occupied in this area at once localises and contains his activities within the realms of debt and drink, figuring Dryground's narrative in terms of wasted money and wasteful consumables. It gives us access to the kinds of lifestyle that were part of the experience of seventeenth-century London, mapping onto the fact that although some of the gentry, who were spending more and more time in London, built grand houses and palaces, some indeed lodged in more lowly situations, including with innkeepers (Peck *Consuming* 17).

In contrast, Bumpsey's own wealth has been acquired through hard work and prudence: "thrifty industry" has raised him a fortune of ten thousand pounds and he announces proudly that he is "out of debt" (1.2.109). If we use the contrasting model of estate management practised by Dryground (and Brookall) in relation to the rest of the play, it makes sense to appreciate their wastefulness in terms of the community at large. Bumpsey's fear that this kind of behaviour will be copied by Valentine exposes the way in which such actions would have an impact on his marriage to Jane, and, we might assume, the rest of the family. He says to Dryground:

Can you (I say) think your good husbandry  
 A lawful precedent for your gamesome son  
 To make my daughter happy in a marriage,  
 Though he had twice my fortune? (1.2.127)

The financial attitude taken by Dryground and Brookall has left them both without the marriage on which Valentine has newly embarked, where ownership of property is a way to fund their lifestyles, and not a purpose in its own right. Bumpsey, however, represents perhaps a more mercantile view of the importance (and success) of urban

commercialism. Kaufman's reading is in line with this, as he argues that "the central theme" of *The Demoiselle* is "the proper attitude towards goods" (138). Brome "weaves the play together very tightly by analyzing the consequences of the fear of *loss* as well as the consequences of greed" (Kaufman 138, emphasis in original). We see this, of course, played out in Dryground's fear that he will lose his remaining estates (with Brookall's similar narrative at a more advanced stage, having lost everything) and in Vermin's greed for others' land resulting in the temporary estrangement from his daughter and his ultimate reform thanks to Dryground and Bumpsey. But I think there is a wider issue at stake with which the play is engaged, linking the interrogation of value and cost we have already seen played out in close-up with the notion of the cost of land and the value of estate living.

Vermin puts value on the land itself and seems to covet it for its own sake. He wishes for the day that Dryground will break his promise so that "all this land is mine" (1.1.31). Moreover, he wants Alice to marry Sir Amphilus, a miserly old knight, and when she argues that "he has / But little land", her father replies, "But he has money, girl, / Enough to buy the best knight's land, that is / A selling knight in the west part of England" (1.1.54-5). Vermin's words seem to be alighting here on the fact that a knight like Sir Amphilus with enough money to his name would be able to buy the land that would normally be expected of a man of his position. Moreover, the "selling knight" could be the "best knight", but one who is forced to put on the market his own lands – much like Dryground. Significantly, Sir Amphilus bought his knighthood as "one o' th' cob-knights in the throng / When they were dubbed in clusters" (1.1.59). Munro explains that in July 1603, James I ordered that all those with an income of £40 or more per annum had to be knighted, or face paying a fine. By the end of his first year as King, the number of knights had grown and was now

triple what it had been (n5881).<sup>32</sup> Unsurprisingly, if we read Vermin's words in this context, his desire for Alice to marry someone who can buy land does in fact differ from what we might have assumed was a similar policy to that of Bumpsey, when he complained that Valentine brought no land to his marriage. The Justice, as we shall see, comprehends value in the honour that is inherited from a landed family, yet the usurer thinks only in terms of the cost of that land.

The play insists that land is the crucial element to any interaction with Vermin, be it borrowing money or suggesting a husband for his daughter: land is the common persuasive factor. The Octavo text (printed 1653) stages this concept most explicitly in that first scene with Dryground. "*The Mortgage*" is included in the stage directions of this scene, and we might understand from this that the actor playing Vermin would have had an actual paper mortgage as a property of the stage. McRae notes that the dramatic use of state documents, like mortgages, was the "most notable strategy employed ... to assert this pervasive appropriation of country by market-oriented city" (*God Speed* 102). Its inclusion, then, in *The Demoiselle*, highlights the city/country dichotomy that is perhaps otherwise not so explicit in the dynamics of Dryground's encounter with Vermin, and furthermore, the emphasis on him taking out a mortgage and not simply a loan underlines the seriousness – and riskiness – of Dryground's situation. Wrightson notes, "Prior to the 1650s mortgaging was an extremely risky expedient. The mortgagee frequently took possession of the property concerned and even the slightest infringement of the terms of the loan could result in its forfeiture" (*Earthly* 276). When we hear later from the gallants that Vermin "undid" Brookall by "thrusting him out of his land", we understand it to be the possible end result of that deal observed between him and Dryground (2.1.219, 220).

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<sup>32</sup> See also Peck (1990).

Since it has not been long since we saw Vermin hold up the mortgage for Dryground's estate, the audience would be in no doubt of the consequences for Dryground if he reneges on his debt. More broadly, the use of the mortgage paper exposes "the inhuman system of bonds and warrants associated with the usurer and lawyers ... [which contrasts] with the values of conscience, charity and brotherliness upheld by the hero, Dryground" (Butler *Theatre and Crisis* 213).

Nevertheless, the pursuit of land is not incompatible with a sense of morality, although we should be ever mindful of how those notions of value and cost that were examined in the space of the ordinary can help us to better understand its economics. The purpose of Dryground's raffle is not simply to raise money for Frank, but to enable him to "pull for his father's land again" (5.1.1004). Indeed, Dryground announces this when he first hears the details of his scheme: "This I have designed to put her off – / I mean her maidenhead – at such a rate / Shall purchase land" (3.1.468). Indeed, it is the land that occupies Dryground perhaps more so than the injustice he did to either Brookall or his sister Eleanor, abandoning her when she was pregnant with Phyllis. It is the first accusation that he lays on Vermin – "Brookall ... whose state you sucked" – before his own, lengthier admission of wrongdoing comes to light (1.1.22). When, at the end of the play, Dryground recounts the story again to those assembled at the New Ordinary, his speech describing his own "wildness" and the effect it had on Eleanor flows without break, but when he comes to portray the way in which Brookall lost his estate, the interruptions of Ambrose, Brookall and Vermin serve to emphasise the details – and importance – of this particular loss:

AMBROSE.           What can this come to?

DRYGROUND.       She had a brother that lost his estate

By law –

BROOKALL.            [*Aside*] Mean he not me?

DRYGROUND.        To a corrupt oppressor –

VERMIN.            [*Aside*] Ha! How's that? (5.1.997-1001)

Remembering the way in which the raffle allowed Brome to examine notions of value and cost, I suggest that the cost of the land – in terms of the financial loss by Brookall to Vermin – is less than the value of the land to any of the patriarchal figures (bar the usurer) in the play. We do not hear about the wider implications for the mortgaging or later selling of either Brookall's or Dryground's estates here, but those gentry “experiencing pressing financial embarrassment” were more likely to fully exploit their estates “with little regard for the social cost” of such actions (Heal and Holmes 114-5). The example of Sir Roger Dallison, James I's Master of the Ordnance, who attempted to “dodge the burden of debt that hung over him” and who thus ruined the yeomen and farmers dependent on his land, is indicative of the kinds of wasteful management that we might imagine occurred in the administration of Brookall and Dryground (Heal and Holmes 116).

Nonetheless, the importance of estates retaining their integrity, and the implications of that, does emerge in the text. The value of land staying intact through a gentleman's ownership is further highlighted by the interaction between the old Justice Bumpsey and his new son-in-law Valentine. Kaufman contends this scene shows “how explicitly the play is couched in terms of money and property – a degree of emphasis exceptional even for this period” (142). Bumpsey announces that he never sought his daughter to be joined to a house “of great sound”, through which union she has become a “baronetess in reversion, / To a substantial heir of two fair

lordships” (1.2.114). Although this is not something he had hoped for his daughter, he does acknowledge the honour of her new family:

land-lordship’s real honour,  
 Though in a tradesman’s son, when your fair titles  
 Are but the shadows of your ancestry,  
 And you walk in ’em, when your land is gone,  
 Like the pale ghosts of dead nobility. (1.2.116)

Here we see an insistence on the importance of land rather than titles as the basis of “real honour” (1.2.120). Bumpsey is inconsistent to some extent; he accuses Valentine of being “heir to [Dryground’s] bought honour” and asks,

But where’s the land you once were lord of? Ha?  
 The goodly cornfields, meadows, woods and pastures  
 That must maintain the house, the gowns, the coach,  
 Withal by complements of horses, hawks, and hounds –  
 .....  
 Where be the parks, the warrens, herds and flocks?  
 Besides the gardens, walks and fish-ponds? (1.2.120-2)

It is also significant that Bumpsey alights on the absence of the materiality of the household, and not only the expanse of the estate’s property.

Moreover, it is these very objects – the gowns and coach – that his own wife later seeks to purchase as part of her increasingly fashionable mode of urban living.



Valentine describes how the purchase of his wife's French-made gown was matched by Bumpsey, and goes on to say, "I spoke but of a coach, and he bespoke one" (2.1.193, 195). Kaufman reads the argument between Bumpsey and Valentine as representing "the new country gentry on the way up the social scale (Bumpsey), and the older landed nobility being deprived of its holdings by the lawyer-usurer combine of the new economy" (141). Indeed, we may see his new life as a spendthrift – and in particular the way in which he buys certain goods and services – as a drifting away from his position as a country gentleman and into a more urban way of life.

But Bumpsey's words above also have an elegiac quality to them, surely echoing the following lines in "To Penshurst":

The lower land, that to the river bends,  
 Thy sheep, thy bullocks, kine and calves do feed:  
 The middle grounds thy mares, and horses breed.  
 Each bank, doth yield thee conies ...  
 .....

The painted partridge lies in every field,  
 And for thy mess is willing to be killed.  
 And if the high-swol'n Medway fail thy dish,  
 Thou hast thy ponds, that pay thee tribute fish,  
 Fat, agèd carps, that run into thy net.  
 And pikes, now weary their own kind to eat,  
 As loath the second draught or cast to stay,  
 Officiously, at first, themselves betray;  
 Bright eels, that emulate them, and leap on land,

Before the fisher, or into his hand.  
 Then hath thy orchard fruit, thy garden flowers,  
 Fresh as the air, and new as are the hours. (22-40)

It is here we find the tension between Bumpsey's nostalgia for the kind of estate living that he imagined the Dryground family enjoyed before the later years of urban extravagance, in this image of a rural idyll, providing sustenance and the means to maintain a large house, and his own trajectory towards a more commercially-led way of life, in the image of consumerism. Like Jonson's *Penshurst*, however, that life is gone, and even though we may understand from the end of the play that Frank is to attempt to occupy his father's lost estates again, the audience is denied that conclusion on stage. Much like at the end of *The New Inn*, there is no sense of a return to the family lands. Instead, as we have seen, the temporary ordinary makes way for a fleeting glimpse of the conventional drinking house. Nonetheless, the way in which the ordinary has been appropriated and exploited for Dryground's project means that that glimpse we see remains only that, and the possibilities that extend beyond the drama mean that this particularly urban space has to make way for a decidedly different sort of living. Kaufman writes that Brome's "point of view is conservative ... He is genuinely and deeply concerned to preserve the values of the older 'Tudor culture'" (3). This is a view we see from Steggle too, in the play's rootedness in "family ties and mutual respect" (136). The reassertion of Dryground and Brookall in terms of their ownership of land symbolises the restoration of a more conservative way of living at the price of the urban space of the New Ordinary. Value – of family and of economy – is asserted over commercial cost.

## Conclusion

It is tempting to understand *The Demoiselle* in a similar way to how we read the space of the New Ordinary: both are subject to conflicting expectations, and both attempt to accommodate several different narratives of value, commercialism, and the recovery of loss through economic negotiations. In all kinds of ways, Brome alerts us to the ways in which exchange holds possibilities for change, and while he subverts the conventions of the drinking house space, he nonetheless asserts it as a site of transformation.

The play perhaps poses more questions that it can coherently answer; indeed it presents very definite challenges to the critic who seeks to make sense of what is – perhaps understandably, given the number of competing strands – a difficult, and sometimes contradictory, text. The subplot of the Bumpseys' spending and the raffle itself are not easy to reconcile with the themes of family and social responsibility. The play does represent, however, a fantasy of economic negotiation, where, despite undeniable shifts in how the ordinary is conceived by different characters, exchange is yet again asserted as the mode through which transformation occurs. That transformation is, of course, one way in which Brome affirms a conservative outlook, in a play where the ordinary effects its own redundancy in favour of a more settled model of living.

### The Economy of the Drinking House: Conclusion

During a visit to the countryside sometime between 1609 and 1612, Francis Beaumont wrote a verse-letter to Ben Jonson (Riggs 160). It contained the following lines:

Methinks the little wit I had is lost  
 Since I saw you, for a wit is like a rest,  
 Held up at tennis, which men do the best  
 With the best Gamesters: what things have we seen  
 Done at the Mermaid? H[e]ard words that have been  
 So nimble, and so full of subtill flame,  
 As if that every one from whence they came  
 Had meant to put his whole wit in a Jest,  
 And had resolv'd to live a foole the rest  
 Of his dull life; then when there hath been thrown  
 Wit able enough to justifie the Town. (L5r)

Beaumont invites his friend to remember the experiences they shared at the Mermaid Tavern in Cheapside, calling attention to the “nimble” and “subtill” words of wit that were bandied between patrons. Indeed, jesting emerges as the defining quality of the tavern’s community, a community often made up of gallants and playwrights: “men of wit” (O’Callaghan “Tavern Societies” 41). The Mermaid, and the nearby Mitre, were not only the destinations of choice for writers like Beaumont, Jonson, and Fletcher, but were also dramatised on stage – sometimes only briefly – where they

would be recognised by an early modern audience familiar with those very spaces. Wilkins' *Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607), Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599) and *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), and Middleton's *Your Five Gallants* (1608) all featured one of these particular drinking houses. As O'Callaghan writes, such allusions to real tavern spaces are especially effective "since they rely on the audience instantly recognising the name ... and what they signify" ("Tavern Societies" 39). In this way, writers mapped the authentic tavern space onto a fictional one, with the result that such staged drinking houses immediately gave the audience access to a particular framework of urban sociability.

Early modern audiences, then, were alive to the fact that certain dramas reflected their own experience of the drinking house space. What is more interesting – and what this thesis has examined – is the way in which writers used that space to make sense of, and not simply reflect, the world around them. The drinking house was a site of conviviality but it was also much more than that: it was a space defined by exchange, by the bonds of financial responsibility, by the encounters shaped there. The plays which I have discussed share this focus: they are products of the same culture and, while there are inevitable shifts across the period, I have demonstrated the extent to which they are characterised by common concerns, even when they subvert our expectations.

This thesis has revealed the way in which certain writers used the drinking house space to examine notions of credit, circulation, and the commercialisation of hospitality. From Hal's reliance upon – and Falstaff's exploitation of – credit in the Boar's Head, to the possibilities of fluid circulation that we see in Brentford; from the irrepressible commercialism of the Light Heart, to the subversion of the tavern economy in the New Ordinary: each space emerges as a potent site for the imagining

of the early modern culture of exchange. Writers used the drinking house to speak to, and stand for, many wider concerns. The reckoning, for example, differing from other forms of bill, encapsulates the notion of a specific settle-able bill, but also evokes more abstract concerns about how deferred payment could both promote circulation and leave people vulnerable to financial anxieties. The host or hostess is a figure whose agency is derived from the materiality of their establishment, to some extent in control of that space, but nonetheless their economic vulnerability exposes the tensions inherent in a fluid economy. The broader tavern community, bound by friendship and the bonds of sociability, is complicated by the expectations of commercialised hospitality, suggesting the stresses within a society where financial obligations often shape social encounters.

My first chapter focused on how popular literature grappled with these themes, as part of a wider literary tradition that engaged with the drinking house. Examples from jest books, rogue pamphlets and ballads demonstrated the precarious position of the host and the tensions surrounding the reckoning, as well as the potential destabilisation of the drinking house economy and the delicate bonds of commercialised sociability. Chapter 2 took up, in particular, the emblematic use of the reckoning in *1 Henry IV* and *2 Henry IV*, through which Hal negotiated his economic and moral redemption in the face Falstaff's threat to a wider network of exchange. Credit as both a productive and destabilising force was also the focus of Chapter 3, which examined *Westward Ho*. In the context of the fringe tavern space in Brentford, errant wives sought to break away from their commodification, and the playwrights mooted the possibilities of an alternative economic vision. Chapter 4 traced the forces of commercialism that defined the Light Heart in *The New Inn*, forces that effected the transformation of several of the characters and that championed a fluid economy

in contrast with landed-estate living. The subversion of those forces was the theme of Chapter 5, where the New Ordinary in *The Demoiselle* upended our expectations; while it remained a space of change, the ordinary was dispensed with in favour of a more settled economy.

This thesis, then, testifies to the investment writers made in the drinking house as a dramatic space and a space to be dramatised. I have maintained a resolute focus on the way in which notions of exchange are privileged over and over again, and on the importance of how a reading of the drinking house space in particular plays offers fresh interpretations of those texts. My argument pivots on the enduring engagement with the site of the drinking house, laying greater emphasis on the similarities between different dramatisations for the purpose of demonstrating a wider literary phenomenon. I have resisted a broader and more thematic survey for the reason that I wished to stress the need to consider these individual texts within the very specific context of the drinking house. While I point to a wider movement, the close readings this thesis presents trace the emphasis upon notions of exchange within the onstage tavern space in a detailed as well as an extensive way.

The logic of my method has led me in this direction, and while a narrow focus has allowed me to develop a sustained and comprehensive examination of the drinking house as a site of exchange, it has necessarily neglected other avenues of fruitful work. Indeed, the study of the drinking house in early modern drama offers a considerable field of research that has much to offer literary critics and cultural historians. As I wrote in the Introduction, there are surprisingly few plays with extended drinking-house scenes, but there are many briefer dramatisations which warrant further contemplation. The plays I mentioned above that feature the Mermaid and Mitre taverns, for example, as well as Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning*

*Pestle* (1607), Dekker and Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611), Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West* (1631), Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1633), and Nabbes' *Tottenham Court* (1633) to name a few, all feature drinking house spaces. Indeed, there is also much to consider if we are to analyse the tavern space within the wider framework of city comedy. How did those plays – some of them mentioned above – use the tavern space to encode tensions and anxieties particular to the urban landscape? What characterises the city tavern in relation to the more provincial inn? And in what way does the commercialised sociability of urban drinking differ from those who indulge in their own homes? A consideration, for example, of the Blue Anchor tavern in *Eastward Ho* might help us to better understand the narratives of social and financial exchange in that play. Indeed, extending my own reading of *Westward Ho* to examine how all three *Ho* plays stage drinking houses that are identified in some way by their proximity to the capital might also uncover some interesting conclusions about the tensions inherent in the urban/suburban relationship that I took up in this thesis.

As O'Callaghan's work on tavern societies has shown, there is also a wealth of material available for the exploration of the role of the drinking house in the history of sociability and the literary culture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. One possible area of further research would be to connect the drinking house space in early modern drama with the onstage coffee house in Restoration plays. Juan A. Prieto-Pablos' recent essay on the dramatisation of coffee houses between 1660 and 1700 builds on work done by Stephen Pinkus and Brian Cowan, and argues for a development in the use of the space over that period as well as for its social, political and ideological significance (54). The potential associations between the tavern and coffee house in seventeenth-century drama may well be compelling,



and help us to better understand how playwrights of the period were working with space and place. Indeed, such a study would necessarily engage with the productive field of cultural geography, in which critics like Julie Sanders, Andrew McRae and Adam Zucker are currently working, and which is making advances in our understanding of how space was practised and understood in the early modern period.

All of this points towards an exciting future for the study of the drinking house in literary texts. For the present, I hope that this thesis provides new insights into the plays on which it focuses, and suggests new ways of reading them within a hitherto neglected context. I began with John Earle's account of the tavern as, "a degree, or (if you will) a paire of stayres above an Alehouse, where men are drunke with more credit and Apologie", a description which situated the space as somewhere material, productive and exchange-based, but above all somewhere to be *experienced* (C12r). I hope that this thesis has demonstrated the extent to which early modern writers sought to make sense of that experience: to ask questions of the encounters facilitated there and the negotiations made, of the deals brokered and the payments avoided. Indeed, more than anything, the tavern space is a space of transformation – economic, yes, but also social and personal – through which playwrights could stage the possibilities, and the energies, of exchange.

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