



**Submission and Defiance: Domestic Crime in Early Modern
English Literature and Culture**

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Abstract

This dissertation details the representations of domestic crime and abuse in early modern English drama. It sets out to establish a context of abuse and women's rights within the *querelle des femmes*, the religious guilt of women, and the controversial Swetnam debate. Following this, it delves into the practices of taming, and enforcing obedience within domestic spheres. Both physical and mental abuse is prevalent within these representations, and they are considered alongside contemporary conduct books and pamphlets. Upon thus far encountering the need for obedience within marriage and domestic spheres, the effects and stigmas surrounding rape and sexual assault are examined. Placing rape within the context of early modern literature and laws, a clear image emerges of women as the property of men, and their relative powerlessness over their fates. An emphasis on virtue, chastity, and obedience is once again enacted through the analyses of these sources. The final point explores adultery and infidelity in an early modern dramatic setting, as well as further proof of women being seen as property.

Female agency is represented alongside male anxiety throughout the sources discussed, and it establishes a clear picture of the presence of domestic crime, abuse, and assault on the early modern stage and the culture surrounding it; with this study introducing new aspects to existing theories relating to the conducted research.

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Introduction

‘...expelling all bitternesse and cruelty hee must liue with her louingly, and religiously, honouring her as the weaker vessel.’ (Speght, 1616:17)

The effects and appearance of domestic crime and abuse in early modern England can be seen throughout contemporary popular entertainment, as well as conduct books, news and the debates surrounding gender and agency. Evaluating the representations or the frequency of domestic abuse has proven to be problematic over the course of this dissertation as it has become increasingly apparent that the majority of cases would never have even reached the courts. The victims of abuse — male or female — very rarely gained justice, and their struggles, more often than not, remained in the shadows. Nevertheless, there is a vast array of abuse and crime represented in the plays, ballads, and poems left to modern critics. This study focuses primarily on the abuse of women within marriage, especially within the time period of roughly 1550-1650.

The question that therefore remains is: how accurate is entertainment in reflecting their society? Critics such as Sandra Clark disagree with the opinion of an accurate reflection, stating that ‘[d]omestic plays in no way represent even the contemporary perception of domestic crime systematically’ (2003:108). Although this statement is true in the way that a modern critic cannot gauge the precise amount or level of abuse from early modern sources, it does leave us with a partial reflection of the early modern English cultural background and society. It seems unlikely that a society portrays issues and ideas completely set apart from its culture, beliefs, and morals. As such, this study relies on the basis that the early modern sources discussed do give us an impression of early modern domestic abuse. To further clarify, the impression here

meaning the stigmas surrounding domestic violence and taming; sexual assault, abuse and rape; and, finally, adultery. Furthermore, what makes topics of abuse and violence so sensational and interesting that they appear so frequently in drama and poetry? Although this could be said for many literary epochs, comedy seems to often accompany early modern depictions of violent and problematic scenes. The nervous laughing one imagines with several of the scenes analysed in this study both lightens and darkens the issues portrayed in a twisted *chiaroscuro* manner. This is not intended to be a problem associated solely with the early modern period, but for this study in particular it hopes to explore what the meaning or intent is behind comedy in domestic violence.

The historiography of domestic violence in early modern England gained traction in the 1970s, ‘due to feminist activism’ with the intent to ‘reveal[ing] women’s oppression over time, and underlining the methods and mechanisms of patriarchy as a modern political and gender regime’ (Muravyeva, 2013:228). Developments in twentieth- and twenty-first-century women’s rights introduced an ever-developing and expanding list of critical works detailing the agency of women throughout history, ‘as a call to combat violence against women’ (Muravyeva, 2013:228). This growing area of research continues to find and understand domestic violence: through exploring court cases, entertainment, politics, religious dissent, and a wide array of cultural influences leading to the “acceptance” of abuse. The term “acceptance” here is key, as despite contemporary negative connotations surrounding abuse, it continued to “thrive” and exist. This dissertation attempts to present a further contribution to the modern perception of early modern domestic violence as it proceeds through the chapters.

Chapter one offers an initial cultural and textual background on the *querelle des femmes* — the women’s debate — and several texts contributing to both sides of the debate. As the quotation above by Rachel Speght announces, the expectation of men was to behave lovingly towards women, a positive outlook. However, the closing term signals an inherent misogynist

view of women which appears to be entrenched in arguments and discussions of the debate, regardless of the author's gender or opinion. The "proto-feminism" in the early modern period is still fraught with misogyny, and this chapter focuses on whether this dependence on seeing the woman as the "weaker vessel," is an inherent belief, or a tactical way of adhering to patriarchal ideals while planting proto-feminist opinions in between patriarchal phrases.

Chapter two launches into the practice of taming a shrewish wife and the acceptance, even sometimes encouragement, of violence in the household. Building on Protestant, Catholic, and monarchical changes, this study aims to place taming in drama in context with conduct books and the debate pamphlets discussed in chapter one. Building new ideas on previous theories, it hopes to illuminate victimisations and vilifications of female protagonists and the exemplary women in conduct books, as well as how they have come to be in their position or predicament. Women appear to often be portrayed as violent and shrewish, inviting and inciting violence, despite the modern understanding that they proved to be the victims more often than not. Does this mean portrayals and representations were meant to reassure society that domestic violence had a reason? That men were within their rights to exercise control over their wives, despite opinions against it? And finally, did these portrayals therefore cast a prejudice over those women who did proclaim excessive cruelty enacted by their husbands in court cases? They may have started associating fiction with reality, explaining and excusing domestic abuse. The chapter will therefore shed some light on how this happens in the sources it explores, before turning to another type of abuse in domestic settings.

Chapter three gives an insight into rape in early modern English drama and discourse, as well as its historical and cultural influences. According to Barbara Baines, '[a]lthough the Renaissance is defined by a rebirth of interest in shrew languages and literature, it also reflects, with the Reformation and the rise of puritanism, a renewed interest in the Old Testament' (2003:7). The Old Testament is not without its fair share of rape and sexual assault stories, and

as a resurging interest can be noted, how does this reflect on a perceived early modern obsession with rape stories? The important term here being “stories,” and not “cases,” as the chapter shall point out, actual rape cases were few and far in between, the prevalence lies with stories of sin and redemption, chastity and suicide. What we perceive are opposing images and ideals of women: ‘the demonization of the disorderly woman involved the sanctification of her opposite: The chaste, silent and obedient heroine of the conduct books’ (Bamford, 2000:21; *c.f.* Murphy, 2015:6). How did surviving rape and assault affect the woman? What options did she have after the act? What awaited the perpetrator? These questions will all be answered and explored within the chapter, including a potentially new view on suicide after the rape. Following the research undertaken for this project, there seems to be a certain integral self-cleaning system introduced and perpetuated by the patriarchal society; the majority of rape victims are either murdered, die from their injuries, or (in the case survival) they commit suicide in order to preserve their “chastity.” This shall further be explained and elaborated upon in the chapter.

The final, and fourth, chapter deals with adultery. Analysing a play detailing adultery and a form of abandonment and suicide, placed in the context of patriarchal laws and contemporary male anxieties, it brings to light the unequal and prejudiced dealings with adultery. Female adulterers were judged more severely than male fornicators, with this separatist terminology coming forward in a Cromwellian law of 1650. This law, together with others and the treatment of adulterous and deviant women in drama showcases the final type of domestic disorder this study explores. As Frances Dolan argues: ‘early modern England witnessed a crisis of order, focusing on gender relations, that began around 1550, peaked in 1650, and passed by 1700’ (1994:17).

The prevalent theme in the chapters and sources of this study seems to be male anxiety and an exertion of patriarchal power. Misogyny and severe treatment re-emerge at any sign of

female uprising and calls for better treatment, or even a more equal perception. Dymphna Callaghan succinctly points out that '[p]atriarchy and the misogyny with which is inherently imbued has a very long history indeed, and so not surprisingly, the theme of unruly women and male tyranny...has indirect literary precedents and was already a well-established theme in classical and medieval literature' (2009:ix). With a deep-rooted interest in classical literary ideals, as well as the influence of its own cultural history, early modern English society recreates the themes of domestic abuse and assault in its drama, conduct, and debate: leaving the modern critic with the task to analyse and understand the intent and meaning.

Chapter One: *Querelle des Femmes*

This study was prefaced with the quotation by Rachel Speght denoting women as the “weaker vessel,” a phrase that, according to Antonia Fraser ‘was freely employed — by Shakespeare amongst others’ in the early modern period (2002a:1). Even as one might think that this term stands challenged by the reign of female monarchs, in particular Elizabeth I, and despite her rule being seen, in retrospect, as ‘a “golden age” of peace and prosperity,’ her ‘unprecedented example of successful female monarchy did not...lead directly to any radical changes in the lives of ordinary women’ (Eales, 1998:2). The importance of establishing the right to rule, as a woman, as well as the strength needed to counter a woman’s “weakness,” becomes apparent with emerging texts such as John Knox’s *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Therefore, Jacqueline Eales argues that ‘Tudor and later the Stuart queens were more concerned with establishing their primacy over male subordinates than addressing any question of inequality between the sexes’ (1998:2). Sadly accurate, this is reflected in the Tilbury speech addressed to the troops in order to instil courage at the threat of the Spanish Armada in 1588: ‘I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and a king of England too’ (Elizabeth I, 1588:392). What emerges from the research conducted for this study, is if women attempted to adhere to patriarchal gender roles, they were more likely to receive better treatment within marriage and society. By using misogynistic and patriarchal phrases and terms to prove proto-feminist ideas, or to establish one’s right to lead, it disables a patriarchal society’s ability to contest and argue against women petitioning for better treatment. This shall be explored throughout the dissertation, and it is exactly what we shall see in the following sources.

In order to understand the context of the *querelle des femmes*, a preliminary background of important historical events and the level of women's education in early modern England is required. In an informative study of the early modern woman, Eales attributes the rise of female pamphleteers and debaters to the Protestant Reformation, starting as early as its appearance in the 1520s, before including 'non-conformist religious sects' from the 1640s-1650s (1998:3). Protestantism seems to have been influential in the education of women, as Eales repeatedly stresses the encouragement of 'literacy amongst the laity and, it has been suggested more contentiously, helped to elevate the status of women within both the home and society more generally' (1998:3). The reason for this suggestion being controversial is the introductory "warning phrase" found in many of the secondary critical sources on the early modern period. Intentions to see women as equal to men, or to punish and reward each equally in whatever situation, should all be seen with the addendum of "in theory." In theory, while the society was undoubtedly patriarchal and misogynist; relying solely on conduct and advice books, women should have led a better and fairer life than they did. As the chapters range through the differing treatment of men and women, as well as idealistic behavioural traits of either gender, this shall become increasingly apparent.

Nevertheless, as Amanda Capern notes 'the *querelle des femmes* could not have taken place without a general acceptance amongst men that women, as a gender construct, was negotiable' (2008:31; *c.f.* Malcolmson, 2002:16). While the need for change of dynamics between the genders was recognised, Eales nevertheless remarks that the call for this change was minimal: 'traditional views about the inferiority of women continued to dominate the market' (1998:2). It does prove the earlier point of men's anxieties and fears emerging at the slightest hint of female uprising: finding a misogynist source proclaiming the inferiority of women is not difficult — the difficulty is finding a source without confirmations of female weakness. What women were starting to notice, however, was the basis of their supposed

inferiority: it 'originated not from any innate inferiority of the female sex, but from society's understanding or construction of what was appropriate male and female behaviour...from nurture rather than from nature' (Eales, 1998:4). Critically, this nurture is based on the education both men and women received, or had access to. In line with the argument that women used misogynist statements against their oppressors, the idea of inferiority was challenged: 'if woman's intelligence was really inferior, she might logically need more, not less education than a man' (Fraser, 2002a:5). The pre-eminent forms or philosophies of education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were humanism and Reformation. Humanism is explained by Capern as a movement 'which originated in Italy in the fourteenth century and had spread to northern Europe by the early sixteenth century,' it 'reject[ed] medieval scholasticism and reviv[ed] the Classical texts...as a blueprint for building the model society' (2008:261). One of the most important developments in education in this period, was the ability to read the Bible in English, not Latin. It enabled 'individual and private reading and interpretation,' thereby also increasing the amount of lectures, debates, and writing in early modern England, for both genders (Aughterson, 1995:9). Notwithstanding, humanism and the Reformation should not be mistaken as complete breakthroughs for women's education: as Kate Aughterson claims that 'one of the modern myths about humanism, which has been difficult to dispel, is that Renaissance women...benefited from humanist educational theories and revolutions' (1995:166). Ironically, the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII from 1536 to 1541 and the subsequent Protestant Reformation actually restricted women's access to education. A dissolution of Catholic places of worship and education included the nunneries, and Fraser highlights the importance of Elizabeth I's death as a further cause to a decline in women's education (2002a:150-152).

Humanism inadvertently caused a 'developing split between men's public function and place and women's private function and place' (Aughterson, 1995:165). While this initially appears

to contrast humanism, it is an unerring, and unnerving, identification of the humanist movement. Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540), humanist and writer, is one of the contributing authors to humanist women's education, and Aughterson's comment can be directly applied to him.

I perceiue that lerned women be suspected of many: as who sayth the subtyltie of lernynge shulde be a noryshement for the malitiousnes of theyr nature. Verely I do nat alowe in a subtile and a crafty womā suche lernyng as shulde teche her disceyte and teche her no good maners and vertues... (Vives, 1529:I.IV)

Intended as a conduct book for the daughter of Katherine of Aragon, Mary Tudor, *Instruction of a Christen woman* (1529) draws attention to the virtuous traits a woman should possess, the purpose of her conduct and life, and the overall importance of her behaviour. As Eales concludes, humanists such as Vives may have written 'in favour of educating women, although their learning was to be put to domestic uses where it would enable them to be obedient to their husbands and to raise children religiously' (1998:2). Despite his Catholic faith, and therefore also the Catholic influences included in his conduct book, there are clear parallels between his work and later post-Reformation conduct books. Curiously, a Spanish, Catholic writer and supporter of Catherine of Aragon brought forth arguments and opinions that were echoed and reused throughout the early modern period, regardless of religion or politics. This will become clearer as the chapters develop and introduce further conduct books.

The illusion of a better women's education through humanism and the Reformation is therefore just that: a *fata morgana*, a mirage, based on the improvement of men's education. The Renaissance awakened an interest in classical literature, and a progression of learning and culture. To judge the development of both genders equally could be problematic: women's access to education became more limited in the sense that Catholic institutes such as nunneries could no longer offer education, and it further suffered under misogynist conduct books.

Nunneries offered ‘vocational education for life as a nun,’ and Aughterson further argues that ‘Catholicism and feudalism’ also enabled ‘aristocratic women, [to] be sent to another large household to learn the skills necessary to help manage a landed estate with a future husband’ (1995:165). Contemporary authors like Vives also argued that ‘a woman shulde nat teache / leste whan she hath taken a false opinion & beleue of any thing / she spred hit in to the herars / by the autorite of maistershyp / and lightly bringe other in to the same errour’ (Vives, 1529:I.IV). Nevertheless, general education for girls was recommended, although it frequently came with the affix of ‘bycause naturally the *male* is more worthy, and politikely he is more employed, and therefore that side claimeth this learned education, as first framed for their vse, and most properly belonging to their kinde’ (Mulcaster, 1581:132). The emphasis was therefore on the importance of the “right” kind of education for girls and women: ‘the euell vse of learning hath more often tymes beene cause of discommodities and damage, then the right and laudable vse of it hath beene of profite and benyfitte’ (Salter, 1579:25). The education for the female gender, therefore tended to delve into ‘no other books but suche as bee written by godlie Fathers,’ and ‘not suche lasciuious Songes, filthie Ballades, and vndecent bookes’ (Salter, 1579:25, 34).

A woman’s inherent gullible nature is blamed on Eve’s trust in the snake: an action which is blamed for all evil in the world, and the basis of a mistrust in women by the men surrounding them. The obvious lack of trust and a continued blame of man’s fall from Paradise does lead into the next point of “proto-feminism.” The reason for its “proto” prefix is due to the fact that feminism is still a relatively modern movement. The movement gained more traction and attention in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, whereas feminism in early modern England was less of a movement, and more of a scattered, occasional outcry for small measures of better treatment and less inequality. It is difficult to really call it a need for equality, as even those authors modern critics call proto-feminists not all demanded or expected to be

completely equal to men. Women in early modern England lacked a proper movement: they were individuals writing for the same, or a similar, cause, but had no access or means to a strong front against misogyny. Partly responsible for this, is the demographic of educated women: those who did write tended to be aristocratic or upper-class women who had been able to learn how to read, write, and debate. Yet even privileged women were dependent on their father's interest in their development and education. Aughterson lays out where representations of proto-feminism can be found:

First, in the area of education and the debate about the “nature” of women; second, in the incipient awareness of gender as a social construct; third, in the actual demands made by some petitioners to parliament in 1649; and fourth, in the frequent assertion of a community of women readers and writers with common interests, which are not simply biological. (1998:262; *c.f.* Romack, 2002:220)

Agreeing with Aughterson, there is one point that should be elaborated upon, namely that of gender as a social construct. What stems from gender as a social construct is the emergence of restrictions and mistreatment, a discord which highlights the need to change social constructs of differences between the genders.

Aemilia Lanyer and Religious Guilt

‘...why are poore Women blam’d, | Or by more faultie Men so much defam’d?’ (Lanyer, 1611: ‘To the Queenes most Excellent Majestie,’ 77-78)

Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611) is one of the religiously inspired proto-feminist texts this chapter will explore: it converges on the religious guilt imposed on women

and the consequential inferior treatment they have received from men. Some conduct books and pamphlets appear ambiguous regarding their intended readership, as Clark argues '[i]t is impossible to say who exactly read pamphlets, or who they were meant for' (1983:118). In this case, however, Lanyer clearly addresses the 'Ladies and Gentlewoman of this kingdome' (Lanyer, 1611: 'To the Vertuous Reader,' 7), accompanied by a series of laudatory poems to well-known aristocratic women. Appealing to those who could write in favour of women at all, Lanyer proceeds to reveal her intentions: 'to make knowne to the world, that all women deserve not to be blamed,' that other women should not 'fall into so great an errour, as to speake unadvisedly against the rest of their sexe,' and finally for men not to show their ungratefulness to those who bore them into the world (Lanyer, 1611: 'To the Vertuous Reader,' 11-12; 14-16; 19-25). The incentive behind Lanyer's work is to call attention to, and rectify the tyranny of men over women. 'This female alliance against the masculine abuse of power was clearly associated with Reformation politics;' therefore, in line with contemporary politics and opinions, Lanyer applies religious changes to the possibility of change in women's treatment (Luckyj, 2017:176; *c.f.* Romack, 2002:219). Relying on biblical examples of tyranny, obedience, and revolt, Lanyer argues that 'obedience is forfeited in the original biblical narrative when rulers become tyrants and renounce their fealty to God' (Luckyj, 2017:167). Christina Luckyj makes an interesting point in calling to mind the 'King James Bible, a text designed to supersede the Geneva Bible, which had been loaded with marginal commentaries on the rights of subjects to overthrow unjust magistrates,' which was published in the same year as *Salve Deus* (2017:167). An impression of fear and anxiety over political and religious unrest becomes manifest to both contemporary and modern eyes: '[f]or women especially, the changes created contradictions between social ideals and social reality, and gave birth to female protest, including the protest against male authority within the family' (Muravyeva, 2013:230).

This opportunistic protest is exactly what Lanyer builds on with her poem, in particular the way in which man is beholden to woman.

As also in respect it pleased our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, without the assistance of man, beeing free from originall and all other sinnes, from the time of his conception, till the houre of his death, to be begotten of a woman, borne of a woman, nourished of a woman, obedient to a woman... (Lanyer, 1611: 'To the Vertuous Reader,' 41-46)

To clarify, Lanyer does not mean for men to completely obey women, or to change the patriarchy into a matriarchy; she means to incite greater equality between the genders, and a better treatment of women. Women should not be solely seen as the downfall of man, and quite markedly Lanyer terms the fall from grace as '*Adams fall*' (Lanyer, 1611: 'Salve Deus,' 259). Although this may sound controversial and progressive, this conjoins with the earlier point of inherent misogyny and view of women as the "weaker vessel." 'Her fault though great, yet hee was most too blame; | What Weaknesse offerd, Strength might have refused, | Being Lord of all, the greater was his shame...For he was Lord and King of all the earth, | Before poore *Eve* had either life or breath' (Lanyer, 1611: 'Salve Deus,' 778-780, 783-784). Returning to the point of women's education, Lanyer attempts to shame men who begrudge the Fall, by stating that 'Men will boast of Knowledge, which he tooke | From *Eves* fair hand, as from a learned Booke' (Lanyer, 1611: 'Salve Deus,' 807-808; c.f. Phillippy, 2002:145). This directly challenges Vives earlier quotation that women cannot be trusted with knowledge: the knowledge he has to state that, or the knowledge he withholds from women through his doctrine, has been made available to him through Eve's transgression. Arguably, the roles should be reversed to see Eve as "Strength" and Adam as "Weaknesse," as Eve dared to further and expand their knowledge whilst revolting against a restricting patriarchal and dictatorial figure, God. Digressing, we return to the prevalence of male conduct authors. Lanyer was of the opinion that only women could correctly and effectively lecture other women on how to

behave. According to Jessica Murphy, this included feminine virtue — a concept of high importance in this study — which ‘as Lanyer imagines it, is not static but interactive’ (2015:88; *c.f.* Murphy, 2015:81). This theory does act like a double-edged knife, however, as sinful and regressive behaviour was also seen as interactive by male conduct authors. The idea of one type of transgressive behaviour leading to another, shall be explored in the following chapters. Sinful behaviour of women is especially brought into the foreground by Joseph Swetnam’s *The arraignment of leuud, idle, froward, and vnconstant women* (1615), and the debate that explored the wide range of misogynist, apologetic, and indoctrinating aspects of the *querelle des femmes*.

Baiting and Muzzling: The Swetnam Debate

‘...shee was no sooner made, but straightaway her mind was set vpon mischief...’
(Swetnam, 1615:1)

The incendiary pamphlet by Joseph Swetnam on the ‘vngratefull, periured, full of fraud, flouting and deceit, vnconstant, waspish, toyish, light, sullen, proud, discourteous and cruell’ women of early modern England is one of the most well-known misogynistic works of the Renaissance *querelle des femmes*. Attacking women for their appearance, deceit, historical and biological weaknesses and wrongdoings; as well as warning men of which women are the worst, who not to marry and how to keep them in check, Swetnam stands out amongst his contemporaries as an unapologetic and biased woman-baiter. Despite the obvious criticism of women, however, it does seem to be primarily directed at men: ‘[p]leasant for married Men, profitable for young Men, and hurtfull to none’ (Swetnam, 1615: title page). This calls to mind

Aughterson's statement that conduct books in general 'were not addressed to women, but to men who had responsibility to women, whether as fathers, husbands or brothers;' although they would have had an impact on women 'even if filtered through the reading of men' (1995:67).

Swetnam believes himself to have been 'wronged' by women, and 'wronged men will not be tongue-tyed;' simultaneously, he attempts to discourage women from replying to his work as it would only reveal their true nature and prove him right (1615:ii). Outspoken women, therefore, are implied to be the bad sort of women he is attempting to lecture in his pamphlet, as he emphasises his belief that there are also good women who should not feel addressed. A weak proclamation, as there does not appear to be any type of good woman in his eyes, and Swetnam uses a twisted analogy to explain why women are inherently bad: 'Hee also saith that they were made of the ribbe of a man, and that their froward nature sheweth; for a ribbe is a crooked thing, good for nothing else, and women are crooked by nature: for small occasion will cause them to be angry' (Swetnam, 1615:1).

Meant, in part, as a pamphlet of advice on how to find a good wife, it is so far not portraying women in a healthy light: taken seriously, contemporary men would have realised that each and every woman surrounding them will inherently cause them strife and misfortune. Further information and advice then comes to light as Swetnam attempts to warn others of six specific types of women that should be avoided, especially marriage-wise: 'good nor bad, faire nor foule, rich nor poore' (1615:36). Each of these traits or positions will be the source of strife and an unhappy marriage, although interestingly, being opposites, these points can be attributed to any person: meaning there are no women left to love. A criticism directed at Swetnam by many, however, is the fact that his text seems to consist of contradiction upon contradiction, as he goes on to state further that men should 'choose a wife young, well borne, and well brought vp, reasonable rich, and indifferent beautifull, and of a good wit and capacity' (1615:52).

Furthermore, despite their awful ways and behaviours, ‘there is none more subject to misery then a woman, especially those that are fruitfull to beare children’ (1615:57).

This contradictory and confusing recognition of a certain female “virtue” or “strength” must be part of the reason for Rachel Speght’s condemnation of Swetnam’s pamphlet as having written an ‘Irreligious and Illiterate Pamphlet’ (1616: title page). Speght does not hold back her contempt and disdain for the overtly misogynistic and talentless pamphlet in her *A Mouzell for Melastomus*, a year after Swetnam produced his. Since the publication of her response, there has been criticism on the validity of the defence for women: both works, including subsequent responses, were published by Thomas Archer; ‘mak[ing] it clear that there was a market behind the controversy that was driven by popular taste, not by high standards of excellence’ (Schnell, 2002:64). Harkening back to Eales’ earlier point that there was a limited call for change and representations of equality between the genders, even this debate seems to harbour hidden intentions of female inferiority and overall misogyny, which shall become increasingly clear as we move through the different contributions. Returning to Speght, we can see an attempt to redeem or defend women, but through the use of misogynist beliefs. Where Swetnam sees the Fall of Man as the result of women’s deceit, Speght argues that ‘she being the weaker vessell was with more facility to be seduced,’ which is still sexist (1616:4). Her argument further follows Aemilia Lanyer in that if men were truly head of families and head of women, then Adam could have stopped Eve with his authority over her. The blame and religious guilt, according to these women, lies with both man and woman: woman for allowing herself to be led astray (an important point to be returned to in cases of rape), and man for not exercising his authority and power over his wife. If women were truly seen as the weaker vessel by both men and women, then men bore the responsibility to lead and keep them from harm: ‘hee is her Head, hee must, by instruction, bring her to the knowledge of her Creator, that so she may be a fit stone for the Lords building’ (Speght, 1616:17). Therefore, Adam has a greater

fault than Eve, which is reflected in Speght's perception of the punishment mankind received for transgressing. Whilst Eve received the punishment of childbirth and pain, 'for the sinne of man the whole earth was cursed' (1616:5). Thus, men should have patience and kindness for their wives, as Christ has it for his Church, and a king for his subjects. If he does not, Speght sees this as a transgression against God, not women: '[w]hosoeuer blasphemeth God, ought by his Law, to die; The Bayter of Women hath blasphemed God, Ergo, he ought to die the death' (1616:34).

Speght's "muzzling" response to Swetnam is the only source of which it is certain that it was written by a woman. Ester Sowernam's *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman* (1617), and Constantia Munda's *The VVorming of a Mad Dogge* (1617) were published by Thomas Archer following the earlier two publications, under obvious aliases. Critics such as Mihoko Suzuki argue for the importance of their pamphlets, regardless of gender:

I am arguing here that Elizabeth's long reign constitutes an important historical circumstance of this debate; and that whatever the motivation in publishing pamphlets...and whether or not Sowernam and Munda were male masquerading as women, they nevertheless wrote from the subject position of women and had the effect of galvanising women's identity as a subordinate group with common interest. (2002:233)

This places the effect and importance solely on the existence and context of the pamphlets: however, it cannot be ignored that proto-feminist undercurrents exist in these texts, dependent on intention and author. It cannot simply be attributed to the "Elizabeth-effect;" if these texts were written by men and have a mocking, misogynistic intent, then they could be part of a "James-effect." Where Speght relates to contemporary beliefs of household hierarchy and societal status of the genders, Sowernam, for example, directly attacks and mocks men: 'Ioseph Swetnam was made as from Adam of clay and dust, so he is of a durty and muddy

disposition...So, if woman receaued her crookedness from the rib, and consequently from the Man, how doth man excell in crookednesse, who hath more of those crooked ribs?’ (1617:3). Without a doubt, this does not appear to be misogynistic, as Sowernam further challenges the degree of perfection with which Adam was created, indirectly challenging God (1617:5-6). No matter how both Sowernam and Munda, male or not, readdress, rephrase and challenge Swetnam’s statements, it appears as an illusion of proto-feminism. Unfortunately, as Eales, Elizabeth Clarke, and other critics have concluded: ‘these pamphlets repeat the traditional arguments that female inferiority was based on nature or divine command,’ ‘[t]hese discourses seem to me heavily coded as misogynist impersonation’ (Eales, 1998:17; Clarke, 2002:48). One further marked difference attributing to the dissimilarities between Speght’s and Sowernam’s responses, according to Lisa J. Schnell, is the ‘Protestant morality’ utilised by Speght, compared to the ‘detached, witty, experimental’ discourse by Sowernam (2002:67). Whilst Sowernam undoubtedly makes for a more interesting and amusing read, and Speght comes across as an apologetic and struggling quasi-feminist against misogynistic ideals, it does signal the commercial and sensationalist sentiments surrounding the *querelle des femmes*. Those intending to explain or redeem women, following Protestant and contemporary beliefs, ended up being mocked and overshadowed by those who either masqueraded as women, or understood the criteria they were given by Thomas Archer: shock, entertain, and sell. Murphy claims that contemporary pamphlets ‘reveal the people’s desire for misogyny, because while Speght and Sowernam’s pamphlets in defense of women had their printing and then were done, Swetnam’s...went through twenty-three editions, reaching into the eighteenth century. Portraying women as the cause of men’s worldly troubles, then, was popular’ (2015:121-122). This idea of entertainment surrounding the *querelle des femmes* is reflected in issues of domestic agency, abuse, and violence and shall be explored in the following chapters, referring back to the Swetnam debate, Lanyer, and women’s issues discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Two: Coercion and Control

The perceived opposition of violence and slapstick, darkness and comedy, reflects our own changing feelings towards the roles of men and women and raises questions that can only be generated by a complex play that requires careful thought and staging. (Pearson, 1990:231)

The use of comedy in settings of domestic abuse and violence is undoubtedly problematic to a modern reader of early modern drama. Interpreting the above quotation by Velvet D. Pearson, the comic elements in the plays this chapter explores may reflect the societal status of both genders within their households, including the public's perception of them. Questions to be considered regarding the presented sources are: how acceptable was violence within the household to an early modern audience? Why were displays of violence in entertainment accompanied by comic relief? Furthermore, should this be seen as purely comedic, or rather a socially coercive method of control? What is the status of the shrew within early modern society, and how were men expected to deal with a shrewish wife? Including William Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* (c.1590-92), John Fletcher's *A Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (1611), as well as touching briefly on the anonymous *The Taming of a Shrew* (1594), a contemporary ballad on taming, and the image of the virtuous Griselda, shall lead to a better understanding of domestic abuse within entertainment. As the chapter moves through these sources, the accuracy of the fictional reflection of women's issues and domestic violence shall become apparent, supported by conduct books, pamphlets, and the aforementioned sources in the *querelle des femmes*.

Before turning to the plays, it is necessary to explore the historical, cultural, legal, and religious backgrounds of the status of women in early modern England, explaining important terms, beliefs, and practices along the way. In the previous chapter, we briefly touched on the

changes within the debate itself, and an inherent misogynistic stance towards women from both genders. The overarching idea seems to be: men are the head of the household, but should rule benevolently and justly, whereas women should remain obedient, helpful and chaste. What happened when these ideals were challenged, or the “rules” were broken? According to Capern, ‘[t]he private life of a male householder was at once a public and private demonstration of his dominion over the women, children and servants in his life and the private sphere of the household, at least in theory, was not supposed to function as an area of female authority’ (2008:80-81). Note the “in theory” and refer back to the earlier statement that the majority of ideals are constantly placed under the addendum of theoretical approaches that were not put into practice. Elizabeth Foyster mentions a similar problem as she states that ‘[i]n reality, wives and husbands crossed the boundaries between the private and public spheres on a daily basis’ (2005:10). The hierarchical paradigm represented in early modern literature owes a lot to the Catholic and Protestant faiths. According to Marianna Muravyeva, ‘the breakup of the religious hierarchy fostered the spread of education and favoured the growth of individualism, which began to undermine familial influence,’ which should be taken with a grain of salt after the educational developments for women explored in the previous chapter (2013:230). Furthermore, individualism was less intended for female autonomy and self-development, but rather as a by-product of the Reformation, ‘promot[ing] a direct relationship between the individual and God’ (Dolan, 2009:4). Dolan elaborates that ‘political change promoted an increased awareness of individual rights and responsibilities,’ but deducing from the actual practice and textual proof this chapter explores, again more “in theory” than reality (2009:4). The popular hierarchical order remained that of ‘the male as head of household religion, replacing the wider constituency of priest as head of his parishioners, [and] gave symbolic religious power to the individual male householder within his own private sphere’ (Aughterson, 1995:9-10). It should also be politically applied to his status as head of household as ‘the

husband's supremacy over wife and children mirrored the supremacy of the monarch over his subjects' (Howard, 2016a:348). If this was ever threatened, it signalled 'the possibility of a breakdown of order and hierarchy in the culture at large' (Howard, 2016a:348).

A frequent phenomenon in ballads, pamphlets and reports against communal disorder is the "skimmington," or "charivari." 'The community's ritual action against the couple who transgresses prevailing codes of gender behavior seeks to reestablish those conventional modes of behaviour — *it seeks to sanction a patriarchal order,*' the italics here being my own, to emphasise the perceived importance of the patriarchy in order to keep a well-balanced and orderly community (Newman, 1991:248). In a skimmington, the offenders against patriarchal order were paraded through their town themselves, in a humiliating and confronting spectacle meant to change their transgressing ways. In other cases, neighbours would have taken their place in an excessively acted parody of the actions the offenders undertook. These transgressions could include a wife overstepping her boundaries within the private and public spheres, husbands allowing it to happen, and any other occurrences that could challenge patriarchal order and "normalcy." A point to consider, therefore, is whether the plays in this chapter served as skimmingtons in the way that they portray domestic abuse and those issues being "resolved" in a dramatic (and often comedic) manner.

Matrimony and Rebellion

‘For obey thy husband, take regard of his requests and give heed unto him to perceive what he requireth of thee, and so shalt thou honour God and live peaceably in thy house.’ (*Homilie on the State of Matrimony*, 1623:476)

A proper analysis of domestic abuse in early modern marriage requires knowledge of marriage and contemporary views on married life in early modern England. Dolan sets forth three different types of marriage: firstly ‘the figuration of Christian marriage as the creation of “one flesh,” which at once powerfully expresses theological, emotional, and erotic union and upholds an impossible ideal’ (2009:3). It instates the husband as the head of the family and the domestic sphere, as was mentioned earlier in the humanist and Protestant contexts of household and status. This concept will prove important when we turn to further contemporary opinions on abuse recorded in pamphlets and conduct books. Secondly ‘through a legal fiction called coverture, husband and wife should become one legal agent by means of the husband’s subsumption of his wife into himself’ (2009:3). A married couple was therefore expected to be fully merged both spiritually and legally. For a married woman, this meant her status changed from *feme sole* to *feme covert*: from one who ‘had approximately the same legal rights and responsibilities as a man,’ to one who relinquished ‘many of these rights and responsibilities onto her husband, who exercised them for her’ (Dolan, 2009:75). A *feme sole* had, in theory, more agency than a *feme covert*, but could also be held more liable for her own transgressions: ‘[s]ome authorities believed that married women could not be held responsible for their actions’ (Eales, 1998:99). The married woman was therefore wholly dependent on her husband and taking legal action on her own would have been nigh impossible. In cases of divorce, for example following cases of extreme cruelty exerted by the husband, Foyster recognises ‘three main courses of legal action:’

She could seek a marriage separation from her husband on the grounds of his cruelty from the church court in her diocese, complain to her local magistrate of her husband's violence, or persuade her friends and family to seek a writ from the Court of King's Bench to question her confinement in her home or other institution. (2005:15)

According to Capern, the 'ecclesiastical or Church courts' tended to be the scene for cases dealing with marriage and sexual morality, falling under canon law (2008:89). However, the amount of divorce requests reaching the Church courts would have been minimal, 'perhaps three or four a year in the main consistory courts at London and York' (Capern, 2008:103). The basis for divorce differed between the sexes, as husbands 'sued their wives for adultery; women sued their husbands for extreme cruelty' (Gowing, 1996:180). Despite the possibility for following divorce and separation procedures, '[w]omen's suits alleging men's violence...declined in the course of the seventeenth century, perhaps because cruelty was difficult to prove' (Dolan, 2009:52-53). Furthermore, an early modern divorce should not be interpreted as a modern divorce: 'so is it impossible, when it is once lawfully and evidently contracted, to distract it by any partition, couenant, or humane traction, *Quos Deus coniuxit, homo non separet*' (Lavves Resolutions, 1632:2.XXII). The Latin translates as "what God joins, man cannot separate," supporting Clark's statement that '[m]en's laws reflected those of God' (2003:37). A partial divorce was possible, but more in the sense of *a mensa et thoro*: a physical separation of the couple, but the spiritual and legal bond remains: 'and therefore Diuorces are sometimes perpetuall, as long as the parties liue, sometimes for a season limited, and sometime, till reconcilement be had, and he that maketh Diuorce with his wife being only separated *a Toro*, is forbidden to take another wife' (Lavves Resolutions, 1632:2.XII).

Dolan's final type of marriage illuminates issues encountered in conduct books and the plays when analysing the possible ironic or satirical stances taken on powerful women, or shrews. 'A comic tradition, including plays, ballads, and jokes, would seem to mark an advance

toward imagining spouses as separate and equal, since it assigns husband and wife similar claims on wit, desire, authority, and material resources' (Dolan, 2009:3). This also appears to be one of the main sources of conflict within the taming plays in this chapter, and shall be elaborated upon in the plays' analyses.

It has to be mentioned that there was no single unified idea of marriage throughout the early modern period, as we are talking about an era that spanned roughly two centuries. Witnessing religious changes and persecutions, as well as significant monarchical changes, opinions on marriage in England shifted accordingly. The Reformation brought about changes within marriage and the limitations of male control: '[s]ome Protestant preachers enjoined husbands to use no violence against their wives and to treat them as spiritual equals and domestic helpmeets,' and further promoting 'marriage not merely as an economic arrangement but as a union demanding mutual affection and respect from both parties' (Howard, 2016a:347-348). However, as Dolan suggests 'husband and wife both are and are not construed as equals' (2009:100). The "in theory" suggested within the majority of changes occurring throughout the early modern period, is therefore once again applicable to marriage issues. Calls for fair treatment within marriage came, amongst others, from Thomas Heywood's *A Curtaine Lecture* (1637) who appears to indirectly admonish authors such as Swetnam by using similar wording to Aemilia Lanyer and Rachel Speght on the harsh treatment of women: 'I am halfe perswaded they had quite forgot themselves to have been borne of mothers' (1637:6). Remembering Swetnam's contrived explanation of women's deceit on the basis of their origins, Heywood's reasoning for a better treatment is remarkably different, yet note the ending:

Because the side is the middle of the body, to signifie that the woman is of equall dignitie with the man; and therefore shee was taken not from the head, nor the foot; *for she must not be superiour or inferiour unto him*. It is probable also that shee was taken out of the left side: for the heart of the man inclineth that way...to denote unto us, that

man and woman should imbrace each other with an hearty and intire love: *and as the left side is the weakest, so the woman made from thence, is the weaker vessell.*

(Heywood, 1637:170-171)

Heywood contradicts himself by stating that women are neither superior nor inferior, and yet they are still weaker. The association of women with “left” also gives us an insight into the perceived weakness they display when confronted with wickedness: *sinistra*, Latin for “left,” has left later generations with the word sinister. Women are etymologically, and according to medieval and early modern medical science, inclined to being sinister, perverse and naturally predisposed to sin: an opinion that can be tracked throughout the pamphlet debate, the conduct books, and early modern drama. Isolated, Heywood sounds like a misogynistic view on marriage, much like Speght’s views of obedience and patriarchal hierarchy within the household, as well as William Whately’s *A Bride-Bush* (1617). Whately petitions for a more just and fair treatment of women within marriage, regardless of their behaviour, and yet insists on their “inferiority,” and the ‘two vertues of reuerence and obedience, which are appropriate to the place of inferiours’ (1617:37). The driving force behind the call for fairer treatment in this pamphlet is the realisation that violence is useless: ‘she shal hardly chuse, but first hate him, and despise him after,’ and ‘these expose a man to contempt’ (Whately, 1617:20). However, the 1623 edition proclaimed the following:

...the husband must know, that for correcting or actuall punishing of his wife, he must come exceeding slowly to it, and be very seldome in it, neuer proceeding vnto it, till some palpable wickednesse haue compelled him, because other meanes haue beene frustrated...The most exorbitant sinnes (such as I named before) may be chastened with blowes...must a man vse gentlenesse in striking, as well as in speaking? I answere: Yes and that much rather also: for the bitterest pills had need to be swallowed with some sweet sirrups. (1623:123, 125)

Therefore, if women are more often portrayed as violent and shrewish, seemingly inviting violence: then according to Whately's revised stance, a husband would have been within his moral and legal rights to physically tame her. As Petronius vouches in *The Tamer Tamed*, 'We'll ship 'em out in Cuckstools, there they'll sail | As brave Columbus did, till they discover | The happy Islands of obedience' (*Tamer Tamed*:2.1.895-903).

An Homilie on the State of Matrimony (1623), possibly edited by Bishop John Jewel, who was the 'general editor of the collection' of homilies, largely follows Whateley's sentiments from his first edition (Bray, 2015:xvii). Violence within a marriage brings about: '[v]erily nothing but that he thereby setteth forward the devil's work; he banisheth away concord, charity and sweet amity, and bringeth in dissension, hatred and irksomeness' (*Homilie on Matrimony*, 1623:474). Once again, 'consider thou again that the woman is a frail vessel, and thou art therefore made the ruler and head over her, to bear the weakness of her in this her subjection' (*Homilie on Matrimony*, 1623:480). Contrary to the religious texts and pamphlets arguing against abuse within marriage, Pamela Allen Brown states that 'English law allowed husbands to beat their wives as much as they liked so long as severe injury or death did not result. On this issue the law was more conservative than church doctrine' (2003:123). Women's status within marriage is therefore represented in convoluted and contradicting explanations and debates, although Francis Bacon allows no ambiguity: '[w]ives are young men's mistresses, companions for middle age, and old men's nurses; so as a man may have a quarrel to marry when he will' (1612, 1625:1665). The behaviour they generally had to show was obedience, meekness, and respect. If they disagree with their husband's behaviour, whether he be cruel, adulterous, or partakes in any other form of disorder, she is expected to use 'milde speech, and if he chide she must hold her peace, for the answer of a wise woman is silence,' and to 'beare with the weaknesse and imperfections of her husband, is the true Character of a wise and virtuous woman' (Swetnam, 1615:55; Heywood, 1637:263-264; c.f. Murphy,

2015:91). Overall, the virtues a wife should possess did not change drastically throughout the early modern period: the emphasis Vives placed on ‘chastite and great loue towarde her husbände’ (1529:2.III) can be tracked in the aforementioned sources after the Reformation. Explaining the prevalence of Vives’ ideals in later Protestant works brings forward the important term when describing changes during the Reformation: the intended “reform,” not “create.”

Barbara Hodgdon remarks on the political changes influencing marriage noticeable within the taming plays, differentiating between ‘Elizabethan notions of hierarchy within marriage’ and ‘Jacobean ideologies of companionate relations between women and men’ (2019:36). ‘Jacobean ideologies’ here could also be construed as the more reformist branches of Protestantism. It is important to remember these contemporary changes in opinion and perception when analysing the marriages in conduct books and plays. As such, Hodgdon can further be quoted on the proof of these differences between *A Shrew* and *The Shrew*: the first being an ‘official Elizabethan rhetoric on women’s status,’ and the latter portraying ‘Jacobean positions on the relations between women and men within marriage’ (2019:398). As both plays portray women as subservient to men, or at least show the men attempting to control and subdue their wives, they certainly reflect the pamphlets and conduct books mentioned above. Speght contributes to this notion, as she explains that ‘the Man is the Woman’s Head’ and ‘as the head of a man is the imaginer and contriuer of proiects profitable for the safety of his whole body; so the Husband must protect and defend his Wife from iniuries:...For men must loue their wiues, euen as Christ loued his Church’ (1616:16-17). Happiness in marriage was reliant on the dynamic between the husband and the wife: did she follow his wishes, according to the doctrine of obedience challenged through the *querelle des femmes*, or was she a shrew? The majority of contemporary conduct books clearly condemn a woman’s freedom of speech and her attempts at control over her husband, denominating such a transgressor as “shrew.”

The term “shrew” originates, according to Hodgdon, from the ‘late medieval and early modern periods’ developing into “‘a wicked, evil-disposed, or malignant man”,’ and finally coming to ‘refer to the devil’ (2019:39). It changed during the medieval period, where Hodgdon names Chaucer as an influence, into a word associated with women, particularly those who rebelled against patriarchal authority and did not uphold the virtues and obedience expected of them (2019:39). This latter development became the primary meaning of the term “shrew,” transforming it into a negative connotation associated with deviant femininity and disorder. Despite the early modern emphasis on chaste and obedient wives, as seen above, Swetnam recalls that ‘many a man happeneth sooner on a shrew then a ship’ (1615:47). Whilst Swetnam is certainly biased towards women, tending to highlight their transgressions and “obvious” naturally evil natures, the popularity of his pamphlet, whether received seriously or not, does point to negative stigmas and “fears” surrounding outspoken women. John Taylor, for example, revises Swetnam’s list of women not to marry, by advising: ‘all men, young and old, rich and poore, to marry any woman of any bad condition, rather than a scold’ (1639:114-115). What, then, constituted a shrew? What did a woman have to do in order to be marked and, in a way, feared as unmarriageable and difficult by men? Dolan recognises that ‘[t]he wife who would not commit herself to the fiction of her own inferiority was consistently depicted as a battling belligerent figure, fighting for possession and control’ (2009:102). Keeping this statement in mind when researching the primary sources, similar phrases appear in nearly every conduct book. Speght argues women should not resort to shrewish behaviour when they disagree with their husbands, but rather they must take care ‘with her tongue not to vtter words of strife, but to giue good counsell vnto her husband, the which hee must not despise (1616:11). In Taylor’s ‘A Lecture of a kinde and loving Wife to her Husband,’ in *A Iuniper Lecture*, the woman attempts to change her husband’s alcoholism through kind words, as advised by pamphleteers.

...you shall ever find me a loving & a kind wife to you in all things; you men are the Head, & must governe us women...you are the Sunne to mee, and I am your Mary-gold, to shut & open when you please...deare Husband, if you will take a Womans counsell... (1639:139)

Following her grovelling and pleasing “lecture” the husband of the tale does end up changing his ways, thanks to her gentle admonishment. According to the *Homilie on Matrimony*, a woman should ‘acknowledge the authority of the husband and refer to him the honour of obedience’ (1623:476). If she does not, and ‘shee stand vpon termes of equality, much moore of being than he is, the very root of good carriage is withered, and the fountaine thereof dried vp. Out of place, out of peace’ (Whately, 1617:36).

Before addressing the taming plays, the discussion of shrews needs to proceed into the acceptance of taming women within marriage, as well as using violence to achieve these goals. Jean Howard relates the phenomenon of taming to ‘the possibility that people can change their social identities as a result of either choice or coercion’ (2016a:343). This was also noticeably influenced by increasingly romanticised depictions of taming, emphasising the successes men experienced as their wives transformed ‘from an old, usually poor woman or a nagging wife into the newly romanticized vision of a beautiful, rich, and spirited young woman’ (Boose, 1991:198). Natasha Korda adds to the discourse by bringing attention to the fact that ‘[p]rior to Shakespeare’s play, shrews were typically portrayed as reluctant producers within the household economy’ (2002:530). The pamphlets and conduct books studied for this were published after Shakespeare’s play and do indeed tend to focus on a wife’s transgression into claims of equality, scolding their husband, and behaving wildly. Heywood’s taming advice against these kinds of women, goes in the direction of ignoring, mocking, or drowning them out with noise: ‘and ever when shee began to scold, he straight without any reply began to play, but so untunably and shrill, that it almost drowned her language’ (1637:164-165). Taylor also

advises men not to ‘descend so low as to take notice of what they say, or to stoope lower to afford them any Reply, but to shame them with their mortall enemy, Silence’ (1639:201-202). He believes men should not pay attention to their wives: ‘bee sure you give her not a word, good nor bad, but rather seeme to slight her, by doing some action or other, as singing, dancing, whistling, or clapping thy hands on thy sides; for this will make her vexe extreamely, because you give her not word for word’ (1639:225-226). The majority of his guide to taming details how one should make a louder noise than the shrew, or to merely walk away from the conflict. The mention of physical abuse seems to only appear in folk tales, ballads and songs, as he continues with:

Dub a dub, kill her with a Club,

Be thy wives Master:

Each one can tame a shrew, but he that hath her. (Taylor, 1639:229-230)

Another song ends with: ‘But if shee persist, and will have her well, | Oh, then bang her, bang her, bang her still’ (Taylor, 1639:231). Unfortunately, as Dolan records, ‘[n]on-lethal physical and verbal abuse is difficult to document through legal records because, for the most part, it was not illegal; as a result, it is impossible to quantify how common or how severe domestic violence was in the early modern period’ (1999:165-166). In general, violence was seen as a sign of weakness — which is why shrews with their violent and authoritative behaviour were so abhorred — a preferred method involved ‘the redirection of both spouses’ violence away from one another and toward more acceptable, that is, unambiguously subordinate, targets’ (Dolan, 1999:169).

To use violence as a taming method was therefore, in theory, not encouraged by the majority of writers in early modern England. Since marriage was intended to join two people into one, both legally and spiritually, some critics such as Swetnam argued that it would be similar to hitting oneself, furthermore ‘there is no way to make her good with stripes, except

thou beat her to death' (1615:12). Although argued in a flawed way, it does ultimately reflect the contemporary homily: '[b]ut yet I mean not that a man should beat his wife. God forbid that, for that is the greatest shame that can be, not so much to her that is beaten as to him that doeth the deed...for she is thy body and made one flesh with thee' (*Homily on Matrimony*, 1623:479-480). Violence was also seen as an ineffective method as it 'shalt increase her evil affections, for frowardness and sharpness is not amended with frowardness, but with softness and gentleness' (*Homily on Matrimony*, 1623:481). Possibly the most forward and acceptable method of dealing with strife and shrews within marriage, from a twenty-first-century point of view, comes through the texts of Sowernam and Whately. Sowernam blames the bad behaviour of women on the men, believing that

If thou wert a man thou wouldest take away the cause which vrgeth a woman to grieffe and discontent, and not by thy frowardnesse encrease her distemperature...they would make a benefit of the discommodity, either try his skill to make her milde, or exercise his patience to endure her curstness... (1617:44)

Even if this is intended as satire, as discussed earlier, it also echoes patriarchal views of rape as a test which comes to light in the third chapter. Encouraging a gentler and empathetic relationship between man and woman, Whately urges both sexes to look at their own transgressions before admonishing the other:

Hast thou bene a foolish, passionate, vniust husband, full of bitter words, perhaps also (which is monstrous) of blowes in anger, seeking and seruing thy selfe alone, and not regarding thy wiyes good,...? Diue not into her faults, cry not out,...but repent of thy bitternes, unthriftines, folly of all sorts: confesse it to God; beseech him to make thee a better husband, that thy wife may bee better. (1617:48)

Note, however, still the remark of hoping for betterment for oneself and the wife. Although Whately advises men to look at themselves first, he also indirectly places the blame at the wives' feet. In contrast, his entreatment to women reads as follows:

Hast thou bene a disdainfull, contemptuous, brawling, impatient, discontented, and disobedient wife?...If yea, clamour not against thine husbands folly, exclaime not of his rashnes and hardnes; but condemne thy selfe before, and call vpon God, to make thee feare and obey thine husband, as a Commander vnder him. Entreat him of mercy to make thee better, that thy husband also may be better. (1617:48)

Despite the underlying message of making each other better through reforming oneself, it is still emphasised that a woman's transgression is behaving like a man and challenging him as an equal, whereas the man's fault lies in excessive cruelty — the main reason for women seeking divorce. A man should reform his behaviour to be kinder, a woman needs to understand her place and obey her husband. The debates, discourses, ideas, and overall cultural background discussed up until now will serve to place the plays within a logical and coherent context: enabling a study into the reasons behind the characters' actions. Condoning wife-beating through texts like these, or at least excusing marital violence under the guise of valid concerns that may only be addressed through violence, may have led to less recognition for the victims. Fiction and examples within conduct books may have been associated with reality, leading to the explanations, excuses, and the concealment of domestic abuse. Often, even a wife's talkativeness was enough to ensure censure from her husband or her family, as it; could be interpreted as a sign of her sexual promiscuity, on the earlier theory of vocal and moral looseness. It therefore 'jeopardized the communal order for men and women alike' (Hodgdon, 2019:47).

Out-Shrewing Shrews and Taming Tamers

‘All beasts by man are made tame, but a womans tongue will neuer be lame...’
(Swetnam, 1615:40)

Obedient and subservient women were ideal within marriage: as has previously been discussed, those who listened to their husbands were seen as virtuous and set an example to those who did not. A frequent character mentioned as a paragon of virtue, is Griselda, or Grissel, a figure originally from Giovanni Boccaccio’s *The Decameron* (1353). The story of the poor girl who marries a marquis and is subsequently tested harshly is narrated under criticism of the tamer. Griselda is described as a woman ‘with a fine figure and beautiful features,’ ‘so confident, graceful and decorous a manner,’ and ‘so obedient to her husband, and so compliant to his wishes, that he thought himself the happiest and most contented man on earth’ (Boccaccio & McWilliam, 1995:787). Furthermore, her kindness extended not just to her husband, but also to her servants, representing the perfect ideal of a woman according to the conduct literature of the early modern period. Despite the earlier publication of his source, it was reworked and reused in plays, ballads, and poems throughout early modern England, emphasising the cultural importance of the tale: ‘the legend of patient Griselda is specially marked as an irritant to women’ (Brown, 2003:180). The premise, however, does not logically lead to the harrowing taming she endures at the hands of her husband, as the reader expects a valid reason but never receives one. The narrator criticises Gualtieri, the marquis, for his actions, and describes his sudden change in manner as a ‘strange desire to test Griselda’s patience, by subjecting her to constant provocation and making her life unbearable’ (Boccaccio & McWilliam, 1995:787). Since he raised her from poverty by marrying her, she seems to see it as a natural treatment: she obeys him because she feels inferior to him in both status and gender. When he finally does send her away, she leaves humbly and accepts that her time at his court was only ever going to

be temporarily. The cruel revelation of his test of her obedience is revealed when he lies about his new “bride:” he has brought his daughter, believed to have been murdered, to court and has asked Griselda to prepare the living quarters for the new woman. Although everyone in the tale disagrees with him, they still let him proceed with the treatment, until he finally reveals the truth. The couple is reunited and Griselda finally gets to see her children after years of alienation, highlighting the amount of time she has suffered under his abuse. Far from condoning Gualtieri’s behaviour, the narrator states: ‘Gualtieri was acknowledged to be very wise, though the trials to which he had subjected his lady were regarded as harsh and intolerable, whilst Griselda was accounted the wisest of all’ (Boccaccio & McWilliam, 1995:794). However, it also echoes Heywood’s earlier statement of a true wise woman listening to her husband, and bearing with his unreasonable behaviour. Interestingly, the feisty remark at the end of the tale reinforces the disapproval of unnecessary taming of a perfect wife: ‘For perhaps it would have served him right if he chanced upon a wife, who, being driven from the shift, had found some other man to shake her skin-coat for her, earning herself a fine new dress in the process’ (Boccaccio & McWilliam, 1995:795). Where the narrator criticises only Gualtieri, subsequent critics and authors have condemned Griselda’s behaviour as too meek and weak. Not just in how she lets her husband treat her, but also in how she lets him take her children away as she believes they will be murdered. As Brown argues, ‘[t]he name of Griselda has also been used as a shorthand for female submissiveness so close to stupidity as to be indistinguishable from it’ (2003:178-179). Essentially, for women she served less as ideal to strive for and look up to, and more ‘ripe for parody’ (Brown, 2003:181).

The opposite to Griselda, obstinate women, appear frequently in early modern drama, both Elizabethan and Jacobean. Clark notices how ‘[f]or writers of plays about women and domestic crime the category *woman* was a particularly problematic one, given the prevalent cultural fear of deviant or transgressive women such as witches and murderers, and the feeling

that they were at heart unknowable' (2003:115). Although this chapter, and the plays represented focus specifically on shrews, there are links and references to witches, or behaviour frequently associated with witches. For example, Paulina in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* (1611) defends her Queen Hermione through scolding and berating the King's bad treatment of his wife, despite the former's innocence. The excessive cruelty he enacts upon her is accepted by the court, apart from Paulina, yet her censure earns her the insults of being a 'mankind witch,' 'A callet | Of boundless tongue,' and 'A gross hag' (*Winter's Tale*:2.3.67, 90-91, 107). Paulina's transgression is rebelling against patriarchal authority and Leontes' societal superiority. Although this particular play focuses on a royal marriage dispute, the plays in this chapter show that female behaviour was censured and restricted no matter the status within society, although rural and urban settings can have an impact on their treatment at the hands of husbands. The image of a tyrannical husband lording over a subdued wife is analogous to that of a king mistreating his subjects, and therefore unacceptable.

Turning to the taming plays, we shall first explore *The Taming of the Shrew* and its links to *The Taming of a Shrew*, before analysing the changes in marital dynamics in *The Tamer Tamed*. As authorship surrounding *A Shrew* remains ambiguous, it is mentioned as an anonymous yet linked play. Janet Clare states that while many critics believe the author is indeed Shakespeare, she disagrees and believes it is "blurring" to apply one author to both, as seems to have become the norm regarding Shakespeare and anonymous plays (2014:90). Furthermore, Macdonald P. Jackson argues that 'it is common knowledge that one of these two plays borrow from the other, the majority view at present being that the anonymous *A Shrew* is a cobbled-up version indebted to *The Shrew*' (2017:129). In terms of genre, *The Shrew* has been called anything from romance, to comedy, to tragi-comedy, depending entirely on the reader's interpretation of the taming scenes and Katherina's final speech as satirical or not. Those who view the play as a comedy, include George Hibbard as he recognises within it,

‘despite the large element of farce and sheer knockabout that it contains, a true comedy, a significant critical comment on the life and society of the England in which it was written’ (1964:141; *c.f.* Callaghan, 2009:viii). Alternatively, Elizabeth Hutcheon recognises the limiting argument ‘that the play is either irredeemably misogynistic or emblematic of feminist subversion and resistance,’ and that instead, in line with the earlier chapter on the importance of humanism and the *querelle des femmes*, it should be thought of ‘in the context of humanist education allow[ing] us to move away from retracing this cycle of subversion and resistance’ (2011:317). Consequently, however, Katherina’s taming and transformation is seen as an effective adherence to ‘humanist education, which allows her to become a fluent and comprehensible speaker’ (Hutcheon, 2011:317). Following the research of primary texts as well as criticism regarding the humanist education, and its impact on women’s education, Hutcheon’s concluding statement is disagreed with: ‘*The Taming of the Shrew* presents a vision of humanist education that does not discriminate by gender; in fact, its most able pupil proves to be a woman’ (2011:317). Katherina’s treatment at the hands of the men around her throughout the play, is influenced by her status as a woman: the only reason Petruccio tames her is because she is too outspoken, opinionated, and independent for a woman (*c.f.* Garner, 1988:217-219). He is her equal in behaviour, but does not require taming in this play: his reasoning is condoned. Hodgdon, however, claims it does not matter whether it is seen as ‘an exuberant marital farce, as a romantic comedy of fulfilled desire...as a theatrical or critical performance that views the comedy as subversive and stresses the coercive harshness of the taming plot, the story of Katherina and Petruccio...are the play’s main attractions’ (2019:4-5). Ultimately, we can apply Callaghan’s notion for *The Shrew*, to all taming plays, in that they do ‘not resolve issues about the difference between domestic brutality and erotic intensity, or even about true love, but rather compels readers and audiences to grapple with them for themselves’ (2009:xiv). A controversial opinion by Harold Bloom, and a surprisingly aggressive one, is that

The Shrew is a purely romantic play, and if one sees it as ‘a “problem play” then perhaps you yourself are the problem’ (1998:192). To avoid confusion, the protagonists in *The Shrew* will henceforth be known as Petruccio and Katherina, Ferando and Kate in *A Shrew*, and as Petruchio in *The Tamer Tamed* — the rechristening of other characters in the latter will also be mentioned as the chapter proceeds.

Petruccio and Katherina’s marriage in *The Shrew* is problematic from the onset: Petruccio goes against contemporary marital advice and chooses a wife based on her wealth. Korda explains this ‘as an alliance between the gentry and mercantile classes, and thus between land and money, status and wealth’ (2002:62). This can be considered alongside Callaghan’s conclusion that ‘conjugal alliance is inherently positive whether or not the particular pair of marital partners achieves personal felicity,’ as the importance depends on the continuation of families rather than the happiness of individuals (2009:viii). However, as mentioned, numerous contemporary authors advised against marrying for wealth. Heywood makes the point that ‘if thou makest election of beauty, it fadeth; if of riches, they soone waste; if of fame, it oft proves false; if of virtue, that only continues’ (1637:75). He further argues: ‘[h]ow often have forced contracts beene made to add land to land, not love to love? and to unite houses to houses, not hearts to hearts? which hath beene the occasion that men have turned monsters, and women devills’ (1637:100). Petruccio’s statement that he wishes to ‘wive and thrive as best I may’ (*The Shrew*:1.2.54), indicates that he does not wish to marry for love — his sole aim is to better his own status and the only way to achieve this is by marrying Katherina. The exact same phrase is also used in Taylor’s *A Iuniper Lecture*, which claims ‘to wive and thrive’ is a difficult process without help from friends and recommendations (1639:104). As he has travelled to the city as a relative stranger — his father and Baptista Minola knew each other — he cannot rely on a great public knowledge of him to help his advances. Instead he works his way into an existing conflict. Baptista is father to two young women: Katherina and Bianca. While the

youngest, Bianca, is introduced as a maid with ‘mild behaviour and sobriety,’ a ‘young modest girl,’ with sweet beauty in her face,’ and ‘coral lips’ through which ‘she did perfume the air; | Sacred and sweet was all I saw in her’ (*The Shrew*:1.1.71, 152, 163, 170, 171-172). With these attributes she conforms to the “perfect woman” category of contemporary pamphleteers, displaying both modest beauty and gentleness. The oldest daughter Katherina, however, appears as ‘stark mad or wonderful froward,’ and who ‘Began to scold and raise up such a storm | That mortal ears might hardly endure the din,’ and finally, as a ‘curst and shrewd’ woman (*The Shrew*:1.1.69, 168-169, 176). Taken from Tranio’s first observance of the two women, as well as the three men who wish to wed the younger, the audience already perceives a prejudiced and negative view towards Katherina as a stronger woman, as well as the positive connotations surrounding Bianca.

One might notice a familiarity in the description of Katherina as raising storms: in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* (1607), as well as James VI’s *Daemonologie* (1597), witches are known to create storms with their witchcraft (*Macbeth*:1.3.24; *Daemonologie*:II.5.46). Maria in *Tamer Tamed* uses the same phrasing in describing herself: ‘Mistake me not; I have a new soul in me | Made of a North wind, nothing but tempest; | And like a tempest shall it make all ruins, | Till I have run my will out’ (*Tamer Tamed*:1.2.204-207). As mentioned earlier, women who displayed disobedient behaviour, who openly rebelled against their husbands or the men in their lives were often accused of shrewish behaviour, but it could also lead to accusations of witchcraft. Linking Katherina to these kinds of women is dangerous but also shows the power she already has over men: they are afraid of her. Next to being likened to witches, women were often compared to the Devil, his mother, or as possessing other devilish traits: ‘Think’st thou, Hortensio, though her father be very rich, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell’ (*The Shrew*:1.1.121-123). In *A Shrew*, the characters use similar phrases: ‘And he that hath her shall be fettred so, | As good be wedded to the diuell himself, | For such a skould as she did neuer

liue' (*A Shrew*:225-227). The term 'deuilish skould' (*A Shrew*:243) is similarly used in *The Shrew*, as well as *The Tamer Tamed* (4.4.2736-2740), and it is implied that such a woman needs a similar man to take her on: 'The diuell himself dares scarce venter to woo her' (*A Shrew*:292).

This chapter sets out to establish that domestic abuse appears to be easier in remote, rural settings, as opposed to the city where more neighbours can witness discord. Katherina is most powerful at the beginning of the play: she is at home, only linked to her father, and is still able to voice her own opinions and truths. Her father knows no man would willingly enter into a marriage with her without incentive: a woman should be obedient and she is anything but. His proposal to Bianca's suitors, therefore, is that Bianca shall only become available once Katherina is wed. The unwanted sister's autonomy begins to change as soon as Petruccio enters the picture. As shall be argued henceforth, the journey from urban to rural — Petruccio's home — marks the beginning of the taming process. Her alienation from friends and family, thereby the lack of opportunity to engage with "gossips" and revenge herself on her husband, is vital to Petruccio: had Katherina limited her outbursts to her suitors, she could have found sympathy and help from her sister and other women. Furthermore, the journey to Katherina's new home draws clear connections with contemporary pamphlets and ballads. The possible origin of her shrewish behaviour will be discussed, as well as the importance and absence of Katherina's mother.

Petruccio's entrance in the play is violent: he abuses his servant and already shows his disdain to those inferior to his status (*The Shrew*:1.2.11-19). His beating of the priest and the sexton at the later wedding can be interpreted as a peacock-like display before Katherina, or, indeed, a threat and reminder of what could be awaiting her if she attempts to transgress her role as submissive and obedient to her husband. In general, he does not appear to take social conventions seriously, as his entrance at the wedding suggests:

Why Petruccio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrice turned; a pair of boots that have been candlecases, one buckled, another laced; an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt and chapelesse, with two broken points... (*The Shrew*:3.2.41-45)

His wedding guests and future father-in-law are less than impressed, with Baptista stating his disappointment: 'Fie, doff this habit, shame to your estate, | An eyesore to our solemn festival' (*The Shrew*:3.2.94-95). He exhibits similar erratic behaviour throughout the play as he shows that he cares only about himself and his situation, not about what other people may think of him. Displaying public and direct violence towards his servants, yet manipulative and cunning abuse towards Katherina is further proof of his aloofness (*The Shrew*:1.2.17-19; 4.1.111-113, 139, 169-192). As mentioned earlier, violence within marriage was not condoned, but neither was it illegal. An example for popular belief or opinion overhauling legal knowledge, is the 'rule of thumb,' according to which it was allowed for a man to beat his wife with a stick as long as it was no thicker than his thumb. Related as an actual 'rule' stated by Sir Francis Buller in 1782, Foyster clears up the ambiguity surrounding its origins by addressing it as a myth. She relays that '[t]here is absolutely no proof that Buller, who became known as "Judge Thumb", ever made this statement in any formal capacity, and it did not become legal precedent' (2005:12). It may have been based on folk beliefs on the accepted extent of abuse, but as far as legality went, it had no foothold. Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford explain the "acceptance" of domestic abuse as being 'secretly accepted among the fraternity of men, but condemned by the public standards of the community at large, and punished through loss of repute when perpetrators were exposed' (2003:216). Punishment and violence were sometimes seen as valid ways to assert dominance and order within the household, and as Foyster notices, 'men were raised in a culture where violence was integral to the process of growing up' (2005:69). Popular literature, for example, has largely encouraged the bravery and strengths of

its male heroes, whilst emphasising the virtues and obedience of its heroines. Those who do not conform to these ideals, are left behind, or serve as an antithesis to the paradigm of male or female social virtues. Authority was given to the male heads of households, and as such '[i]f the use of force was a necessary element in the maintenance of family order, family violence was its inevitable corollary' (Amussen, 1995:18). It was therefore the type of abuse that was frowned upon, not the form of discipline itself. The excessive violence claimed by wives as grounds for divorce, fell under the belief that because wives were not equal to their husbands, he was abusing his authority: 'unreasonable behaviour inflicted by a superior upon an inferior' (Foyster, 2005:45; *c.f.* Amussen, 1995:3). Therefore, 'a happy ending involves ingenious forms of coercion which can be called "policy" rather than "force",' echoing the relationship a government or king has to its subjects (Dolan, 1999:169).

Thus, if a man were to abuse his authority, it would be seen as transgressive in the eyes of society, but limited and accompanied by claims that the wife may not have been behaving as obediently as she should have. If it is a man's weakness to use excessive cruelty, imagine the censure awaiting women who showed signs of violence or shrewish behaviour. To be concise, if the weaknesses and vices men show are also displayed by women, it is more commendable if a woman manages to overcome them due to her inherent impressionable and cruel nature, as discussed in the religious guilt by Aemilia Lanyer and the Swetnam debate. As a "weaker vessel" they are simultaneously expected to be lesser and better than men: if they display the same weaknesses, they are worse than the men who revel in them. Katherina belongs to this category, as she uses both physical violence and verbal abuse to instate her authority and power. Dolan comments 'it was not just masculinity that was associated with violence — usurped by the shrew, then reasserted in the taming — but authority' (1999:171). This authority begins with the father of the woman, who transfers his power and property at the wedding to the husband. The women in the taming plays recognise the authority fathers

possess, as well as that of their husbands, but do not always seem to understand that the father, quite literally, gave them away. After Kate, in *A Shrew*, recognises her predicament at her new “home,” she tells Ferando that ‘Thou shalt not keepe me nor feede me as thou list, | For I will home againe vnto my father house’ (*A Shrew*:986-987). However, as Maria recognises in *The Tamer Tamed*, her father relinquished his possession and protection of her when she married Petruchio (*Tamer Tamed*:1.3.593-600) — similarly then between Kate and Ferando, as well as Katherina and Petruccio.

Petruccio’s “wooing” begins when he approaches Baptista, and interestingly the father of the shrew agrees to the match as long as Katherina does. It seems that despite her difficult nature, he still allows her to wed who she wants; although this may be due to the fact that she’d be less likely to rebel against her husband if she loved him. As with the contemporary ballad *A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel’s Skin, for Her Good Behavior* (c.1550), the father of the potential bride has more concern for the suitor than his daughter: ‘Gold and silver I would thee give: | If thou her marry, by sweet Saint John, | But thou shouldst repent it all thy life | ...It were great pity, thou wert forlore. | With such a devilish fiend of hell;’ note again the comparison with the Devil and hell (*A Merry Jest*:78-80, 111-112). The ballad details a similar plot to *The Shrew*: a father with two daughters — one sweet, one shrewish — has to marry off the oldest first. A suitor arrives and wishes to marry the shrew, and the ballad recounts the events leading up to a taming process, as well as the results of one.

One main difference between the ballad and *The Shrew*, is the mother: Katherina’s mother is neither mentioned, nor does she appear, in the play. When discussing the origins of shrewish behaviour, contemporary authors have suggested the fault may lie with the mother, either through coddling or setting their own shrewish behaviour as an example. Furthermore, although Brown may suggest that the ballad ‘hints that the bride turns shrewish not simply because her mother is a shrew but because her spouse is crude, rough, and boorish on their

wedding night,' the argument in this study is that the mother plays a bigger role in the development of shrewish behaviour than the husband (2003:131). If it was truly due to his behaviour, then her father would not have had such difficulty in marrying her off.

...let the old Prouerbe put thee in mind hereof, that an euill Bird layeth an ill Egge, the Cat will after her kind, an ill Tree cannot bring foorth good fruit, the young Crab goeth crooked like the Damme, the young Cocke croweth as the old, and it is a verie rare matter to see children tread out of the pathes of their Parents. (Swetnam, 1615:44)

Thus, a likely scenario is that Katherina and Bianca's mother was a shrew herself, leading to two shrews: one hiding under a veil of obedience, the other openly rebelling against male authority. The mother of the bride in *A Merry Jest* is portrayed as the origin for her eldest daughter's shrewish behaviour: the father recommends the young suitor to get her on his side — without her there will be no marriage. In line with Brown's earlier statement, however, it cannot be denied that shrewish behaviour can be enflamed by the husband's or suitor's actions: it serves as protection and a desperate attempt at autonomy and power. Alternatively, Hodgdon argues that 'the play offers no explicit motivation for her shrewishness,' leaving all ideas open to speculation (2019:40). Hibbard appears to accept the theory of Katherina protecting herself, attributing her behaviour to: 'the expression of her self-respect. Indeed, it even looks like a deliberately adopted form of self-defence, a means of testing the quality of the men she meets,...She is certainly not opposed to the prospect of marriage' (1964:148). Her testing behaviour when it comes to men can be seen as she questions her sister about her suitors. After a "gold-digger" insult towards Bianca, the latter mocks Katherina with 'Is it for him you do envy me so?' (*The Shrew*:2.1.18). Her behaviour stems from the feeling that she is made out to be inferior to her younger sister: 'She is your treasure: she must have a husband, | I must dance barefoot on her wedding day | And, for your love to her, lead apes in hell' (*The Shrew*:2.1.32-34). Jealousy and inadequacy are therefore the reason that she mistreats Bianca. Additional

proof that she is not against the idea of marriage itself, appears in *A Shrew*: Kate states ‘[b]ut yet I will consent and marrie him, | For I methinkes haue liude too long a maid, | And match him to, or else his manhoods good’ (*A Shrew*:348-350).

Above, the importance of marriage seen as an alliance is mentioned, and yet this is ignored in *The Shrew*. Katherina’s aforementioned autonomy and power over her own actions declines, as discussed, and this begins with Petruccio and Baptista’s conversation. As Katherina enters, his previous misogynist demeanour transforms: he praises her qualities, compliments her, all to her astonishment and annoyance. The conversation that follows could be interpreted as either a series of witty remarks, laden with innuendos, creating a joking and comical scene (*The Shrew*:2.1.195-238). Katherina’s intelligence and quick wit matches Petruccio’s and we can see a glimpse of two well-matched, equal people. Her wit evades her, however, as she strikes him. Her illusion of authority through crude remarks and excessive displays of strength parallel Petruccio’s threat to strike her back, which she sees as a transgression and abuse of male authority. Recalling the earlier mention of comedy in domestic abuse and Dolan’s three types of marriage, this certainly preludes Katherina and Petruccio’s third type of marriage: Dolan’s ‘comic tradition’ of equality within marriage is the source of conflict within this play (2009:3). The argument is that the conversation does not reflect an attempt at an equal relationship, but rather signals the beginning of a satirical view on equal marriages. It is emphasised by Petruccio’s deceit as he convinces Baptista of Katherina’s love for him, and her speech and agency are silenced. Nevertheless, we start off by thinking Petruccio appreciates her outspoken nature: ‘Now by the world, it is a lusty wench. | I love her ten times more than e’er I did. | Oh how I long to have some chat with her’ (*The Shrew*:2.1.160-162). The sexual connotations surrounding his description of Katherina points to early modern conceptions that ‘one kind of looseness leads to another’ (Howard, 2016a:348). It should be argued that Petruccio admires her wordplay, but only when it is directed towards others; this would explain

how he redirects her temper and shrewish nature towards his servants and other women at the end of the play. He does not necessarily hate her temperament, he actually ‘enjoys his wife’s intelligence and wit,’ just not if her censure is directed at him as her husband: a position that should demand respect and obedience (Pearson, 1990:240). It also falls under the redeemable qualities of shrews: an assertive wife can be counted on to keep the household in check in the name of her husband. As Brown notes: ‘Women thus received contradictory messages: in the market they should be assertive, at home obedient’ (2003:206). Karen Newman quotes David Underdown in emphasising how ‘the period was fraught with anxiety about rebellious women and particularly their rebellion through language’ (1991:252; *c.f.* Eales, 1998:30). Such anxiety is certainly depicted through Swetnam:

Is it not strange of what kinde of mettall a womans tongue is made of? that neither correction can chastise, nor faire meanes quiet: for there is a kinde of venome in it, that neither by faire meanes nor foule they are to be ruled. ...it is but a small thing, and seldome seene, but it is often heard, to the terror and vtter confusion of many a man.
(1615:40)

Schnell argues that Swetnam’s, and other men’s, fixation and fear of women’s tongues ‘seems to lie in the perceived threat that women would speak aloud of the male vulnerability they were privy to as objects of male pleasure, a vulnerability, once revealed that might topple the myth of unassailability on which an exclusively masculine economy was based’ (2002:60). The taming of Katherina’s speech takes some time, however, as she attempts multiple times throughout the play to test her boundaries: the wedding feast is one example.

In the altercation over staying for the wedding feast after their marriage, Kate again claims the importance of language and her use of it to women’s place and independence in the world. But here it is Petruchio who controls language, who has the final word,

for he creates through words a situation to justify his actions: he claims to be rescuing Kate from thieves. (Newman, 1991:255)

Petruccio patronises her into submission by refusing to acknowledge her speech and opinion. In fact, as Howard states, ‘because of her gender, her verbal independence is read by her father and suitors as a sign of shrewishness’ (2016a:347). Katherina recognises this and speaks against Petruccio’s aggressive silencing method several times:

Why sir, I trust I may have leave to speak, | And speak I will. I am no child, no babe. |
Your betters have endured me say my mind, | And if you cannot, best you stop your
ears. | My tongue will tell the anger of my heart, | Or else my heart, concealing it, will
break, | And rather than it shall, I will be free, | Even to the uttermost as I please in
words. (*The Shrew*:4.3.74-81)

According to early modern beliefs, the anger Katherina feels is a male emotion. This can be followed up by Kirilka Stavreva’s argument that ‘portrayals of feminine contentious speech develop a hybrid iconography of men with women’s tongues and women with serpent tongues, discharging choleric masculine humors across the soundscape while wreaking havoc on the elemental balance of the reason-controlled body’ (2015:16). Therefore, masculinity within women can be seen as the real problem: if a woman who should only possess the humours of cold and wet, suddenly displays the hot emotion of anger, it throws off the balance within the household, and masculinises her. Alternatively, it could be seen that too much “power” or “personality” being perceived in one woman was too problematic to men.

As mentioned above, there is the possibility that *The Shrew* gives us two shrews instead of just one. Critics have argued that the “true” shrew in Shakespeare is Bianca: she appears meek and subservient at the beginning of the play, the epitome of a perfect wife. For example, Callaghan states that ‘of the two daughters, Kate marries with full parental consent while Bianca’s marriage constitutes an act of filial disobedience’ (2009:xiii). Standing opposite

Katherina, they initially represent the ideal and disagreeable sides of women: ‘Woman is represented as spectacle (Kate) or object to be desired and admired, a vision of beauty (Bianca)’ (Newman, 1991:253). Since Kate is not stated to be ugly, only shrewish, it could be argued that the beauty that shines through in Bianca is greatly influenced by her perceived virtue. She uses this to her full advantage, and possibly even utilises contemporary conduct arguments of getting one’s way through “obedience.” As Hibbard shows, ‘[s]he enjoys the pleasures of being wooed by no fewer than four men, of making her own choice among them, of deceiving her father...and, most important of all, of continuing to get her own way with her husband after marriage as well as before it’ (1964:146). In its final scene, however, she disobeys her new husband, Lucentio, and shows disdain for Katherina’s transformation. Bianca’s wedding is a subversion of Katherina’s earlier wedding: here it is her who does what she wants, and Lucentio who follows.

Throughout the taming plays and contemporary literature, there is a clear theme of journeys, horses, and hell, which are linked intrinsically and undeniably. Lynda Boose sees the “‘low culture” trope of unruly horse/unruly woman’ as the possible ‘connection that led first to a metaphoric idea of bridling women’s tongues and eventually to the literal social practice’ (1991:199). One of the most well-known devices for silencing women is known as the ‘scold’s bridle,’ a torturous device clamped down on the victim’s head, with a metal spike attached to it and inserted into the mouth to prevent the woman from speaking. A traumatising ordeal, but the following ballad takes silencing and taming from an accepted and condoned punishment to a display of excessive cruelty. Beginning therefore with the earliest example used for this theory, *A Merry Jest*, the husband in the ballad plans a taming of his wife after a long period of hardship in their marriage. His wife is not obedient and mistreats both him and his servants. Naturally, the reason for it is that he denies her sleep and continually harasses her with sexual advances. The plan: ‘I fear me I shall never make her good | Except I do wrap her in black

Morel's skin,... | I will be master as it is reason, | And make her subject unto me | For she must learn a new lesson' (*A Merry Jest*:783-784, 802-804). Morel is his horse, one he rides several times in the ballad, and it is on one of these travels that he gets the idea to use his horse for his wife's taming. As the horse is old, he has no more use out of it and kills it, enabling it to "serve" his master for a "good" cause one last time. He salts its hide, severely beats his wife, and places her inside while she lies unconscious. In the end, she concedes and becomes the emblem of an obedient wife. The horse, the travelling, the conflict, and the conclusion show a linear plotline of a journey to a hellish action, followed by a final resolution. Isolated, this sounds like an excessively brutal and illogical sequence of events, however, compared to the following evidence, it is not as accidental as it seems.

After detailing which women to marry and which to avoid, as mentioned earlier, Joseph Swetnam illustrates a charming picture of marriage: 'If thou mariest a still and quiet woman, that will seeme to thee that thou ridest but an ambling horse to hell; but if with one that is froward and vnquiet, then thou wert as good ride a trotting horse to the Deuill' (1615:35). In other words, it does not matter what kind of woman a man marries, they will end up in hell regardless. Once again, we are given the image of a horse, a travelling pair, and hell. Only this time instead of an abusive action, the entire concept of marriage is seen as unholy; an interesting and blasphemous notion.

Returning to the theory at hand, there are now two texts which display and use similar descriptions in texts regarding women and shrews. There is one other source to be discussed before moving on to the plays, and that is Taylor's *A Iuniper Lecture* (1639); a collection of lectures shrews give their husbands: an obvious important source when evaluating the opinions of shrews in early modern England. In 'A Lecture of a Countrey Farmers wife,' the shrewish wife launches into a tirade against her husband for indulging too much in alcohol and staying out too late. In a story similar to Robert Burns' *Tam O'Shanter* (1791) the woman says:

I would that the next time thou drinkest in this manner, and stayest out so late, that thou mightest meete Will with a Wispe, or some Fire-Drake or other, to leade thee over Bushes and Bryers, Ditches and Watry places, that you may bee so hampered by such furies, that you may hereafter take warning for beeing from home so late. (Taylor, 1639:37-38)

The similarity is clear: a horse journey induces hellish occurrences, whether real or not. While this is a wish for her husband being subjected to fear and ridicule, the other examples so far have been linked to women.

As mentioned above, the wedding of Katherina and Petruccio sees the latter appearing on a horse that looks close to dying. Biondello lists in a lengthy monologue how dilapidated and close to death the horse looks, riddled with disease. Petruccio himself is dressed inappropriately, which, as argued, shows his lack of concern of societal norms, but also creates a skimmington-like image of himself and his entrance (*The Shrew*:3.2.41-58). If a man and woman, once married, became one, then Petruccio's self-ridicule and lack of respect thereby preludes the disrespect he shows Katherina throughout the play. Alternatively, Sarah Johnson believes he could be placing Katherina as the subject of the skimmington, and quotes Peter, a servant, saying: 'He kills her in her ow humor' (*The Shrew*:4.1.162), effectively 'out-shrewing' the shrew (2011:317). It also becomes apparent that he does not love her in the following conversation as Katherina begs Petruccio to let her enjoy her own wedding feast: 'Now if you love me, stay' (*The Shrew*:3.2.198), whereupon Petruccio replies 'Grumio, my horse' (*The Shrew*:3.2.198). During their travels to Petruccio's house, Katherina's horse falls, with her stuck underneath it. Boose also recognises a possible link between 'bridle' and 'bridal:' 'that gets foregrounded in Grumio's horse-heavy description of the journey home and the ruination of Kate's "bridal"...By means of the syntactical elision of "horse's," the phrase quite literally puts the bridle on Kate rather than her horse' (1991:199). It evokes the taming process the

husband uses in the ballad: Katherina is as trapped as her shrewish counterpart was. It therefore also forebodes her eventual taming and the possibility that Petruccio will succeed. The woman underneath, the woman being ridden, the man as the rider: these are all obvious references to '[s]exual imagery' (Mendelson & Crawford, 2003:61). The fact that the horses ran away and the overall turbulence of the scene seems to allude to Swetnam's quick trot to hell, especially if the next place they appear is at the centre of Katherina's taming. Furthermore, on the journey back to her familial home, Petruccio finalises her taming, through threats of turning back and, finally, making her take part in his 'absurdities:' 'Having exhausted and humiliated her to the limit of his invention, he now wants her to know that he would go to any extreme to get the obedience he craves... In male-supremacist utopia, masculinity might be identical with absolute truth, but in life the two coincide only intermittently' (Kahn, 1975:96). This applies to Petruccio's interchanging of the sun and the moon, the misgendering of Lucentio's father, Vincentio, where she finally realises she needs to play along in order to get what she wants (*The Shrew*:4.6.1-23, 28-50; c.f. Pearson, 1990:235). The tale of a shrew, therefore, seems to naturally include a resemblance or inclusion of a journey and a horse. It also leads this into the aforementioned theory that domestic abuse and taming processes are more easily achieved in rural settings as opposed to urban areas.

Foyster notices '[t]he reaction in this period of some city wives to their husband's threats that they would "send them into the country"', suggests that it was urban life that was believed to give women freedoms and protection from violence, compared to the isolation of country living' (2005:14). In *The Shrew* it is used both as a threat as well as incentive: Katherina is not allowed to go to her sister's wedding in the city until she obeys Petruccio completely. In the rural setting of Petruccio's house she is denied food, sleep, respect, the permission to voice her own opinion and the opportunity to clothe herself in the latest fashions. 'Out of place, out of peace' seems strangely fitting here, as Katherina's autonomy undergoes a complete

transformation (Whately, 1617:36). The difference between urban and rural could be explained through the access to social life as well, as Laura Gowing states that '[t]he nature of urban life seems to have involved more public female activity' (1996:265). However, once the woman was moved to a rural area, it can be argued that 'at a personal and daily level men's power was consistently enforced at the expense of women's and through the ideologies of gendered morality:' reflecting Katherina's lack of power as soon as she leaves the urban space of her family home (Gowing, 1996:273). Furthermore, Hodgdon notices how 'Katherina is not all shrew all the time, for although her quick tongue characterizes her, once she arrives at Petruccio's house, she says little until, at the play's end, she talks — and talks and talks' (2019:41).

The taming Katherina undergoes at the hand of Petruccio begins with taunts of promises of fine foods and clothes, only to have them taken away as they are "inadequate" for her. As soon as he denies her clothes, he is simultaneously denying her a semblance of individuality and independence within their marriage: '[m]any wealthy married women were able to gain from their goods a sense of individuality that was independent from their husbands, despite the common law theory of coverture' (Foyster, 2005:50). The abuse he subjects her to is manipulative and places her in an impossible position. Despite his earlier threats of physical violence — 'I swear I'll cuff you if you strike again' (*The Shrew*:2.1.219) — he never actually harms her. His aim is to kill her with kindness, 'And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor' (*The Shrew*:4.1.190); relating to Howard's earlier statement of 'choice or coercion' leading to personal change (2016a:343). The aim of Petruccio's taming has been questioned by numerous authors, and Howard debates:

Is he forcing her to deform her nature or helping her experiment with a role that might bring out untapped aspects of her personality or lead to greater control of her social environment? Is there, in fact, anything like a "real self," or is personhood a succession

of social roles adopted because of coercion, social expectations, material circumstances, or the drive for social mastery? (2016a:344)

Similarly, Korda argues that Petruccio is merely attempting ‘to teach Kate. He seeks to unmask the lure of status objects for Kate, while at the same time instructing her to deploy this lure skillfully for others’ (2002:67). Petruccio therefore does not stop Katherine from being abusive, he just tames her attitudes as his wife and allows her to abuse her subordinates as that is an acceptable social order: ‘[w]hen Katherina uses violence to dominate servants and other women rather than to resist her father and husband, her conduct is presented as acceptable, even admirable’ (Dolan, 1999:173). His entire stance towards taming is presented in a shockingly matter-of-fact way:

Thus have I politicly begun my reign, | And ’tis my hope to end successfully. |...| She
ate no meat today, nor none shall eat; | Last night she slept not nor tonight she shall not.
| As with the meat, some undeserved fault | I’ll find about the making of the bed, |...|
And in conclusion, she shall watch all night, | And if she chance to nod, I’ll rail and
brawl | And with the clamor keep her still awake. (*The Shrew*:4.1.169-188; c.f. Garner,
1988:215)

Sounding similar to Boccaccio’s Gualtieri, Petruccio has meticulously planned out how he shall tame Katherine, and he is confident he shall win. It is not surprising that he believes this, as his taming takes no real skill: he lords his authority over her, wears her out, and wins through physically and mentally exhausting her, yet without any intricacy, debate or reason. If he indeed attempts to teach Katherine the skills of humanism, he is sorely lacking in the area himself. Coppélia Kahn criticises Petruccio for ‘plainly declaring her a sub-human being who exists solely for the purposes of her husband’ (1975:96). There are critics such as Sir Arthur Thomas Quiller-Couch who believe that Katherine has been receptive to taming throughout the play — that she subconsciously wants to be dominated and tamed: ‘marriageable and willing to mate’

(1962:138). This sounds unlikely, and is furthermore reminiscent of Petruccio's descriptions of her as an animal. His 'killing with kindness' method — in modern terms 'gaslighting' — is also the reason Katherina is not able to sue for divorce. As mentioned earlier, women's reasons for divorce were on the basis of excessive cruelty, and as Quiller-Couch notes 'he never says the sort of misprising word that hurts a high-mettled woman,' neither does he physically abuse her (1962:138). 'And that which spites me more than all these wants, | He does it under name of perfect love, | As who should say, if I should sleep or eat | 'Twere deadly sickness or else present death' (*The Shrew*:4.3.11-14). One could argue that the prohibition of eating, sleeping, and his exhaustive methods in general, should be seen as excessive cruelty; however, Katherina's physical abuse is hidden, and his abuse is not easily proven without any witnesses on her side. The only witnesses are Petruccio's servants, and are thereby subservient to him, not her. The only servants we encounter are male, and Grumio has previously hinted at other tamings Petruccio has performed (*The Shrew*:1.2.108-112). Had Katherina been able to access a group of gossips, it could have been prevented. A group of gossips could protect one of their own and had a certain level of authority within a community (*c.f.* O'Malley, 2002:126; Capp, 2017:20). Heywood records the discord between a shrew who enlists her gossips against an abusive husband. After "enduring" her shrewish tongue, he beats her one night, whereupon he 'presumes he had got the victory over her' (1637:206). She tricks him, by telling him to crawl into a sack during a game of "All-hid" — most likely a game of hide and seek — and proceeds to beat him with sticks with the help of two gossip friends. Unlike *The Tamer Tamed*, however, they do not end up as the victorious party, as the tale ends with him pushing her down the stairs at a party and she 'submitted her selfe and hee accepted of her submission;...they lived in great unity and love all the rest of their life after' (Heywood, 1637:209). Through alienating possible allies, Katherina has enabled Petruccio to 'quickly establi[sh] complete hegemony over his new wife and household, ignoring any contravening force of neighborhood. His bride's

shrewishness proves weak and superficial compared to that of the wives in jests and ballads who preferred death to capitulation' (Brown, 2003:139). As it stands, without her band of women to protect her, Katherina only has one option to survive: 'greater docility and subservience to her husband' (Howard, 2016a:344). Due to her difficult position, Katherina gives in — or does not, varying per critic — to Petruccio's taming, and adheres to his will towards the end of the play. According to Jochen Petzold, Katherina's transformation is a farce:

...Katherina has learned to play Petruchio's game, but she has not necessarily stopped being of a different opinion. By saying the words Petruchio wants her to say, Katherina is able to take centre stage and usurp the position of public orator...Thus she can take on a position of (limited) power in mocking irony...[But] while her final speech does point out that the husband has certain duties towards his wife...it certainly places more emphasis on wifely submission and cannot be read easily as a plea for equality. (2006:162-163)

To those listening to her speech and seeing her transformation she appears like Griselda, however, this perception is a double-sided coin. Where she looks virtuous and ideal to the men, Katherina appears equally as foolish as Griselda to the women, perhaps even more so, as she allowed herself to be tamed, and Griselda has always been obedient: 'she estranges all the women onstage and offers little for women in the audience to pity or admire' (Brown, 2003:140). Once again, Callaghan notes upon the ambiguity surrounding the play: just like the difficulty in determining the genre, it is also uncertain 'whether Kate's transformation is genuine or permanent' (2009:xiv). Korda concurs by stating she neither acknowledges that Katherina has been tamed, nor that she has not (2002:74). In favour of her possible transformation, is Murphy, as she focuses on the intention behind Katherina's words:

Kate claims that "women are so simple" because they do not realize the potential for strength in obeying. This strength is found not by pretending obedience or saying all of

the right things but by performing obedience in the way that the conduct manuals would recommend — in such a way as to draw others to virtue. (2015:10)

This does adhere to the aforementioned conduct authors, who advise women to bear their husbands faults, and sway them with kindness. However, the deceptive ‘transformation of Christopher Sly from drunken lout to noble lord...suggests that Kate’s switch...may also be deceptive’ (Kahn, 1975:89). The fact that she even has the last word, and the longest speech, hints at a lack of complete subservience. Kahn interprets Katherina’s speech as ‘a pompous, wordy, holier-than-thou sermon which deliberately mocks the sermons her husband has delivered to her and about her’ (1975:98). However, it cannot be seen as a shrewish speech, because she does not behave ‘unwomanly.’ As mentioned previously, Hutcheon attributes this to a humanist education Petruccio has subjected her to. If this play is to be analysed alongside *The Tamer Tamed*, then the inclination is to agree more with Kahn, than those critics who believe Katherina’s transformation is sincere.

Apart from her eloquence, the staging remains very important when evaluating Katherina’s state: when she delivers the speech, is she flanked by Bianca and the widow as they return, or does she face them? If they flank her, it could be an ironic and mocking speech directed towards the men, whilst being supported by the women behind her. Seeing Katherina actually interact with Bianca and the widow as she convinced them to join her would have been an interesting scene, and could have shed some light on whether she changed or not. The final image we get of Katherina, as ‘[k]neeling for forgiveness, bareheaded and barefooted’ evokes the image of ‘penitent fornicators and adulterers, not for penitent scolds;’ although Stavreva follows this with the possibility of it being ‘a preemptive penance on her part for some possible adultery in the future’ (2015:65).

Following the distinction between shrews and sheep — those who blindly obey their husbands and are mocked by shrews — ‘Petruchio seems to get a wife who is a sheep with him

and a shrew to servants and other women' (Dolan, 2009:127). The introduction to *The Tamer Tamed*, however, indicates that this may not have been achieved. This play presents us with an alternative to the taming husband trope: Maria and her band of women are rebellious women who achieve their goals. Nevertheless, the use of abuse and coercion is apparent throughout, with a dark reference to Katherine's possible fate at the beginning. According to Tranio, Petruchio remembers his first wife as a shrew: 'Hiding his Breeches, out of fear her Ghost | Should walk, and wear 'em yet' (*Tamer Tamed*:1.1.56-57). It is further implied that Petruchio may have killed Katherine, as Tranio muses how Petruchio 'will bury her | Ten pound to twenty shillings, within these three weeks' (*Tamer Tamed*:1.1.70-71), referring to Maria. Fletcher's play is not a sequel to *The Shrew*, but should be interpreted as a spin-off: for if it is read alongside *The Shrew*, and analysed accordingly, it completely invalidates Petruchio's transformation at the end of *The Tamer Tamed* (Bergeron, 1996). The premise is that Katherine was never fully tamed, like Kahn suggests, and that her submission was either only brief, or a mockery (c.f. Maurer, 2001:196). Petruchio's new wife is reminiscent of Bianca, in that she appears to be innocent before the marriage, and turns on her husband in the following acts. His "taming" cannot be taken seriously though: Petruchio is as tamed as Katherine was, he will revert just like she did and the plays end on a paralleled mockery of marriage, obedience and equality. Compared to contemporary negative connotations surrounding shrews, the question remains of how the public would have received the topsy-turvy hierarchy of the getting her way through shrewish behaviour and overall disobedience. Meg Livingston studies Sir Henry Herbert, 'the Jacobean-Caroline Master of the Revels,' and his disapproval of the play in a 'religious/political subtext' as he made 'cuts and changes' (2001:213, 229). His unsuccessful attempts to censor the work, is attributed to 'Fletcher's characterization of Maria as a woman who fights the play's most important battle with her mind rather than with her actions' (2001:229). Perhaps she had already benefitted from that same humanist education Katherine

lacked at the beginning of *The Shrew*. Placing this play in the religious and political context mentioned earlier, Herbert and other contemporaries could have seen the transgressing women as an allegory for ‘Catholicism and with attacks on the Church of England...developing a subtext about Catholic women who seek to control men and subvert the social order’ (Livingston, 2001:219).

The marriage between Petruchio and Maria starts off completely differently to his first marriage, as Maria knows what to expect: she has been warned by Byancha, or Bianca, of his violent and manipulative behaviour. However, her aim is not to divorce him, murder him, or end up without him in any way; ‘Maria’s rebellion is not a rejection of marriage, as she clearly desires consummation’ (O’Leary, 2017:79). With this she is not too dissimilar to Katherina, but she does not react as violently towards Petruchio as her predecessor. In *The Shrew*, there does not appear to be any direct logic or reason to Katherina’s behaviour: she appears to be a shrew, because that is just the way she is. Maria is a shrew for a purpose, to ‘control and act upon her own will rather than allow that will to be subsumed by her husband,’ going against the law of coverture (O’Leary, 2017:79). In line with Dolan’s earlier theory of comedy within marriage, perhaps contemporaries such as Herbert did not approve of the play, because Maria’s straining for equality falls outside farce and comedy: she is sincere and is actually reaching her goal. It seems more reminiscent of one of Taylor’s lectures where a mother lectures her daughter for not recognising the potential she has in moulding her rich yet stupid fiancé. If she plays the saint in public, she can play the devil in private: ‘Gossips will pitty you, and revile your husband’ (1639:79).

For I tell you daughter, if you can make such use of your tongue, as the most part of wise women doe now a days, you may awe the good man with his goods and family like and Empresse, and if you have never so many faults, they will never be seene or

thought of, if your tongue be sharpe, quicke, nimble, and can hold out untired. (Taylor, 1639:76-77)

As Maria's mother does not appear in the play, her confidante is Byancha, her cousin. Remembering the treatment Katherina suffered, Byancha warns: 'Believe me, since his first wife set him going, | Nothing can bind his rage' (*Tamer Tamed*: 1.2.189-190). Her advice, therefore, is to tame Petruchio before he can tame her, in order to gain a more equal footing within the marriage. Gordon McMullan attributes this to 'the need for companionate marriage — the model for intimate male/female relations that Protestantism had begun by this time to develop' (2003:xvii; *c.f.* Berg, 2018:418-419). As shall be discussed in a following chapter, the ideal of companionate marriage gained traction after the changes from Catholicism to Protestantism. The image of a virginal and chaste nun received praise within the Catholic faith, whereas after the Protestant Reformation, the preference changed to chaste and virginal behaviour in a married woman. As Mendelson and Crawford deduce: 'Given the nature of women's bodies, how could nuns possibly contain their sexual desires? Better to marry than to burn' (2003:66). This new emphasis on the importance of marriage therefore also called for a reform within the concept of marriage. As mentioned above, a marriage was often viewed as analogous to the relationship between a monarch and their state: a tyrannical monarch is not accepted and exploits their authority. Instead, a respectful, obedient, and "companionate" relationship between the head of the household and his wife is expected and sought after. With the help of Byancha and her gossips, Maria strives for a companionate marriage, with an emphasis on more equal footing and treatment.

Comparing Katherina to Maria, we notice the difference allies can make. Where Katherina moves from one phase into another — virgin to wife — Maria manages to suspend her subjugation as she 'remakes herself and harnesses this self-making to form a female cohort' (O'Leary, 2017:79). *The Tamer Tamed* shows the perks of creating a female alliance, rather

than a marital alliance; where Katherina failed, Maria and Byancha succeed. Part of Katherina's failure can be attributed to her abuse of her sister in *The Shrew*, whereas Maria only treats Byancha as a friend and equal. 'Maria rewrites the standard expectations of matrimonial alliance, pledging faith to her female community rather than to her husband first...challeng[ing] the status quo of male domestic authority' (O'Leary, 2017:81; c.f. Mendelson & Crawford, 2003:254). The importance of establishing a strong female community has already become apparent in the earlier mention of Heywood's abused wife and her group of gossips; it is also a driving factor between Katherina's difficult situation and lack of support against Petruccio. Gossips in the early modern period, often tended to be the witnesses to abuse within marriages in their social circle: their status as a group gave them 'a measure of power as arbiters of behavior' (Brown, 2003:39). The term "gossip" implies that they were only capable of voicing their concerns, however: '[t]hrough beatings, ambushes and skimmingtons, they could sometimes enact revenge on behalf of a friend of their group or older women stepping in on behalf of younger victims' (Brown, 2003:119-121). Despite this behaviour, they should not be interpreted as a group of vigilantes wreaking revenge and havoc on transgressors: Bernard Capp notes the importance of their authority as '[c]oncerns voiced by many women over an extended period were more likely to trigger action' (2017:24). Their function as 'a localized system of justice, righting domestic dysfunction for those women who met their criteria as virtuous women deserving of assistance' also alludes to Katherina's lack of support, compared to Maria's: she is not virtuous nor part of a female community, and is therefore undeserving of help (Inbody, 2017:51). Overall, their purpose was to provide 'practical and emotional support that helped them cope with the challenges of everyday life in a world that remained always deeply insecure,' an insecurity of powerful women that led to an 'intensification of negative stereotypes about excesses such as idle talk and drinking' (Capp,2017:29; Inbody, 2017:51). Within entertainment and literature, these negative

connotations tend to be emphasised and ridiculed, however they also served as a reflection of contemporary ‘revolts that occurred and were occurring in Renaissance England’ (Easo Smith, 1995:43).

The ‘political action’ taken by Maria and her gossips against Petruchio and the other men is based on what Byancha calls ‘All the several wrongs | Done by Imperious husbands to their wives | These thousand years and upwards’ (O’Leary, 2017:69; *Tamer Tamed*:1.2.269-271). The idea that men have mistreated women accords with the *querelle des femmes*: ‘Fletcher in his fiction chronicles the women and their success in reorganizing the world along feminine lines. He has entered the *querelle des femmes*’ (Bergeron, 1996:150). Maria adheres to the debate’s examples, as she sets forth her will with words and debates: not on ‘physical coercion’ (Johnson, 2011:317). She moves beyond traditional shrewish behaviour, thereby setting herself apart from Katherina, and startles the men surrounding her with her agency and intelligence (Crocker, 2011:411). Comparing themselves to ‘a race of noble Amazons’ (*Tamer Tamed*:2.2.953), introduces classical connotations of proto-feminism, and further establishes their political and social importance within the debate. They see themselves as setting an example for women of future generations, and take the advice of many contemporary authors to barricade their fortresses quite literally. They also manage to bind together the differences between rural and urban settings: ‘[i]n Maria and her army of city wives and country wives, Fletcher depicts an alternate social and political reality: a female community mobilizing to defend that communal interest which joined it together — the ideals of companionate marriage’ (O’Leary, 2017:77). They do not rebel against marriage or the consummation of it, they merely want an equal footing in their contract, an opportunity to live as an individually respected person. Thus, it can be concluded that they disagree with figures such as Griselda and Katherina, as they either took defeat too easily — as sheep — or they simply did not handle their husbands well enough, choosing physical and aggressive threats, instead of intelligent

taming; arguably humanist. Maria does not take ‘a scurvy course’ (*Tamer Tamed*:1.2.292-295). She stands firm on her principles, and differing from Katherina, she actually lays them out for Petruchio: she makes demands based on the idea of a companionate marriage, and he has no choice but to accept them if he wishes to enjoy his marriage, or her.

I’ll make you know, and fear a wife *Petruchio*, | There my cause lies. | You have been famous for a woman tamer, | And bear the feared name of a brave wife-breaker: | A woman now shall take those honors off, | And tame you; nay, never look so big, she shall believe me, | And *I* am she: what think ye... (*Tamer Tamed*:1.3.686-692)

Her eloquence can be likened to Katherina’s final speech, in that ‘social advancement of triumph over one’s adversaries through the skilled exercise of rhetoric is not the prerogative of men solely...rhetorical skill could result from natural eloquence as much as from formal training’ (Johnson, 2011:319). Petruchio is now in need of this training, as he has become an unchangeable shrewish man; he still threatens the same taming methods, and now seems to completely prefer violence over rhetoric (1.3.673-676). Holly Crocker’s following statement in line with this, however, seems controversial regarding the earlier information on marriage in early modern England: ‘[b]y presenting the tamer as *shrewd*, Fletcher recognizes women’s rational capacity as a powerful check against the domestic tyranny authorized by early modern marriage’ (2011:422). Given the multiple primary sources presented above on abuse and treatment within marriage, it does not seem plausible to say that ‘domestic tyranny’ was ‘authorized:’ it was mainly advised against and only excused in severe cases of disobedience. One final point linking *The Tamer Tamed* to *Morel*’s ballad, is the coffin scene: Petruchio has willingly locked himself into a coffin in a last attempt to tame Maria. She, however, sees through his trick and following her humanist eloquence he shows remorse for his actions. The scene is reminiscent of the shrewd wife being wrapped up in *Morel*’s hide, and only coming out once she has been tamed and acknowledges her husband’s superiority. While Petruchio

does not recognise his wife's superiority, he does allow for a companionate marriage and comes emerges from the coffin "tamed." The "taming" of Petruchio remains dubious, however, due to the implied failed taming of Katherina and the subsequent impression that coercion and control cannot successfully change a personality.

Whether Maria is a true amazon and proto-feminist, remains disputed as she gives up her hard-earned agency at the end of the play: 'when Petruchio relents, so does Maria. *Against the advice of her commanders, the city- and the country-wife*, Maria accepts Petruchio's promise to fulfil her demands without further pledge' (Crocker, 2011:414). The italics being my own, they emphasise how disappointing her non-victory is. It may be a victory for her in the terms of having achieved a companionate marriage, but Byancha's view of living like 'a race of noble Amazons,' and where they'll 'root ourselves and to our endless glory | Live, and despise base men' (*Tamer Tamed*:2.2.953, 954-955).

Bianca, or Byancha, has been briefly introduced as the possible true shrewish sister of Katherina, as she manages to enter a marriage on her own terms. In *The Tamer Tamed*, however, the absence of her husband, Lucentio, is of interest: has Byancha become a widow, or is her husband still alive? Widows were seen as natural shrews: one taste of freedom and the means to be independent went to their heads. As Swetnam and others believed, although perhaps expressed slightly less hyperbolically, 'they are the summe of the seauen deadly sinnes, the Fiends of Sathan, & the gates of Hell' (1615:63-64). If Lucentio is indeed deceased, her active participation in rebellion shows her intelligence in navigating a misogynistic world: act sweet and manipulate when married, but gain independence when obedience is no longer required at the death of a husband. However, Margaret Maurer has noticed that Lucentio is most likely still alive, but his appearance, or lack thereof, does not seem to be important enough for her role (2001:200; *Tamer Tamed*:4.1.2260-2261). It is critically important that Byancha does not need her husband as a supporting character: she is more emancipated than either Maria

or Katherina as she never gives in to her husband. Her matriarchal and misandrist speeches seem highly controversial, but also reveal the extent to which Fletcher must have been comfortable in portraying female agency. Maria's fault is openly rebelling against her husband, but she does so under the guise of achieving a perfect model of Protestant marriage. Byancha does not even need her husband, she incites other women to rebel, and she is not accepting of anything less than complete rebellion. Possibly left unchecked by her husband, her manifesto is the supplanting of men, and independence of women. Livia's development in *The Tamer Tamed*, seems to echo Bianca's in *The Shrew*, as she merely wishes to marry the man she likes. Through tricking her father and suitors much like Bianca did, it does not seem farfetched to argue that she might take on Byancha's role following the events in *The Tamer Tamed*. Her marriage and her future status as either Byancha or Maria, depends on Rowland's development into either Lucentio or Petruccio/Petruchio.

Before addressing the sexual abuse and rape found in early modern drama, the same should be brought forward in the taming plays (c.f. Foyster, 2005:36). In *The Shrew*, Petruccio manipulates Katherina sexually, next to his other abuse. The sexual connotations underlying one of his following statements is undeniable: 'Tell me her father's name and 'tis enough, | For I will board her, though she chide as loud | As thunder when the clouds in autumn crack' (*The Shrew*:1.2.92-94). The allusion to rape is clear and becomes even more apparent as Grumio references possible past taming processes his master has undertaken:

O'my word, an she knew him as well as I do, she would think scolding would do little good upon him... Why, that's nothing; an he begin once, he'll rail in his rope tricks. I'll tell you what, sir, an she stand him but a little, he will throw a figure in her face and so disfigure her with it that she shall have no more eyes to see withal than a cat. (*The Shrew*:1.2.106-112)

According to the footnotes in the Norton edition of the play, the “rope tricks” ‘may refer to rhetorical or sexual feats,’ providing clear evidence of the intent to abuse and harm Katherina (Greenblatt, 2016:370). He further boasts: ‘Oh pardon me, Signor Gremio; I would fain be doing’ (*The Shrew*:2.1.74-75). In their bedroom further on, Hutecheon claims he may not take sexual advantage of her, but ‘his very presence in her bedchamber is threatening’ (2011:329). However, it cannot be argued that his refraining from raping her, ‘is an action from a many-faceted, sensitive character’ (Pearson, 1990:234). No matter the contemporary importance of consummation, his manipulative behaviour is indicative of his ‘killing with kindness’ method. In *The Tamer Tamed*, he places excessive importance on bedding Maria, as does Sophocles: ‘It may be then, | Her modesty required a little violence? | Some women love to struggle’ (*Tamer Tamed*:3.3.1659-1661). Similarly, Rowland focuses on Livia’s sexuality as he questions Tranio, ‘And shall I enjoy her?’ (*Tamer Tamed*:5.3.3270), a dark question reiterated in rape and sexual abuse representations in early modern English entertainment and discourse.

Chapter Three: From Rope Tricks to Rape

There were infynyte in nombre | that had leauer be killed | heded | strāgled | drowned |
or haue theyr throtis cutte | than lose their chastite, whiche whā they wold nat ste them
selfe | yet they sought crafte to come by their deth | whā they were in ieoperdye of their
chastite... (Vives, 1529:81)

The prevalence of rape and sexual assault in Elizabethan and Jacobean entertainment is confrontational and disturbing; furthermore, the majority of these tend to end in murder, suicide, marriage. This theme, recognised by Baines, also leads to the coining of a new term: “chastity-suicide:” based on the idea that chastity remains a woman’s sole and most important virtue, to be guarded or redeemed by her life. This chapter explores the rapes, and attempted rapes, paired with the subsequent deaths and ambiguous “happy endings” of those who escaped into marriage, within several works of Shakespeare: *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594), *Titus Andronicus* (c.1588-1593), *Measure for Measure* (c.1603-1604), and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (c.1589-1593). Placing these in the context of contemporary conduct books and pamphlets, as well as a woman’s legal rights concerning rape, provides an overview of the acceptance or condemnation of rape by the early modern community.

Before proceeding with an evaluation of literary opinions and representations, a historical context should be provided. As two of the plays in this chapter take place in Roman settings, the history of that culture proves to be important for subsequent periods, including the early modern period. The conception of Romulus and Remus, the founders of Rome, was the rape of their mother Rhea Silvia by Mars, the Roman god of war. As a vestal virgin, her rape desecrated her purity and chastity. Consequently, she ‘was buried alive by Amulius for violating the laws of Vesta’ (Lemprière & Wright, 1963:295). The punishment of the woman

for an act she is not responsible for, can be tracked throughout the following plays, both in Roman and early modern English settings.

Within Christian hagiography, there is a further dependence on rape and its consequences regarding female martyrs: 'the Church enshrined the sexually threatened woman as supremely heroic' (Bamford, 2000:25). Karen Bamford attributes this religious phenomenon as significantly influential upon sexual violence in Jacobean drama. A marked transformation, however, is the status of the female victim: her marriage status, to be precise. The rape victims in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama tend to be 'married or more or less formally betrothed; this suggests greater interest in the idea of marital fidelity than in virginal chastity,' which is exactly what can be seen in ideas of marriage after the Reformation (Catty, 1999:95). Furthermore, Jocelyn Catty suggests a reoccurrence of the rapist being in a 'socially powerful position in relation to the victim,' suggesting an abuse of power and authority: a subject discussed in the case of abuse within marriage. Moreover, publishing stories and plays with a king of leader abusing his authority, brings forward anxieties surrounding tyranny, hierarchical abuses and rising tensions.

Despite a rich history of rape within literature and significant historical events, Garthine Walker claims that 'the social history of rape in early modern England could be described as a non-history, a history of absence' (1998:1). Interpreting this, it could mean that while there is a history of rape, there is a lack of history regarding the acknowledgement of rape and its effects on the victims. Walker further states the 'limitations of early modern criminal court records as sources' as proof of a limited history (1998:1): however, there was also a limited number of victims that ended up taking their case to court. Apart from the natural humiliation and mental distress that accompanies surviving sexual assault, a woman was subjected to doubt and scrutiny by those she looked to for help. Her case would be stronger, if she immediately notified other men of the rape as soon as it had happened, with the physical proof of torn clothes and

blood (Baines, 2003:68). Part of the legal procedure was an examination of the female body, for if she claimed she had been a virgin beforehand there would have been: 'a physical examination by four worthy matrons to affirm her defloration. Such physical "evidence" was...more trustworthy than her word' (Baines, 2003:9). If they 'complain[ed] publicly of rape, women frequently were legally charged with defamation of character by the alleged rapist (Baines, 2003:63). Therefore, Walker's earlier statement of a lack of rape in records 'may have been due in part to the difficulty of proving rape, in part to the reluctance of (male) juries to take the life of the accused' (Bamford, 2000:5). Within entertainment, Catty notices 'four types of symbolic or figurative rape:'

One occurs when rape is not mentioned but details suggest that it may lie behind the story...Second, in scenes which deploy the idea that rape is physically impossible, the attacker may make a sexually nuanced threat...The third...deploys the formulaic nature of the genre to set up the expectation of rape where none in fact occurs, or is even threatened...In the final category, an erotic substitute for rape occurs at the point demanded by the structure of the scene. (1999:37-38)

What, then, was the purpose of portraying these different types of rape within a setting of enjoyment? Donatella Pallotti argues, it may have served to 'deter the audience from felonious activity; they also served the authorities as a means to direct control over public opinion concerning criminal matters' (2013:229). It should not be interpreted, however, that rape within entertainment was merely intended as a moral warning: commercially, rape was a successful theme, enticing the audience with sensationalism, pain, strife, sin, punishment, morality, conflict, and empathy. Nevertheless, this applies to fictional accounts of rape, as Capern points out that although '[i]n legal terms, rape was a heinous crime...rape rarely got into print' (2008:131). The representation of rape also differed between Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, as Catty notices an increase in rape within Jacobean drama: 'sexual violence as spectacle

becomes extreme; yet, paradoxically, the actual moment of rape necessarily takes place off-stage (1999:23-24). Additionally, due to an emphasis on ‘rape as a normative male action’ within literature, as well as its links to romance, it was not always necessarily seen as something bad, just a display of excessive male emotion and desire (Catty, 1999:28). Bamford agrees with this and coins the term “natural” in relation to rape and male desire, as it was interpreted in Jacobean England (2000:6). The *laissez-faire* attitude towards rape can also be explained by the painstakingly destructive obsession on the chastity and guilt of the female victim: ‘Elizabethan rape fiction manipulates the implication that a rape victim could not have been virtuous enough, and uses rape to enforce chaste conduct in the posited woman reader’ (Catty, 1999:31). These themes of chastity, guilt, reason, the woman as property, and the introduction of a theory regarding the patriarchy’s creation of a “self-cleaning system,” shall be considered and analysed alongside the aforementioned sources.

Unimitable, Virtuous, and Betrayed

‘She bears the load of lust he left behind, | And he the burden of a guilty mind.’
(*Lucrece*:734-735)

The story of Lucrece’s rape is one that has permeated Western literature as a tale of exceptional virtue shown by the victim, and unforgiveable abuse of authority enacted by the rapist/villain. Its prevalence in early modern Post-Reformation literature, can be explained through Bamford, as she claims that replacing the hagiographic virgin martyrs with Roman matrons removed any ‘taint of Roman Catholic “superstition”’ (2000:63). It furthermore provided the Protestant audience or reader with a chaste wife, rather than a chaste virgin, which, as

mentioned before, became the preferred ideal of the perfect woman. Lucrece, or Lucretia, conforms to that Protestant ideal: she is virtuous, innocent, beautiful, chaste, and the perfect wife and companion to her husband; anticipating his feelings and needs with every action or reaction. The question remains, why would an early modern audience or reader want to see an ideal woman raped and humiliated? Catty suggests that rape was sometimes represented as a test of ‘man’s corruption or potential for reform, or the woman’s chastity’ (1999:94). In this case, *The Rape of Lucrece* touches on both points, however, the emphasis lies on Lucrece. Critically, Sara Quay sees the development of the rape, and her status as victim, as: ‘Lucrece is able to be raped because she *is a woman*, but because she is constructed as a woman who is *able to be raped*’ (1995:4). This suggests that there is a sense of ease and inevitability surrounding the rape; that she was doomed to be raped because of her innocence, her purity, and her irresistibility to Tarquin. However, Katharine Eisaman Maus believes that the rape is the product of ‘the consequence of a decision, not an accident of fate, and nothing seems inevitable’ (2016b:696).

The first decision, or catalyst, of the rape, is Collatine’s decision to boast of his wife’s virtues in front of Tarquin, and thus ‘Borne by the trustless wings of false desire, | Lust-breathèd Tarquin’ (*Lucrece*:2-3) makes his way towards Collatine’s house. The narrator seems to initially blame Collatine, as his descriptions have driven Tarquin to lust and jealousy (*Lucrece*:15-43). The first appearance of Lucrece only enflames his desire; intriguingly she is described only through beauty and virtue, nothing else. Of course, Tarquin comes under the guise of friendship, as Pallotti states: ‘in most cases, the man charged with rape is known to the victim and part of the same cultural and social environment’ (2013:227). The fact that he is a prince, of high authority, makes the deceit increasingly problematic, his status does not allow for suspicions of mistrust and abuse: ‘Hiding base sin in pleats of majesty’ (*Lucrece*:93). Hidden intentions and pure innocence and trust are slowly leading to Lucrece’s downfall, as

the narrator reveals she would not have noticed Tarquin's lust, even if he had displayed it more openly (*Lucrece*:104-105). After the characters have retired, the reader starts to gain an insight into Tarquin's inner struggle: whether he should or should not rape Lucrece.

As one of which doth Tarquin lie revolving | The sundry dangers of his will's obtaining;
| Yet ever to obtain his will resolving |...| Pawning his honor to obtain his lust, | And
for himself himself her must forsake. |...| Is madly tossed between desire and dread: |
Th'one sweetly flatters, th'other feareth harm; | But honest fear, bewitched with lust's
foul charm... (*Lucrece*:127-129, 156-157, 171-173)

The emphasis on Tarquin's conflict, and its opposing sides, can be explained through the 'common Renaissance belief...that all things are balanced against their opposites which are held in check, and the corollary, that corruption and death are waiting to overbalance virtue and life' (Bromley, 1983:201-202). In this case, corruption and virtue are not just battling between Tarquin and Lucrece, but also within the characters' own thoughts: Tarquin on whether or not he should proceed, Lucrece on whether she should commit suicide, or continue living.

On a side note, as mentioned earlier, there are clear links between witchcraft and shrews, as seen in the taming plays and *Macbeth*. There is an opportunity here to add a further link to this theme, as in the quotation above, desire and lust are clearly connected to witchcraft: 'bewitched with lust's foul charm' (*Lucrece*:173). Furthermore, the descriptive 'No noise but owls' and wolves' death-boding cries' (*Lucrece*:165), is reminiscent of 'It was the owl that shrieked, the fatal bellman | Which gives the stern'st good-night' (*Macbeth*:2.2.3-4). It appears that certain themes regarding sound, animals, and female transgression are intrinsically linked to domestic abuse, murder, and rape throughout these plays.

Nature's foreboding presence in both *Macbeth* and *Lucrece* signals the evil nature of the following action: Tarquin's rape and Macbeth's murder. Although Tarquin's inner conflict

spans from lines 127 to 672, it is obvious that his mind is already made up: ‘As from this old flint I enforced this fire, | So Lucrece must I force to my desire’ (*Lucrece*:181-182). Despite the narrator’s emphasis on nature’s, as well as the house’s desperate attempts to stop him, or perhaps because of this emphasis, the reader gets the impression that there is no ambiguity left regarding Tarquin’s decision. The “rating” doors, the shrieking ‘night-wand’ring weasels,’ the ‘unwilling portal,’ the wind attacking his torch, the pricking needle; none of the warnings stop him as his mind dismisses it as ‘accidental things of trial’ (*Lucrece*:304, 307, 309, 311, 319, 326). Upon further analysis, it also becomes clear that his intrusion of Lucrece’s private space, her home and the property of her husband, is likened to rape in the language the narrator uses: ‘by him enforced,’ ‘yields him way,’ the panicked reaction of the animals, and defensive household objects (*Lucrece*:303, 309, 307, 320-322).

Property and rape cannot be seen as separate in early modern perceptions of rape. A woman’s rape case was dealt with according to how important her value as property was. Even the definition of rape should not be interpreted as it is in the twenty-first century: ‘today, the word ‘rape’ denotes the violent sexual appropriation of a woman against her will,’ however, ‘it derives from the Latin *raptus*, meaning theft, and was originally used for the abduction of a man’s wife or daughter, regardless of whether the sexual act took place, and regardless of her volition’ (Catty, 1999:1-2; *c.f.* Rudolph, 2000:174). Adding to this statement, it should be mentioned that over the course of the past few decades, especially in the twenty-first century, the importance of recognising sexual assault in other genders, not just female, has taken place: rape can therefore no longer be identified as ‘the violent sexual appropriation of a *woman*.’ Returning to the early modern conception of property, if a rape was only as important as the value of the woman, it explains how ‘prosecutions and convictions almost always pertained to cases involving the virginity of young girls’ (Baines, 1998:70). If the victim, like Lucrece, was married, ‘the exclusive possession of the married woman’s body by her husband defines the

chastity and thus the value of the married woman' (Baines, 2003:60). Therefore, Tarquin intruding Collatine's home, and his wife, points to a rape or theft of two properties. He sees his act of rape as an assault of Collatine, not Lucrece. Because he has no reason for the rape, 'The shame and fault finds no excuse nor end' (*Lucrece*:238). This suggests that rape tends to be political, or as an attack upon another man: the woman is just a means to an end. Supported by other critics, Baines thus concludes that 'both the public or state issues and the private, domestic issues surrounding rape are political' (2003:160; *c.f.* Bamford, 2000:7, 155-156; Catty, 1999:10).

As he comes into Lucrece's room, her body is indeed described as an object, or as made up of different objects: 'virtuous monument,' 'Her hair like golden threads,' 'Her breasts like ivory globes circled with blue, | A pair of maiden worlds unconquered [...] These worlds in Tarquin new ambition bred, | Who like a foul usurper went about | From this fair throne to heave the owner out' (*Lucrece*:391, 400, 407-413). Portrayed as an empty husk, or building, possessed by men and subject to conquering intruders, Lucrece loses any individuality and becomes an object of possession and lust, to be discarded once used. In an odd way, it seems like Tarquin expects Lucrece to simply allow him to sleep with her: as though it is his right to "enjoy" her; as she starts to wake up, her loudly beating breast 'moves him in more rage and lesser pity, | To make the breach and enter this sweet city' (*Lucrece*: 468-469). Once she finally recovers the ability to speak, she does not react violently, but questions his intentions and reasons. As matter-of-factly as Petruccio summarising his taming method, Tarquin blames his lust on her: 'The fault is thine, | For those thine eyes betray thee unto mine' (*Lucrece*:482-483). It is her beauty which has led to him stealing into her bedroom: arguably it is actually Collatine's boasting and Tarquin's selfish, entitled desire that are at fault, not Lucrece's beauty (*Lucrece*:484-490). Referring back to the earlier point of natural excessive male desire, Tarquin shifts his blame to his victim: '[j]ust as female beauty may be blamed for rape, assertions that

beauty and virtue are their own protection also give women the responsibility for rape' (Catty, 1999:33).

What follows is Lucrece's repeated, but ultimately useless, pleading for her virtue, his honour, and her husband's property. Not focusing on her feelings, Lucrece adheres to early modern, and Roman, patriarchal values in order to convince him. Although it does not work, her subsequential self-blame after the deed is made puzzling to an even greater extent. Upon her repeated rejection, Tarquin threatens her with a Susanna-like fate: he shall place a slave next to her and pretend he happened upon an adulterous affair. Lucrece's fate is not intervened by God, and she must accept either bodily or spiritual defilement. Separating her from Catholic virginal martyrs, Lucrece thus portrays the acceptable matron-like example of virtue who must live with her ordeal. Similar to the portal yielding to his earlier appearance, she must now yield to "coerced consent" (Baines, 1998:87). Baines indicates that Lucrece sees that she 'could only do greater harm to her reputation and to Collatine's honor by resisting' (1998:87). Given the provided textual evidence, Joseph Swetnam's advice on how to prevent rape is therefore a weak suggestion:

...it behooueth euery woman to behaue her selfe so sober and chaste in countenance and speech, that no man may bee so bod as to assayle her:...therefore if a woman by chance bee set vpon, let her make this answere, When I was a maid, I was at the disposition of my parents, but now I am married, I am at the pleasure of my husband, therefore you best speake to him, and to know his mind what I shall doe; & if her husband be out of the way, let her always behaue herselfe as if he were present. (1615:55)

Lucrece in no way transgressed her obedience to her husband, nor did she challenge Tarquin's authority or lead him to imagine she might want to commit adultery. His intention was there before he saw her, and as such she is blameless. There appears to be a lack of understanding

surrounding rape in the majority of early modern conduct books and pamphlets, including, as Baines argues, *The Lavves Resolutions* (1632): which ‘reveals not only an amazing combination of indifference and confusion concerning the woman’s experience of rape, but also the fact that the very meaning of rape eludes its author’ (1998:77). The anonymous author states an ironic point, possibly influenced by the low number of rape cases that made it to the courts: ‘[t]hat if the rampier of Lawes were not betwixt women and their harmes, I verily thinke none of them, being aboue twelue years of age, and vnder an hundred, being either faire or rich, should be able to escape rauishing’ (1632:5.XX). There is an acknowledgement, whether intended or not, that it is not up to the woman, but to the man on whether a rape occurs or not. The clincher is the law, which should deter men from rape with the threat of punishment. Following Lucrece’s coerced consent, there may be some ambiguity regarding her status as victim or consenting adulterer. According to the guidelines on how to appeal for justice, the author summarises that ‘if a Feme couert be rauished, shee cannot haue an Appeale without her husband... But if a Feme couert be rauished, and consent to the rauisher, the husband alone may haue an Appeale’ (*Lavves Resolutions*, 1632:5.XXIX). Furthermore, the importance of property rights is mentioned, as the husband ‘must be a lawfull husband in right and possession’ in order to appeal for reparations regarding his lost property (*Lavves Resolutions*, 1632:5.XXIX). A *feme sole*, widow, or otherwise unmarried woman could appeal on her own, but Lucrece, in early modern understanding, would have needed her husband on her side.

This is the reason for her sending word to Collatine. As mentioned before, doubt and mistrust often accompanied accusations of rape: if she wrote down what happened to her, he may not have believed her. Instead, she knows if she can show him what happened, through her distress and the mental and physical pain she has suffered, he would be less likely to doubt her. It should also be noted that her display at the end of the poem is for the purpose of both her husband and the reader. An additional layer to the possible doubting of her innocence, is

the perception of Tarquin. As he steals away in the night, he seems to believe he will be absolved:

And then with lank and lean discolored cheek, | With heavy eye, knit brow, and
strengthless pace, | Feeble desire all recreant, poor, and meek, | Like to a bankrupt
beggar wails his case. | The flesh being proud, desire doth fight with grace, | For there
it revels, and when that decays, | The guilty rebel for remission prays. (*Lucrece*:707-
714)

If Tarquin begins to show remorse for his actions, regardless of how ruined Lucrece is, an early modern audience — as well as possibly her husband — could have altered the perception of the rapist: ‘[o]n the scaffold, the distinction between the exceptional monster and the ordinary man could dissolve as easily as flowed tears of repentance and sorrow’ (Walker, 2013:23). Lucrece must be cautious with her image, as Shakespeare at no point completely villainises Tarquin: throughout the poem, or the moments leading up to the rape, Tarquin is represented as a person consumed by conflict and desire. Thus, he was influenced by lust, not rationality, and cannot be held accountable. The negative image the reader perceives of Tarquin is through the eyes of Lucrece: there is an abundance of emotion and a sense of injustice following the rape, which is only possible through her reaction to it.

The time between the rape and his arrival, is fraught with her inner conflict, her anger, and her despair. As Laura Bromley recognises: ‘Tarquin has no further role in the poem once Lucrece takes up the struggle against herself...the most important contrast in the poem is not between the lustful Tarquin and the chaste Lucrece, but between the chaste Lucrece and the unchaste Lucrece’ (1983:203). This internal struggle signifies Jacobean views of ‘the *truly* chaste woman:’ as ‘her chastity increases with her suffering’ (Bamford, 2000:32). Chastity is not just her status as a chaste wife, it is the value of her life and as being her husband’s valuable property. ‘But she hath lost a dearer thing than life’ (*Lucrece*:687); this line is in accordance

with contemporary opinions on female chastity, and the importance set on this aspect of a woman's life is reflected in the pamphlets and conduct books considered for this chapter. Vives harshly questions how a woman who has lost her chastity or virginity 'can eyther haue ioye of her lyfe / or lyue at all / and nat pyne a way for sorowe' (1529:36). He perceives that no woman, no matter the conditions surrounding the loss of her chastity, can continue living as she once did. She had been defiled, has become worthless and a reminder of an horrific act; not even Lucrece is exempt from this, '[a]nd yet had she a chast mynde in a corrupt body' (1529:39). She proves her spotless chaste mind as she reveals what happened to her husband, her father, and their followers. Her distraught display is yet still controlled by her request for revenge: she has a goal in mind, and her rape shall not go unavenged. Lucrece understands that there is no positive outcome for her in this matter: her fate has been taken out of her hands and she is not in control of her existence. However, she has taken away Tarquin's authority by killing herself, and not dying at his hands; a necessary step for her to undertake as 'this forced stain' (*Lucrece*:1701) cannot be removed. Thus, she takes control of the only thing she can: how she dies, her final image, and Tarquin's fate. She stabs herself in the heart, the same that beat so loudly as to anger and spur on Tarquin, and leaves the men around her standing shell-shocked. Her blood is described as 'purple,' alluding to her nobility and chastity, however, it does not come away unstained: 'Some of her blood still pure and red remained, | And some looked black, and that false Tarquin stained' (*Lucrece*:1742-1743). The black blood can be interpreted as Tarquin's semen, as Elizabethan and Jacobean medical opinions dictated that the heated semen transformed back into blood once it entered the woman, cooling down and, in this case, turning black (Crawford, 1997:66). John Crawford further argues that the 'mixing affects the woman's blood quality, either ennobling or debasing her' (1997:66). Since only half of the blood that flows from her is black, it can be argued that Lucrece was in the process of becoming completely debased, with her suicide halting the process and preserving her virtuous image.

Ultimately, Lucrece takes control of her own legacy: '[she] is not a passive, wronged woman, then, but a powerful person who resists evil with an act that leads to the supplanting of a long line of tyrannous kings and the establishment of representative government in Rome' (Bromley, 1983:210). Nevertheless, despite her final act of absolution, the aforementioned ambiguity revolving her innocence remained, as her act of suicide was questioned as the concealment of a possible pregnancy. According to early modern medical belief, 'conception means consent,' as a woman's orgasm, and pleasure, was conducive to pregnancy (Baines, 1998:88). Even so, '[w]hat besides a general misogyny would be the impetus behind the arguments against Lucrece's perfect chastity and innocence' (Baines, 2003:96)? Lucrece as the ideal of chastity and innocence is reflected in a significant amount of early modern literature, however, often still closely related to Collatine's possession of her: '*Collatine* might boast of unimitable *Lucrece*,' and how 'she presently slew her selfe in the presence of many, rather then shee would offer her body againe to her husband being but one time defiled' (Heywood, 1637:17; Swetnam, 1615:48).

The self-cleaning system mentioned above is the result of the impression of injustice despite her lasting legacy as a virtuous woman. This idea permeates other representations of rape throughout early modern literature, and the idea arises that rape was simply not taken seriously enough by men. The woman either becomes victimised or is blamed for having secretly consented. Baines argues that '[t]he violated woman...must go, for should she survive she would become the evidence of disorder and moral corruption' (2003:5). The patriarchal indoctrination of sin and innocence instils women with a sense of shame and guilt, despite their lack of control over the situation. Either she is shunned and censured, she is murdered as a by-product of the rape, she marries the rapist, or she kills herself. In any case, the problem is gone and there is no further need for involvement and justice. The line between adultery and rape is thin in the early modern period, and Baines argues this has remained in the twenty-first century

(2003:19, 21). Bamford succinctly explains how a modern critic can evaluate a representation of rape in early modern literature:

...a woman's chastity is at once an immaterial virtue and a material possession; it is simultaneously a moral code of vigilant self-discipline and a commodity that may be stolen from her in spite of her best efforts; it is both a mode of conduct...and a physical state...The heroine who loses her chastity in the second sense...is perceived as unchaste in the first sense; that is, deficient in virtue, no matter how she has behaved. (2000:10)

What follows is a short view into further representations of rape in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, comparing and evaluating these alongside *Lucrece* and the points discussed so far.

Mutilation, Marriage, and Muting

‘CLAUDIO Death is a fearful thing. | ISABELLA And shamèd life a hateful.’
(*Measure*:3.1.116-117)

Above, the different types of symbolic rape as argued by Catty were discussed; *Lucrece*'s rape is not symbolic at all, her rape is narrated, although briefly, and the reader knows exactly what happened. *Titus Andronicus*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, do not portray the actual rape quite as explicitly. Although the audience certainly gets a violent impression of the rape from *Titus*, it is not shown. The other plays “merely” threaten the rape, and while there is an effect on the plot, it does not confront the audience as much as the former poem and play.

When discussing *Titus Andronicus* alongside *The Rape of Lucrece*, the need for physical evidence of rape becomes apparent: ‘[a]s the legal compendia prescribed, in order to

be deemed credible, a woman had to provide evidence both in words and action for the violence inflicted upon her' (Pallotti, 2013:221). Lavinia's evidence of her rape is unmistakable: she has been mutilated to the point of excess which, to Eisaman Maus, 'condenses a long history of sporadic violence against women into a single, intensely imagined brutalization' (2016c:493). Although not as intense as the rape, Lavinia experiences abuse throughout the play: abuse at the hands of the patriarchal hierarchy around her. She is first deemed as property by her father, who goes into a murderous rage once he realises his property is being stolen by Bassianus (*Titus*:1.1.293-294). As mentioned with regard to the taming plays, as well as *Lucrece*, the status of women was based on property value, and 'women were vulnerable to bad treatment from members of their family because the law treated them firstly as the property of their fathers' (Capern, 2008:98). Bassianus' later denial of "rape" indicates that the transfer of property has been completed: the contract of which was implicitly agreed upon at the engagement. 'Rape call you it, my lord, to seize my own, | My true betrothed love and now my wife? [...] Meanwhile am I possessed of that is mine' (*Titus*:1.1.407-410). Rape here should not be explicitly interpreted as sexual assault and carnal knowledge, but rather the abduction and theft of someone else's property.

Lavinia's choice to marry Bassianus, instead of Saturninus, shows an autonomy similar to Bianca's in marrying Lucentio. The difference being, that Bianca ends up as a portrayal of the possible "true shrew," whereas Lavinia is mutilated and murdered. In terms of female agency, *Titus Andronicus* is sorely lacking, as Tamora's personality only really acts as an opposite to Lavinia; opposing characters within plays, in the sense of virtuous versus sinful, helped to emphasise the virtue and chastity of the "better" woman. Just like John Marston's Erictho to Sophonisba in his *The Wonder of Women; or, The Tragedy of Sophonisba* (1606), Tamora is a powerful, yet destructive and immoral woman. Her choice to let her sons rape Lavinia, reflects an absolute disregard for Lavinia's chastity, life, and mental wellbeing.

Critically, Tamora does not survive the play like Erictho: she is killed and the play ends on patriarchal restoration. The threateningly powerful, sexual and manipulative female foreign queen to Saturninus introduces new fire to the flame of male anxiety. Therefore, it could be argued that despite the topic of abuse directed at women, rape, and women's rights in a Roman patriarchy, echoed by the early modern society, the play remains a masculine-orientated plot.

In terms of the rape, it differs significantly from Lucrece's experience, as Lavinia is dragged away by her abusers. Initially, it is suggested that the sons of Lavinia, Demetrius and Chiron, may indeed love Lavinia: 'She is a woman, therefore may be wooed; | She is a woman, therefore may be won; | She is Lavinia, therefore must be loved' (*Titus*:2.1.83-85). Chiron especially seems emphatic of his love: 'I love Lavinia more than all the world' (*Titus*:2.1.72). It seems more likely, however, that with love, lust is implied and intended. Perhaps through emphasising the presence of desire and love behind the lecherous intentions of men, lessens the condemnation and makes the perpetrator identifiable, or sympathetic. However, it is not just one man acting on his desires: it is a gang rape. Through her analyses of rape in early modern England, Walker has recognised that '[c]ircumstances where forced intercourse was not viewed as the expression of normal, if immoderate, masculine lust...might be manifest in violence (excessive brutality), the number of assailants (gang rape),..., or context (rapes enacted gratuitously during the committal of some other crime)' (2013:18). Aaron infers that the brothers do not need to fight over Lavinia since there is a "simple solution" to their dilemma:

Take this of me: Lucrece was not more chaste | Than this Lavinia, Bassianus' love. | A speedier course than lingering languishment | Must we pursue, and I have found the path. |...| The forest walks are wide and spacious, | And many unfrequented plots there are, | Fitted by kind for rape and villainy. (*Titus*:2.1.109-117)

Tamora is implicated, and Demetrius' final statement seals Lavinia's fate: '*Sit fas saut nefas,* till I find the stream | To cool this heat, a charm to calm these fits, | *Per Stygia, per manes vehor*' (*Titus*:2.1.134-136). He does not care whether it is 'right or wrong,' his desire and lust for Lavinia has become torturous, and he cannot be expected to stay in this state. It is an entitlement of enjoying and raping any woman, whether she be virtuous or not, that permeates the majority of rape plays. A hypocritical entitlement, as it is the men that place sexual restrictions, humility and guilt on their women. It does reflect on Tarquin as well, however, with the comparison of Lavinia to Lucrece. The aforementioned excessiveness displayed alongside unaccepted rape, escalates as the brothers kill Lavinia's new husband, as planned, right before her eyes after the latter two insulted Tamora. A point could be made that right in this moment, Lavinia becomes a widow. A widow of a man she was not supposed to marry. She is no longer a virtuous matron of Rome, or the protestant ideal of a chaste and "virginal" wife. Her new status as a widow, as unfavoured by her father or the king, places her importance incredibly low, apart from its reliance on her maiden family name. The context of another crime, the murder, the brutality of the following rape, and the gang rape all set Lavinia apart from Lucrece as a victim. The similarity is that despite the rapists' intent to 'obtain the woman's consent, Chiron and Demetrius never address Lavinia to this purpose' (Pallotti:2013:225). There is no excessive brutality in Lucrece's rape, the majority of her anguish stems from her mental conflict and inner torment. Lavinia's cannot be hidden. She becomes an emblem of rape, rather than of virtue: '[h]er rape and dismemberment simply figure what has already happened to her: absolute objectification' (Baines, 2003:161). She moves from being the property of her father, to the object of interest between Bassianus and Saturninus, to the sexual object of Chiron and Demetrius. This is arguably why the play is masculine and patriarchal in its plot, despite the "justice" enacted at the end. Lavinia does attempt to move away from her status as object, however, as she tries to explain what happened to her to her family: '[b]y

choosing *stuprum*, Lavinia rejects the implication of *raptus*, i.e. that she is personal property, and overcomes the ambiguity inherent in the English legal term “rape” (Pallotti, 2013:225).

Nevertheless, it appears to be impossible for her to move into autonomy, as her situation and fate are continuously interpreted and prescribed by the men in her life. Baines argues that Lavinia’s mutilation is erotically described by Marcus: ‘those sweet ornaments | Whose circling shadows kings have sought to sleep in,’ ‘Alas, a crimson river of warm blood, |...| Doth rise and fall between thy rosed lips, | Coming and going with thy honey breath’ (*Titus*:2.4.18-19, 22-25; 2003:163). Whilst this description seems uncomfortably poetic and floral, Bamford disagrees and points to the horrific mutilation of amputated hands, removed tongue and violent rape, claiming that ‘[t]here is nothing erotic about it, nor is there anything heroic about the rapists: Chiron and Demetrius are brutal thugs’ (2000:64; *c.f.* Rudolph, 2000:180). Agreeing with both, it is logical to conclude that the brothers’ transgression would not have been viewed favourable or forgivable by an early modern audience, given the evidence, although the description does once again emphasise Lavinia’s status as an object. Marcus attempts to recall her beauty, but fails miserably with creepily desperate illustrations.

Lavinia’s final fate and image are as that of her father ‘grief’ and ‘woe’ (Bamford, 2000:65). Her death is to keep both her and her father’s honour, ‘[t]here is no sign in the text to tell us if she is a willing victim or not. In her death as in her passion Lavinia is mute’ (Bamford, 2000:65). Although, it could be argued that she has been waiting for and expecting her death, even welcoming it (*Titus*:2.3.173-188). As Vives expected, and how both Lucrece and Lavinia react to their fate: ‘she shal fynde al thynges sorowfull and heuy / waylyng / & mourning / & angry / & displeaserfull’ (1529:36). Even in her revenge, Lavinia is not shown to have emotion, leaving her joy, repulsion, or hatred of the brothers’ final moments open to the director’s interpretation.

The silencing or muting of women within plays is revisited in *Measure for Measure*, with the case of Isabella, the virtuous female protagonist who wishes to become a nun. As discussed above, the preferred image of the ideal woman after the Reformation, was the chaste, married woman. Through joining the convent, Isabella adheres to Catholic conventions, ignoring her expected transformation from maid to wife. A transformation which, in this case is ‘a means of controlling human sexuality’ (Aughterson, 1995:103). Controlled sexuality and marriage are the origin of the entire play’s problem: ‘Claudio and Juliet defer their wedding day; Angelo abandons Mariana; Lucio refuses to support his child or marry the mother. Prostitution flourishes. Rampant promiscuity makes syphilis a familiar ailment and a standard topic for nervous jokes’ (Eisaman Maus, 2016a:2172). Angelo, who has been put in charge by the Duke, strictly sees sexual relations as part of married life, and not to be enjoyed prematurely. Therefore, for the simple action of sex, Claudio must pay the ultimate price. His only salvation: his sister’s skill at begging for Angelo’s clemency. However, her true thoughts of intercourse are revealed in her less than animated pleading. She criticises his tyrannical abuse of authority, linking Angelo’s transgression to Tarquin, Petruccio, and the men in *Titus Andronicus*: ‘Oh it is excellent | To have a giant’s strength, but it tyrannous | To use it like a giant’ (*Measure*:2.2.108-110). Her forthright and confrontational stance towards his decisions ‘awakens his appetite,’ and Eisaman Maus suggests that ‘the habits of restraint can themselves provoke sexual excitement’ (2016a:2174). Interestingly, it is suggested that his disgust of sexual acts is a by-product of his sexual arousal of prohibition: ‘Mariana loves him, and his relationship with her breaches no social norms; he discards her. Isabella is ostentatiously pristine, and her nun’s habit marks her as taboo; he finds her irresistible’ (Eisaman Maus, 2016a:2174).

Once again, despite the patriarchy’s emphasis on female chastity, it is regarded as less important once it serves a man’s purpose. Chastity is to be surrendered when requested by a

male member of the family who “owns” them as their property; in this case Isabella’s brother. Isabella’s reaction, throughout the play, is one of disgust: at Angelo for suggesting it, and at Claudio for entertaining the idea and then forcing her to do it. Remembering the fate of those who are raped, or who are forced into consenting, it is therefore not surprising that Isabella vehemently refuses to give up her chastity. Thus, it is argued that those ‘modern critics’ who ‘have found her defiance...chilling or selfish,’ as well as contemporary audiences with similar opinions, cannot be agreed with in this sense, as her value in society depends on her sexual behaviour (Eisaman Maus, 2016a:2175). Bamford succinctly recaps: ‘Rape is a fate worse than death for a woman, but it is not worse than her *brother’s* death’ (2000:132). Relating this to Lucrece and Lavinia, it becomes clear that Lucrece would have chosen death, were it not for the threat of deceit, and ends up taking her own life; Lavinia explicitly begged for death, rather than being subjected to rape (*c.f.* Belsey, 2007:94). To Isabella, her brother’s sexual transgression is not worth the loss of her sexual integrity; on the other hand, if she does not yield it, she must have Claudio’s death on her conscience. The Duke comes with a logical solution to two problems: a bed-trick, where Isabella is replaced by Mariana, the jilted fiancée of Angelo. Isabella shall retain her chastity, whereas Mariana shall finally receive the consummation of her engagement to Angelo. In a modern analysis, it should be pointed out that since a more widespread attention directed to female on male rape, the bed-trick is a non-consensual act, as Angelo has been tricked into sleeping with the wrong person. Had this bed-trick not been performed, however, then Isabella would have been forced into consent. In an early modern understanding of consent, and given the frequent denial of rape, no matter how forced or willing the consent is, it is valid as consent. ‘Men often claimed that sex, not rape, had occurred. They dramatized female consent verbally (by a woman’s assent or invitation), [and] physically (by her acquiescence or little resistance),’ thus proving both Lucrece and Isabella’s limited options following the rape, or intended rape (Walker, 1998:6). Isabella’s

actual rape, in the sense of an abduction or theft of her person, appears in the Duke's "offer" (or threat) of marriage. Similar to Lavinia, her voice is no longer heard, and once again the woman's reaction is left open to interpretation, although it seems likely, given her earlier outspoken statements and views on virginity, that she does not consent. As with the taming plays, the thoughts and opinions of the unheard characters can only be revealed by the director's interpretation. To a post-Reformation audience, however, she has now conformed to the ideal image of the Protestant wife; virtuous, but married.

Concluding, the final attempted rape is that of Sylvia, the female protagonist of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. In this play, Shakespeare emphasises the importance or preference of homosocial over heterosexual relationships. Where 'female homosocial bonds were essential to the order and regulation of communities,' as seen in *The Tamer Tamed*, male homosocial relationships showcase a discarding behaviour of the value of women (Luckyj & O'Leary, 2017:5). However, Proteus' disregard of his friend's "property" does not display an ideal homosocial bond; he should respect the relationship or promise between Sylvia and Valentine, and yet he does not. Sylvia is safer with a band of lawless men, than a sophisticated man and supposed friend. Once again, love is confused with lust, but love should not condone or excuse rape. As Catty remarks: Shakespeare 'makes it clear that Proteus's sexual appropriation of Sylvia, with or without his friend's permission, would be rape' (1999:111). Similar to Tarquin, Chiron, Demetrius, Angelo, and the Duke, Proteus does not particularly care whether his victim consents or not: 'Nay if the gentle spirit of moving words | Can no way change you to a milder form, | I'll woo you like a soldier, at arm's end, | And love you 'gainst the nature of love — force ye' (*Gentlemen*:5.4.55-58). Upon Valentine's subsequent interference, Proteus launches into a pathetic plea for mercy and forgiveness as he "realises" he has betrayed his friend. The importance of betrayal and transgression here is not directed at his near-rape of Sylvia, but rather at the betrayal of the homosocial bond. What follows, is

Valentine's forgiveness of his friend, and the offer of Sylvia: '[a] near rape and the offer of a woman as an object of exchange between men — is this the stuff of comedy' (Howard, 2016b:121)? Linking Sylvia to Lavinia and Isabella, is that she 'never speaks again after she is offered to Proteus' (Howard, 2016b:127). The "comedy" and the muting of female characters all points to an attempt to move away from a tragic and depressing ending; although it does not erase the issues raised within the play.

As mentioned above, these plays and the poem all point to a self-cleaning system, dealing with the sexual transgressions of men by shaming and pushing women into impossible situations: '[t]he rape victim's suicide is the misogynistic patriarchal imperative, for it is the only act that makes the rape victim's innocence credible' (Baines, 2003:227). Consequently, the victim 'must either live chaste (by marrying the rapist) or die unchaste;' a fate prevented to a certain extent by Lucrece and Lavinia as they retain their mental chastity, even though they have lost their physical chastity (Bamford, 2000:10). Alternatively, even in death, they cannot escape symbolical references to their rape or legacy as a rape victim, as Bamford further suggests that 'the phallic sword' represents 'a symbolic rape' (2000:26). To summarise directly: 'Raped women are...most likely to be dead by the end of the play' (Catty, 1999:95).

Chapter Four: Betrayal and Adultery

‘For women haue a thousand waies to entise thee, and ten thousand waies to deceiue thee...’ (Swetnam, 1615:15)

In the previous chapters, we have encountered women who rebelled against their husbands: fighting for companionate marriage, a degree of equality, and better treatment in marriage. Others suffered from abuses of authority, a lack of communal support, and the disregard for their chastity and person. The importance of obedience and virtue is echoed throughout the plays discussed, and these are thoroughly challenged in Thomas Heywood’s *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607). Anne Frankford’s adultery and the betrayal of her husband, directly addresses male anxieties over ‘female subordination,’ or the lack thereof, in early modern England (Miller, 2002:167). It also reflects the prevalence of conduct books on female obedience and virtuous behaviour: ‘[i]f women always did what they were told, there would have been no need for the massive outpouring of so-called “conduct-books”’ (McMullan, 2003:xiii). Nevertheless, early modern depictions of adultery and abuse in drama can in no way be an accurate reflection of the contemporary society, despite it ‘play[ing] a significant role in relation to news and current events’ (Clark, 2003:106). Drawing on male anxiety, it created the image of ‘women, not men’ as ‘domestic dangers,’ with marriage being ‘the sphere in which women’s principal identity was defined, [and] also the sphere in which femininity was perceived as most problematic’ (Gowing, 1996:270). A danger that grew with the absence of the husband, which is brought to attention by Ann Christensen: ‘[t]he man’s absence unpartners his wife, increasing her autonomy, but not necessarily her authority at home,’ leading to attempts at autonomy within plays, with a return of the husband signalling a return to the

reinstitution of authority (2017:9). During his absence, the wife is usually portrayed as, or suspected of ‘commit[ing] adultery...with sometimes comic, sometimes tragic endings’ (Christensen, 2017:1). Ironically, given the previous topics of physical and mental abuse, as well as sexual assault, and the threats accompanying these: ‘it was physical, mental, and material disturbances that husbands focused on at the court’ (Gowing, 1996:194).

Deceit and Repentance

‘Pardoned on earth, soul, thou in heaven art free; | Once more thy wife, dies thus embracing thee.’ (*Woman Killed*: 17.121-122)

Within *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, there are two plotlines regarding domestic abuse. Firstly, linking the play to the previous chapter, is the side-plot of Charles, Francis, and Susan. Echoing Isabella and Claudio’s problematic dynamic, Charles and Susan portray a brother and sister duo, in which the woman is once again used as valuable property by the men closest to her. Susan’s chastity is as valuable as Isabella and Sylvia’s, in the sense that it can be used to absolve a brother’s debts and mistakes, or as an offer of friendship and homosocial bonds: ‘Thy honour and my soul are equal in my regard’ (*Woman Killed*:14.61). Initially, the potential rape is seen as a political act of revenge: similar to one of Tarquin’s possible reasons for rape that made his act all the more unreasonable. Francis Acton wishes to revenge himself on Charles Mountford, who has already been imprisoned for a murder, and the theft of valuable property comes into play: ‘Shall I, in mercy sake | To him and to his kindred, bribe the fool | To shame herself by lewd dishonest lust? | I’ll proffer largely, but the deed being done | I’ll smile to see her base confusion’ (*Woman Killed*:7.80-84). There is no animosity towards Susan, but her

consent and personal feelings are not even remotely considered, as the true victim (in Francis' eyes) is Charles, with the loss of his property and the shame then associated with the Mountford name. However, once he sees Susan, his thoughts of lust and defilement disappear: unlike Tarquin, Chiron, Demetrius, Proteus, and Angelo, he is struck by her virtue and chaste demeanour. Lust turns to love, and she becomes more important to him than revenge. Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that Susan does not love him: 'Acton! O God, that name I am born to curse. | Hence, bawd! Hence, broker! See, I spurn his gold — | My honour never shall for gain be sold' (*Woman Killed*:9.52-54). She embodies Isabella's spirit in her abhorrence of selling her virginity and chastity, and also adheres to Francis Bacon's description of 'chaste women:' they 'are often proud and froward, as presuming upon the merit of their chastity' (1612,1625:1665). It is not surprising that women tend to react so vehemently to notions of their virginity being sold or taken away: if it has been indoctrinated that a woman's value and future is dependent on her sexual status, then it must come as a shock when men are so frivolous in disregarding the standards set by a patriarchal hierarchy.

Francis finds a way around her hatred for him by releasing her brother and thereby indebting the latter, as well as perhaps gaining her favour for his mercy. If this behaviour sets a precedent for his conduct in marriage, then he sets out to establish a Protestant ideal of marriage: 'husbands were instructed that without love, they were tyrannical rulers' (Foyster, 2005:11). Susan suspects he may love her: 'His love to me, upon my soul 'tis so; | That is the root from whence these strange things grow' (*Woman Killed*:10.104-105). This is further supported by his refusal to rape Susan upon Charles' offer, who believes that her chastity is worth the debt of five hundred pounds, 'paid with interest' (*Woman Killed*:14.45-46). Susan eerily echoes Lavinia's fate as she anxiously fantasises about her impending rape with 'Will Charles | Have me cut off my hands and send them Acton?' (*Woman Killed*:14.56-57), further likening the rape to an act of excessive brutality. Similarly, once she has "consented" to the

rape at her brother's continued behest, Susan clearly echoes Isabella and Lucrece: 'But here's a knife, | To save mine honour, shall slice out my life' (*Woman Killed*:14.84-85). Her sacrifice for her brother's misdeed is like a suicide, but she still intends for her soul to remain chaste, like Lucrece, when her body is defiled. The estimation of Francis rises once he reveals his intentions of marrying her, rather than 'To murder her that never meant thee harm' (*Woman Killed*:14.129). The following statement does reveal the flawed and problematic early modern view on rape: 'I cannot be so cruel to a lady | I love so dearly' (*Woman Killed*:134-135). Meaning that he could rape any woman as long as he does not love them: a woman's value is only ever as important as men's love for her and the status of her sexual morality. Unlike Isabella and Sylvia, the audience hears her reaction upon learning she shall marry a man she previously hated: 'You still exceed us. I will yield to fate, | And learn to love where I till now did hate' (*Woman Killed*:14.147-148).

The second plot provides the audience with the opposing, sinful character to Susan in the play: Anne Frankford, an adulterate, yet sorrowful character which leaves the audience and reader with a mixed impression of justice and injustice. As the *Homilie on the State of Matrimonie* (1623) and *A Sermon Against Whoredom and Uncleaness* (c.1542) state: 'God hath straitly forbidden all whoredom and uncleanness' to 'all kinds of people, all degrees and all ages without exception' (*Homilie on Matrimonie*, 1623:472; *Sermon Against Whoredom*, c.1542:97). This is further echoed in conduct books and pamphlets, as the general consensus stands that '[t]he Husband must not dare to giue himself to any woman in this world but to his wife; nor the wife to company with any vnder heauen besides her owne husband,' and a wife must be 'of greater chastite than an vnmaryed' (Whately, 1617:2; Vives, 1529:142). Anne Frankford embodies this at the beginning of the play, as she is lauded as 'A perfect wife already, meek and patient' (*Woman Killed*:1.37). Margaret Kidnie describes the marriage between Anne and Frankford as 'embodying the ideal of the companionate marriage in which Mistress

Frankford functions as both ornament and helpmeet' (2017:9). However, this undergoes a transformation almost as soon as Wendoll arrives. Playing the Proteus to Frankford's Valentine, Wendoll lusts after Anne; yet instead of threatening to rape her, he woos her into committing adultery. Upon his arrival, Nick the servant is the first to mistrust him: 'I do not like this fellow by no means; [...] ...yet know not why; | The devil and he are all one in my eye' (*Woman Killed*:4.85-88). Remembering Lucrece, and Tarquin's entitlement of her body after hearing Collatine's praises, the same could be read in the interaction between Frankford, Wendoll and Anne. Perhaps Wendoll becomes enamoured with her because of her virtue, obedience, and willingness to 'As far as modesty may well extend, | It is my duty to receive your friend' (*Woman Killed*:4.81-82). Disregarding the homosocial bond, and the patriarchal importance of a married woman's chastity —although initially promising to contain his feelings — Wendoll quickly changes his mind and pursues her, despite confirmations of Anne's love for her husband (*Woman Killed*:6.64-67). Following Tarquin, he displays the same inner conflict over his betrayal of another man who should be considered a friend or unworthy of such a transgressive act.

Both Anne and Susan change their stances in a confusingly short amount of time, perhaps echoing Heywood's opinions on female weakness in his *Curtaine Lecture*. The reaction turns from 'The love I bear my husband is as precious | As my soul's health,' to 'My soul is wandering and hath lost her way' (*Woman Killed*:6.142-143, 152). Frankford is made aware of the affair by Nick, who has witnessed a kiss between Anne and Wendoll (*Woman Killed*:6.165). Of course, the word of a servant does not immediately convince Frankford, and he therefore hatches a plan: to catch the lovers in the act of adultery. His asides during the dinner are hardly subtle, and it becomes clear to the audience that he must be sure in his suspicions:

My mind's not on my game. | Many a deal I have lost, the more's your shame. | You have served me a bad trick, Master Wendoll. [...] Thou robbest me of my soul, of her chaste love; | In thy false dealing thou hast robbed my heart. [...] Sir, I was lusty and I had my health, | But I grew ill when you began to deal. (*Woman Killed*:8.173-175)

Frankford and Nick hatch a plan to copy the keys to the master bedroom, and for Frankford to “leave” the domestic space. Under the cover of darkness, he returns, however, echoing *Macbeth* and *Lucrece*, he mentions ‘I hear nothing but the owl and you’ (*Woman Killed*:13.4). As he sneaks through the house, it evokes the image of Tarquin moving towards Lucrece’s chamber, only this time the stalking is legitimate and in the name of marriage. Rather than nature and the house attempting to stop him, it seems to wait with baited breath: ‘A general silence hath surprised the house’ (*Woman Killed*:13.21). Once he enters the bedroom, his suspicions have been confirmed: Wendoll and Anne are in bed together. Wendoll has taken possession of Frankford’s domestic space and his wife, a complete betrayal of hospitality and the homosocial bond. The immediate aftermath awakens repentance and remorse in both Anne and Wendoll, as the characters are confronted with their sins. From here on out, however, there is a marked change in the treatment of the transgressors.

The double standard in adultery and fornication becomes apparent in the punishment, or lack thereof, of Anne and Wendoll. Although Capern claims that ‘[t]here was a single sexual standard employed in canon law in the sense that men and women sinned equally when they committed adultery,’ it does not naturally prelude an equal treatment of said sin (2008:63; c.f. Gowing, 1996:188-189). Furthermore, a Cromwellian law of May 1650, the *Act against Adultery*,

...defined married women who were sexually unfaithful as adulteresses, but prosecuted unfaithful married men for what was redefined as the lesser crime of fornication. Both cases carried the death penalty, but the double sexual standard was institutionalised in

this also, with women only needing to break the law once to be punished, whereas a man needed to be unfaithful twice before attracting the full weight of the law. (Capern, 2008:65; c.f. Clark, 2002:105)

The law may have only come into effect several decades after the play, but it does echo the unequal treatment between men and women. Following the discovery, the audience only hears Anne's repentance: 'I would I had no tongue, no ears, no eyes, | No apprehension, no capacity' (*Woman Killed*:13.84-85); once again echoing Lavinia in her mutilated state. The scene is heart-breaking in its emotional turmoil: Anne portrays true repentance and pain in her state of humiliation, whereas Frankford begrudges her betrayal after he has only shown love and gentle "ruling" as the head of the household. The intensity of her repentance calls Anne's consent into question: she changed her mind so swiftly, and the fact that 'Anne is not a very enthusiastic (or stereotypical) adulteress,...is often observed' (Christensen, 2017:128). Is her consent therefore coerced? As has been made clear, coercion, whether in taming, rape, or otherwise, is not consent, nor does it end well. Although her crime is that of infidelity, her repentance and sense of guilt is akin to that of a rape victim, as we see in Lucrece and Lavinia. Tragically, Frankford includes the children in the scene of domestic mayhem, and Anne is no longer allowed to see her children. In the same way that children follow their mothers in the sense of becoming a shrew, their children could imitate Anne's adulterous transgression. Her Eve-like punishment from her domestic sphere and her separation from her husband and children does not seem to be in line with what is his "killing with kindness." It also calls forth Petruccio's earlier "killing with kindness" method in order to tame Katherine: she cannot complain, because he has not transgressed his into excessive cruelty.

'By choosing to exile Anne Frankford from the home, Frankford insists, along with his guilt-ridden wife, that she is unforgiven and unforgiveable,' in fact, he goes so far as to call himself a widower already (Kidnie, 2017:36; *Woman Killed*:15.30). In the play, the couple

divorces *a mensa et thoro*, as mentioned in the second chapter. As discussed, the *Lavves Resolutions* state that man cannot part what God has joined, therefore they may separate their bodies but they cannot separate their souls: marriage ‘is neuer dissolved but by death, and the wife as long as she liueth is subiect to the law of her husband’ (*Lavves Resolutions*, 1632:2.XXVII). In a way, Kidnie’s statement that Frankford’s treatment of Anne is ‘more like revenge, or a vindictive promise’ can be both understandable, yet also problematic (2017:35). Indeed, Frankford’s reaction seems vindictive, but on the other hand, he allows Anne to live in relative comfort: her guilt is her own. Furthermore, Martin Wiggins notes how ‘criminal history is littered with cases of husbands who have literally killed their wives upon finding them in bed with other men’ (2008:xx). Frankford treats his wife in the way that Whately, Heywood, and the previously mentioned conduct books and pamphlets recommend: with a just hand, and no excessive brutality. Judging in a twenty-first-century context, it still seems unjust, yet compared to contemporary opinions and beliefs of women and the acceptance of abuse and mistreatment in marriage, Frankford is not a tyrannical husband.

Where his treatment errs, is in the way Wendoll comes off unscathed: travels through Europe seems hardly equal to Anne’s fate, despite his Cain-like wandering. The repentant man is left to find a way to better himself: he is offered redemption through a new life. The repentant woman is left to find redemption through death: exactly like Lucrece and Lavinia, and, presumably, Susan if her rape had occurred. Once Anne is on her deathbed, her brother, Francis, and his new wife, as well as Frankford, come to visit her. Her sins are removed only through death, and Frankford can only fully forgive her once he knows she will not survive and he is free to marry another without guilt. ‘Though thy rash offence | Divorced our bodies, thy repentant tears | Unite our souls’ (*Woman Killed*:17.104). After her transgression, her self-punishment of fasting and the acceptance of her ostracization, Anne once more accepts her passivity in her fate from wife, to mistress, to social pariah, and dies as peacefully as she can.

Frankford's final words nevertheless leaves her legacy as one of infidelity and deceit: 'In golden letters shall these words be filled — | Here lies she, whom her husband's kindness killed' (*Woman Killed*:17.138). Where Lucrece and Lavinia managed to save their spiritual chastity and lasting image, Anne is branded as an adulteress, despite the final redemption; placing the last lines oddly reminiscent of a certain Cardinal's 'Who could not say, 'Tis pity she's a whore?' (*'Tis Pity*:5.3.156).

Conclusion

‘...betwixt their breasts is the vale of destruction, and in their beds there is hell, sorrow & repentance.’ (Swetnam, 1615:16)

The female victims of domestic abuse in this dissertation have shown a remarkable resilience towards the male abusers of authority within their domestic spheres. Suffering from physical and mental violence through “accepted” forms of taming: Katherina, Kate, Griselda, and the wife from *A Merry Jest*, have managed to stand out as conflicted, sometimes empowered, yet always subdued women. Furthermore, the repeated oppressive and transgressive acts of authority seem to concur with Dolan’s statement that ‘[m]any early modern people linked violence to the limited access to divorce’ (2009:92). Surviving rape or having to deal with the consequences of sexual assault in a patriarchal society: Lucrece, Lavinia, Isabella, Mariana, Sylvia, and Susan, portray the resilience, powerlessness and sad reality of their perceived inferior status. The lacking acknowledgement of the severity of rape is apparent in the plays’ genres as ‘tragedy or tragi-comedy;’ it ‘hinges not only on whether the rape is achieved or not, but on whether a raped woman commits suicide (producing tragedy) or marries her rapist (a happy ending)’ (Catty, 1999:20). Depicting the double standards surrounding fornicators and adulterers, we encountered Anne Frankford: another victim of male desire, and patriarchal stigmas around infidelity. Obedience, chastity, and virtue are the key terms throughout these plays, poems, and ballads, as well as the conduct literature, with the emphasis on women being “weaker vessels.” Nevertheless, as Fraser reminds us: ‘[f]or all this, women in the seventeenth century were as they had always been, strong vessels where they had the opportunity: that is to

say, where a particular combination of character and circumstance enabled them to be so' (2002b:249).

Alongside the *querelle des femmes*, and signalling a changing stance towards female oppression and subservience, characters such as Bianca, or Byancha, Maria, and Livia, illustrate the possibility of companionate marriages and the hope for more equality within marriage. However, despite the emboldening behaviour of the female protagonists, it is clear that the represented male playwrights, conduct authors, and writers do not allow for complete female agency within any of the sources. The majority of female characters have been “muted” towards the final scenes. As Amussen reflects, '[w]e can never get a full picture of the use of domestic power in early modern England,' but we certainly receive an impression of the use of violence, excessive and accepted, against transgressive women (1995:14).

This dissertation has explored several examples of domestic abuse directed at women in early modern literature, paralleled with contemporary opinions on the mistreatment of women. Accumulations of the crisis of violence can be seen in escalated cases of spousal murder, as in the play *Arden of Faversham* (c.1588-92); women murdering their husbands could be perceived as committing desperate acts for recognition and for an escape from oppression. Despite the emergence of the *querelle des femmes*, and both male and female writers petitioning for the better treatment of women, Fraser argues that the progression of women's rights 'dip[ped] again with the restoration of the old order in 1660' (2002b:245). Some issues presented in this study, as quoted in chapter three by Baines, continue to be prevalent into the twenty-first century. To conclude with Aemilia Lanyer on the religious guilt and oppression of women; 'If one weak woman simply did offend, | This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end' (1611: 'Salve Deus,' 831-832).

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