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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Queer Capitalism and Global Economies on the Early Modern English Stage

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree
Doctor of Philosophy

in

Literature

by

Melissa Vipperman-Cohen

Committee in Charge:

Professor Daniel J. Vitkus, Chair
Professor Stephanie H. Jed
Professor Seth Lerer
Professor Sarah E. Nicolazzo
Professor Janet L. Smarr
Professor Ulrike Strasser

2021

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University of California San Diego

2021

DEDICATION

To all of the indomitable women in my life who inspired me, nurtured me, raised me, led me, loved me, challenged me, and believed in me.

I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Bruce, and to my stepmother, Julia, who lead by most generous example. Without their love, support, and guidance, my work would not be possible.

I dedicate this dissertation to my sister, Anne. I am inspired by her commitment to fairness and justice, and I am awed by her fierce dedication to all that she does. Her comfort, love, and enthusiasm mean everything to me.

I dedicate this dissertation to my late mother, Ramona. She cultivated my passion for literature and my excitement for learning from my earliest years, and she encouraged me to obtain my doctorate before I knew what one was. For her, I choose happiness.

I dedicate this dissertation to my partner, John. He is my best friend and my champion. He brings more adventure, laughter, and love to my life than I could have ever dreamed. Always.

EPIGRAPH

The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
‘Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire;’
The second, silver, which this promise carries,
‘Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves;’
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
‘Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.’
How shall I know if I do choose the right?

William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits and
Are melted into air, into thin air;
And – like the baseless fabric of this vision –
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to acknowledge the support, expertise, and guidance of my dissertation committee: Daniel J. Vitkus, Stephanie H. Jed, Seth Lerer, Sal (Sarah) E. Nicolazzo, Janet L. Smarr, and Ulrike Strasser. I have been immensely fortunate to learn from your academic excellence and your exemplary pedagogy. Thank you, all.

I would like to thank my chair, Daniel J. Vitkus, in particular for his mentorship and direction throughout my graduate career. His encouragement, rigor, and advice strengthened my work significantly. It has also been my honor and privilege to work together on the *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* bringing new scholarship to our field.

Thank you to my incredible graduate school friends who became my San Diego family and filled my dissertation years with joy, support, and camaraderie: Michael Metke, Aleena Arakaki, and Vladimir Jovanovic. You three helped me keep going when I stumbled, you broadened my intellectual horizons, and you showed me what academic achievement and personal accomplishment could be. I am extremely grateful to have befriended and learned from a remarkable community of UC San Diego graduate students; thank you also to Tara-Lynne Pixley, Haydee Smith, Betty Ramirez, Kailey Giordano, Celine Khoury, and those with whom I worked during my time on the Graduate Student Association. It has been my honor to serve our community with such passionate people.

Thank you to my professors and mentors at Barnard College. Peter Platt, Achsah Guibbory, Saskia Hamilton, and Constance Brown helped me to transform a love of reading into a love of literary knowledge, history, and scholarship. Thank you to my friends for sharing your indomitable intelligence and ambition with me and for inspiring me to seek ever greater heights: Elisabeth Watson, Cassie van Stolk-Cooke, Victoria Jones, and Amanda Hemenway.

Thank you to my Los Angeles friends and teachers who have known me for so long. Abby Schulman, thank you for your unwavering love, understanding, and fellow belief in the magic of Shakespeare. Natasha Neufeld, thank you for your compassion, strength, and laughter through all these years as we have grown together. Alyssa Siegel, thank you for showing me how to follow dreams and stay true to oneself. Thank you to Jeremy Michaelson and Blaise Eitner for inspiring me to pursue my academic ambitions at an early age and helping me to believe I could achieve my goals.

I would never be where I am today without the love and support of my family. Thank you to my mother and father for encouraging me to follow my love of literature throughout my life. I also would not be completing my degree without my father and stepmother, who consistently supported me through triumphs, setbacks, and difficult times. My bond with my sister brings me immeasurable joy, and her enthusiasm and encouragement have kept me going strong through my years in graduate school. Thank you as well to Kathy LeClair, Howard Vipperman, Sallie Zemlin-Kisor, and to my grandfather, Herbert Cohen, for instilling in me a drive for excellence and the practice of trusting myself. “Keep up your bright swords, for the dew will rust them.”

Finally, thank you to John L. Ferrand for your encouragement, your kindness, your patience, your mirth, and your support throughout my writing. You inspired me to become a stronger researcher, you celebrated my accomplishments, and you believed in me when I doubted myself so that I could soar again. You are my partner.

Chapter Three contains material that has been submitted for publication. Vipperman-Cohen, Melissa. The dissertation author was the sole researcher and author of this material.

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Queer Capitalism and Global Economies on the Early Modern English Stage

by

Melissa Vipperman-Cohen

Doctor of Philosophy in Literature

University of California San Diego, 2021

Professor Daniel J. Vitkus, Chair

This dissertation considers the intersections between emerging capitalism, global trade, and shifting negotiations of value as they are represented in early modern English theater during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. International exploration, contact with other cultures, and new forms of trade fundamentally transformed the English economy as well as English understandings of the self. This dissertation utilizes economic criticism and a focus on queer

theory in order to examine early modern theater's place in constructions of early modern value. Each chapter of this dissertation analyzes how certain plays explore newly emerging capitalist conceptualizations of value through language and relationships combining, intertwining, and complicating economic and erotic value in order to question the changing nature of the self, the economy, and the English state in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Chapter One analyzes representations of male homosocial chains of credit and reputation that complicate, and at times supersede, those of the English heteronormative family structure in literature and in law. The plays offer representations of queer economic value and desire that are in fact vital to the English economy, though they also contend with historical anxieties regarding male eroticism, sodomy, and coinage. Chapter Two explores a complimentary financial institution, that of marriage, but the plays examine international marriages between English subjects and strangers. As England navigated its new capitalist practices at home, it increased its reach abroad, which in turn brought more opportunities to examine the relationships between economic power and gendered, racialized, and queer desire. Finally, Chapter Three interrogates plays that follow the circulation of gold specie and the rise in counterfeit gold, which reveal and influence English anxieties regarding the promise and peril of mercantile wealth within new representation-based global economies. This dissertation focuses on characters who employ both economic and erotic language to describe themselves and their worlds in order to search for opportunities to subvert the mandates of commodity fetishism, accumulation, and exploitation that the capitalist world demands.

Introduction

This dissertation considers the intersections between emerging capitalism, global trade, and shifting negotiations of value as they are represented in early modern English theater. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, England engaged in unprecedented social, political, economic, and cultural upheaval. Contact between England and its new trading partners and competition with its geopolitical adversaries (including economic competition) extended from fellow European states through the Mediterranean and beyond the Atlantic to the so-called New World. Although England experienced the consequences of these interactions through myriad sociocultural spaces, this dissertation focuses on the ramifications for England's economic practices and theatrical experiences. International exploration, contact with other cultures, and new forms of trade fundamentally transformed the English economy as well as English understandings of the self. These transformations play out onstage at the London playhouses as simultaneously public and private experiences where audiences could be educated, tantalized, or warned of such phenomena occurring as far as the other side of the globe or as near as the neighborhoods of their own city.

This dissertation utilizes economic criticism and queer theory in order to examine early modern theater's place in constructions of early modern value. Shifting onstage depictions of wealth, self, eroticism, and relationships created increasingly nuanced and at times contradictory understandings of value, both material/bodily, and abstract. These representations in turn responded to and explored English trade practices on the global stage as well as how subjects navigated their own communal, familial, and state value. The plays in this dissertation focus on characters who frequently use both economic and erotic language to describe themselves and their worlds in order to subvert the proto-capitalist mandates of commodity fetishism,

accumulation, and exploitation that the changing worlds around them demand. Economic criticism, queer theory, and recognition of the importance of a global perspective offer greater elucidation of the shifting understandings of economic, erotic, and material value being negotiated during the rise of England's capitalist enterprise. The London stage served as a focal point for the culture to examine, reinforce, question, or satirize these new values.

Amanda Bailey rhetorically asks, "why are so many late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century English stage plays preoccupied with money?" ("The Theater" 98). She lists twenty-eight Elizabethan and Jacobean plays about which scholars have written regarding the rise of commodity, commodification, market, credit, or capital, and the effects that these economic changes and practices had on English life.¹ While not an exhaustive list, it is unsurprising that such a large number may be compiled given the striking economic changes England underwent as it began to participate in emerging capitalism.

Ellen Meiksins Wood argues that the origins of capitalism in Europe began in the feudal period under an agrarian proto-capitalism. She suggests that "the dictates of the capitalist market – its imperatives of competition, accumulation, profit maximization, and increasing labor productivity," which define not only the economic sphere but also a state's sociopolitical realms,

¹ See Bailey, "The Theater and the Early Modern Culture of Debt" 109-110: Shakespeare's *King John* (1596), *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), *Measure for Measure* (1604), *Timon of Athens* (1607), *Comedy of Errors* (1589), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1600), *1 Henry IV* (1597), *2 Henry IV* (1597), *The Taming of the Shrew* (1593), Thomas Heywood's *If You know not me, you know nobody Parts I and II* (1605-6), and *A Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1607), Ben Jonson's *The Alchemist* (1610), *Everyman Out of His Humour* (1599), *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) and *Volpone* (1605); Jonson, George Chapman, and Jon Marston's *Eastward Ho* (1605), Philip Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1625); Thomas Middleton's *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* (1611), *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1606), *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (1613), *Michaelmas Term* (1605), and *A Mad World, My Masters* (1605); Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (1590); Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* (1584), William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money* (1598); Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton's *The Roaring Girl* (1611); and Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599). This dissertation includes analysis and discussion of six of these plays, as well as several not listed here.

thrived by the time of the exploratory voyages headed first by the Spanish and Portuguese, and later by the English, in sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (3).²

It would be challenging to argue for a specific date or singular reason when England's economy became a capitalist one, but there were multiple factors that contributed to such a shift. In 1974 while introducing his "world systems theory," Immanuel Wallerstein declared that after the decrease in production and profit of the European agrarian feudal model of the fourteenth century, "in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century, there came into existence what we may call a European world-economy" (15,18). Maarten Prak elaborates further by arguing that in previous centuries, the only world-economies possible had been those of powerful political empires, such as the Roman Empire. Such a former world-economy was weighed down by the tributary responsibilities and enforcement that were necessary to maintain political dominance (5). Instead, Prak argues, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, those who had held property under European feudal systems sought new ways to increase their wealth, and subsequently, states became tied together by their economic practices, such as trade and exploitation, and mutual interests, rather than shared fealty.³ Significantly, as the novel, global world order was forming, Prak argues that there was "a division of this world-economy into different zones, or regions, according to a specific hierarchy of exploitation ... [and] different systems of labour control" that privileged the stronger, centralized states of north-western Europe (5).

It is important to note that it is incorrect to suggest that only European powers were prominent economic forces during the early modern period, or that capitalism emerged only as a result of Western European agency; the Ottoman Empire, in particular, was a significant political, cultural, and economic force to the east that engaged both with and against European

² See Wood, particularly Part I.

³ See Prak, "Introduction."

states, and the development of long-distance trade and overseas colonies and trade networks came about through interaction with other cultures and economies.⁴ I discuss connections between England and the Ottoman Empire, particularly those through trade, religion, and interracial marriage, in depth in Chapter Two of this dissertation.

Vitally important to the rise of English capitalism (for both the domestic economy and the expansion of long-distance trade) was a newfound emphasis on venture capitalism and the subsequent rise of a new kind of merchant class. According to Keith Wrightson, this transition was made possible by many factors, including but not limited to “increased consumption, rising prices; agrarian and agricultural change; urban growth; the expansion of manufactures and commerce; government economic policy ... development of financial institutions; the interconnected emergence of widespread wage-labour and of a commercial and agricultural middle class” (7-8). These changes came about through a growing desire for increasingly exotic goods brought by expanding trade routes, new markets, and the rise in international competition. Wrightson argues that together these culminated in “the rational employment of accumulated capital ‘for the sake of profit’” (Wrightson 8). This is not to say that England had not been engaging with other states or trading earlier. England began aggressively expanding its overseas trade routes in the latter half of the sixteenth century with the rise of the 1579 Eastland Company trading with the Baltics, the 1573 Spanish Company trading with the Iberian Peninsula, and the 1581 Turkey Company and 1583 Venice Company, which would combine in 1592 to become the Levant Company, to trade in the Mediterranean.⁵ These were chartered trading companies who

⁴ There is a great history of scholarship on the global early modern Ottoman Empire. See Jyotsna G. Singh, *A Companion to the Global Renaissance: English Literature and Culture in the Era of Expansion*, Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe*, and Gerald MacLean, *Re-Orienting the Renaissance: Cultural Exchanges with the East*.

⁵ See Wrightson 177-8. Under the Merchant Adventurers’ company, “the geographical expansion of English overseas trade has often been interpreted as the outcome of a search for new markets for English cloth in response to

received Crown-sponsored monopolies and were run by so-called “new men,” or merchants outside of the privileged group of Merchant Adventurers who had previously kept other traders out of their ranks by charging fees for entry into the group and for other merchants intending to encroach on their markets (Wrightson 177-8). These new companies, particularly the joint stock companies where any merchant who invested was entitled to potential profit, or subject to loss, significantly impacted England’s international trade. These companies were largely responsible for the increased diversification and profitability of England’s overseas trade in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, and they were also instrumental in funding ventures to the New World colonies across the Atlantic, which I discuss further in Chapter Three.⁶

With the burgeoning mercantile trade class, the significance of credit in the early modern English economy also rose. There are many reasons for this shift, including that the rise of international economic activity increased the circulation of existing, inadequate coinage.⁷ Although the rise of a monies and credit-based economy from a primarily barter-based economy is not simply a linear process, there is a marked increase in England’s circulation of money and use of capitalist mandates in the sixteenth century.⁸ Money became the material that could quantify wealth, but it also came to negotiate the relationships between the people using it. As Georg Simmel argued, “the dual nature of money, as a concrete and valued substance and, at the same time, as something that owes its significance to the complete dissolution of substance into motion and function, derives from the fact that money is the reification of exchange among people, the embodiment of pure function” (188). Craig Muldrew, then, argues that English

the commercial crisis of the 1550s. It was partly so. But it also involved the desire to establish direct access to a variety of high-profit import goods previously obtained via the Antwerp entrepot” (177).

⁶ See Wrightson, particularly 179-80.

⁷ For more on the connection between credit and coinage, see Craig Muldrew, Wrightson 128-9, Bailey, “The Theater and the Early Modern Culture of Debt” (101-2).

⁸ See Charles Kindleberger, *A Financial History of Western Europe*.

capitalism expanded rapidly because of the corresponding rise in “the *culture* of credit” as both an economic and a social circulating value (2). Not only were English merchants newly trading with previously untapped ports, but within the state’s home economy there arose “a system of cultural, as well as material exchanges in which the central mediating factor was credit or trust,” mediated through knowing another’s reputation (Muldrew 4). To be a creditor in early modern England carried significant social, economic, and legal weight. Laura Kolb builds from Muldrew’s work to argue that because specie was limited, particularly in the face of rapidly expanding commerce, credit was simultaneously “a ubiquitous currency” that was also extremely individualized (2). She suggests that borrowing and lending practices based on credit and reputation reified interpersonal relationships, as “loans not only flowed through structures of affiliation and affection; they also nourished and reinforced those structures” (2).

The growth of commercial theater in the London playhouses, both public and private, negotiated with and participated in these shifting economic practices, as well. A foundational study for New Historicist scholars of the late twentieth century was the work of Jean-Christophe Agnew, who argues for the interconnectedness of the English early modern economy with the changing theater. Agnew argues that the negotiation of credit is paramount in both experiences and that extending one’s faith to a creditor or debtor mirrored the suspension of disbelief necessary at the playhouse. He claims that “though the rules governing credit in the market stalls ... may have differed in detail from the conventions governing credibility in the adjoining theatrical booths, the fact nonetheless remains that in either instance the customer’s will to believe was a stipulated or conditional act” (x). The London playhouses not only staged commercial practices and relationships for its audiences, but it also became a significant

capitalist enterprise itself.⁹ Jean E. Howard argues that going to the playhouses and experiencing a play had become “institutionalized and commodified” and was an “object of cultural contestation” (*The Stage* 5). Nina Levine agrees that English Renaissance plays and theatergoing increasingly reacted to, and at times shaped, citizens’ responses to rapid economic changes. Particularly with regard to city comedies, she traces how plays engaged with new quotidian commercial practices, such as “credit and labor relations, foreign language lessons, and the temporal measures of plague time and playgoing” in order to reveal the growing urban “networks of association and exchange” in London (*Practicing the City* 3,4). In doing so, Levine argues that the theater both revealed these relationships and connections as well as forged them.¹⁰ She suggests that Elizabethan and early Stuart plays presented the opportunity to experiment with new understandings of these shifting networks of exchange while recognizing that the issues at stake were taking place in a real-world context outside of the theatrical space as well.

There was significant anxiety surrounding the rising economic and social power of London playhouses and those who operated or performed in them.¹¹ Much of the antitheatrical tracts published under Elizabeth and James focused on the theater as a space of social and political threat or change, particularly against traditional monarchical power and power structures. Howard, however, argues that these discourses “emerged as an all-purpose language of stigmatization and delegitimation [sic]” and became a way to attempt to control a range of social issues and groups (*The Stage* 6). Potentially even more provocative for the authors of the antitheatrical tracts, however, was the very fact that the London playhouses had become

⁹ See Bailey, “Theater and the Early Modern Culture of Credit” for a discussion on how early modern playhouses were particularly shaped by reliance on debt.

¹⁰ Levine suggests that “as the theater modeled networks of association on stage, it was beginning to operate as a local network in its own right, enabling the city’s population to experiment in the complex reciprocities of new modes of urban belonging” (*Practicing* 4).

¹¹ See Howard, *The Stage and Social Struggle in Early Modern England*, particularly 6.

commercialized. David Hawkes points out that “the main objection, it seems, is not to the theater per se but to the startlingly new form taken by the theater in Elizabethan London. The most conspicuous novelty to scandalize puritan opinion was the fact that the playing companies had become commercial enterprises, selling a product for a fee ... The ‘abuse’ of the theater, in short, involved its *commodification*” (*Idols* 79, emphasis original). The theater was not only a market space now, but thanks to its ability to create liminal and potentially subversive social, political, and economic spaces, its stages highlighted the growing changes of money and economic practices that allowed for the opportunity to push against traditional Christian standards of wealth and value. Hawkes posits that the changing value of money, the rise of the powerful merchant class, a voracious consumer culture fed by new trade, and subsequent unprecedented social mobility together led to fundamental crises of “traditional understandings of hierarchy and order,” all of which could be seen in the “shape shifting” of theater (*Idols* 80).

The root of these unprecedented and unwelcome changes, according to the antitheatricalists, was money. Money was breaking down the previously stable relationship between an individual and their identity.¹² Bailey observes that commercial theater was eroding traditional Medieval social and economic structures, as “the theater’s elaboration of and participation in commodity fetishism, and the commodification of culture more generally, evoked the ways that the conceptual distinction between persons and commodities could be rendered negligible and signaled the displacement of customary social ties by the intrusion of capitalist practices” (“The Theater” 100).

¹² See Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace*: “Money, in other words, allows one to change one’s identity. Its Protean nature makes possible the kind of social mobility and identity confusion that is frequently exhibited on the Renaissance stage” (93).

Bailey writes that for the past several decades, literature scholars have illuminated the relationship between England's developing capitalism and the commercial theater. She argues that "The developing economic contours of English society generally shaped the vicissitudes of theatrical production, influenced day-to-day dealings between hired players and heads of playing companies, and served as a structuring principle of drama itself" ("The Theater" 99). In order to elucidate the relationship between the theater and the marketplace, it is beneficial to draw on the theoretical paradigms introduced by the New Economic Criticism, a term created by Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen. This critical lens produces deeper understandings of a text and the economic practices of its time. Over the past two decades, New Economic Criticism performed significant work to bring literature and literary criticism into productive conversation with economics and economic theory in order to understand how both disciplines intersect and contribute to one another.¹³ New Economic Criticism offers the opportunity to analyze economics as a discourse replete with signs and signifiers that can be analyzed using the tools of literary theory and interpretive practice. As Marc Shell foundationally argues, "the formal properties of literature and the formal properties of finance develop in lockstep, because they are two parts of a larger totality. Language and money are both forms of representation, and the connection between linguistic and financial representation is reflected etymologically" (*Money, Language, and Thought* 96). Shell argues that historically, representation and signs move further from the real objects to which they refer, and likewise money and language are "complementary or competing systems of tropic production and exchange" (180).¹⁴

¹³ See Martha Woodmansee and Mark Osteen, eds. *The New Economic Criticism: Studies at the Intersection of Literature and Economics*.

¹⁴ See Shell *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era* "Introduction" for further on the history of the teleological relationship between money and language: "Sēmē means 'word' as well as 'coin'" (2). See also Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies: After Marx and Freud*.

Early modern literature underwent substantial changes with the rise of capitalism, and scholars in the past several decades have increasingly turned to early modern literature for greater opportunities to explore the influential and complementary relationships between fiction, literary production, social change, and economic practice.¹⁵ Bailey suggests that “plays exploited the language of the market as a source for metaphors, [and] they also experimented with the conceptual possibilities of market relations as determinative of the formal properties of genre” (“The Theater” 99). Hawkes suggests that “the condition of pre-modern England, insofar as ‘economic’ matters are ... conceptually inseparable from moral, cultural, or aesthetic considerations” (*Shakespeare* 30), and he calls for us to see cultural production connected closely to economic life. Numerous scholars argue that the economic transactions taking place in the early modern world impacted the running of the London playhouses as well as the content of the plays staged there. Woodbridge argues that “money, commerce, and economics make a good deal of difference to English Renaissance literature” and not surprisingly, the language of commerce abounds throughout the plays written in the period from the opening of the commercial playhouses to their closure in 1642 (9,11).

Recent scholarship at the intersection of economics and literature further explores how Renaissance literature may reveal truths about early modern economies and realities, as well as how knowledge may be produced, created, and changed in both disciplines throughout these processes. Valerie Forman persuasively contends that the rise of the tragicomic genre was due to evolving English trade practices, particularly the reconceptualization of loss as an expected and even necessary aspect of an ultimately successful venture.¹⁶ Forman maintains that theater participated in and influenced economic understanding and practice, while it was also being

¹⁵ See Linda Woodbridge, ed., *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism*.

¹⁶ See Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage*.

affected by it. Subha Mukherji and Rebecca Tomlin argue for the necessity of understanding “literature at the centre of early modern economic knowledge” (3). They argue that the economic shifts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly those related to change and exchange, “produced a range of epistemic crises” as language and literature too evolved, ultimately which “intertwined personal, interpersonal, social and commercial dimensions” (4).

Of particular significance, they argue, is the transformation of the relationship between economics and how knowledge and value are produced, understood, and reified. They build from Marx’s assertion that exchange value and commodity have their roots in the early modern period and from Foucault’s declaration that in the seventeenth century, “the signs of exchange are sustained by the dark, dangerous, and accursed glitter of metal” (Marx 5, Foucault 188). They agree with Foucault’s assertion that the early modern period’s capitalist changes, such as commodification, use and exchange value, and accumulation, led to a “range of epistemic crises,” as “monetary exchanges informed the way in which signs were deemed to acquire value from their relation to other signs, with implications for literary methods such as metaphor and allegory” (5). Foucault also argues that the early modern period’s economic upheaval was simultaneous with “transformations of knowledge and symbolic systems” (5). They seek to understand the nuances of early modern economic experiences and the literature that shaped and was shaped by them. The conceptualization of value particularly resonates with this analysis, as value is constantly and consistently negotiated across social, political, and economic systems. Mukherji and Tomlin propose that value is “located at interfaces at which knowing, knowingness and unknowing dance around one another, where certitudes are radically destabilized, and change fractures exchange” (3).

In order to trace the epistemological, literary, and economic changes taking place, it is important to understand the fundamental changes that money was undergoing. Discussing the unprecedented power and simultaneously mutable nature of money, Hawkes argues that “it is this power of money that made possible the social mobility and the transforming of identity that we find displayed in the Renaissance theater. We should note, however, that for Marx this is no ludic, transgressive self-fashioning. Rather, it is the replacement of the authentic human subject with an alien, reified parody of subjectivity,” forever alienating the self because the market economy will ultimately result in the “objectification of the subject” (*Idols* 94). Marx famously wrote that Shakespeare skillfully highlighted the dialectical nature of early modern money as both “the visible divinity—the transformation of all human and natural properties into their contraries ... it makes brothers of impossibilities” and “the common whore, the common pimp of people and nations” (“The Power of Money” 163).

Bradley Ryner argues that Marx’s concept of commodity fetishism is most visible in examining the money form.¹⁷ Marx proposes that a commodity is “a mysterious thing” because it falsely reifies the worker’s labor, creating an object/commodity as a purely social, independent relationship. Marx states that within a commodity, “the social character of men’s labour appears to them as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour; because the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour is presented to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, *but between the products of their labour*” (*Capital* Vol. 1, Section 4, 52, emphasis mine). Early modern coins, for example, were commodities as well as representations of other commodities. They were commodities because they were made of precious metal and had trade value, and they also represented the other commodities for which

¹⁷ See Ryner, “To Look on your Incestuous Eyes: Knowledge, Matter, and Desire in Richard Brome’s *The Queen’s Exchange* and *The New Academy, or the New Exchange*.”

they were traded, as their monetary value was separate from the coin's actual metal content but in fact given (reified) by the Crown.

Commodity fetishism, then, is the misunderstanding of a commodity's value as an inherent property of the object itself, rather than recognizing the value and effect of being part of larger social and labor systems of value. Ryner argues that money as a fetishized commodity "fosters a blindness to the human social activity reified in the commodity" (164). This then leads to a (deliberate?) misunderstanding of the commodity's exchange value as an inherent property, a natural part of the commodity, that hides the social foundations for potential capitalist profit. The capitalist investor may then purchase commodities and sell them for higher prices, to obtain more capital, all while ignoring that the ability to profit is predicated on larger labor, social, and exchange systems.¹⁸

Of course, exchange value is distinct from use-value, as "use-values become a reality only by use or consumption" as well as "the material depositories of exchange value" (Marx, *Capital* Vol. 1, Part 1, 23). Exchange value, on the other hand, Marx claims, is "characterized by a total abstraction from use-value," and it is the only way in which the true Value of a commodity may be expressed; that is, through exchange (Part 1). Ryner, in his analysis of Richard Brome, posits that early modern plays "raise questions about whether value adheres in the materiality of a thing or in its desirability, and whether either can be satisfactorily known" (160). Mukerjhi and Tomlin, too, argue that "just as selfhood is shown to be both performable through, and irreducible to, the material accoutrements of mercantile credit, the pictorial language complicates the economically inflected values that constitute it" (9).

¹⁸ See Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* Vol. 1, Section 4.

In the last two decades, early modern economic criticism has intersected with a broad range of theoretical approaches to expand the field's analyses, including critical race theory, eco-criticism, queer theory, and more. This dissertation focuses particularly on the engagement between economic criticism and queer theory. Kevin Floyd argues that queer theory has “developed new ways of thinking sexuality’s relation to capital, and especially heteronormativity’s relation to capital, a development marked especially by a rich consideration of the ways in which this relation is mediated by a range of normalizing regimes and forms of social hierarchy, including those that operate along axes of gender, race, and nation” (2-3). Both economic criticism and queer theory present the opportunity to engage with value systems that influence and are influenced by broader social and political structures. Floyd argues for the benefit in combining Marxist critique with queer theory because they are both “critical perspectives on social relations that operate from a subordinated situation within those relations,” and that they are “ways of knowing the social which are ultimately inseparable from specific histories of collective praxis” (3). This dissertation also includes a queer theoretical approach because, as Melissa Sanchez writes, “because ‘queer’ is a relational and contingent term, it can illuminate the ideological work not only of sexual norms but also of the racial, ethnic, national, economic and legal categories often assumed to have nothing to do with sex or gender. Queer theory reveals the queer within the normal and the ordinary” (7). Building from such scholarship, this dissertation seeks to bring together these two theoretical paradigms to explore the slippery value systems at play in the early modern period particularly as they intertwine economically and erotically in their representations, leading to broadened understanding of shifting and performed value.

Queer theory as a theoretical field was created and rose to critical attention in the 1990s as a result of decades of preceding scholarship, theories, and political movements. These include poststructuralism and deconstruction, psychoanalysis, gay and lesbian studies, critical race theory, feminist theory, and sociopolitical activism.¹⁹ Queer theory is founded on two texts in particular: Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Epistemology of the Closet* and Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Sedgwick's groundbreaking work argues for resisting a strict binary divide between homosexuality and heterosexuality because, as Sedgwick claims, "the specificity, materiality, and variety of sexual practices, along with their diverse meanings for individuals lives, can be done better justice in a context where the impoverished abstractions that claim to define sexuality can be treated as not authoritative" (xvi). Sedgwick rejects the so-called "natural" division of binary sexual categories, categories which influence social realms far beyond sexuality alone, and indicates their historical bases which make both present and past sexualities unknowable.²⁰ Butler's "antifoundationalist approach" to sex and gender argues that gender is "a complexity whose totality is permanently deferred, never fully what it is at any given juncture in time" (22). Butler argues that gender is performative; the "'coherence' and 'continuity' of 'the person' are not logical or analytic features of personhood, but, rather, socially instituted and maintained norms of intelligibility. Inasmuch as 'identity' is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of 'the person' is called into question by the cultural emergence of those 'incoherent' or 'discontinuous' gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined" (23). Butler further claims that acceptable and understandable genders are those that are adhere to legal, political, and social constraints,

¹⁹ See Sanchez, *Shakespeare and Queer Theory* 22.

²⁰ See Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*.

which require genders to act very specific ways in order to be recognized as such. The idea that there might be a true sex, Butler argues while drawing on Foucault, is actually a produced idea created through the forced/imperative repetition of regulated performances and practices that create the understood and acceptable identities.²¹

Queer theory has grown to be a significant critical lens in the past decade. Michael Warner argues for using queer theory because it “rejects the minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favor of more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal ... ‘queer’ gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual” (xxvi). Queer theory as a critical paradigm, Sanchez argues, critiques the fundamental expectation of what is normal, private, and political in order “to consider the numerous ways that erotic fantasy, desire and practice, exceed and fracture what Berlant and Warner elsewhere call a ‘fantasized mainstream’ accorded legal, social and economic benefits” (*Shakespeare* 25, Berlant and Warner quoted 345).²² Increasingly, early modern scholars have utilized, though also at times argued against, utilizing queer theory in approaching historical literature. Ari Friedlander argues that “both queer theorists (many of whom are also historicists) and queer historicists (many of whom are also theorists) are deeply invested in history *and* desire” (4). Sanchez posits that queer theory is concerned with the past because queer theory challenges a historical assumption of heteronormativity and because, as Sedgwick claims, queer theory seeks to destabilize the notion that contemporary sexuality is stable and coherent.²³

It is of course necessary to acknowledge the tension of critical theory as a tool to bring together disparate texts and time periods, yet simultaneously a lens through which to see

²¹ See Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

²² See Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, “What Does Queer Theory Teach Us about X?”.

²³ See Sanchez, *Shakespeare and Queer Theory* 11.

differences therein. Sanchez proposes that “The universalizing aim of theory, the effort to forge abstract principles applicable in all times and places, exists in acknowledged tension with particular, embodied, time-bound instances” (*Shakespeare* 11). Queer theory also provides the opportunity to trace relationships between sexuality, literature, and societal structures, such as economics, politics, and the law, in the early modern period, as literature is an integral material aspect of queer theory, the history of sexuality, and early modern scholarship.²⁴

Recent scholarship in early modern sexuality studies has been rich and varied, and there have emerged contrasting historical and unhistorical approaches. Valerie Traub provides a historicist foundation for integrating critical sexuality studies into research and interpretation of early modern texts and culture. Her intersectional research methodologies, such as combining historiographies and archival work with literary close readings, bring together feminist, queer, psychoanalytic, and New Historicist critique to analyze early modern sex, even for all that is unknowable of it. Furthermore, Traub’s work uses these methods of inquiry to expand how we can broaden our critical paradigms for understanding these interpersonal dynamics as they relate to and work within broader social, economic, and political systems. Traub also utilizes queer theory not to identify queer bodies in the early modern period, but to understand “how sexuality sets up obstacles to knowledge, not in terms of *identity*, but in terms of *sex*” as well as how queer “as a verb, a method, and a category” is an “oppositional stance toward normativity” (17). Traub acknowledges that “sexual attitudes, concepts, and practices have been influenced by and are indices of societal concerns specific to time, place, and discursive context” (1), and she incorporates Kadji Amin’s concept that queer is a term “sticky with history” (181).

²⁴ See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*.

In conversation with, and at times against historicist readings of early modern literature and sexuality, are scholars such as Carla Freccero and Madhavi Menon who posit that historicist reading assumes a stable, knowable present, which is antithetical to much queer critique. They instead advocate for deconstructivist and psychoanalytic theories to put forth readings that are historically linked, rather than marked by difference. Such arguments are similar to those of utilizing theories created after a time period, such as psychoanalysis, on a time period that preceded it. Freccero argues that “At times, *queer* continues to exploit its productive indeterminacy as a word used to designate that which is odd, strange, aslant; in this respect ... all textuality, when subjected to close reading, can be said to be queer,” and she urges holding onto the indeterminacy and slipperiness of the term (5). Menon, as well, acknowledges the tension in using queer theory on a time period earlier than its institutional recognition, though she celebrates this. She argues that “Even as queerness is informed by its historical association with sexual irregularities, it cannot be reduced to or located in their embodiment” (“Introduction” 4). Menon argues that queer is not just that which designates fissures in heteronormativity, but also that which is “the open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances, and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone’s gender, of anyone’s sexuality aren’t made (or can’t be made) to signify monolithically” (“Introduction” 6). She posits that queer is not an inherent category “but the confusion engendered by and despite categorization” (“Introduction” 7).

Rather than limit this dissertation’s analysis to one approach or the other, I seek to demonstrate the productive relation between these two related methods of interpretation.²⁵

²⁵ Mario DiGangi rejects what he terms “the caricature of a monolithic ‘historicism’” in his advocacy for continuing to use a combination of historicist approaches with other modes of critical inquiry and argues against “rigid distinctions between present and past” (“Disciplines, Institutions – and Desires” 110).

Sanchez, in her exploration of the relationships between sex and sexuality, literature, and early modern politics in *Erotic Subjects* argues for bringing together early modern history and literature, including the early modern meaning of “queer,” with contemporary queer criticism in order to study the sexual dimension of early modern politics and law (3-4).²⁶ In doing so, she argues for tracing the intertwining of power, sex, and desire as structural forces, rather than as individual actions or events. She proposes that “given the early modern period’s habitual correlation of political and sexual affect and behavior, recent theoretical studies of gender and sexuality can give us new insights into sixteenth- and seventeenth-century political history. At the same time, attention to the queer moments of erotic fantasy and identification in early modern texts can compel us to reassess our own contemporary mythologies of love, courtship, marriage, and power” (7). Bringing attention to the potentially erotic or amorous elements of economic interaction may deepen or complicate what has historically been recognized as economic history. Sex and sexuality’s importance to shaping and being shaped by public power is deeply intertwined with the significance of economic change and dominance of the early modern period.

In order to explore the relationships between rapidly changing early modern economic practices and shifting negotiations of eroticism, intimacy, and self, this dissertation brings together economic criticism and queer theory by incorporating the concept of queer value. The term “queer value” refers to Meg Wesling’s eponymous article in which she argues for “how an

²⁶ Sanchez’s definition of her use of the word “queer” in *Erotic Subjects* is salient to this project, as well. She states: “I bring together the early modern meaning of ‘queer’ with Michael Warner’s definition of the term as signifying not only desires that reject heteronormativity but modes of being that challenge the ‘regimes of the normal’ more largely (‘Introduction’ to *Fear of a Queer Planet*, xxvii). I also draw on Dollimore’s definition of the ‘perverse dynamic’ as that which ‘denotes certain instabilities and contradictions within dominant structures which exist by virtue of exactly what those structures simultaneously contain and exclude’ (*Sexual Dissidence*, 33) and Freccero’s argument that queer theory works to critique identitarian constructs by examining how not only gay and lesbian identities but also ‘certain forms of heterosexual, transsexual, and transgender identities and bisexuality’ destabilize ideas of normativity (*Queer/Early/Moder*, 13-30)” 14.

interrogation of the concept of value can make room for a materialist reading of sexuality that goes beyond the identifiably LGBTQ to address the historical specificity of capital's investment in formations of sexuality" (107). Wesling combines Marxist critique with a close reading of a film about a queer community in order to "recontextualize value as that concept which mediates between the material, the cultural, and the psychic" to create a more nuanced understanding of queer value (107). She argues that the term "queer value" means both understanding the Marxian value of accumulation and exchange in embodied queerness and queer work, as well as recognizing the indeterminate and unstable nature of value itself through "its refusal to remain fixed along the vectors of use or exchange" (107). The use of the term queer value in this dissertation allows for bringing together materialist concerns, such as burgeoning capitalist production, accumulation, labor, and exploitation, with a recognition of their inextricable connection to desire, sexuality, and affect, and it allows for the ability to explore the slipperiness of early modern value itself.

Wesling builds from Gayatri Spivak's observations on the relationship between cultural and economic systems that create disparate, often gendered values. Spivak considers that Value to Marx "escape[s] the onto-phenomenological question" of what it actually is (74). While she acknowledges that Jean-Joseph Goux and Marc Shell argue for a teleological understanding of money as the broadest representation of Value, Spivak suggests that value applies to both use and exchange systems and determinations (76-9). Furthermore, she posits that in contrast to socially necessary labor, there is also "the question of *affectively* necessary labor brings in the attendant question of desire and thus questions in yet another way the mere philosophical justice of capital logic" (79, emphasis original). In other words, labor that is more than the required amount to reproduce the subject so that they remain useful for capitalist exploitation and that

which is bodily, potentially even pleasurable, often historically categorized in gendered and racialized terms and un-valued (80-92). In tracing the materialist relationships between economic and cultural work, the concept of value may be further nuanced and understood.²⁷

Briefly mentioned earlier, Kevin Floyd's work bridging the critical divides between Marxism and queer theory further underscores the productive work to be done when combining the two fields of inquiry. Floyd particularly uses the concepts of totality and reification to argue for the ways in which both fields seek to answer questions of overarching structures and practices and how their critical methodologies can complement, rather than contradict, one another.²⁸ Marxist critique typically relegates individual characteristics such as sexuality away and apart from such questions, while queer theory traces the rise of heteronormativity as a compulsion across multiple social, political, and economic structures.²⁹ Floyd, however, argues that the "practice of totality thinking" can bring Marxism into conversation with queer theory. Where Marxism seeks to understand capital's role in separation, be it public or private, differentiation of labor, etc., and ultimately how "capital [acts] as the systemic, global source of this enforced social dispersal," then Floyd argues that queer theory is "a refusal of sexual particularization, a refusal of sexuality's routine epistemological dissociation from other horizons of social reality, has given rise here again to particularization's dialectical opposite" (6-

²⁷ For further feminist Marxist scholarship, see Lisa Duggan, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*.

²⁸ Marx states the following on totality from *A Contribution to Political Economy*: "In the social production of their existence, men inevitably enter into definite relations, which are independent of their will, namely relations of production appropriate to a given stage in the development of their material forces. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production of material life conditions the general process of social, political and intellectual life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but their social existence that determines their consciousness."

Georg Lukács states the following on reification from *History and Class Consciousness* that due to the acceptance of commodity fetishism: "there is no natural form in which human relations can be cast, no way in which man can bring his physical and psychic 'qualities' into play without their being subjected increasingly to this reifying process" (100).

²⁹ See Floyd 5.

7). Working also with what he terms “totality’s dialectical other,” Floyd argues that reification “compels an experience of privatization and isolation, and experience of exchange relations as impermeable to human intervention” by way of turning social relationships between people into forms of exchange value that seem to be given, unchangeable (17). He argues that “reification refers to a certain misapprehension of capitalist social relations; it identifies the very process of social differentiation within capital as fundamentally and objectively mystifying, as preempting any critical comprehension of the social” just as capital does for totality thinking (17). Floyd uses reification particularly as “an objective normalizing of formal abstraction throughout the totality of social life” as sexual desire becomes historically reified (23-4).³⁰

The London playhouses, as places of artistic expression and communal gathering, and as capitalist businesses, are an ideal space in which to apply the concept of queer value to question the negotiation of economic value(s), intimate relationships, and shifting social structures. These spaces responded to and in turn mediated early modern English economic, social, and political changes. Particularly as London experienced unprecedented growth in population and business, plays concerning money, wealth, and value gained popularity. Theatrical space is one of exploration and exchange, and playhouses provided an opportunity for engagement that was otherwise unavailable to the majority of London inhabitants. Sanchez argues that the “literal place of the theatre ... physically gathers and represents bodies and desires that exceed conventional gendered and sexual arrangements” while simultaneously “the virtual gathering

³⁰ Floyd continuously shows how during ongoing negotiations of capitalist changes, capital and value traverse both economic and queer spaces particularly with regard to neoliberalism. Will Fisher, however, provides an example of economic and queer critique brought together in the early modern period through tracing the overlapping histories of queer as a way of describing counterfeit coins and queer as homosexual. See Fisher, “Queer Money.”

space of manuscript and print is accessible through texts in the imaginary worlds they depict” (*Shakespeare* 82).

Each chapter of this dissertation analyzes how certain plays explore newly emerging capitalist conceptualizations of value through language and relationships combining, intertwining, and complicating economic and erotic value in order to question the changing nature of the self, the economy, and the English state. Chapter One discusses representations of male homosocial chains of credit and reputation that complicate, and at times supersede, those of the English heteronormative family structure. William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* (performed 1596-7) and *Measure for Measure* (written 1603-4, performed 1604) offer representations of queer economic value and desire that are in fact necessary to the English economy, though they also contend with historical anxieties regarding male eroticism, sodomy, and coinage. Chapter Two explores a complimentary financial institution, that of marriage. While England navigated its new capitalist practices at home, it increased its reach abroad, which in turn brought more opportunities to examine the relationships between economic power and gendered/queer desire. As such, the plays in this chapter, Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London* (written 1581, performed 1584), William Haughton’s *Englishmen for my Money, or A Woman Will Have Her Will* (written 1598), and Robert Daborne’s *A Christian Turned Turk* (written 1609-12, quarto 1612) examine international marriages between English subjects and strangers. Finally, Chapter Three interrogates English anxieties regarding the promise and peril of mercantile wealth within new representation-based economies as the state increased its international explorations. Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors* (performed 1594), Thomas Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West Part I, or A Girl Worth Gold* (written 1603), Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody, Part II* (published 1605), and John Fletcher and Philip

Massinger's *The Sea Voyage* (performed 1622) follow the circulation of gold specie and the rise in counterfeit gold across the London stage and around the globe.

By examining value through multiple lenses and drawing from multiple critical disciplines, this dissertation seeks to explore the relationship between English commercial trade practices and the growing understanding of the early modern self. Popular drama reflected that English subjects were using new economic language and metaphor to consider their world and to think about themselves. Such language was also being used to negotiate novel understandings of value in terms of eroticism, wealth, and international status. Analyzing the plays in this dissertation also allows for a broadened understanding of the varied ways in which plays were presenting economic changes, questions, and interactions. By incorporating the concept of queer value into how I bring plays together in each chapter, I seek to understand more fully the theater's place while early modern English capitalism was challenging traditional hierarchies of value (monarchical, racial, gendered, wealth, sociocultural) in favor of a stronger merchant class, and how in other respects, new economic practices were also being challenged.

The rise of the credit economy emphasized an individual's reputation and his profound (and profitable) relationships with other men, while simultaneously monetary coin represented a changing relationship between the sovereign's authority and their subjects, particularly as England sought to strengthen its international status. Certain plays use economic and erotic language, situations, and relationships to ask broader questions regarding the creation of self, national identity and hybridity, and state power. In reading the plays in this dissertation through queer theory's attention to inconsistencies or destabilizations, I explore the ways in which economic and erotic value both work with and against one another to understand how the changing economy subsumed certain queer practices in order to produce new understandings of

subjectivity and profit (perhaps even create space for rejecting certain capitalist mandates of self-commodification, accumulation, and alienation). The intimacy and eroticism reflected in early modern economic practices and language reveal a shift toward the conceptualization of commodification of desire and the (created) self and a new understanding of value. Desire and desirability are described in commercial terminology as well as intimate words, which illustrates both of their necessity in new understanding of desire. Ultimately, this dissertation aims to illuminate the relationship between early modern English economics and queer value as both were represented, challenged, and changed onstage. I examine representations of erotic and economic value in Early Modern English theater in order to understand how the rise of capitalism changed understandings of the self, and I argue that changing early modern economic practices created new understandings of what is valued and valuable, which in turn changed how English individuals understood and created their own senses of themselves.

Chapter One - “Look on beauty, / And you shall see ‘tis purchased by the weight”: Credit, Reputation, and Homosocial Friendship in Queer(ed) Capitalism

Early modern English capitalism was founded upon homosocial economic practices that were constantly (re)negotiated and performed publicly. Laura Kolb argues that “Early modern English credit relations were both socially embedded and rhetorically constructed, and they were driven by the interplay of persuasive speech, conduct, and interpretation” (3). Burgeoning English capitalism relied on homosocial chains of credit in order to create interconnected social and economic systems. These relationships were not only integral financial connections, but they were also celebrated intimate relationships between the men who invested their capital, time, and reputation in other men. The economic connections between these men built from the prioritization of early modern homosocial white friendship, which includes deep intimacy and material, emotional, and religious connections that privilege it in some cases over heterosexual marriage for its financial profitability.

The early modern “culture of credit,” the term coined by Muldrew, is in opposition to, though deeply connected with, the burgeoning early modern process of usury. Early capitalism monetized and profited from the economic relationships between men to strengthen social, economic, and gender hierarchies as well as solidify centralized state power. Usury, too, is an economic practice predicated on trust and credit, but where credit builds profitability on the (queer) relationships between men, usury is associated with negative queer practice, such as sodomy. Many of the Elizabethan and Jacobean plays that explore credit relationships, their promises and their perils, interrogate the social, political, and personal questions brought about by these new practices. Ultimately, as Kolb argues, “language and interpretation shaped economic relations on a fundamental level ... period writers explored its implications for the

construction of the self, for social bonds, and for the fabric of society” (3). Plays and poetry provided the space for theatrical and creative processes such as “making, inventing, feigning, counterfeiting, dissembling,” and more, which “provided a vocabulary and a set of cognitive structures for thinking about credit-driven behavior and its effects on individuals, social bonds, and society” (10). Early modern English credit economies and relationships were practices that not only mirror heteronormative familial procreation, but ultimately may supersede the heteronormative mandates of the state as England became more aggressive in its economic expansion.

As discussed in the Introduction, the early modern English economy transitioned significantly in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries to one predicated upon credit, debt, accumulation, risk, and interest. Muldrew, in his foundational work on “the *culture* of credit,” argues that sixteenth-century England was fundamentally changed both socially and economically by the new market system which relied on credit, lending, and debt collection, as the circulation of coins was inadequate to support all of the transactions taking place in the English economy.³¹ Muldrew argues that “credit was a public means of social communication and circulating judgement about the value of other members of communities,” and this judgement was rendered through a “currency of reputation” constantly negotiated by members of social and economic spheres (2-3). Muldrew demonstrates that to an early modern subject, a creditor had significant social and ethical responsibility to themselves and to their community, and because the majority of credit was established based on interpersonal, emotional

³¹ See Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* 2-3.

relationships, there was a crucial element of trust between creditor and borrower.³² These interpersonal relationships led to what Muldrew terms “chains of credit,” which grew increasingly complex and lengthy in the second half of the sixteenth century (3).³³ Kolb expands this concept to argue that “interpersonal bonds [had] social and affective content alongside their economic function. Moreover, a single individual might be involved in numerous debt relations at any given time, operating as one node in a vast network of linked and crisscrossing bonds” (2). She suggests that the credit and lending taking place through these bonds were not only predicated on “structures of affiliation and affection,” but that the economic practices actually “nourished and reinforced those structures” (2). These chains coincide with the rise in expanded trade routes and growing consumerism, particularly for exotic luxury goods. There also grew to be a conflation of an individual’s, or a household’s, material accumulation with their social trustworthiness and communal responsibility, a set of connections between wealth and status which was both complex and fundamental to the success of the English economy. Muldrew recognizes that as English trade expanded during the end of Elizabeth’s reign, the necessity of “individual demonstrations of trust,” through which reputation was understood and upon which credit as currency was based, became increasingly difficult to maintain (7). The breakdown of these trust relationships led to a significant rise in litigation over unpaid debts and shifts in understanding of social relations and responsibility.³⁴

Muldrew traces how, as the use of credit increased in the late sixteenth century and early seventeenth, many transactions were predicated on public displays of negotiation and agreement.

³² Muldrew states that “most credit was extended between individual emotional agents, and it meant that you were willing to trust someone to pay you in the future. Similarly, to have credit in a community meant that you could be trusted to pay back your debts” (3).

³³ Muldrew also refers to these relationships as “chains of obligation” when referring to the connections between large numbers of strangers linked through individual transactions. See 9-10.

³⁴ See Muldrew 5-7 for examples of debt litigation.

He argues that “most credit was extended orally in front of witnesses,” and that nearly all English households were familiar with this exchange (96). Because that credit was negotiated orally, its destruction could spread extremely quickly. Muldrew argues that:

Because credit was based on words, it could be communicated much more rapidly than knowledge about actual bargains, which might take months to complete. This is why there was such a pressing concern to preserve reputation; because doubt could be spread very rapidly with unfortunate consequences. For this reason Thomas Wilson claimed that a slanderer was ‘worse then anye thiefe, because a good name is better then all the goodes in the world.’ (154-5)

This shift required the ability to construct and maintain “the self as a legible text” signifying creditability, Kolb argues, and each participant in a credit chain needed to “present oneself in the most positive, and therefore most profitable, manner and how to assess others’ self-presentations” (3). In fact, all members of a household needed to uphold honest and trustworthy reputations in order to obtain credit, especially as commercial competition became more severe.³⁵ However, though women participated in buying and selling certain goods for their households, it was predominantly men who engaged in lending and credit relationships in both local and global economies.³⁶ Credit and reputation were even codified for young men traveling on business in the form of “letters of credit” from those whom they had worked with who themselves had strong reputations.³⁷ Alexandra Shepard argues that credit was not only measured in terms of internal worth; she proposes that material possessions were also a measure of creditworthiness: “What one had ... was as important as what one did to assessments of economic standing” (“Crediting Women” 16). Nevertheless, Muldrew argues that by maintaining

³⁵ See Muldrew 148-9.

³⁶ In her analysis of church court records of credits and debts, Alexandra Shepard argues that married women did participate in certain aspects of the early modern credit economy. She proposes that “As savers and accountants of household goods married women were critical brokers of the informal credit relations through which the early modern economy functioned” (“Crediting Women” 17). Natasha Korda suggests that there is also evidence that unmarried women and widows provided credit in rural and provincial areas particularly after the 1571 Usury Act. See “Dame Usury: Gender, Credit, and (Ac)counting in the Sonnets and *The Merchant of Venice*.”

³⁷ See Muldrew 153.

a good reputation, and therefore good credit, an individual became known as wealthy and creditable (153).

Early modern reputation straddles an uneasy position as both a use and exchange value that represented enormous potential for value. Kolb argues that “Credit ... referred most frequently to economized or economizeable forms of reputation. Yet it also denoted communal belief in a person’s worth and word, and so bore a real relationship to perceived inward qualities – to self and soul” (67). Muldrew suggests that “Because households were the basic economic unit, reputation had definite competitive economic implications, and this is why credit became synonymous with reputation. For this reason, making a distinction between economically rational transactions and other social transactions, such as courtship, sex, patronage or parenthood, does not make sense” (149). Men’s reputation is an immaterial, yet crucial economic attribute; Alexandra Shepard describes it as an “essential” public feature in order to engage with the marketplace (*Accounting* 25). Crucially, reputation also embodies and possesses legal and material significance, however. As Kolb argues, “commercial and non-commercial forms of reputation co-existed and could be conceived of separately. At the same time, they were described with overlapping vocabularies, signaling structural and ideological overlap” (67).

In 1613, James published the *Edict and Severe Censure Against Private Combats and Combatants*, which outlawed dueling in England for the first time. Jennifer A. Low claims that dueling was immensely popular throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century with the rise of the “English duel of honor,” an act which grew to represent powerful, self-determined masculine identity and solidified social class and status (2-3). Low argues that the duel grew to become transgressive and “ritualized violence” that created and characterized a range of class-based masculine identities as the Tudor or Stuart landed gentry and aristocracy’s understandings of

honor shifted dramatically (5-6). Importantly, dueling was extralegal, and the practice not only perpetuated violence, but perpetuated violence outside of monarchical control.³⁸

The 1613 edict is also considered to be one of the foundations of English defamation common law, as it is the first royal mandate to outlaw libel and slander. Its publication coincides with the explosion of defamation litigation that M. Lindsay Kaplan and Lawrence Stone examine at the turn of the seventeenth century, but in particular, it legally constructs and defines a man's reputation.³⁹ The law declares that it is illegal to harm someone's reputation in the same way that it is illegal to harm someone's physical body. In other words, the edict conflates reputation with the body to emphasize its inherent presence, its necessity, and its potential to help or be harmed. This conceptualization of reputation as an explicitly physical presence when combined with its ephemeral nature in the credit economy is why it is so necessary, so powerful, and so dangerous to lose. The following is a particularly telling passage:

Touching the maine point, it is euident that Wrongs, which are the grounds of Quarrels, are either *Verball*; that is, when one Gentleman accuseth another of some dishonest fact, or giues the Lye: or *Reall*; vnder which Head may be comprised, Blowes, Stripes, or Hurts in all degrees, though they differ in proportion; and beside all scornfull looks, actes, or figures, that implie contempt, all Libels published in any sort to the disgrace of any Gentleman, or any person, whom that Gentleman is bound in credite to defend, as himself: for all these trench as deeply into reputation, as the stabbe is felt doeth into a man that esteemes Honour. (42-3)

It is significant here that wrongful acts can be spoken, as in the case of verbal slander, in addition to physical aggressions. Interestingly, it is not illegal just to lie about someone, but it is also illegal to accuse another of *being* a liar (to give the lie) ("to give the lie to, 2a"). To call someone a liar brings their whole character into question, whereas to accuse someone of a lie asserts that

³⁸ See Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern Drama and Culture*.

³⁹ See Kaplan and Stone, *The Culture of Slander in Early Modern England*.

they have been false once and only implies that they might have been at other times. This dangerous potential hints at the relationship between reputation and trustworthiness that Muldrew sees in the economic sphere; that even to accuse someone of dishonesty can not only tarnish, but actually permanently wound or maim reputation (42). Most importantly, though, to harm someone's reputation is equated with harming their body, which underscores the necessity of cultivating and maintaining one's reputation (42). It is also explicit that multiple men in chains of economic obligation to one another, men "bound in credite to defend, as himself" are affected in these scenarios (42). Many early modern writers explore the physical and spiritual connection between men in credit relations; Montaigne claims that between friends, "souls mingle and blend with each other so completely that they efface the seam that joined them," ("Of Friendship") while the anonymous English author of *The trial of true friendship* (1596) wrote that "my friend...is another my self" (B1v). Thomas Wilson was not wrong to want to protect his name and reputation as forcefully as possible, as they define one's public self.

It is also important to note that the law recognizes the economic connections based on multiple peoples' reputations; Muldrew points out that, with the diversification and complication of borrowing, lending and trading, credit and reputation became the primary ways to determine who was trustworthy enough to add to already established "chains of friends and business associates," which led to "structural chains of obligation" (152). According to the law, to hurt one has the power to hurt several, as a man has a responsibility to defend those whom the "gentleman is bound in credit to defend, as himself" (42). Incorporating the dialectical meaning of early modern "credit," we understand that being "bound in credit" refers to both an emotional and economic relationship between individuals in business, as for example the bonding between Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice* (42). Thus, the law attempts to protect both the

personal and public significance reputation maintains as well as to preserve the state's ability to control and benefit from reputation's value.

The edict also generates creates an understanding of where reputation comes from and how it should be protected:

Verball wrongs expressed by reprochfull termes, whether they be spoken to the parties face, that is depraued, or behind his backe, breed ill conceits in standers by, besides the deepe disgrace, which he sustaines by foule aspersions vpon faire grounds. By this meane all men may bee robbed of that reputation, which as a *Birth right* they brought with them into the world, and cannot forfeit nor forgoe, without some acte done by themselves vnworthily. The words or termes by which men may receaue disgrace, are in number too many, and in nature too different, to be comprised in a List: but this rule neither faileth in the point of scandal, nor the prooffe of scorne, that wherinsoeuer reputation is agreeued, though it be but in the weight of one graine, it ought to be repaired, and as much restored, as hath beene diminished. (43-44)

Although the law emphasizes again the communal necessity of guarding reputation and trusting others, it also allows that a reputation is natural, that it is one's "birth right" to be maintained and protected (43). Interestingly though, the law uses both reproductive and economic language to describe the loss of reputation. Just as chains of credit and obligation create familial and intimate structures, so slander and the loss of reputation "breed" communal ills (43). Then, a man "cannot forfeit" reputation unless he acts inappropriately, and while the law acknowledges the difficulty in quantifying reputation's value, it nevertheless attempts to do so by characterizing even a small defamation as "the weight of one grain" (43-4). Therefore, reputation is both a part of oneself as well as a circulating currency, a presumption of wealth and worth. Muldrew proposes that "The link between the material and cultural can be reconstructed in a more flexible manner if we think of reputation or credit as a currency within a linguistic, or rhetorical, system of circulation which considered wants and needs in terms of social relations of exchange and negotiation. Such

linguistic evaluation, argument and description in turn had an effect on people's access to material goods, and on their judgements about what constituted wealth" (150).

Kolb argues that credit relations created what she terms "social fictions," revealing the performative and constructed nature of credit-based relationships and economic practices (10). She claims that "the rhetoricity of credit relations produced social fictions, and these fictions took many forms: from the transitory, improvised performances that facilitated localized transactions, to the longer-term project of maintaining a reputation within a community, to the widespread indeterminacy that arose from the constant interplay of economic performance and interpretation across English society" (10). She also posits that these credit relationships could be better understood through their representations in literary fiction and performances of the same time period because of "credit's multifaceted presentation in period literature," both fictional and nonfictional, which trouble and explore "credit's grounding—whether that grounding is understood to be goods, reputation, or something else" (11).

The necessity of negotiating credit and reputation affected many spheres of English life and literature, and it particularly impacted the London playhouses. Amanda Bailey points out the intimate relationship between the increasing overseas trade and corresponding local consumerism with the rise in theater's public popularity as well as plays' preoccupation with economic matters. She suggests that "The developing economic contours of English society generally shaped the vicissitudes of theatrical production, influenced day-to-day dealings between hired players and heads of playing companies, and served as a structuring principle of drama itself" ("The Theater" 99). Bailey, Forman, and others build on the work of Agnew and

Shell to explore how economic language not only permeates many English Renaissance plays, but in fact shape new understandings of interpersonal relationships, value, and genre.⁴⁰

The growing focus on economic practices and their complicated relationships to shifting social expectations and relationships plays out onstage in many early modern plays.

Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, first performed 1596-7, interrogates how early modern individuals conceptualized selfhood and participated in, and at times resisted, capitalist practices that are predicated on both economic and erotic values.⁴¹ The play's emphasis on credit and reputation reveals how reputation was conceptualized as a precious "social hieroglyphic" as well as a vulnerable liability.⁴² The play further elucidates how the burgeoning capitalist practice of building homosocial credit networks of lending and debt is intertwined with and connected to the public, performative, and economically and emotionally significant practice of early modern male (homosocial) friendship. It also emphasizes which members of the growing merchant class, and who of those that did business with them, were able to hold reputations and who were not. *Measure for Measure*, performed 1604, too interrogates the growing significance of credit-based relationships in the seventeenth century and how they redefine individual, social, and political values.⁴³

⁴⁰ See Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750*; Marc Shell, *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economies from the Medieval to the Modern Era*; Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage*; Amanda Bailey, *Of Bondage: Debt, Property, and Personhood in Early Modern England*; and Levine, *Practicing the City: Early Modern London on Stage*.

⁴¹ See John Drakakis, "Introduction: *The Merchant of Venice*" 112.

⁴² Marx argues that in comparing labor and exchanging commodities, human beings attach social significance and coding to products, which require negotiation and analysis. He claims that "when we bring the products of our labour into relation with each other as values, it is not because we see in these articles the material receptacles of homogenous human labour. Quite the contrary: whenever, by an exchange, we equate as values our different products, by that very act, we also equate, as human labour, the different kinds of labour expended upon them. We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it. Value, therefore, does not stalk about with a label describing what it is. It is value, rather, that converts every product into a social hieroglyphic. Later on, we try to decipher the hieroglyphic, to get behind the secret of our own social products; for to stamp an object of utility as a value, is just as much a social product as language." See *Capital Volume I: A Critique of Political Economy* 54.

⁴³ See A.R. Braunmuller and Robert N. Watson, "Introduction" 111.

The Merchant of Venice is particularly well situated to explore social, political, and economic changes taking place as European states increased the frequency and aggression of international trade in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.⁴⁴ Peter Grav points out that Venice was a prominent center for trade in the Renaissance, and it had a complicated reputation itself.⁴⁵ The city was a renowned location at which to buy and trade exotic goods, but it was also a city known for the influence of money over all else, as social hierarchies in the city shifted from being based on land or title to being based on accumulated wealth and finance (84-5). Grav argues that the economic setting influences the ways that characters interact, writing that “practically all aspects of interpersonal relationships seem tainted by the scent of money” (84). Although the play’s title seems to speak to the importance of a single merchant, Grav argues that in fact all of the character’s emotional dealings are rendered in financial signifiers, so that the play becomes not so much about a single trader as much as a social system that can see individuals only as propertied value (86, 91).⁴⁶

Antonio, potentially the eponymous merchant, begins the play in a state of melancholy. His friends attempt to deduce why his mood is sour, reminding him that he has an argosy out to sea with the potential to be lost, so perhaps “Antonio / Is sad to think upon his merchandise” (1.1.38-9). Antonio denies this, however, as he has diversified his numerous ventures in an attempt to protect them. He also denies being love-sick as his friends insinuate next, however. Bassanio, Antonio’s close friend, too engages him, but not to cheer him. Sheepishly, Bassanio reminds his friend that he has vastly overspent himself, having “disabled” his “estate” by living

⁴⁴ See Drakakis 8 and R.H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

⁴⁵ See Grav, *Shakespeare and the Economic Imperative: “what’s Aught but as ‘tis Valued?”* particularly 84.

⁴⁶ See David G. McPherson, *Shakespeare, Jonson, and the Myth of Venice* for further discussion of the ways in which ideas of Venice were constructed, particularly four salient “myths” of the city that were understood: Venice the Rich, Venice the Wise, Venice the Just, and ‘*Venezia-città-galante*,’ and how they contributed to complex dynamics of wealth, power, and decline in the city.

too lavishly, even admitting that it is Antonio to whom he “owe[s] the most in money and in love,” though he claims to have a plan to clear his debts (1.1.123,131). Antonio promises to help him in the strongest terms, as he declares “My purse, my person, my extremest means / Lie all unlocked to your occasions” (1.1.138-9). John Drakakis argues that that Antonio’s pun between “purse” and “person” is meant to associate one’s ability to hold wealth (“purse”) with one’s identity (“personhood”), creating identity that is intrinsically defined by money (183). He also suggests a sexual meaning intended in the word “purse” because the word also connotes “scrotum” (*OED* 7a). Therefore, Antonio underscores his commitment to Bassanio both financially and sexually. Antonio offers all of himself, both economically and erotically, solidifying the connection between male economic obligation, profit (money bred from money), and the sexualized nature of the transaction.⁴⁷ This chapter will return to the connection between Antonio’s material offer as well as his bodily suggestion.

Unfortunately for Bassanio, Antonio has no liquid assets or moneys available as all his ships are out to sea. This is why Antonio encourages him to “Try what my credit can in Venice do” so that Bassanio may borrow money against Antonio’s reputation and use it to appear a wealthy suitor to Portia (1.1.180). Drakakis argues that it is “a genuine friendship that extends to an offer of financial assistance that will enable the Lord Bassanio to replenish his own coffers” when Antonio offers to share his credit with the young man (51). In doing so, Antonio and Bassanio become economically and metaphorically bonded in the young aristocrat’s quest for Portia’s hand and wealth. I explore the bond further later, but as Mark Netzloff points out, “part of the play’s strategies to recuperate value entail a linguistic obfuscation of the distinctions and

⁴⁷ See Drakakis 184, footnote 139: “This also anticipates the ambiguity of the later ‘casket scenes’ (2.1, 2.7, 2.9 and 3.2) where the act of unlocking determines the future of the participants in a sexual *and* financial game. From the outset the critical connection between financial investment and ‘breeding’ (i.e. the increase of one’s assets) is suggested.”

tensions between material currency and the forms of representative currency, such as credit or bills of exchange, which increasingly facilitated international trade and domestic borrowing ... Antonio's 'credit' possesses an economic and semantic flexibility that allows it to take both material and abstract form" (162). Antonio's credit acts as his ability to turn his reputation into money, but it is also a commodity in and of itself.

This chapter does not argue that Antonio is necessarily a homosexual character; rather, the economic practice of extending one's credit and reputation is an act imbued with material, emotional, and erotic significance due to its relationship to early modern homosocial friendship.⁴⁸ This makes it a queer act.⁴⁹ The communal bonds established in credit and moneylending are in fact deeply connected to early modern male friendship. Alan Bray traces the imbrication of homoeroticism in male homosocial bonds of friendship in early modern England. Bray argues that male homosocial friendship was a profoundly public, codified, and emotionally significant experience that influenced and was influenced by myriad social, political, religious, and economic structures within communities.⁵⁰ Bray stresses that friendship was not a private or merely personal act, but rather that friendship was constructed and reified through performed ritual, oaths, emotional and physical intimacy, and understood mutual obligation.⁵¹ It is important to recognize that one of the foundations of sixteenth century friendship, according to Bray, was a perceived lack of self-interest or advancement and a Christian foundation. Early

⁴⁸ Eve Sedgwick argues that in early modern literature, there exists "the presence of male heterosexual desire, in the form of a desire to consolidate partnership with authoritative males in and through the bodies of females,' and it is women's presences that threaten homosocial relationships between men (*Between Men* 38). This chapter challenges this argument to propose that the homosocial bond in fact may have queer love and/or desire embedded in it.

⁴⁹ See Will Fisher, "Queer Money" and his argument for the connection between legitimate and illegitimate forms of sexual and economic exchange during the early modern period, and the increasing difficulty in distinguishing the natural versus unnatural processes of both.

⁵⁰ See Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* and *The Friend*.

⁵¹ See Bray, *The Friend* 9-10 for examples of rituals of friendship, particularly those that mirrored Christian ceremonies.

modern friendship is not only an emotional support, but rather it is another link in the chain of economic and social obligation that connected men and households together. Credit practices too incorporate elements of this homosocial, erotically charged friendship model that prioritizes male intimacy, connection, and generation (similar to the creation of progeny).

Bray focuses particularly on the obligation exchanged in early modern friendship, which often included financial and material responsibilities, and the prevalence of the “familiar letter” exchanged between men as a symbol of intimacy, a metonymic extension of the friend shared, that also had the potential to be witnessed by other men outside of the two bonded by their relationship. Bray argues that “Friendship was dangerous, and it was so because friendship signified in a public sphere. That was as true of England in the sixteenth century as it had been of the fourteenth ... Lending money was a ‘kynd of freindshipp’” (*Friend* 59). Between early modern men, a friend’s financial, social, and political interests were inextricably intertwined with one’s own, which simultaneously had potential for significant profitability or loss. As Bray claims, friendship “was sufficient to make you use influence on their behalf, or expect them to use theirs for you, to obtain payment perhaps, or to settle a dispute” (*Friend* 61).

Bray also highlights how early modern friendship was not only connected to the interconnected household structure that created familial communities, but it itself was a kinship between men building family-like structures. Bray claims that “an individual lived in a potential plurality of families, in the strict sense of the term. He or she could be part of one such family in terms of blood relations and simultaneously incorporated into another in terms of the ritual kinship created by betrothal or marriage, by baptism, or by a ‘sworn’ brotherhood,” and it is these multiple friendships and subsequent kinships and family structures that “created that web of obligations and friendship that held the society of England together” (*Friend* 104-5). Public

and meaningful friendship links households together, much like the chains of credit and debt discussed earlier in this chapter. These kinship linkages were deeply important, including providing and caring for a friend's family as one's own if the friend died, as friends were bound in love and body as one.⁵² Friendship was a significant responsibility, and "given solemnly and before witnesses, its gestures gave to the obligations of friendship the objective character that made them indistinguishable from those of kinship" (*Friend* 174). Kolb agrees that "Friendship and finance skimmed close together," and that "Despite the risks created by its amorphous, hard-to-control boundaries, credit in the period became part of the 'all things' that friends were said to hold 'in common'" (81). This is because in friendship, men were expected to remain bound together both when they were successful and when they lost wealth or owed debts.⁵³

Traub argues that Bray's work locates "male intimacy in a range of early modern social systems" (*Thinking Sex* 41). Bray suggests that physical eroticism between men, what he terms "the gift of the body," includes public embraces, kisses, and the sharing of emotional intimacy (*The Friend* 150). Crucially, he claims, this physical sharing in fact contributed to, rather than undermined, social and cultural systems in place. Bray terms this gift a "countenance," which was a form of capital that communicated "a friend's evident favor" and "the influence it advertised was a gift that could readily be turned to advantage" (*The Friend* 150). Bray argues that "The gift of the body was a sign of power and security in the friend, and wherever power was diffused – into whatever levels it seeped – so too was potentially diffused the gift of the friend's body" (*The Friend* 158).

Antonio and Bassanio's relationship in *The Merchant of Venice* reveals how both the credit economy and early modern English friendship are queer practices. Credit and reputation

⁵² See Bray, *The Friend* 110-6

⁵³ See Kolb 79-81.

are significant portions of both of these relationships, as Bassanio borrows against Antonio's credit and physical body. Reputation is a queer value in certain social situations, but it is still heavily regulated by codes of normative (gendered, racial, religious) conduct. To be a friend, to be in business together, was more than purely economic. It was an extension of oneself similar to the binding of bodies and souls together in marriage.⁵⁴ Kolb proposes that "In the figure of Antonio, Shakespeare dramatizes an extreme position with respect to the interwoven concerns of credit and friendship: an enactment of 'among friends, all things should be common' that comes as close to literalizing the proverb as possible, along with a logical (if not practical) corollary" (100).

Consider again the way that Shylock convinces the merchants to agree to his terms as he illustrates the queerness inherent in early modern credit relations. When Bassanio balks at the request that Antonio will owe Shylock his body as surety, Shylock attempts to reassure him by reminding the young man that the sale of human flesh is much less profitable than "muttons, beeves or goats," and he lies by reiterating that this is merely a friendly transaction: "To buy his favour I extend this friendship" (1.3.163-4). Although Shylock could mean that by lending him this money interest free and with such an ostensibly low repayment, he purchases Antonio's friendship or goodwill, the sixteenth century definition of "favour" also includes a material meaning as a "an appearance, aspect, look" or "feature" of one's body ("favour, 9a"). This is striking because it calls back to a dualistic understanding of reputation, not credit; a man's reputation is both an immaterial economic attribute and a physical material one. His credit is merely a marketplace value; his reputation is also one of his "essential" public features, in both senses of the word (Shepard *Accounting for Oneself* 25). Shylock's sarcasm reiterates that part of

⁵⁴ See Bray, *The Friend* 10.

the bond is the flesh of my flesh, the displacement of one body of a friend for another, almost another form of breeding (Antonio: “As to thy friends, for when did friendship take / A breed for barren metal of his friend?” [1.3.128-9]).

Drakakis, too argues that “As the ‘merchant of Venice’ Antonio registers all of the tensions that are generated as a result of the convergence of the obligations of friendship and economic activity” (60). Antonio’s actions in lending his money, his reputation, and his body reveal the conflation of the individual’s value in financial and homoerotic terms. Antonio’s offer to extend his purse and personhood to Bassanio is not only an offer to extend his chain of credit; it is a form of kinship and family building through the generative act of money lending. As Drakakis argues, “the inscription of the ambivalent ‘purse’ in the semantic field of ‘person’ indicates that he is willing to enter into an agreement that will assist, in part vicariously, in the generation of money *and* progeny. From the very outset two opposed types of generative patriarchal activity are brought into a differential relationship with each other that distinguishes the sterile ‘breeding’ of money (usury) as the demonized obverse of the act of biological generation” (56).

Antonio’s position in *The Merchant of Venice* highlights a contradiction inherent in early modern English capitalism: the privileging of homosocial chains of moneylending and credit and the demonization of the practice of usury. Drakakis argues:

Antonio is the link connecting two different kinds of social organization. The one is epitomized by the aristocratic Bassanio and implicates the merchant in the process of sustaining a particular social hierarchy, while the other, epitomized by the Jew, demonstrates the extent to which the power vested in circulating capital has shifted irrevocably from one social group to another. The play invites us to reflect upon the condoning of the one and the ridiculing of the other. (57)

Teresa Nugent suggests that “Despite the fact that early modern drama characterized usurers as malevolent parasites on society, the plays [that include usury and counterfeiting] ... illustrate an

emerging perception that moneylending also created constructive communal bonds within an emerging culture of credit” (201-2). For example, *Measure for Measure*, performed in 1604, also explores the influences that credit and the credit economy assert on interpersonal relationships, and despite the play’s supposed happy ending with two marriages, there is no resolution to the moral questions raised by a fictionalized Vienna where sexual, economic, and political desires are distressingly entwined.⁵⁵

Both texts illustrate the connection between usury and illegitimacy. In 1524, Martin Luther published his scathing tract *On Trade and Usury* condemning the practice as unjust, un-neighborly, and artificial to the point where he accuses the usurer of being a divine imposter attempting to create something new from nothing (19). Luther’s sentiment reveals and perpetuates early modern suspicion of usurers who profit from others’ labor, and his suspicion is morally and religiously motivated, as well. It is not enough to discourage moral Christians from lending money at interest, he must also condemn the Jewish individuals who continue to do so while seemingly thinking of themselves as god-like figures. Interestingly, Luther condemns absolutely “the practice of one person becoming surety for another” (21), as Antonio does for Bassanio. Luther declares that acting as another’s surety is “too lofty for man” and “unseemly for it is a presumptuous encroachment upon the work of God,” a subtle connection to his hatred of usury (22).

Religious, moral, and economic writers under Elizabeth and James were deeply concerned with the question of usury. Lloyd Edward Kermode suggests that authors were not always consistent in their anxieties toward and understandings of usury; he claims that “religious

⁵⁵ A.R. Braunmuller and Robert N. Watson propose that *Measure for Measure* be considered a “problem play” rather than a comedy because it “wrestle[s] with a social problem, provoking complicated thought and even discomfort rather than primarily pleasure” (2).

and moral authors drew on the Bible and early churchmen to decry or apologize for usury; economic and political authors wrote explications and analyses of usury to place it in the early modern world of trade and international relations; and imaginative authors used it as a means by which to label characters' 'nature', or as a trope through which to understand narrow strands or wide swaths of culture" ("Introduction" 1-2). Crucially, however, credit relations, lending, borrowing, and debt collection were becoming increasingly necessary elements of England's flourishing international business and trade.⁵⁶

In 1571, Elizabeth issued a proclamation officially limiting the interest rate on usury to ten percent, though it was difficult to enforce and there were numerous complaints about usurers extorting higher percentages from their customers.⁵⁷ Historically, there were several reasons for contention surrounding the practice of usury in England: religious interdictions against it, the national financial necessity of lending money amidst England's growing international venture capitalism, and the Aristotelian model of unnatural (monetary) breeding. Usury straddled a complex divide by being both a pragmatic economic issue and a coded social signifier of moral and religious worth, which ultimately allowed it to be recoded as arguments for and against certain practices, decisions, and teachings.⁵⁸

There was significant debate over the degree to which usury could be acceptable; from "regular business money-lending" to "deliberately 'biting' usury," or interest terms that were too harsh.⁵⁹ Christian writers had historically pointed out that usury as a practice was condemned

⁵⁶ See Kermode, "Introduction"

⁵⁷ Elizabeth's proclamation was in fact a revival of Henry VIII's 1545 declaration of a ten percent limit on usury that had been abolished by Henry's son, Edward. See Kermode, "Introduction" 2.

⁵⁸ It is necessary to note that usury included a range of practices that encompassed "unnatural" forms of generation and procreation. The practices were also affiliated with decay, barrenness, and feces, and usurers were described as devourers and consumers. See Fisher, "Queer Money," Nugent, "Usury and Counterfeiting."

⁵⁹ See Kermode, "Introduction" 4.

throughout the Bible and therefore should not be practiced.⁶⁰ Eric Kerridge argues that in 1571, when Parliament debated usury and Elizabeth issued the Statute Against Usury, there emerged a distinct difference between usury and interest for the English economy. Kerridge claims that usury “was the taking of payment merely and solely for a loan” (34). The usurer lacked the Christian good will to lend money graciously and without thought to themselves in a true act of friendship; the usurer risked nothing for their gain.⁶¹ Interest, on the other hand, was a rightful compensation to one who risked losing part or all of their investment while still lending charitably.⁶² Kerridge points out that there was significant confusion between the two practices, however, particularly when chains of credit and their subsequent transactions grew longer and more substantial. This was particularly problematic because usury was technically illegal, but the practice was tolerated, and “legitimate interest” was permitted by both ecclesiastical and royal courts (35-6). The 1571 Act, he claims, denied usurers legal recourse if they lost their principal investments, but the act “tolerated [the practice of lending at a rate of] up to ten per cent” so long as the “the borrower actively willed the transaction” (37).

Changing attitudes toward wealth and success in England necessitated borrowing at greater amounts, as well. 1571 was also the year that the Royal Exchange opened in London, an economic, social, and political feat accomplished by Thomas Gresham that this dissertation studies further in the third chapter. The last few decades of the sixteenth century saw aggressive

⁶⁰ Exodus 22:25: “If you lend money to one of my people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; charge no interest.”; Leviticus 25:35-7: “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit.”; Deuteronomy 23:19: “Do not charge a fellow Israelite interest, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest. You may charge a foreigner interest, but not a fellow Israelite, so that the Lord your God may bless you in everything you put your hand to in the land you are entering to possess.”; Proverbs 28:8: “Whoever increases wealth by taking interest or profit from the poor amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.”

⁶¹ Kerridge points out that “the usurer lent not money for gain, but for certain and assured gain” (34).

⁶² See Kerridge 34-5, Kermode 5-6.

English expansion of foreign trade and importation, as well as rising prices on imported and local goods.⁶³ There was a subsequent increase in the necessity of loans to conduct business, increasingly at rates above ten percent, which in turn corresponded to what Kerridge argues was a “shift of opinion on the ethics of usury” (37). Usury became associated with England’s rising merchant class, and its wealth and prosperity. While some writers and preachers continued to rail against usurious practices as sinful and exploitative, it was increasingly regarded as an economic necessity by those in power, if not necessarily a good. Kermode, too, argues that “The conflict between morality and necessity really lies as a foundation beneath the usury tracts and drama of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries” (6). Even Francis Bacon argued that “it is better to mitigate usury, by declaration, than to suffer it to rage, by connivance” in 1625 (*The Essayes or Counsel* 125).

Kermode and Nugent argue that there is a shift in the portrayal of usurers in early modern English theater: in the sixteenth-century, most usurers on stage are stereotypically and clearly foreign, whereas later plays of the seventeenth-century include English usurers, as well.⁶⁴ Foreigners occupied complicated social, political, racial, and religious positions in Elizabethan and Jacobean England, but this chapter is particularly invested in the economic anxieties surrounding foreign merchants and usurers as they interacted with English merchants. Particularly important was the representation of Jewish usurers and the implicit threats therein. Increasingly, these staged strangers became foils against which English usurers and moneylenders could measure themselves and be reassured of their own righteousness. James Shapiro argues that “At a time when English men and women were increasingly engaged in lending at interest, sometimes demanding excessive rates of return, it was reassuring to learn that

⁶³ See Kerridge 37.

⁶⁴ See Kermode, “Introduction” 12-3, Nugent 201-2.

they were not as bad as Jews,” and he suggests that it is Jewish usury in particular that evoked the dangerous, violent anti-Semitic tropes such as ritual murder or Jews drinking Christian blood (100). Kermode, too claims that the prejudice against Jews along with the combination of the stereotypical usurer and Jewish character on stage conflated the two until each evokes the other in plays concerned with moneylending and credit.⁶⁵ The staged Jewish usurer was able to act as an embodiment of the evils of usury, even if the threat was not necessarily religious. Jonathan Gil Harris argues that these plays create “the usurer as a palimpsest, within which discrete categories of national and religious identity have been fused and confused” (53). The language of disease, allegedly originating in particularly foreign but distinct places of “‘Judaized’ hybridity,” was deployed as English writers called for the identification and eradication of Jews and foreigners in order to return to an idealized English, Christian state.⁶⁶

As English capitalists grew more powerful through investment in international trade toward the end of the sixteenth century, usury was ostensibly held to a ten percent limit, although characters such as Pisaro from William Haughton’s *Englishmen for my Money*, which I discuss in Chapter Two, indicate that the practice was not always enforced. Different nations practiced different lending practices and percentages, and increasingly usury became associated with strangers intent on tarnishing England’s national identity.⁶⁷ The Parliamentary debates around usury increasingly became concerned with how to regulate it to ensure its modest reach while maximizing profitability and money circulation. Early modern economists conceived of money as circulating throughout a healthy body politic and coming from the healthy sovereign as blood

⁶⁵ See Kermode, “Introduction” 19.

⁶⁶ See Harris, *Sick Economies* Chapter 3.

⁶⁷ Kermode points out that “Because interest rates in England were routinely a few percentage points higher than on the Continent, lenders borrowed abroad and did their money lending in England. . . . The same advantage is clearly available for international merchants to borrow more cheaply than their English counterparts and thus undercut them in the marketplace” (7).

is pumped through the body by a heart. Increasingly, usury became intertwined with the concept of tainted specie and alien deceit.

The humanist writers of the sixteenth century began to conceptualize an acceptable usury that was predicated on frugality, but nevertheless also on self-interest. Lorna Hutson argues that as usury's usefulness and necessity increased, writers, scholars, and dramatists increasingly argued that loans at interest could still be charitable, Christian, and beneficial for English individuals as well as communities.⁶⁸ Hutson acknowledges that the stereotypical trope of "the usurer" was still commonly deployed into the seventeenth century as antithetical to "all good neighbourhood and true friendship between men," but the ideological shift had begun to take hold that it was possible for a good Christian to practice usury without condemnation, particularly if it was in service of his community and country.⁶⁹ Norman Jones, too, posits that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, the arguments around usury had largely shifted away from the theological and were focused primarily on the economic, which he believes is due to Protestant influence.⁷⁰

This is not to say that the practice was not still controversial, and many early modern plays explore the uneasy relationships between personal wealth, state power, and conflated erotic and economic values inherent in the ongoing debates surrounding moneylending and usury. Nugent argues that even as Parliament considered reducing the ten percent official usury interest rate, there was no consensus of opinion towards the practice. Furthermore, she proposes that the religious, ethnic, economic, and sexual anxiety surrounding usury also became part of the

⁶⁸ Hutson argues that the humanist writer Heinrich Bullinger's *Christlich Eestand* was instrumental in convincing Londoners "of the compatibility of economic carefulness and the words of Christ" in his assertion that usury could be legitimate. See *The Usurer's Daughter* 41-6.

⁶⁹ See Hutson 44-5.

⁷⁰ See Jones, *God and the Moneylenders: Usury and Law in Early Modern England* for more on the correlation between Protestant theology and Parliamentary proposals to stimulate the English economy through reductions in rates of usury.

conversations toward coinage, circulation, and counterfeiting, which this dissertation studies further in Chapter Three. She further points out the growing number of plays that featured English moneylending as a potential, though by no means sure, way of increasing profitability in an idealized subject within their relationship to the monarch.⁷¹ Drakakis also points out the evolving justification for usury, which by the seventeenth century could be distinguished between the selfish usurer who takes advantage of unsuspecting men and the merchant venture capitalist who risks personal wealth in the face of uncertainty and in service of a divine good for their community and state.⁷²

Finally, in addition to the moral and religious interdictions and complications toward usury, many early modern economists were suspicious of what they understood to be the unnatural nature of the practice. Many early modern economists did not trust usury's ability to replicate money quickly and to turn profit.⁷³ Kerridge points out that Christians believed that money itself was barren, and therefore could not create or beget more money. Therefore, usury was "ungodly, immoral, unproductive and a grave impediment to economic advance" (34). According to the Aristotelian model of money, money itself is meant to be sterile and only a use value, not an exchange value. Money is meant to function as a sign in order to help men facilitate exchange. When money becomes an object of exchange, then the exchange becomes usurious, which was unnatural. Aristotle commands:

Interest or Vsury consisting in multiplying and encreasing of money from moneth to moneth, or yeare to yeare, is likewise comprehended vnder the artificiall getting of goods, and reprooued amongst all other meanes of getting, as contrary to the right vse of money, which was onely inuented for the furtherance of

⁷¹ See Nugent, particularly 204-14.

⁷² The churchman Miles Mosse posited in a series of anti-usury sermons that "Tullie reckoneth Vsurers with Toll-takers and Customers, a kinde of men in those days of most base accompt and filthie conuersation, as may be gatherd euen out of the holie scriptures. Aristotle sayth that Vsurers and Bawdes may well goe together: for they gaine by filthie meanes all they get. Saint Augustine couplet them with Couetous men and Theeues. Musculus ioyneth Vsurie with Deceit, and Periurie. Lavater reciteth it with Drunkennes and Adulterie" (8).

⁷³ See Kermode, "Introduction."

Trafficke, and according to the Nature thereof; and being a thing without life, neither ought nor lawfully may engender other mony, but should be employed to that purpose whereunto it was ordained: Though many men wholly imploy themselves to hoord vp mony without end, deeming that therein consisteth the principall and chiefe of richness. (38)

Hawkes writes that, according to the Aristotelian model, “Usury reverses the natural relation of use value to exchange value, making the medium of exchange into an object of exchange, and thus ‘putting it to use’ – that is, imposing and improper and usurious value upon it” (“Exchange Value and Empiricism in the Poetry of George Herbert” 80). There was significant correlation between the anti-usury belief that money should be sterile, and therefore should not generate or breed money from itself, with the illegal and morally unacceptable practice of sodomy.

The queer threat of sodomy is connected to the queer threat of the usurer in contrast to the queer possibility/futurity of the credit lender’s potential profit. Usury is the antithesis of the generative and (re)productive homosocial credit kinship relationship; the usurer breeds unnatural coin from sterile coin, while the creditor (re)produces profit from male friendship. Hawkes argues that “The sins of sodomy and usury are mirror images: Sodomy is sinful because it makes what is properly generative sterile, while usury is sinful because it makes what is properly sterile generative. Elizabethan moralists could thus draw on a long heritage that associated usury and sodomy” (*Idols* 99). Both usury and sodomy were understood to violate each’s natural telos.⁷⁴ Hawkes writes that “The official Aristotelian-Thomistic morality of precapitalist Europe condemned as unnatural those sexual acts that do not result in reproduction, on the grounds that reproduction is the natural *telos* of sex. Similarly, teleological objections to usury—the reproduction, or ‘breeding,’ of money—formed the major ideological obstacle to the

⁷⁴ See Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace* 7.

accumulation of capital,” although the early modern capitalist economy challenges these ideals and ultimately moves away from them (*Idols* 96-7).

Usury in *Measure for Measure* is also connected to illegitimacy and counterfeiting as a practice that subverts the heterosexual patriarchal order. Braunmuller and Watson argue that this “rampant illegitimacy” may prove deadly “for the orderly functioning of society (9). The threat of usury in the play is particularly connected to that of counterfeit coins and their ability to destroy community and state authority (as well as personal wealth) as Angelo equates their creation with murder:

It were as good
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven’s image
In stamps that are forbid: ‘tis all as easy
Falsely to take away a life true made
As to put metal in restrained means
To make a false one. (2.4.44-8)

Nugent suggests that the representations of “Both illegitimate offspring and counterfeit coins debase and undermine the authorized systems of circulation and transfer of property” (210).

Shylock’s association with unnatural breeding connects him to the threat of sodomy, as does his Jewish faith (seen as an anti-Christian threat). In fact, when discussing money being made from money, he proudly tells Antonio “I make it breed as fast,” in relation to Jacob’s lambs born from his uncle’s sheep (1.3.92). Thus, his threat to Antonio in the final scene is intended not only to kill him in extracting his pound of flesh, but also to castrate him and simultaneously poison his Christian faith.

It is important to note that in this chapter, I mean “sodomy” as a collection of acts; an early modern understanding of sexual acts that are considered unnatural and against nature, often with a homoerotic connotation. The category of sodomy is complicated and, at times,

contradictory.⁷⁵ Early modern sodomy was understood as including pleasurable, subversive, or taboo sex rather than reproductive heterosexual sexual intercourse. As such, Sanchez argues, “sodomy was a category of acts” that were forbidden or hidden (*Shakespeare* 59-60). To that end, for example, prostitution could be considered a form of sodomy, particularly due to its financial aspects as well.⁷⁶ Alan Bray, too, argues that “[sodomy] was not part of the individual’s nature: it was part of all human nature and could surface when the mind was dulled or sleeping, much as someone might commit murder in a drunken fit or in a dream” (183). However, Bray declares that sodomy “was thought of as an essentially masculine sin, a distinctively ‘masculine bestiality’” also associated with political and religious dissidence that carried dangerous significance (184).

There is intimacy in both the celebrated figure of the male friend and in the denigrated and outlawed practice of male homoeroticism. Bray proposes that the image of the “masculine friend” was “universally admired” while “the sodomite” was “execrated and feared: yet in their uncompromising symmetry they paralleled each other in an uncanny way” (183). This relationship is important to this chapter’s argument because it underscores the connection between different kinds of reproduction; that which is acceptable, celebrated, and commodified, such as money-lending in chains of economic obligation, against that which is condemned as unnatural and immoral, such as usury. It is common throughout early modern literature to describe progeny and biological children with economic terminology.⁷⁷ Hawkes argues that at times dramatic works, such as some of Shakespeare’s sonnets, can tease out the nuances of these

⁷⁵ See Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities* for his foundational work on historical slipperiness of sodomy and “the work that the term [sodomy] has been able to do – and continues to do – precisely because the term remains incapable of exact definition” (18).

⁷⁶ Hawkes argues that “‘bawdry’ or pimping seemed an especially apt point of connection for usury and concupiscent sexuality” (101).

⁷⁷ See Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace* 102.

two kinds of reproduction, and at times even celebrate that which comes “from traditionally barren activities such as money-lending and homoeroticism” (*Idols* 101). In close-reading the sonnets dedicated to the young man, Hawkes argues “If reproductive sex is usurious, as the *Sonnets* suggest, the according to traditional morality it is in fact *unnatural*. If one responds that usury is actually *not* unnatural, then one has abandoned the teleology that also designates sodomy a sin against nature. Either way, the poet has subtly constructed a witty rhetorical vindication of homoerotic desire” (*Idols* 105-6). Therefore, the progeny made possible between men in chains of credit, such as specie and money, may in fact be natural, strong, and beneficial.

Ultimately, homosocial chains of credit predicated on the significance of male friendship, which encapsulated homoerotic and affective elements, are proposed to be important to the burgeoning English capitalist economy, as a (superior) version of the biological heterosexual family structure. The creation of wealth from men to men has the potential to supersede the importance of progeny produced through reproductive sexual intercourse. Credit relations themselves strengthened the bonds of intimacy between the men borrowing and lending from one another, as well as the homosocial relationships being produced and lengthened throughout England. Credit’s reliance on reputation represented a schism from earlier centuries’ delineations of power and noble status based on name and landownership. Reputation, however, was not static; in order to maintain it, a person needed to demonstrate it and their trustworthiness continually. A successful individual stressed their “moral virtues of piety, thrift, diligence, and credit” in order to create “the communal security needed to maintain this wealth” made possible and visible by reputation (Muldrew 151). In other words, only by continually performing the appropriate markers of a strong reputation could an individual maintain it. This performative

nature is how certain individuals were able to manipulate reputation to negotiate supposedly strict economic divides, not just recognize it as a status symbol.

Reputation's performative nature is also why it is so necessary to examine its role as seen on the Renaissance stage. In analyzing the final act of *The Merchant of Venice*, Kolb argues that Bassanio and Gratiano inadvertently reveal that men have been privileging their economic relationships to other men over that of their marriages when they give their rings away. She claims, "In a homosocial economy that has room to include Antonio, Bassanio, Gratiano, Balthazar, and Balthazar's clerk, a ring may pass from hand to hand to hand. It is a sign of gratitude, affiliation, and willingness to perform future favors. It expresses an affective and (at least potentially) economic bond that does not exclude other, similar bonds," whereas a ring between husband and wife is meant to signal a closed structure between the two (109). In giving their rings to others, Bassanio and Gratiano have blurred the boundaries between their marriages and their friendships.

Crucially, these homosocial chains of credit are in service of the capitalist economy and continually push towards ever increased wealth and commodity accumulation, as well as gendered hierarchies. The plays that examine, negotiate, or test the boundaries of men's credit-based relationships reveal the ways in which economic, erotic, intimate, and affective values are intertwined within England's changing economic practices and with changing understandings of selfhood, increasingly defined by said practices. Traub argues that the acceptable and publicly celebrated homoeroticism inherent within male homosocial practices fades in the latter half of the seventeenth century "With the rise of economic individualism and social pluralism – represented most visibly in the advent of London molly houses" (*Thinking Sex* 39). Nevertheless, it is crucial to recognize the importance of male friendship and its fundamental place in the

culture of credit in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In doing so, we are able to perceive how new modes of potential wealth, value, and power emerge along with the new forms of public identity defined by credit and reputation. Fisher argues that the connection between languages of economic exchange and sexuality relates to broadened understandings of social and political value. If counterfeiting coins and sodomitical practices were considered to be perversions, then their generative and pure counterparts would be coining and sexual reproduction.⁷⁸ As it became increasingly problematic to delineate clear boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate moneymaking and moneylending, and the ramifications felt in the sexual realm, hybridity emerges more strongly in Elizabethan and Stuart literature.

⁷⁸ See Fisher, "Queer Money."

Chapter Two - “What devils dare not move / Men to accomplish, women work them to”: Women, Wealth, and International Marriage in Early Modern English Theater

Each chapter of this dissertation explores the same structural shift in the economy and society of early modern England and traces cultural implications of that shift: the expansion of commodity, including money, circulation, and the growing impetus towards accumulation as it was represented in theater. In doing so, each chapter explores the expansion and challenging of traditional conceptualizations of value and the numerous ways in which it was newly becoming possible to do so under emergent capitalism. Within a burgeoning international economic sphere, fictionalized transactions, relationships reified, and commodities traded on the early modern stage influenced the way that English subjects thought about themselves and their positions in a world increasingly defined by new economic terms and parameters. In the previous chapter, I showed how men’s homosocial chains of credit and reputation created social and economic bonds that in some cases superseded those of the heteronormative family imperative in England. This in turn complicated gender and class expectations while reframing men’s value as paradoxically physical, vulnerable, and reliant upon other men in deeply economic and erotic ways.

This second chapter examines theatrical representations of another integral financial bond in English life: that of marriage. More specifically, as London experienced an unprecedented influx of immigrants at the end of the sixteenth century and international trade began to flourish, England saw a rise in international marriages.⁷⁹ This chapter focuses on three early modern English plays that stage relationships and marriage between English subjects and those from other countries, and, in doing so, explore England’s anxieties towards its financial position on

⁷⁹ See Scott Oldenburg, particularly “Cosmopolitan London” for greater history of relationships and marriages between English subjects and “strangers.”

the international stage and its fragility as an early modern state. Economic exchange onstage intertwined eroticism and economics, and that drama influenced how English subjects thought of themselves and their value as human beings in the marketplace. While the first and third chapters examine the complexities and contradictions in use and exchange value, here I mean to incorporate the broadened/deconstructed understandings of value by those such as Gayatri Spivak and Shad Naveed who point to the indeterminacy and friction of use value and labor value in order to incorporate a materialist, feminist understanding that builds on Marx's original theorization of value.⁸⁰ Spivak pushes on the conflicting understandings of value – for example, how a laborer's body is valuable because it can create commodity, but then through exchange the laborer's work becomes circulated capital, and it is this friction that creates space for a more nuanced understanding of value that includes gendered and sexual materialist realities.

This second chapter particularly focuses on instances in which these values are queered through characters' rejection of normative economic and erotic practices, yet the characters still retain power and control, thereby challenging the capitalist mandate of accumulation. In Robert Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money, or A Woman Will Have Her Will*, and Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, the characters who negotiate England's international economic place are feminine, queer, and receptive, challenging the English assumption of its status as a masculine, patriarchal European state. Examining the

⁸⁰ David Harvey posits that according to Marx, "Value ... becomes an embedded regulatory norm in the sphere of exchange only under conditions of capital accumulation" ("Marx's Refusal"). Harvey suggests that "Marx's value theory ... centers on the constantly shifting and contradictory unity between what is traditionally referred to as the labour theory of value in the sphere of the market ... and the value theory of labour in the sphere of production" with an incorporation of a value within social reproduction ("Marx's Refusal"). Value is therefore formed, he writes, through "The dialectical relations between competitive market processes, surplus value production and social reproduction," though these elements are all necessary but conflicting, within societal totality. Importantly, value is also connected to "wants, needs, and desires," all of which must be paid for ("Marx's Refusal"). See also Spivak, "Some Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value" and Shad Naveed, "Gayatri Spivak's Critique of Marxist Value(s)."

surprising ways in which England is represented in these plays – both in power and in danger, the protector of the realm and the vulnerability of it – allows a fresh examination of these three disparate representations of English marriage to non-English Others. In each case, the conventional movement in these plays toward closure in marriage is replete with representations of value, profit, and loss. The three plays queer the representations and understandings of England's international status and identity as well as the very nature of profitable marriage by challenging the expected gendered hierarchies within early modern matrimony.

There is no such phenomenon as a singular early modern marriage, and the English theater reflects the diverse forms of socio-economic practice involving courtship, wooing, matchmaking, engagement, wedding, and married life. Early modern theater displayed, affirmed, and questioned a variety of social, gendered, classed, and racial systems. There are archival accounts of affection and desire between real world English spouses, and many plays would seem to indicate the prevalence of what would be later termed romantic love and affection in Renaissance relationships. In contrast, there are also many texts that highlight a calculated understanding of marriage as nothing more than means to an end, be it financial or social.

It is not always clear what kind of love is explored in early modern theater, as love itself is not a singular category, emotion, or practice. As Alan Bray writes, “the word ‘love’ in this society could comprehend as easily the public relation of friends as the more private meaning we give the word today” (158), and Traub too argues that in early modern England “the sexual, the physical, the subjective, and the affective” all intertwined in language of intimacy, be it loving, friendship, or family (*Thinking Sex* 47). Elizabeth Rivlin also writes that there was a strong connection between loving and serving, both of which were performative gestures as well as

internal emotions. A servant who worked for their master expressed love toward them, a good Christian who chose to serve God loved Him, and a loyal subject lovingly serves the sovereign.⁸¹

Amy Louise Erickson argues that early modern marriage was primarily a business transaction rarely motivated by heterosexual, affectionate love.⁸² Same-sex friendship, particularly friendship between men, was arguably more emotionally fulfilling and socially favored.⁸³ Erickson traces the profound, and sometimes harmful, economic, social, and political impacts of early modern marriage, particularly for women.⁸⁴ In England, women's wages were significantly lower than men's, and women were required to relinquish all personal property and control of their estates to their husbands under the legal system of coverture.⁸⁵ Women who never married and widows could be highly active in their local credit economies, both in rural and urban areas. Although some married women did manage their household's finances, they could not establish lines of credit in their own name, which left them deeply reliant on their husbands and their husbands' wealth.

⁸¹ See Rivlin, "Service and Servants to 1660" for her discussion of numerous types of early modern service, servitude, and servants, particularly how servants were able and expected to create opportunities for others, but not themselves.

⁸² See Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* 6.

⁸³ There is a large history of scholarship on early modern friendship. For foundational work on men's friendship, see Alan Bray, *The Friend* and Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts*. For work on women's friendship, see Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama*.

⁸⁴ Natasha Korda argues that some widows were "astute investors who diversified their assets in investment portfolios that included secured and unsecured loans at varying rates of interest in order to minimize risk and maximize profit" (*Labors Lost* 59-60). Unmarried woman who engaged in moneylending, however, often faced slander and ill repute for their relationship to money, which some equated with prostitution (*Labors Lost* 60). For more on married women who could not establish credit, see Erickson 101. Alexandra Shepard also argues that in language that assessed one's value in relation to one's money and movable assets was heavily correlated to their marital status, as "Among women, widows were most likely to provide a positive cash estimate of the value of their moveable estate, and least likely to describe themselves as being worth little or nothing or poor" (*Accounting for Oneself* 54). Shepard acknowledges that although widows were more likely to claim greater ownership of goods and land than unmarried women or wives, the accumulated value of widows' assets was still lower than most men (54).

⁸⁵ See Erickson for a detailed analysis of women's wealth accumulation before and during marriage and how they changed and the history of women's material statuses from the Medieval to early modern period.

Marriage, therefore, was still considered a women's strongest opportunity for economic security. Fathers deliberately chose sons-in-law that would, or had the potential to, contribute to the bride's family's wealth (Erickson 91). After all, a bride's dowry was considered incentive for her husband to provide for her and any children that they might have during their marriage, as well as his obligation to provide for her should she become a widow. Importantly, it was possible for either a man or a woman to improve their social and economic status by marrying, but a man did not risk the potential financial devastation that a woman did. A woman was required to give up her wealth, property, and contracts to her husband while also facing legal roadblocks if she wanted to change her state or designate her wealth differently.⁸⁶

Marriages in early modern plays both reaffirmed and complicated the transactional nature of real-world relationships. Levine argues that in many Renaissance comedies, a marriage plot signifies that there will be a happy resolution to the story and a supposed guarantee of heteronormative ideals ending a courtship in a wedding (*Practicing the City* 80). Even in supposedly light comedy, scholars such as Scott Oldenburg and Brian Gibbons argue that within the satire and wit, many early modern comedies that feature marriages or marriage plots explore or question large social conflicts and societal changes.

It is not only onstage marriages between two English subjects, however, on which this chapter focuses. As England continued to expand its economic international reach, there was a substantial increase in cross-cultural interaction and international immigrants in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.⁸⁷ This led to an increased number of English subjects marrying

⁸⁶ Erickson allows that some women could benefit financially from successful marriages, and women could inherit wealth and property from parents, but primogeniture only allowed women to inherit land if there were no sons in a family, and it was significantly more difficult for women to write sole wills designating beneficiaries of family wealth.

⁸⁷ See Oldenburg, "Outlandish Love': Marriage and Immigration in City Comedies."

strangers or aliens from other nations, despite a simultaneous rise in anti-immigration sentiments and anxieties that also plagued the end of the century. It is unsurprising, then, that popular theater reflected these new interpersonal and communal relationships in a great number of plays that featured relationships, romances, conflicts, and marriages between English subjects and characters from other lands. Emma Smith points out that “the amorous foreigner” was in fact a conventional character trope in early seventeenth century civic comedies (165). These characters served many purposes, but Smith argues that their prevalence in comedies speaks directly to anxieties about foreign invasion and influence that are explored through material and sexual relationships enacted onstage (165). In plays that constructed exaggerated and highly recognizable, though fictionalized, foreign characters, the plays participated in creating notions of English characters and English traits, ultimately contributing to shifting ideals of a national identity (165). Fictionalized strangers could therefore serve as both seductive or warning forces for English characters and audiences, particularly as England expanded its economic reach and London audiences watched examples of these interactions onstage.

Oldenburg argues, contrary to other scholars, that foreigners were not always shunned or vilified when they immigrated to England.⁸⁸ He claims that many were welcomed into English communities with enthusiasm and that there were English families eager to marry their children to wealthy strangers.⁸⁹ While this is not the case in every instance, there was significant evidence of willingness to marry outside of one’s English community especially for wealth and higher status, though not necessarily for race or religion. The markers of wealth traditionally exchanged take on new meanings and urgency in transactions between England and other nations. In fact,

⁸⁸ For scholarship on the history of anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner English sentiment, see Ronald Pollitt, “Refuge of the Distressed Nations,” Susan Brigden, *London and the Reformation*, and A.J. Hoenselaars’ *Images of Englishmen and Foreigners in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries*.

⁸⁹ See Oldenburg’s section “Cosmopolitan London” for archival accounts of such.

Oldenburg posits that “the impulse to marry strangers was at least in part economic, but it is interesting that money trumps the supposed xenophobia scholars have assumed to exist among the English. Examples from literary history reinforce the economic underpinnings of such marriages” (17-8).

This chapter examines representations of heterosexual marriage because in early modern literature, the gendered representations of men and women and the expectations, characteristics, and actions contained within those gender categories are significant to how English subjects struggled to understand their nation’s strengths, limitations, wealth, and value. These representations were also intimately linked with changing economic practices, terms, and trade; scholars such as Jyotsna Singh, Stephen Deng, and Richmond Barbour trace the complex rise of European national identities during the early modern period particularly alongside the increase in international trade, travel, and settling.⁹⁰ Deng, for example, argues that the circulation of foreign coinage throughout England was not only vital to the nation’s ability to trade with foreign powers, which is discussed further in Chapter Three, but their movement and the terminology surrounding coinage also mirrored shifts in how English subjects thought about themselves against the example of other, often inferior, nations and their money.⁹¹

This chapter studies further how theater explored England’s place not only through economic terms, but also through erotic and intimate ones. In many ways, this chapter builds on work by critics such as Richard Helgerson, who argues that emerging forms of early modern theater gave newfound attention to common, or non-aristocratic families and homes, while

⁹⁰ See Jyotsna G. Singh’s *A Companion to the Global Renaissance*, particularly Singh’s “Introduction,” Barbour’s “A Multinational Corporation: Foreign Labor in the London East India Company,” and Deng’s “‘So Pale, So Lame, So Lean, So Ruinous’: The Circulation of Foreign Coins in Early Modern England.”

⁹¹ See Deng 262-3, particularly for the comparison of foreign coins to foreign venereal diseases.

connecting these narratives to broader themes of monarchies and state building.⁹² Emma Smith, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Flora Anthias explore how Elizabethan and Jacobean comedies complicate women's roles in representing, protecting, and highlighting the vulnerability of the English state. It is a common trope in civic comedy that a woman's body represents a weak, vulnerable body politic, and that there are aggressive male foreigners trying to penetrate her/it so as to taint the nation and drain its value.⁹³ In comedy, Smith demonstrates, foreigners' sexual aggressions and intended penetrations cannot be successful, and instead the English women must comically, yet successfully, rebuff them thanks to their superior strength and intellect. Furthermore, women represent the potential for national reproduction and heirs, highlighting the anxiety of miscegenation or religious conversion. As Forman suggests, "understandings of the socio-economic power over reproduction become fundamental to notions of expansion and make the literary a particular useful space for negotiating such issues and imagining its potential" ("Afterword" 270).

By looking at representations of international marriages in three different genres, this chapter interrogates the disparate ways that it was possible for the theater to act as a space to explore how marriage functioned as both an economic and erotic relationship as well as a metonymic expression of English financial (and racial) fears. The theater as a space of codifying performance and public spectacle uniquely handles the correspondence between economic and erotic spheres as the drama intertwines various functions and significations for marriage, such as marriage as a business transaction, marriage as a performative act of commitment, and marriage as driven by bodily desire or affection. Although each genre treats marriage differently in terms

⁹² See Helgerson, *Adulterous Alliances: Home, State, and History in Early Modern Drama and Painting*, particularly the Introduction.

⁹³ See particularly Smith 165 for examples.

of tone, the elements at stake in such unions – value, profit, desire, family, competition – are all present in each.

Early modern marriage is a legal contract, a financial negotiation, and a familial alliance. It was also a system in which women were heavily disenfranchised financially compared to their husbands. When marriage is represented onstage, however, the theater creates a space to recognize potential agency and power that open up questions of value within romantic, economic, and household relationships. Diverse modes of desire and eroticism are enacted through the very different women characters in the three disparate plays on which this chapter focuses. In particular, the women in Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money*, and Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* embody and enact queer eroticism and desire that is empowered by their personal wealth. In so doing, the characters challenge the heteronormative expectations of marriage, capitalist wealth, and value. Both women and men in these plays subvert the heteronormative expectations of their marriage plots in order to defy established gender roles in early modern England and to complicate and develop the English concept of an international self.

Desire features heavily in all three of these plays: desire for profit, desire for the body, desire for power. Multiple texts challenge conceptualizations of heteronormative eroticism, for example, by enacting culturally recognized lesbian desire between two women and cross-dressing their male lovers.⁹⁴ In other instances, however, characters queer their desire by challenging other modes of normative hierarchy, privilege, and power such as racial identity and economic status.⁹⁵ Because the consequences for these queer expressions vary widely across

⁹⁴ See Denise A. Walen, *Constructions of Female Homoerotics in Early Modern Drama* for her analysis of plays that explore love, lust, and desire between women in sixteenth and seventeenth century English plays.

⁹⁵ For more on how queer theory is a critique “of the very concepts of the normal, the private and the political”, see Sanchez *Shakespeare and Queer Theory* 23.

genres, they create room for a broader exploration of the limitations of queered value and theater's ability to contribute to and explore these limitations. Forman's work on tragicomedy, for example, questions how changing economic practices along with the rise of tragicomedy's popularity on the stage created new understandings of wealth and value.

Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London* explores these questions through the lens of a morality play that challenges the audience's expectations of charitable goodness while confronting new international corruption and profit, precisely as England began to expand outward and its theater reflected this expansion. The three powerful women protagonists challenge English ideas of power, usury, and eroticism, while the most powerful of the three is an Italian immigrant. Early modern comedy, particularly city comedy, is often predicated on the conventions of marriage that accommodate conflict in lighthearted ways. Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money*, however, confronts these expectations by subverting stereotypes of wealth and power for English characters, foreigners, and men and women. Daborne's *A Christian Turn'd Turk* is a tragedy, the genre that tends to be associated with the upper class, and yet the lower-class, renegade protagonist marries a sexualized, powerful, wealthy, and queer Muslim noblewoman. He ensures his economic, religious, and sexual downfall without redemption by seeking only to satisfy his physical lust and economic drive in a tempting foreign market. These examples of marriage to non-English, racialized foreigners queer the representations and understandings of England's international status and (threatened) identity, as well as the very nature of profitable marriage by challenging the expected gendered, social, and economic hierarchies within early modern marriage.

Wilson's *The Three Ladies of London*, first performed in 1581 and first published in quarto in 1584, is a play that recalls the tropes and values of the late Medieval and early Tudor

morality play while also moving forward with the rise of a new commercial London theater more deeply engaged with international concerns.⁹⁶ In fact, Kermode argues that “*Three Ladies* pushes into several modes that later become dramatic categorizations in their own right; city comedy, merchant play, prodigal narrative, and an early dramatic example of a warning for London and England - the latter mode taken on in earnest after the Armada of 1588 and the occupation of the Lowlands by Spain” (270). It is beneficial to examine both the plots and characters therein as allegorical gendered signifiers as well as characters confronting an expanding English economic landscape. The play explores deep anxieties regarding a strengthened merchant class, a rise in foreigners within England, and the influence of foreign powers. In 1581, Elizabeth issued a proclamation attempting to regulate usury in London’s markets, and the joint stock Turkey Company was founded to promote trade with the Ottoman Empire.⁹⁷ The play is particularly concerned with questions regarding the practice of usury, and Kermode argues that Wilson uses the allegorical characters in order to explore connections between love, conscience, money, and greed in the real psychological and material states in London as they were impacted by changing economic practices (“Money, Gender, and Conscience” 265). The play begins to delineate between good usurers and bad usurers, particularly through the personification of xenophobic and dangerous foreign usurers with honest and hardworking, albeit corruptible, English usurers. Kermode points out that “ultimately, the play argues that all usurers are connected, but it does begin to make a distinction between acceptable kinds of usury, potentially even beneficial, moral ones, and those that are inherently immoral ones” (“Introduction” 35).

⁹⁶ For the play’s production history, see Kermode’s *Introduction to Three Usury Plays*, particularly pages 28-32.

⁹⁷ See Kermode, “Introduction” 32-33 and Kermode, “Money, Gender, and Conscience in Robert Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London*” 270 for his analysis of the correlation between the new wealthy merchant class and the play’s plot.

Daniel Vitkus argues that the play is not concerned exclusively with usury and how to regulate it, however; it is a play that helped to teach and “inform playgoers about the sacrifices and investments that were supposedly necessary in order to (ad)venture, to return home, and to turn a profit” when engaging in the newly emerged cross-cultural economies.⁹⁸ Vitkus suggests that the particular relationships between the antagonists and their foreign ties reinforce the English fear that a combination of moral corruption and the influence of outside non-English merchants and practices caused London’s financial and social downturns. It is the foreign, commercial, negative influence causing London’s domestic moral degradation and economic hardships.

While England engaged more broadly with Mediterranean and Ottoman trading powers from the 1570s and onwards, the English economy continued to struggle, leading to dissatisfaction and frustration with the new capitalist market.⁹⁹ Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London* explores England’s anxieties regarding its new international economic relations through gendered and international characters. The three women queer the expressions of value onstage in several ways. Most notably, Lady Lucre queers London’s capitalist marketplace with foreign influenced usury, and she queers the expected heteronormative relationships between these women by seducing Lady Conscience and convincing her to work for her brothel. The explorations of capital, value, and Englishness culminate in a forced marriage between Lady Love and Dissimulation in which Lady Lucre manipulates and mutilates Lady Love, the ultimate

⁹⁸ See Vitkus, “‘Consider the lamentable cry of the poor’: Foreign Parasites, English Usurers, and Economic Crisis in *The Three Ladies of London*.”

⁹⁹ See John Bohstedt *The Politics of Provisions: Food Riots, Moral Economy, and Market Transition in England C. 1550-1850* for an analysis of how repeated decades of agricultural dearth led to subjects rioting and uprising even as upper classes while the crown was most concerned with the transition to a national capitalist trade. Muldrew in *The Economy of Obligation in Early Modern England* also traces how the connections between rise in credit based lending systems in the 1590s with the food and goods shortages that led to significantly higher prices for subjects outside London as well as increased mortality rates. See also Vitkus, “Consider.”

expression of Christian charity and the figure who could redeem London's morality. Ultimately, all three are punished for their crimes in an attempt not only to instruct the audience to resist the feminized and queer temptations of the new usurious and capitalist marketplace (in other words, the audience should only profit in the right way), but also to reinforce traditional gendered expectations of power over women and commodification of women's bodies.

Wilson's play tells the story of London's moral, economic, and racial corruption through the manipulations of the Lady Lucre, who grows her influence by enlisting the help of Usury, Dissimulation, Simony, and Fraud. Lady Lucre's goal is to destroy Lady Love and Lady Conscience, and even at the outset of the play she has been fairly successful. Lady Love cries out:

'Tis Lucre now that rules the rout, 'tis she is all in all,
'Tis she that holds her head so stout, in fine 'tis she that works
our fall (1.3-5)

Lady Conscience agrees wholeheartedly, angrily lamenting that even though the men of London "ought to seek true Love and Conscience clear," instead "every man doth sue, / And comes from counties strange and far, of [Lucre] to have a view" (1.9,6-7). International foreigners from "Italy, Barbary, Turkey, / From Jewry" have been infecting London with their desperation to engage in unsavory economic practices, or lucre (1.13-4). It must be noted as well that Lady Lucre is not entirely English herself; her grandmother was the "old Lady Lucre of Venice," from whom Usury learned his trade and "lived there in bliss" (2.216,217). There is also the Italian Christian merchant Mercadorus, who also pledges his service to Lady Lucre, and drains England's most necessary resources by trading them for "baubles" that delight and corrupt the wants of the upper classes while depriving the commoners of staples.¹⁰⁰

¹⁰⁰ Mercadorus gleefully tells Lady Lucre that he trades England's "corn, ledar, beef / and bacon too" for nothing but "many baubles ... to beguile" so that other countries can be "well furnished" while England festers (3.3.52-

The Three Ladies of London takes place both in London and abroad, highlighting English fears of sharp racial, religious, and economic divides between the state and its international competitors. London's population grew from 55,000 subjects in 1550 to over 200,000 subjects by 1600, partially due to an influx of immigrants,¹⁰¹ and it is the combination of foreign merchants and their unacceptable usury that threatens London in the play. Usury gleefully proclaims that even though the practice was glorified in Venice, "England was such a place for Lucre to bide, / As was not in Europe and the whole world beside" that he rushed to England's shores to serve her (2.222-3). Kermode argues that "the interplay of geography and ethnicity, morality and practicality, gender and power, class and corruption in *Three Ladies* insists that we consider carefully Wilson's combination of telling us a moral tale and showing us an embattled community" ("Introduction" 36-7). In addition to new members of its community, London also began trading more with other foreign merchants dealing in a much stronger proto-capitalism. Vitkus argues that with the rise of joint stock companies like the Turkey Company, there arose a new kind of merchant who "embraced new and more aggressive forms of usury" that deeply troubled English morality writers ("Consider"). Kermode agrees that while many English merchants and businessmen understood the necessity of usury, foreigners, and foreign trade, there was also deep concern that foreign money would ultimately corrupt England. Therefore, a significant number of plays utilized foreign characters practicing an explicitly evil form of usury such as that of Lady Lucre and her Usury.¹⁰² These depictions of villainous usury, including

3,54,55). Kermode discusses the severe threat this imbalanced trade posed to the English economy: "there was the worrying phenomenon of foreign luxury goods entering the markets and being exchanged for staple English product" ("Introduction 14). See this dissertation's introduction for further information.

¹⁰¹ For more on how the rise of London's immigrant population contributed to the city's geographical changes and theater, see Howard, *Theater of a City: The place of London Comedy 1598-1642*.

¹⁰² See Kermode, "Introduction" specifically the section "Usury, trade, foreigners"

dramatic characters like Shakespeare's Shylock and Marlowe's Barabas, often draw on anti-Semitic traditions that associate Jews with usurious money-lending practices.¹⁰³

Through its association with the allegorical Ladies who personify Love and Conscience, London is perceived as a city that must be protected for its virtues. Nevertheless, it is vulnerable to corruption through Lady Lucre and her queer capitalism. Here, queer capitalism refers to the correlation between usury and the threat of queer practice, as there was a significant early modern correlation between sodomy and usury as an unnatural, anti-Christian way of breeding money from its barren self.¹⁰⁴ In 1598 in his *Palladis Tamia*, minister Francis Meres compared sodomy and usury as both unnatural attempts to pro/create: "As Paederastie is unlawful, because it is against kinde: so usurie and increase by gold and silver is unlawful, because against nature ... nature hath made them sterill and barren, and usurie makes them procreative."¹⁰⁵ The threat of Lady Lucre and her Usury in the play embody the correlation between economic corruption and sexual vice. As Kermode argues, "Usury and Lucre are inseparable as economic and social operations, and the gendering of money makes its 'handling' and multiplying by male usurers inevitably if often indirectly *a sexualized practice*" ("Introduction" 38, emphasis original).

English merchants, however, also recognized the significant opportunities that these new economic practices afforded them. In *The Three Ladies of London*, Lady Lucre's threat is not only bringing in foreign merchants like Italian Mercadorus to corrupt English ideals, but it is also to corrupt Englishmen to engage them in trades of vice. Kermode argues that one of the true dangers of the play is that "the city provides opportunities for men to engage in legitimate

¹⁰³ See Hawkes, *The Culture of Usury in Renaissance England*, particularly chapter three for more on the historical and theological association between evil usury and Jewish money lenders

¹⁰⁴ For the beginnings of history on early modern usury and sodomy, see Arthur L. Little Jr., Jody Greene, Will Fisher, and Sanchez, Madhavi Menon, among others

¹⁰⁵ See Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia, or, Wits Treasury Being the Second Part of Wits Commonwealth*, 322

definable trades, but the temptation to insert oneself into the interstices *between* working trades (into brokering, moneylending, and scrivening) or to misuse a trade ... or craftsmen that produce ‘deceitful’ ‘pieces of work’ 93.111 and 110) is powerful because these spaces are *lucrative* - inviting and rewarding spaces for desiring men” (“Money, Gender, and Conscience” 274). Legitimate trades are put at risk by particularly feminized vices here, meaning that the feminized threat is in fact corrupting the now weakened English state. As Kermode argues “Wilson’s *Three Ladies*” is the earliest play to lay out fully the ‘well woven’ web of gendered and sexualized lending and circulation of money and goods that seduces and ruins men [Prologue, line 17]” (“Money, Gender, and Conscience” 269). Nugent too posits that it is Lucre’s emphasis on Usury that bring destruction and corruption to Lady Conscience and Lady Love.¹⁰⁶ Lady Conscience bemoans the fact that “Lucre crept into the bosom of man, woman, and child, / That every one doth practice his dear friend to beguile,” as though the very business of London itself has become for its citizens to cheat one another (5.19-20). So too has Lucre affected London’s streets and homes, as she has increased the rent in city tenements where immigrants “dwell ten houses in one very gladly, / And be content-a for pay fifty or threescore pound a year / For dat which da Englishmans say twenty mark is too dear” (5.75-7). In other words, Lucre has made the prices so high that only immigrant families, willing to live ten households in one dwelling, are able to abide there, which further changes the social and cultural fabric of London’s population. Though they plead for mercy and compassion, because “Usury hates Hospitality, and cannot him abide, / Because he for the poor and comfortless doth provide,” neither of whom can be made profitable, Usury brutally murders Hospitality, signifying Conscience’s and Love’s downfalls and the corruption of London (5.23-4).

¹⁰⁶ See Nugent, “Usury and Counterfeiting,” particularly page 202.

Not only does Lady Lucre threaten the London economy with her emphasis on fraud, usury, and permeating corruption, but she also threatens English heteronormative expectations of desire and influence by seducing Lady Conscience and by mutilating Lady Love. Scholars such as Traub, Sanchez, and Denise A. Walen argue that representations of desire and sexual contact between women existed across a range of media in early modern England.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, when women characters engage in “erotically coded situations,” playwrights and audience members would understand that these interactions were meant to signify desire and queer erotic tension (Walen 411). Lady Lucre’s seduction of Conscience is striking; she conflates Lady Conscience’s desire for returned material comforts with a physical and queer desire for the female Lady Lucre. The conflation of this queer desire and capital collapses then with Lady Conscience’s capitulation – she accepts money to become the bawd in Lady Lucre’s brothel, exposing the inherent threat of queer desire and its relationship to supposedly immoral ways of gaining it.

Throughout the play, Lady Conscience vigorously condemns Lady Lucre and her deceitful work with Usury. She fights to keep her home against rising lending rates, she rails against them when Usury murders Hospitality, and still she refuses to bend to Lucre’s will even as she is evicted from her home, proclaiming:

Lucre, well, you know pride will have a fall
What advantageth it thee to win the world, and lose thy soul withal?
Yet better it is to live with little, and keep a conscience clear,
Which is to God a sacrifice, and accounted of most dear. (10.14-7)

Having lost everything, Lady Conscience bitterly sells brooms in the street to try to earn a living, as she blames Lucre, Usury, and the death of Hospitality for her misfortune. Lady Lucre comes across her and taunts her, saying:

Yet to give thee a piece of gold I do it not grudge,

¹⁰⁷ See Traub *The Renaissance of Lesbianism in Early Modern England; Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* and Sanchez *Erotic Subjects: The Sexuality of Politics in Early Modern English Literature*

And if thou wouldst follow my mind, thou shouldst not live in such sort,
But pass thy days with pleasure store of every kind of sport. (10.66-8)

Lady Conscience wavers in her conviction to resist Lucre's temptations, admitting to herself that Lucre "lead[s] the world in a string," and so perhaps she should follow Lucre, as well (10.69).

Tempting her further, Lady Lucre offers Conscience five thousand crowns in exchange for becoming the bawd to Lucre's brothel, to which Lady Conscience agrees. Lucre then spots

Conscience's face with ink while asking her to count the moneys "to see if any want" (10.105).

While she paints Conscience's face with ink, dirtying it, Lucre exclaims:

O, how beauty hath adorned thee with every seemly hue,
In limbs, in looks, with all the rest, proportion keeping due.
Sure, I have not seen a finer soul in every kind of part,
I cannot choose but kiss thee with my lips that love thee with
my heart. (10.111-4)

Lady Lucre then conflates seduction of Lady Conscience's will with the promise of coin to restore her from poverty as well as the physical and erotic act of kissing to collapse the distinction between her economic threat and her queer threat. Walen argues that "on one level, goodness is corrupted by capital gain, but on the surface one woman uses sexual flirtation to seduce another woman. Conscience desires Lucar [sic], meaning both financial resources and the female character representing them" (416). Furthermore, in marking Lady Conscience's face, she further queers her character's role and relationship to Conscience by embodying a dominant/masculinized form of marking another's body with liquid (i.e., with a sexual, semen-like substance and an exclamatory "O" of pleasure, even orgasm) (10.111). Harris too argues that the spotting on Lady Conscience's face could be a representation of syphilis or pox, as well as that of divine judgment, since Lucre understands that she is corrupting Conscience's "soul" as

well as her body (10.113).¹⁰⁸ It could also be a sign of darkening her face, as though altering her race and marking her as a foreign outsider.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, after she receives, or potentially returns Lucre's kiss, Lady Conscience counts the coins she has been paid, reducing her to not only a bawd but, in certain ways, a prostitute herself (10.115). Lady Conscience, embodying London's moral center, submits her soul, her beauty, and her agency to Lady Lucre's defiling will in a highly charged economic and erotic manner.

Lady Lucre understands that in order to possess London fully, she must also control Lady Love. In order to do so, she forces Love to marry her servant Dissimulation, again embodying a potentially male figure such as a father deciding to whom Lady Love is betrothed. Lady Love laments that "unto Dissimulation I did repose such trust" because out of her marriage, she has grown a monstrous second head marking her (15.10). She grieves:

My bad intent
Hath brought on me a just reward, and eke a strange event!
Shall I be counted Love Nay, rather lascivious Lust. (15.7-9)

Lady Lucre's foreign command grossly mutates the purity of the young English woman. Lady Love has been physically transformed from the symbol of pure Christian love to the monstrous, voracious Lust because she followed Lucre's demands. In the final scene of the play, Judge Nemo does not allow for the possibility of Love's redemption. Instead, he sentences her to receive "like torment" with Lucre "because thou followed Lucre, / Whereby thou hast sold thy soul" (17.89-90). All three of the women are punished in the final scene for having been corrupted by "cankered coin" to be tortured (17.75,97), and Nemo sternly tells the audience:

God grant, to his goodwill and pleasure,
That we be not corrupted with the unsatiate desire of vanishing earthly treasure;

¹⁰⁸ See Harris's "(Po)X Marks the Spot: How to 'Read' 'Early' Modern' 'Syphilis' in *The Three Ladies of London*, particularly pages 109-32.

¹⁰⁹ See Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton, *Race in Early Modern England* for a greater history of the supposedly destructive power of painting that could result in spiritual taint.

For covetousness is the cause of wresting man's conscience;
Therefore restrain thy lust, and thou shalt shun the offence. (17.102-5)

Kermode points out that “for all that the play pulls away from representing real women on stage who can be blamed for the downfall of London's men, and for all the male dissimulation and fraudulence on the surface, Wilson makes sure to have the male figures escape punishment while the ladies all go to hell-like prisons ... It is the feminine, passionate, uncontrollable, changeable, corruptible, and lustful (this last word used many times in the play) forces of love, conscience, and lucre that reside within and destroy good men of London” (267).

None of the male merchants or servants of Lady Lucre are punished at the end of the play, nor does any of their “earthly treasure” truly vanish (17.104). Furthermore, Lucre's servants Dissimulation, Fraud, Usury, and Simony reassimilate themselves into London citizenry to continue to wreak havoc and spread vice. Even if the ladies are imprisoned, it is reported toward the end of the play that Usury “was seen at the [London] Exchange very lately” (17.10). Even if the finale is meant to inspire a return to Protestant values of charity and devotion, the world of London has already been changed by the three ladies— these foreign, feminine, and queer influences. It is only through Wilson's sequel, *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, in which there is a fantasy of a return to a moral, incorruptible London. And even in this fantasy, all three lords still seek Lady Lucre first and Usury is even more pervasive, and more English, than before.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ Nugent argues that *The Three Lords of London*, which Wilson wrote seven years later, responds to the shifting attitudes and practices toward English moneylending in the late sixteenth century, particularly with regard to Parliament's simultaneous acceptance of certain types of lending and rejection of others over the ten percent limit with the Act Against Usury in 1571. When Usury is captured and branded as a criminal in *Three Lords*, he is accepted into the London of the play and “no longer poses a threat,” representing an acceptance of certain kinds of moneylending and usury. See “Usury and Counterfeiting.”

William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money, or A Woman Will Have Her Will*, was written in 1598 and is credited as being one of the first city comedies to stage contemporary life in Elizabethan London.¹¹¹ The play uses the comedic genre to challenge the Renaissance expectation that daughters must marry for money while simultaneously exposing deep-seated fears of foreigners invading England's marketplace by marrying and impregnating English women. The play complicates this narrative, however, by highlighting the wealth and autonomy of the daughters through their economic and sexual agency – agency over their own suitors as well as their intended husbands. The three daughters' complex national identities, as they are both English and Portuguese, challenge the narrative that English women should be seen as passive, receptive propagators of the realm. The play insists that wealth and status are far more important factors in determining agency than home nationality. By rejecting the foreign suitors and paying the debts of their English lovers, the daughters attempt to increase their own wealth and erase the Portuguese, that is, non-English, aspects of their identities. Nevertheless, the play exposes the precarious financial situation England fears in the face of growing international trade, international marriage, and inescapable cross-cultural influence.

Many scholars have studied *Englishmen* as a play deeply concerned with the social and financial changes occurring in London at the end of the sixteenth century. Kermode argues that the play is “steeped in its London location” and also “reflects back on the traditions of plays and dialogues concerned with the moral place of money in a realm and the relationships between money, nationality, gender, and age” (“Introduction” 42). The play particularly explores the stronger, increasingly public economic marketplace and the subsequent questioning of value that new money, wealth, and trade brought through the plots of non-aristocratic characters. Howard

¹¹¹ See Levine, “Trading in Tongues: Language Lessons and *Englishmen for my Money*.”

argues that city comedies provided a way for London audiences to experience the intertwined natures of value, wealth, commodification, relationships, and gender, particularly amongst common people rather than the upper classes or monarchs.¹¹²

Englishmen offers greater nuance to the exploration of men's and women's roles in and views toward marriage, however, because the play does not contain solely English characters. Rather, the father of the three daughters, Pisaro, is a wealthy Portuguese merchant. Pisaro's late wife was English, however, and his three daughters straddle an uncertain position of both Englishness and foreignness. The play builds from the power dynamics and gender expectations in a city comedy marriage plot but places them in an international context in order to interrogate the relationships between wealth, value, gender expectations, and national identity.

Much of the preceding scholarship on the play argues that Haughton's work is nationalistic, racist, and xenophobic.¹¹³ Indeed, the three daughters eschew the advances of their three alien suitors and mock their differences in a variety of ways, particularly linguistically, while scheming to marry their desired English beaux. Emma Smith, however, argues that *Englishmen* problematizes supposedly simple ideas of national identity and international competition.¹¹⁴ Smith recognizes that by "representing foreign characters in a London setting, and specifically through the representation of their accented speech, the plays construct legible

¹¹² See Howard, *Theater of a City: The Place of London Comedy, 1598-1642* for additional markers of the plays within the category of city comedy, such as using London as the setting, focusing on urban commoners and their lives for the plot, and a privileging of "satiric examination of city vices and follies such as greed, lechery, and undeserved pretensions to wit" (19). Vitkus too points out that early modern English plays were deeply concerned with "economic issues and featured many plays that dramatized economic transactions, typically of a highly erotic nature – gender and sexuality were closely associated with economic transactions and forms of exchange" ("Turning Tricks" 240).

¹¹³ See Howard and A. J. Hoenselaars for scholarship regarding how the foreign suitors are portrayed with extreme prejudice in order to create a superior English identity and plots.

¹¹⁴ See Smith, "So much English by the Mother": Gender, Foreigners, and the Mother Tongue in William Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money*" 165.

and recognizable fictions of both Englishness and non-Englishness in order to produce an idea of national identity” (165). Yet the play fails to create a monolithic English identity, for men or for women, and does not in fact demonize the foreign suitors. In fact, it is the three English suitors who are the arguable antagonists. Kermode points out that “the alien merchants, although ineffectual, are hardly dangerous invaders,” and it is Mathea’s English suitor, Ned, who is the most aggressive, duplicitous, and dangerous character (“Introduction” 44).

Pisaro’s status as a proud, wealthy Portuguese merchant who married an English woman of means complicates notions of English identity, but his story would have been highly recognizable to a London audience. The number of foreign-born people living in England and having children on English soil had risen and continued to rise toward the end of the sixteenth century; Smith posits that “recent estimates of the total population of the city [London] and the liberties in 1600 at two hundred thousand makes the foreign population about 3.5 percent. Significantly, however, although second-generation immigrants were counted as English nationals by law, many people born in England to foreign-born parents are included on the census,” which could make the number of foreigners living in England even higher (166). Although as previously discussed some communities welcomed foreigners for marital and economic purposes, Smith points out that in the last decades of the sixteenth century, there were many incidents of violence and threats by English subjects against the growing number of immigrants from mainland Europe.¹¹⁵ It is difficult to determine an approximate number of marriages between English subjects and foreigners, but it is a frequent trope in Elizabethan and Jacobean theater. Smith calls this the “dramatic trope of transnational desire,” and it clearly

¹¹⁵ See Smith “So Much English by the Mother,” particularly pages 165-6 for detailed accounts of published libels against foreigners and accounts of violent acts.

indicates interest, if not anxiety, toward these international unions (165). Much of this anxiety in *Englishmen* comes from the question of whether or not Pisaro's daughters are, in fact, English.

Pisaro and his daughters embody a question of great significance in Elizabethan England: how was the legal status of how English national identity to be determined – by inheritance from one's parents' nationalities or by one's birthplace? In 1608, the English Court of King's Bench ruled that Robert Calvin, born in Scotland after James had ascended the English throne, was in fact an English subject and therefore retained the right to own English land.¹¹⁶ Francis Bacon argued that both should be considered for nationality, particularly in determining who was English. Bacon argued that “if he be born in England it is no matter though his parents be Spaniards, or what you will: on the other side, if he be born of English parents, it skillet not though he be born in Spain or in any other place of the world” (143). Smith, however, argues that this position was not generally supported. Alan Stewart proposes that in practice many children of English and foreign parentage paid taxes as foreigners or gave funds to become “denizens,” a legal status that straddled a precarious position between native subject and stranger.¹¹⁷ Particularly crucial to one's status as a denizen was the ability to inherit funds or lands from one's parents. English lawyers, scholars, and politicians debated not whether a denizen could purchase English land, but rather whether their children should be entitled to inherit such property or any titles acquired with such prestige.¹¹⁸ For example, Bacon argued that English law did not offer fair protections or rights to denizens. He contended that even after they were no longer legally considered strangers, their very birth outside of England rendered them suspicious,

¹¹⁶ See *The Selected Writings and Speeches of Sir Edward Coke* for Coke's analysis of Calvin's Case, particularly 166.

¹¹⁷ See Stewart, “Euery Soyle to Mee is Naturall”: Figuring Denization in William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* for an extensive history of denization in early modern England.

¹¹⁸ See Stewart 63-66 for the arguments between John Leslie, Edward Coke, and Francis Bacon.

perhaps even an enemy of the state. Importantly though, the law did allow the children of denizens to inherit.¹¹⁹

As a proud Portuguese merchant, it is unsurprising, then, that Pisaro is deeply concerned with his daughters' marriages and subsequent financial futures, and he seeks to marry them to wealthy men whose statuses are secure. Pisaro explains at the outset of the play:

every soil to me is natural.
Indeed by birth I am a Portingale,
Who, driven by western winds on English shore,
Here liking of the soil, I married,
And have three daughters. (1.1.10-4)

Interestingly, Pisaro conflates his own national heritage with the natural earth and both desire for his wife and procreative sexual fulfilment in the forms of his daughters, which recalls women's roles as simultaneous guardians of the state and vulnerable representations of it. It also prefaces the crucial connection between Pisaro's desire to control his daughter's marriages and lands that their English suitors owe to him; if Pisaro agrees to cancel the Englishmen's debts, they regain their land, their soil, for free. Paradoxically, it also emphasizes his foreign and outsider status, particularly as a member of the Jewish diaspora, even while he desperately wants to lay down roots in soil that feels "natural" (1.1.01).¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Bacon argued to the lower House of Parliament concerning the act of naturalization as it pertained to Scotland: "A subject who having beene an alien is by charter and denization, to such an one, the law doth imparte, yet a more ample benefit, for it gives him power to purchase freehold and inheritance to his owne use, and likewise to enable those Children, borne after his denization to inherit, but neverthelesse hee cannot make title, or convey pedigree from any ancestors paramount, for the Law thinks not good to make him in the same degree, with a subject born, because hee was once an alien, and so might once have been an Enemy ... affetions cannot be settled by any benefit, as when from their Nativity, they are imbred, and inherent" (19).

¹²⁰ Stewart argues that the image of a seed transplanted by wind to new lands and new soil is related to the Biblical story of Moses telling the Israelites to "be scattered through all the kingdoms of the earth," and that early modern audiences would recognize this connection in Pisaro's language (65).

Pisaro is a merchant who has made his fortune “by the sweet loved trade of usury, / Letting for interest, and on mortgages,” much to the displeasure of the three Englishmen who have mortgaged their lands to him (1.1.17-8). He remarks:

three English gentlemen
Have pawned to me their livings and their lands,
Each several hoping – although their hopes are vain –
By marriage of my daughters to possess
Their patrimonies and their lands again.
But gold is sweet, and they deceive themselves. (1.1.21-6)

The repeated references to his work in usury, his Portuguese birth, and his love of gold have generated substantial scholarship on the argument that Pisaro is not only foreign born, but Jewish.¹²¹ I propose that the threat that he poses as an international merchant, however, is more significantly financial, rather than religious. Throughout the play, his daughters make multiple mention of their Portuguese heritage, but neither they nor Pisaro identify as Jewish. Rather, the play’s dramatization of Pisaro’s position of financial superiority throughout the play and the repeated attempts by the English suitors to trick him out of his wealth and intentions for his daughters highlight the changing demographics in London’s economic spheres and the growing English anxiety regarding foreign, particularly Iberian European, influence.¹²² It is one thing to trade with foreigners, but it is another for them to threaten to control and define the English marketplaces in which they work.

Pisaro’s position in the play highlights Haughton’s commitment to setting *Englishmen* in a version of real-world London and confronting the state’s shifting capitalist markets and

¹²¹ Although the words Jewish or Jew do not appear in the play, there are multiple other instances such as that his nose is described as a “snout, / Able to shadow Paul’s” that suggest he could be interpreted as Jewish based on derogatory stereotypes. See Kermode, “Introduction,” Stewart, and Howard.

¹²² Portugal maintained significant international foreign capital, commerce, shipping, and colonial ventures through the seventeenth century and remained a substantial economic competitor to England. See Leonor Freiré Costa, Nuno Palma, and Jaime Reis, “The great escape? The contribution of the empire to Portugal’s economic growth, 1500-1800.”

practices. Crystal Bartolovich claims that Haughton's play not only reflects a changing London marketplace, particularly the Royal Exchange, but that it in fact "participate[s] in the production of the abstract space of emergent capitalism" (138). I study the Exchange in greater detail in Chapter Three, but here it is important to recognize that the creation and significance of the London Exchange, while attempting to consolidate English debt away from Continental banks and merchants, was a thoroughly international space. Bartolovich argues that "it was a node in the generalized market of emergent capitalism as opposed to being a localized marketplace in any meaningful sense: by participating in the Exchange's market, all merchants become implicated in the alien" (141, emphasis original).

The Exchange was a symbol of alien construction, participation, trade, and design, rather than of English pride and prowess.¹²³ The Englishman Thomas Gresham, head of the project, was inspired by the designs from the bourse of Antwerp, and much to the anger of London laborers, he employed builders from the Low Countries instead of English subjects. English merchants were forced to confront an abstracted market that was increasingly reliant on international networks of exchange made physical in their own city, which was increasingly populated with foreign laborers and merchants. In other words, the Exchange highlighted their reliance on international capitalism and forced them to question what it meant to be English. The Exchange makes it clear that London itself has already become alienated, and by participating in the economic practices therein, English merchants risked losing their own sense of identity. This is not to suggest that Haughton's *Englishmen* should be considered a history play. Rather, Haughton uses Pisaro's status and his relationships to his creditors and debtors to highlight the English anxiety regarding an alien presence infecting and weakening the English state.

¹²³ See Ann Saunders, ed. *The Royal Exchange*, particularly chapter 4, and Bartolovich, particularly 140-7.

Speaking to this concern, in the play it is the Englishmen who are destitute and desperate for Pisaro's daughters' wealth. Pisaro daughters' tutor, Anthony, is a friend to the men and counsels the women "What, though their lands be mortgaged to your father, / Yet may your dowries redeem that debt" and advises them to spurn the expectation that the women must marry for wealth, and instead "But wedding these, to wed true love, is duty; / You make them rich in wealth, but more in beauty" (1.1.79-80,93-4). Pisaro, enraged, overhears Anthony and his daughters' expressions of love and vows to wed his daughters to "three wealthy merchants in the town, / All strangers, and my very special friends," who are Italian, French, and Dutch, respectively (1.1.211-2). Pisaro desperately wants to prevent the English suitors "wed[ding] and bed[ding]" his daughters while they are courted by the strangers.

The onstage relationship between the foreign merchant and the English debtors emphasizes the English crown's contentious relationship with its own creditors, particularly those on the Continent; much of English debt was controlled by Continental banks up until, and through, the Exchange's construction.¹²⁴ Although Pisaro is Portuguese, his foreignness and economic strength over the suitors highlight England's somewhat precarious financial state. Haughton's Englishmen are grossly indebted to Pisaro for their mortgaged lands and, although they claim to love his daughters, well understand that if they marry into his family they will erase their debts, which brings their amorous intentions into question. Walgrave, Mathea's intended, for example agitatedly asks Anthony:

Will old Pisaro take me for his son?
For, I thank God, he kindly takes our lands,
Swearing, 'Good gentlemen, you shall not want
Whilst old Pisaro and his credit holds'.
He will be damned, the rogue, before he do't! (1.2.28-32)

¹²⁴ See Bartolovich's discussion on 140. For foundational work on England's shifting trade practices, see Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*.

Anthony does nothing to assuage his fear, however, instead revealing that Pisaro hates them and “all the love he shows is for your lands” (1.2.47). Throughout the plot, the English suitors grow increasingly desperate for Pisaro to extend their credit, which he denies, and to ensnare the daughters in marriage in no small part because the daughters agree to cover their debts. When the women have a clandestine meeting with their suitors, Laurentia agrees to “pay the int’rest and the principal” on any additional gold that the men might ask from Pisaro at the Exchange in the future (1.3.145).

Pisaro’s daughters complicate and queer the expectations of women’s roles; they utilize their own substantial wealth and sexual dominance to enact agency. Their value to their father and their suitors is clearly financial, but they also describe their own love to be given in economic terms. For example, in their first scene onstage Marina declares that her love is that which “shall be stamped” on her heart, which is a reference to coin-making, and Laurentia kisses an angel coin as a stand-in in for her beloved (1.1.106).¹²⁵ Rather than remaining passive commodities to be won or traded by their father or their intended suitors, Mathea, Laurentia, and Marina recognize their own ability to manipulate the men in their lives and to harness the value that they possess through their money, affections, and sexual desires. For example, Mathea wants to take advantage of her own wealth in order to secure the husband she wants and to “have [her] will” (1.3.129). In the first scene in which the daughters are reunited with the Englishmen, Mathea swiftly cuts off Walgrave’s proclamations of love and sternly asks:

But say, come you to us, or come you rather
To pawn more lands for money to our father?
I know ‘tis so; i’ God’s name spend at large.
What, man? Our marriage day will all discharge. (1.3.122-5)

¹²⁵ See Kermode’s footnote 106 on the myriad ways how the daughters express devotion to their English suitors.

Despite their father's intentions for them, the three daughters refuse to be defined by the expectations of their international heritage or their gender. Kermode, Smith, Kern Paster, and others have argued that English women's bodies in city comedies can represent the English nation state prone to penetration and violation by foreign powers. In order to control them and protect the body (politic), Diane Cady argues, both the strangers and the women are to blame for tarnishing the "cleane and pure" English state (178).

It is not only the daughters' wealth that is privileged in the play, but it is also their vehemence to speak only English in the face of their foreign suitors. Cady argues that the introduction of foreign language into *Englishmen* is a salient metaphor for the threat of economic, racial, and political miscegenation. She argues that there is a historical tension about the introduction of strangers' languages into early modern England and the vulnerability of women's bodies ripe for violation by said strangers.¹²⁶ Pisaro seemingly understands the intimate relationship between language and physical intimacy because he chooses wealthy Italian, French, and Dutch merchants for his daughters and instructs their tutor to teach his daughters to "have the tongues, / That they may answer in their several languages" (1.1.216-7). Pisaro understands that his daughters' language is deeply intertwined with their identities and their desires.

Bartolovich argues that the play's persistent privileging of English as a culturally superior medium of communication, despite its low international status at the turn of the seventeenth century, directly contrasts with London's struggling economic and social reputation (156). Smith points as well to the recognizable trope by the end of the sixteenth century of the accented foreigner who is marked by their inability to speak English correctly; linguistically, they are recognizably alien, which allows a London audience to understand who then is properly English

¹²⁶ See Diane Cady, "Linguistic Dis-Ease: Foreign Language as Sexual Disease in Early Modern England."

against them (172). The daughters repeatedly mock and ignore their international suitors and their linguistic differences. When her Italian suitor tries to woo her with recognizably phonetic pseudo-Italian, Marina exasperatedly asks, “Pray, sir, what is all this in English?” (2.1.37), and Mathea disgustedly dismisses her French suitor, “Think you I’ll learn to speak this gibberish / Or the pig’s language? Why, if I fall sick / They’ll say the French *et cetera* infected me,” deriding the French language and the connection between France and disease (2.1.97-9).¹²⁷

Paradoxically, *Englishmen* privileges the use of the English language over the wealth of the foreigners in order to reject the mandate that wealth be the deciding factor in marriage. Their foreign suitors are rich, yet simultaneously the play downplays how the English daughters’ wealth will benefit the poor Englishmen and celebrates the daughters as English-speaking English subjects. The daughters certainly act as though they are not denizens, like Pisaro, but rather English subjects who are entitled to their father’s money and inheritance. Mathea proudly declares:

Though I am Portingale by the father’s side,
And therefore should be lustful, wanton, light,
Yet, goodman goose-cap, I will let you know
That I have so much English by the mother
That no base, slaving French shall make me stoop. (4.1.42-6)

Smith argues that the language the daughters inherited from their mother makes them English subjects in their own words.¹²⁸ Mathea here acknowledges inheritance from both of her parents, but her insistence that her inheritance of English is stronger than the traits associated with Mediterranean and southern peoples, such as lustfulness or spriteliness, contradicts early modern

¹²⁷ See Harris.

¹²⁸ See E. Smith 173.

patriarchal inheritance practices.¹²⁹ The significance of a “mother tongue” is echoed in many other early modern texts, however. In William Camden’s *Remains Concerning Britain*, published in 1605, Camden celebrates Englishmen living in Ireland who have refused to abandon their language and forcibly removed the tongues of the women they inter-married in order to protect their language due to the strength of language, likening the language to racial difference:

So that our ancestors seemed in part as jealous of their native language as those Britons which passed hence into America in France, and marrying strange women there, did cut out their tongues, lest their children should corrupt their language with their mothers tongue. (36)

Here, the mother tongue that must be protected is English. Smith posits that the image of a mother tongue is one that “shifts unsettlingly between the symbolic and the material. It is both a property of the country, the symbolic mother, and of the immediate, material parent” (175).

Naturalization or denization were not guaranteed to children of mixed marriages simply because a mother was English, and the place of birth was generally more important if the father was English.¹³⁰ Significantly, Mathea does not renounce her father’s contributions to her identity, however; her agency, her refusal to “stoop” to a (French)man, comes from her inviolable Englishness through her mother, her mother’s language, and her wealth through her Portuguese father (4.1.46).

Mathea and her sisters represent a hybridized London; proud English subjects and simultaneous daughters of a foreigner capitalizing off of the English soil that they embody. G. K. Hunter argues that the attraction between the English men and the half-foreign half-English daughters demonstrates England’s “culture that is imaginatively engaged in defining and fixing

¹²⁹ See Erickson, particularly chapter four on “Inheritance,” for more of the patriarchal foundation of early modern English legal inheritance. It was possible, however, for a woman to negotiate children’s marriage terms if her husband had died, though her property at that time was still through her original marriage.

¹³⁰ See Smith for historical accounts of matrilineal versus patrilineal naturalization, particularly 175-7.

the otherness of the foreigner, and in testing and affirming its own self-identity” (16). This chapter argues, however, that the play fails to create the self-identity that it sought to do. As this chapter has demonstrated, women are both keepers of national identity and potential destroyers of it. As Smith says, the play “asserts an idea of the native while registering the complex diversity of its populace” (177). The wealth that the English are so desperate to obtain is consistently generated by foreigners, and it can only be maintained by the daughters and their children of mixed nationalities.

Through their rejection of their father’s will and their determination to use their value to obtain the marriages that they want, Mathea, Marina, and Laurentia queer the representation of the English state in the play. They embody contradictory understandings of England’s feminized weakness and vulnerability on the international stage as well as attempts to create a recognized masculine state that competes in the global economy. The daughters are both English and not English enough; they represent the opportunity of wealth and the reality of England’s rapidly changing demographics. They demonstrate that England is simultaneously a defiant, powerful aggressor and a receiver of strangers.

The daughters push the boundaries of gender in their affections and desires for their male suitors and reject their roles as commodities in the transaction of arranged marriage. Mathea recalls the original subtitle of the play, *A Woman Will Have Her Will*, when she determinedly declares that she “is resolved to have her will” to marry Ned (1.1.124). Oldenburg argues that this statement serves to underscore Mathea’s masculinity; she uses the phallic pun on “will” that further emphasizes “her own phallic potency in getting what she wants” (“Outlandish Love”). Although the daughters prove that characters do not have to be men to enact agency, there is no denying that they refuse to be defined only in feminine terms. As stated earlier, they offer to

cover and then cancel their English suitors' debts. Mathea too jokes that "if [she] fall sick / They'll say the French *et cetera* infected me," as though she is a male visitor to a French brothel and has contracted a venereal disease (2.1.98-9).¹³¹ She further demonstrates queer interest and a conflation of the economic with the erotic when she cries out "These tango mongoes shall not rule o'er me! / I'll have my will and Ned, or I'll have none" (2.3.405-6). Kermode explains that "tango" is a variation of the word "tanga," which are coins that circulated in Persia, India, and Turkistan (footnote 405). Mathea refuses to be bought or traded, as Pisaro intends for his daughters to be so that he may amass even greater wealth. Mathea recognizes her value is something greater than can be bought, and she instead resolves to rule herself. She also declares that she will "have none" if she cannot marry her intended suitor, which evokes the early modern slang for "vagina" since women were joked to have "nothing" between their legs.¹³²

Many of the queer themes first established by the fraught marriages of *The Three Ladies of London* – foreign influence, danger and power/seduction of women's sexuality, the relationship between money and eroticism – play out in *Englishmen* in more lighthearted, though not necessarily less significant, ways. When all three daughters scheme to marry their English suitors secretly, it is Mathea's beloved, Ned, who cross-dresses as such an attractive woman that he stirs desire even in Pisaro. When Pisaro encounters Ned disguised as Mistress Susan so that he may sneak into Mathea's room to wed and bed her, Pisaro lasciviously notes, "she is a sweet, smug girl; One might do good on her" (4.3.21-2). The old man attempts to woo Ned multiple times, though he comically rebuffs Pisaro's advances. When Ned emerges from Mathea's room with her the next morning, he is still clothed in women's wear, and he pompously cries:

Nay, stare not; look you here, no monster, I,
But even plain Ned. And here stands Matt, my wife.

¹³¹ See Kermode, "Introduction."

¹³² See Gordom Williams, *A Glossary of Shakespeare's Sexual Language* 219.

Know you her, Frenchman? But she knows me better.
Father, pray father, let me have your blessing,
For I have blessed you with a goodly son. (5.1.279-284)

The two lovers repeatedly queer their relationship by moving back and forth across lines of sex and gender. Although Ned does call Mathea his wife, he uses a masculinized shorter name for her: Matt. It is also unclear who is the “goodly son” to whom Ned refers (5.1.284). On the one hand, it could be a child of Ned and Mathea, proof that they have had sexual relations (through bawdy the pun on “know”) and therefore Pisaro’s plan would be truly foiled. It could be Ned himself saying that he is now Pisaro’s son, or it could also be encouraging Pisaro to see Mathea as a potential son after she has successfully enacted her masculine will and secured her mate.

Stewart argues that *Englishmen* “enacts a fantasy version of denization that allows the audience the vision of seeing the daughters of a denizen grow up to be sturdy, xenophobic English roses, fruits of English soil, the mother, and the mother tongue, in a blow against their alien paternity” (75). Although the daughters do obtain the English marriages that they desire and they are declared to be animalistically “breeding,” they have managed to remain hybridized and proud of both their Englishness and their Portuguese heritage. The play emphasizes that the Englishmen are marrying into Pisaro’s family, and it is his foreign wealth that they “have got what [others] did think to gain” (5.,285,301). Still, Howard acknowledges that the play emphasizes that Pisaro must be foiled; the play *cannot* allow the wealth and land Pisaro has gained from English subjects to be inherited by foreigners, and his daughters’ success both means that the wealth remains in England and that England itself is changing. As Howard puts it, “the dream of a clean division between an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ here seems to have been made more urgent by the simultaneous recognition of its impossibility” (*Theater of a City* 49).

England is both the indebted Englishmen and their saviors, the self-proclaimed English women. The daughters challenge the early modern expectation of subservience due to their uncertain legal status and their female natures, yet their value (wealth, desire, motherhood) is exceptionally high. They embody an English state that seeks to reconcile its drive to accumulate wealth and capital with an England that is increasingly inhabited and embodied by once strange(r) bodies. *Englishmen* conflates economic and erotic conceptualizations of value, challenging the supposedly xenophobic anxieties concerning early modern international marriage.

The first two plays in this chapter illuminate certain ways in which English international marriage could complicate (or benefit) English notions of identity and self-fashioning as English merchants attempted to strengthen their international statuses. Robert Daborne's *A Christian Turned Turk*, published in quarto 1612, warns of the dangers of the overseas proto-capitalist marketplace. The play engages with a masculinized England being seduced by the pleasures of an excessive and dangerous Muslim, lustful, female bodied economy through the condemnation of piracy. All three plays in this chapter question England's ability to withstand the newfound temptations of the marketplace, and in *A Christian Turned Turk*, England fails to do so. Daborne's protagonist, Ward, succumbs to the seductive, erotic, and economic pull that international trade offers through his marriage to the wealthy and powerful Voada, sister to the captain of the Turkish Janissaries. Voada is not only a racialized and gendered other; she is the epitome of capitalist accumulation and mercantile desire combined with sexual empowerment and aggression. She represents a masculinized desire with the power to exert control over who and what she wants. She dominates (the feminized) Ward into sexual, religious, economic, and marital submission. Even though eventually he renounces his conversion and murders her, Ward

still commits suicide – the ultimate Christian sin – proving that he has subsumed his identity entirely in his lust for Voada.¹³³

Where *Englishmen for my Money* offered an opportunity to celebrate marriage to foreigners, *A Christian Turned Turk* warns the English audience of the dangers therein. The play is an example of lustful, tempting, but forbidden dangers of racial and religiously othered women (sexual, predatory, the wrong kind of stranger to marry) but the play also highlights the danger of the changing and increasingly international English merchant. Here, he is portrayed as an English pirate of appetite; greedy for gold, susceptible to sexual and religious temptation and downfall by the dangers created and experienced in other economic markets, particularly Mediterranean and Ottoman. The religious threat that Voada poses is part of the growing economic threat of the Ottoman Empire, and the erotic and the financial become conflated in this play, as well. Historically, the recorded instances of English subjects marrying Muslim aliens were quite low.¹³⁴ Ward's succumbing to the sexual and religious temptations of the Ottoman Empire, therefore, represent England's increasingly precarious financial position and the anxieties surrounding their tenuous Englishness particularly as they interact with powerful Muslim territories.

The only known version of *A Christian Turned Turk* is the 1612 quarto, and the play was most likely composed between 1609 and 1612.¹³⁵ As England increasingly interacted with the dominant Turkish empire, such exchanges were reflected in a large number of plays and other forms of early modern literature that reveal complex, at times contradictory anxieties regarding

¹³³ There is a significant history of representing Muslim women as a wanton, dangerous, beautiful, seductive, and emasculating towards European Christians. See Samuel Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance*; Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, ed., *Women, 'Race' and Writing in the Early Modern Period*; Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature*; and Vitkus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean*.

¹³⁴ See Oldenburg "Outlandish Love," particularly *Cosmopolitan London*.

¹³⁵ See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England*.

the threat of the Muslim world. It is important to note that England regarded the Turk as very much a political, military, and religious threat. Vitkus argues that once the Levant Company was established in 1581 and England began to strengthen its position in the Mediterranean economy, the state, which was often represented by the merchants engaged in long-distance trade who worked with court officials, came into direct contact with the Ottoman world in competition and in collaboration. As England expanded its trade routes to include the Mediterranean Sea and the Ottoman empire, there were large profits to be sought in Muslim ports such as Tunis and Constantinople, but there were also significant dangers to confront, such as Muslim pirates.

Daborne's play is based upon the stories of the life and piracy of English renegade Captain John Ward. Ward was one of a number of historic English seafaring merchants and pirates who interacted with Muslim traders and pirates. Barbara Fuchs argues that from the 1570s to the 1580s, Elizabeth recognized the political and economic potential in piracy already taking place as a way to combat Spain's aggressive expansion, and she created new channels for privateering expeditions to act as state-sanctioned piracy both to attack Spanish ships and to seek new trade routes.¹³⁶ By 1603, however, England claimed to have formally ceased pirate activity, yet the Crown found difficulty in differentiating between sanctioned privateering designed to enrich the English state and piracy that was ostensibly the same practice that continued. Fuchs argues that the rise in piracy under James's reign in fact undermined the economic expansion that they had originally seemed to assist. She suggests that "Because piracy requires a constant performance of the more orthodox negotiations of commerce, empire, and expansion, it threatens the legitimacy of the original transactions," and that performativity reveals the deeper national

¹³⁶ See Fuchs, *Faithless Empire: Pirates, Renegades, and the English Nation*, particularly 45-7.

anxieties regarding trade, exchange, state building, and the negotiation of national identity, or Englishness that had originally been bolstered by privateering (49).

Ward represents an increasingly aggressive venture capitalist pirate whose sole ambition is profit for himself, rather than for his home country. This was a historical economic conflict that grew into a debate over the costs and benefits of exports and circulation of coin in the latter half of James's reign.¹³⁷ Benjamin VanWagoner argues that Ward's greatest threat throughout the play is his embodiment of a merchant turning away from considering themselves accountable to their (home) state or "soil" and becoming a truly "free" venture capitalist. Rather than "live as cankers, eating up" the profits and exports of one's home state, Ward argues that the privateer must engage in unlimited, but risk-driven foreign exchange on the sea, which he considers to be free of regulation (1.35).

Alongside piracy, also threatening to the English state was the danger that English Christians were converting to Islam, or turning Turk, due to their encounters with Muslim pirates and powers.¹³⁸ Vitkus, Samuel Chew, and Nabil Matar argue that there was significant English anxiety toward their perceptions of Turkish Muslim economic and political powers and their abilities to convert Protestant Christians to their religion. Although she acknowledges the steep economic stakes, Fuchs too claims that the play's focus overall is on Ward's religious betrayal.¹³⁹ There were many reasons for conversion: some sailors converted under threat of capture, while others embraced Islam as a way to experience the economic and sociopolitical opportunities that the Ottoman empire offered.¹⁴⁰ Regardless of the reason, Vitkus points out the

¹³⁷ See VanWagoner 315 and 323 for an explanation of the pamphlet war between Gerrard de Malynes, Edward Misselden, and Thomas Mun on the establishment of mercantilism as an English economic trade practice.

¹³⁸ See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays*, particularly 3-8.

¹³⁹ Historically, there were numerous instances of English renegados sharing naval systems and technology with the Barbary pirates with whom they were in competition. See Fuchs 51-2.

¹⁴⁰ See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays* 4.

immense commercial appeal of such stories and claims that there were “numerous printed narratives describing the exploits of renegades and pirates who had willingly joined the Moors and become part of the privateering communities in Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli, Sallee, and other North African ports. These fascinating traitors and apostates were thought to have succumbed to the sensual temptations offered by life in Islamic society” (13). As this chapter will further argue, Ward’s seduction by Voada and into Islam, and thus inside the Muslim socioeconomic and racialized space, represents turning away from English identity and economic power. Ward seeks to change himself, rather than change the stranger. Although historical piracy did still play a threatening but prominent role in international exchange, the real Ward posed a far greater threat to the Crown and to the concept of English subjecthood as an apostate who surrendered to Muslim temptations.

It was not only the Islamic religion that had a sensual connotation; VanWagoner argues that the threat of piracy had deeply sexual connotations related to those of prostitution, as well. Both trades deal in “wholesale,” or that which is difficult to regulate but common and increasingly threatening to the national economy (the character Gismund claims that he and Ward “deal by wholesale” in the first scene). VanWagoner argues that “by proudly touting themselves as ‘wholesale[rs],’ Daborne’s pirates establish themselves as merchants who flout English maritime regulations precisely because they profit by the breakdown in a centralized market” (315). It is unsurprising, therefore, that in this play economic prowess, religious conversion, and sexual temptation are conflated. Multiple characters in Daborne’s play, including Ward, Benwash, and others, convert to Islam due to their sexual desire for Muslim women as well as their increasing financial gain. Ward’s particular succumbing to the promises of wealth, sexuality, accumulation, and gratification that Voada offers are an example of the

anxiety that Vitkus proposes is rather an interior, individual one; the English individual is responsible for resisting the threat of the growing Turkish empire.¹⁴¹ As this chapter has argued previously, the individuals in these plays have represented larger questions regarding the creation, or lack thereof/complication of an English identity that both questions and threatens the very ability to conceptualize an English self. Even more so, it is the danger of conversion that is feminized and internal, leading to both a struggle with one's (sexual) identity as well as one's religious decision.

Over the course of the play, Ward abandons his proto-capitalist determination to accumulate long-term wealth in favor of pursuing petty revenge and sexual gratification in the short term, thereby proving that he is not a successful capitalist (investor). He opens the play having tricked the wealthy French merchants Ferdinand and Albert onto his ship to play a game of hazard and has already succeeded in winning money away from them. His greater intention, however, is to capture the men to use as laborers on his ship. Ferdinand offers him "our moneys that you covet, willingly we give it up" if only Ward will "deprive us not of our fair home, our country" in an attempt to ransom himself (1.29-30). Ward scoffs, however, and tells him:

Know we have other use for you,
Have not enticed you hither for your gold:
It is the man we want. (1.31-3)

Ward knows that while the gold they carry is significant, he wants the labor value that the men can provide more than the specie in their pockets. He wants control not only of money but also of the means of production on his ship (though he does angrily sell the men to Benwash later after they attempt unsuccessfully to ransom Raymond and his sons as his exchanges with the Ottoman empire grow when he encounters Voadia).

¹⁴¹ See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays* 44-5.

Ward's most significant decision is to convert to Islam in order to marry the object of his lust, Voada. He does so both to conquer her sexually, but also to gain access to her wealth, conflating her economic and erotic values. Voada initially refuses to marry him unless he becomes a Muslim, and while he is wavering, the governor of Tunis points out the material advantages of converting to Islam, convincing him:

What difference in me as I am a Turk
And a Christian? Life, liberty,
Wealth, honor—they are common unto all! (7.29-31)

Voada is a powerful, persuasive woman herself. Earlier, she coyly asks her friend Agar, "What cannot we persuade? / Man was asleep when woman's brain was made" (6.195-6). She convinces Ward to turn Turk by telling him that she cannot love or have sex with a man who is not Muslim. He claims that he has naught but a "love-taught tongue," yet she is too self-assured to be persuaded by his speeches. She says that "I understand myself too well to credit 'em" and instructs Ward not to call her an infidel if he wants to be with her (7.106). Yet she also exemplifies a merchant who recognizes how best to attain the most profit. She says to herself and to the audience regarding Ward's pirated wealth, "Howe'er thou sink, thy wealth shall bear me high" (7.176). Voada complicates the question of desire by her motivation for wealth and sexual gratification, rather than a returned amorous or sexual desire for Ward.

Ward equates his marriage to Voada and converting to Islam, thereby gaining her virginity and immense wealth, to becoming a deity on earth. At first, he equivocates somewhat on his decision to marry her because of the impending loss of national identity. He asks himself:

What is't I lose by this change? My country?
Already 'tis to me impossible.
My name is scandalled? What is one island
Compared to the Eastern monarchy? (7.179-182)

Ward questions not only how to understand or define Englishness, but also what its value is in an international context. Here, he demeans it greatly, as he argues that he already does not belong to his home state and that English wealth cannot compare to that of the Ottoman Empire. Fuchs argues that *A Christian Turned Turk* deftly presents the performance and representation of “national allegiance,” which reveals the interconnectedness of piracy, venture capitalism, and national identity as they contributed to the (in)stability of the English state. Here, Ward prioritizes material wealth and erotic experience over country and religion. He boasts:

That god on earth, to whom all men stand bare,
Gold, that doth usher greatness, lackeys me.
I have more than I can spend (7.187-9).

He believes that he is above serving because of his financial status. It is not just wealth, however, but wealth, sensuality, and power that convince Ward to convert. He ultimately declares “Beauty, command, and riches—these are the three / The world pursues, and these follow me” (7.193-4). He believes that he is in control of that which makes him outside the rule of anyone else – state, God, or wife.

Ward intends to dominate Voada, but she in fact convinces him to reject all of his identities: English, capitalist, protestant, white, and male. The ceremony of Ward’s conversion is presented in dumb show, one that the Chorus ashamedly does not want to portray, and instead laments “Here could I wish that our period, or that our pen, / Might speak the fictions, not the acts of men” (8.1-2). Vitkus argues that the Chorus alludes to Ward’s circumcision when they state that “with a blushless front he dares to do / What we are dumb to think, much more to show,” as though Ward’s actions during his conversion are so horrifying and outrageous that they cannot even be imagined, much less shown on stage (8.7-8). Vitkus suggests that Islamic circumcision was “considered by early modern Englishmen to be a bizarre rite of mutilation,”

and Patricia Parker argues further that frequently in narratives of conversion and circumcision, the act was equated to castration (*Three Turk Plays* 236; “Preposterous Conversions” 18-19). Ania Loomba also traces how religious conversion was imagined through the lens of contamination.¹⁴² In becoming Muslim, Ward threatens even to lose his whiteness.

Ward ultimately fails in his pursuit of exorbitant wealth and physical pleasure and is severely punished for his lack of profitability as well as his apostasy. Just as English economists encouraged seeking profit not just for oneself, but also for one’s nation and national pride, Ward renounces both in order to slake his lust.¹⁴³ Ward as an English privateer represents the queering of English value as he renounces his religion and his sexual domination particularly through the implied circumcision he undergoes during his conversion. When he renounces his Christian identity, the audience is meant to believe that he renounces his English (man)hood. The queer self that Ward becomes reveals the anxieties of English national identity and masculinity being corrupted and dominated by the sexually powerful and economically dominant women whom he encounters; for example, during his conversion to Islam, Ward is apparently circumcised, a form of feminization and emasculation common amongst representations of Muslim identity.¹⁴⁴

His emasculation continues later in the play when another character mocks his circumcision and conflates it with not only being unable to consummate his marriage to Voadia, but instead being anally penetrated by Mahomet.¹⁴⁵ Parker claims that Ward’s conversion conflates “circumcision, impotence, castration, idolatrous subjection to a woman, and pathic

¹⁴² See Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism* particularly 91-111.

¹⁴³ See VanWagoner 315-7.

¹⁴⁴ Sanchez argues that “the language of race is as inseparable from a discourse of sodomy as from that of misogyny,” and that when the object of desire is a racialized character, the language and practice around it is often described as queer (*Shakespeare* 125-6).

¹⁴⁵ Rabshake jokes “Poor fellow, how he looks since Mahomet had the handling of him! He hath had a sore night at ‘Who’s that knocks at the backdoor?’ Cry you mercy, I thought you were an Italian captain” (13.53-5). Although Rabshake taunts Ward for his perceived lack of virility as well as for his lack of nation state. See Vitkus, *Three Turk Plays* 238.

“handling” or preposterous venery” (19). Ward attempts to regain his heterosexual dominance through the stabbing and murder of Voada with the (phallic) dagger, but even then he is shamed, as a guard tells him “You have most unmanly thrust in a woman” (15.99).

After stabbing Voada, Ward is to be punished by Turkish law. He is instructed to receive corporal punishment and pay a fine, which he rejects outright. He begs:

Pay a fine! What fine, from one that’s famished?
For want of a poor asper, set me to sea again.
The tenth of what I’ll bring you in shall countervail
The revenue of the Indies. (16.245-8)

Ward desperately wants to reclaim his former identity as a renegado and create his own fortune on the main seas. He is rebuffed, however, so instead he kills Voada and is sentenced to torture. He stabs himself in his final act of defiance and masculinity as he bemoans his conversion, hoping “O may I be the last of my country / That trust unto your treacheries, seducing treacheries” (16.315-6). His crying out “O” is not sexual but mournful as he claims to have realized the error of his ways. His suicide and the repeated claims that he is an “Inhuman dog” recall Othello’s suicide, both examples of the Christian man turned Turk who sees no way back from his conversion. Here, however, Ward’s language is explicitly economic as he speaks to his fellow pirates who “All you that live by theft and piracies, / That sell your lives and souls to purchase graves” (16.317-8). He attempts to convince them that material wealth is not worth the Christian sacrifice, but his words ring hollow.

Ward is reduced to a penniless traitor and worse, an apostate due to his desire for what he was not supposed to want. His marriage is revealed to be the sham that it was, and his identities are shredded. The final words describing Ward are from the Governor, who angrily proclaims that the best descriptor of the renegade is: “Ward sold his country, turned Turk, and died a slave” (16.326). As Fuchs states, “Ward’s pitiful death exemplifies precisely that representation of the

renegade subject's fragility ... although he might betray England, the text suggests, he cannot be allowed to survive his betrayal" (52). Ward is an example of the widespread English anxiety that economic strength, religion, and sexed identity are in fact for sale in service of a proto-capitalist drive towards primitive accumulation, commodification, and the conflation of erotic and economic satisfaction. This anxiety, however, neglects the necessity of such economic and material familiarity for England's prosperity.¹⁴⁶ Benedict Robinson argues that in early modern literature, with increased interaction with the Islamic world that included emotional and sexual encounters, English narratives of self conflict, as they contain "erotic intimacy to evoke Christianity's global desires, and another in which sexuality becomes the anxious ground of increasingly racialized identities" (9).¹⁴⁷

Early modern marriage between subjects and strangers challenged questions of English nationhood and selfhood in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Rather than homogeneously portray intense xenophobia during a period of unprecedented immigration, marriages portrayed onstage convey complicated feelings and experiences toward England's changing demographics. As England expanded its economic reach, it struggled to contend with the complications that arose from real-life relations across religious, economic, and geographical divides. A deeper understanding of the marriages between English and non-European others reveals the queer representations and understandings of England's international status and identity as well as the potential to reject traditional gendered hierarchy within heterosexual unions. Male wealth is not

¹⁴⁶ Benedict Robinson argues that English anxiety regarding Christians living under a tyrannical Muslim rule was contradictory: "real, insofar as not only indigenous Christian populations but also English merchants were living under Islamic authorities across a range of Mediterranean and Asian sites; but disingenuous in the way these expressions of anxiety seem to disavow England's economic and diplomatic intimacy with places like Persia, Morocco, and the Ottoman Empire" (29-30).

¹⁴⁷ Hawkes argues that unacceptable sexual behaviors and practices, those that were "queer," "sodomitical," and otherwise unproductive sexualities were related in historical manifestations of what he terms "anti-logocentrism." See *The Reign of Anti-Logos* 1-2.

the only marker of a successful marriage; these plays reveal new ways to consider agency and value for unexpected characters in an international context.

By the seventeenth century's rise in aggressive piracy, international markets, and strengthened racialized/religious economic competition, the plays in this chapter suggest that aggressive (predatory) capitalism and acting on erotic desire together create an English identity in the midst of the country's growing multicultural nature. Gender, on the other hand, is less critical to a national self. In the first two plays examined here, marriage is an opportunity to exchange and build English wealth, but in the third being English is the price paid to marry. The value gained in the first two plays is directly connected to the created and embodied national identity, whereas wealth in the final play is the downfall of the ostracized protagonist. The economic aspects of marriage reify the desire embodied in the participants, and shared wealth in marriage is taking the strongest, most valuable aspects of other states and subsuming them into a stronger (white) England. The plays here underscore the desire to embrace profitable multiculturalism in order to dominate religious and racial others.

Chapter Three - “I see the jewel best enameled will lose his beauty; yet the gold bides still”: Coins, Counterfeit, and the Crisis of Value in Early Modern English Theater

This chapter traces how the circulation of gold specie and the rise of counterfeit gold coins reveal English anxieties regarding the novel promise of mercantile wealth made possible within a new representation-based capitalist economy and explore the very question of value itself. Jesse Lander writes that in examining the language of early modern coins and coinage, we can see how “a range of problems that we identify as economic get thought out in the early modern period” as well as how “the language of coinage is also used to articulate the peculiar relationship between authority and value in contexts far removed from the world of money and trade” (146-7). Under both Elizabeth and James, a significant number of popular plays explore these questions against domestic suspicion of capitalist practices, growing threats of foreign imperial economic powers, and trans-oceanic colonial competition.

This chapter further explores how the circulation of gold specie and numismatic language not only gives rise to expanded understandings of value, but in fact, offers the opportunity to queer value itself. The instability of gold to be categorically defined as a use value for its worth in its own metal or an exchange value in its ability to represent other commodities troubled many economists struggling to understand this new “status of representation.”¹⁴⁸ Stephen Deng argues that during the early modern period, although money was primarily material specie, “monetary conceptions vacillated between intrinsic and extrinsic value theories, between the value

¹⁴⁸ Hawkes argues that “The change in the attitude toward money that we will observe in this period was part of a shift in the status of representation in general, and it was understood as such by the people of the time.” For example, Francis Bacon believed that the world as it was perceived was true and knowable, but man’s words and signifiers do not accurately or truthfully represent it. The expression of experience through systems of signification are inherently flawed, or idolatrous: “For man is but the servant and interpreter of nature: what he does and what he knows is only what he has observed of nature’s order in fact or in thought; beyond this he knows nothing and can do nothing. ... Men believe that their reason governs words, but it is also true that words react upon the understanding; and this it is that has rendered philosophy and the sciences sophistical and inactive” (*Novum Organon*). See Hawkes, *Idols of the Marketplace* 32-5.

embodied in a coin's material and that ascribed by the state's stamp" (1). Hawkes points out that this economic development from gold as money because it is precious metal to gold coins stamped by the mint *becoming* money brought deep discomfort to many early modern people.¹⁴⁹

Gold specie under Elizabeth caused particular political and economic frustrations for early modern England. English gold coins were more valuable and rarer than silver in international trading; therefore, they were highly sought after and even bought as commodities in their own right. Akinobu Kuroda traces the influx of both precious metals into Europe from the late sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century in the global evolution of currency and transactions, and he suggests that although the influx of both metals increased "interregional trade," it is clear that "Gold was used as money in more limited regions than silver until the eighteenth century" (119-20). Despite the distinct dearth of available coins for daily business, Elizabeth refused to issue smaller currency made of less precious metal.¹⁵⁰

Under Elizabeth, the English mint was relatively successful in regulating silver coin and bullion production, but the country's stores of gold specie were historically low.¹⁵¹ There were large quantities of foreign gold coins in circulation throughout the state, and particularly problematic was that many that looked remarkably similar to the English gold coins known as angels, so called because they had St. Michael slaying a dragon on one side and an English ship on the other.¹⁵² Between 1558 and 1603, there were increasing numbers of English merchant complaints that foreign gold coins in circulation were too similar looking to angels to

¹⁴⁹ In *Idols of the Marketplace*, Hawkes argues that "for most literate Englishmen, the autonomy of value was one manifestation of the same tendency that could be observed in religious idolatry and carnal sensuality in all its forms. It is this totalizing perspective that allows the thinkers of the early modern period an insight into the spiritual and ethical implications of commodity fetishism that has largely been lost to our own epoch" (22).

¹⁵⁰ See Kuroda 127 for Elizabeth's refusal of copper specie and rejection of "the idea of minting a small denomination coin when it was proposed as a measure to relieve the liquidity shortage in daily transactions among ordinary people" (127).

¹⁵¹ See Muldrew, Kermode, Cunningham.

¹⁵² See Cartwright, "Introduction" 44.

differentiate between them, and therefore they were losing profits on counterfeit coins. Although their value was less, because these foreign coins were virtually indistinguishable, sometimes even minted with parts of the actual angel coins, they contributed to devaluing the true English specie, as well.¹⁵³

English coin's status as a symbol of monarchical power fluctuated dramatically with its own instability of worth and value in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well. Forman suggests that the question was "Should value be determined by the power and image of the monarch or by the value of the substance of the coin that is itself determined by market forces?" ("Afterword" 267). Deng argues that because the state maintained a monopoly on coin production and because coins were critical both for the state and for individual subjects engaging in the changing economy, coins functioned as a way for individual subjects to experience, and at times, acknowledge or reject the state's authority.¹⁵⁴ Amanda Bailey points out that the fluctuations in the value of coin and the increasing power, both social and economic, of the merchant class threatened the state's ability to serve as both economic authority and moral protector of its subjects, particularly when the market began to commodify personhood.¹⁵⁵ Although England's successful trade ventures theoretically needed stable coin value, Deng points out that they were overwhelmingly inconsistent due to counterfeiting, debasement, inflation, and more, contributing in large part to the necessity of credit culture that I discuss in Chapter One.¹⁵⁶

Gold guilds, moves across, and haunts the early modern English stage. England was late to the international search for precious metals and valuable new commodities dominated by Spain

¹⁵³ Christopher Edgar Challis argues that during Elizabeth's war against Spain, the angel coin was more valuable for its metal, and the number of angel coins in circulation was considerably depleted. See 229.

¹⁵⁴ See Deng 1-2.

¹⁵⁵ See Bailey, "Shylock and the Slaves," in her argument that plays showing the increasingly high stakes of debt and forfeiture "brought new urgency to the state's role in preserving inalienable right to life even as it paradoxically allowed the market to perpetuate alienable property of person" (13).

¹⁵⁶ See Deng 9-12.

and Portugal in the first half of the sixteenth century, and Elizabethan and Jacobean plays reveal England's complex, at times contradictory, obsessions with gold. Fuchs argues that "England had come late to the table," as the Spanish and Portuguese naval powers had already laid claim to maritime trade routes most efficient to the resource rich Indies (*The Poetics of Piracy* 30). Therefore, Elizabeth funded voyages attempting to sail through as yet undiscovered passages to the Northwest, none of which returned with the gold, silver, or ore for which had been hoped.¹⁵⁷

Jane Hwang Degenhardt argues that crown's desperation to compete with Spain in laying the groundwork to build its seventeenth and eighteenth-century empire can be observed through literary representations of gold. She suggests that "while certainly England's commercial reorientation in the late sixteenth century and nascent involvement in global commerce did not constitute a coherent imperial agenda, these developments importantly informed England's early conceptions of itself as an empire in the making" (154-5). Degenhardt claims that the circulation of gold is a way of observing "the complex, multi-lateral dynamics of empire" (155). Despite the statutes administered under Elizabeth and James attempting to retain English specie in the country, already in short supply, gold refuses to be held to signify only material wealth or exchange value. The rise in counterfeit coinage and counterfeiting underscored significant anxieties surrounding these questions, as well.

Impacted too by changing economic practices and values, the London playhouses staged plays that detailed versions of political competitions and commercial ventures. Of course, it would be an oversimplification to argue that plays represented the sociopolitical conflicts historically playing out between states. Nevertheless, it is well established that early modern theater participates in and responds to what Fuchs terms "the consolidation of the nation-state"

¹⁵⁷ See Fuchs, *The Poetics of Piracy* 30-1.

and a creation of English national identity (*The Poetics of Piracy* 89). For example, Fuchs argues that “Despite James’s attempts to cement a dynastic allegiance with Spain, the popular theater was never more successful than when Spain was reviled” (*The Poetics of Piracy* 73).

William Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, performed in 1594, is a play deeply concerned with the construction of selfhood in an increasingly commodified world defined by money and filled with false copies.¹⁵⁸ What Kent Cartwright terms the play’s “device of doubleness – two sets of identical twins, a city simultaneously humdrum and magical, incidents that seem recurrent, words layered with multiple meanings” and its obsession with gold and the newly flourishing merchant class challenging the social and economic status-quo, interrogate early modern conceptualizations of value, wealth, and selfhood. The play begins in the magical city of Ephesus, which was a Greek commercial city in the Mediterranean noted in the New Testament as a place of exceptional wealth and powerful magic.¹⁵⁹ It is a city where transformation is possible, where fortunes can be won and lost, and where identity can be manipulated at will.¹⁶⁰ In other words, Ephesus represents both the marketplace and the theater.¹⁶¹

Appropriately, Ephesus is as known for its mysticism as for its merchants. Cartwright indicates that “Magic saturated biblical Ephesus ... and *Errors* brims with related imagery: sorcerers, jugglers, fairies, fairy land, goblins, sprites, mermaids, sirens, enchanting mists, misleading illusions, devils and totems, Circe, genius-spirits and, pre-eminently, witches.

¹⁵⁸ For more on the performance history of Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors*, see Cartwright “Introduction” 103 and Appendix 1. For more on the economic history of early modern London and how it compares to the Mediterranean in the 1590s, see Jesse M. Lander, especially 145-7.

¹⁵⁹ See Cartwright, “Introduction” 5, 50.

¹⁶⁰ Although Ephesus is a Mediterranean city, aspects of its marketplace and characters can be interpreted as indicators of the London marketplace and its Elizabethan inhabitants. See Cartwright, “Introduction” 56-57 and van Elk, “Misidentification.”

¹⁶¹ See Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker’s argument that the theater, like the marketplace, is a space where the individual may “lose their sense of self” (7-8).

Characters experience magic with an emotional intensity that makes it difficult entirely to dismiss” (28-29). Indeed, Antipholus of Syracuse, hereafter known as Antipholus S, is particularly terrified of the mystical reputation Ephesus holds.¹⁶² When he encounters Dromio E for the first time, mistakenly believing him to be his own servant pretending not to know him and having stolen his entire fortune from him, he cowers:

They say this town is full of cozenage
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body. (1.2.97-100)

The consequences of disobeying the characters who posit magical abilities are dire; Antipholus E loses his wife, his home, and his fortune seemingly to an unknown, but powerful double, and is nearly imprisoned for madness (3.1.38, 4.1.53-79). Antipholus S, on the other hand, as he attempts with sword drawn to escape the city, is accused by the goldsmith of “shame, imprisonment, / [and having] done wrong to this my honest friend” (5.1.17-18). Crucially, it is not actually magic, but the marketplace, that is the cause of repeated mistaken identity, loss of wealth, and threat to the body. It is important not to reject the spiritual significance of these encounters, but rather to emphasize their relationship to the magic of the marketplace with which they are intertwined. It is not the conjurer Doctor Pinch whom one should fear, but the threat of the self displaced through commodity fetishism and alienation.

In the characters’ various quests, be they for family or fortune, it is in fact mercantilism that multiplies commodities and laborers as if by magic, rather than sorcerers or conjurers. Shankar Raman argues that Ephesus embodies “the nightmarish threat of the market, of a space and a process of doubling, exchange, and possession, wherein people, things, identities, and

¹⁶² For ease of reading, the doubled set of twins are referred to here as follows: Antipholus of Syracuse is Antipholus S, Antipholus of Ephesus is Antipholus E, Dromio of Syracuse is Dromio S, and Dromio of Ephesus is Dromio E.

attributes endlessly circulate” (193). The play underscores how early modern traders felt anxiously about reducing people to objects, yet continued to do so in pursuit of profit.¹⁶³ Hawkes argues that in fact, “the fetishistic aura that was attached to commodities reminded many people of magic,” and that the commodity itself contains “supernatural” properties because “The value, the meaning, of a commodity is not produced by nature, and this made it a source of unease” (*Shakespeare and Economic Theory* 100-01). Thomas Cosgrove goes even further to posit that the magic in Ephesus is *only* money and argues for “the play’s transposal of qualities of the monetary onto the magical” (149). Cosgrove argues that the play “is motivated not only by the confusion, or errors, that arise from the play’s identical twins, but also by the confusion of the structural positions entailed by commodity circulation, buyer and seller” in a system of circulation (151). Marx, of course, described money as “the transformation of all human and natural properties into their contraries,” a magical stand-in for and perversion of the human being (“The Power of Money” 163). The play then highlights both the confusion of the individual engaging in the marketplace, and also the precariousness of one’s position in the circulation, credit-based economy.¹⁶⁴

In this opening scene, *Errors* establishes not only a dramatic impetus for moving the plot forward – the stakes are life and death for Egeon – but the scene also emphasizes the lifesaving or life-ending properties of gold and money in the text. *Errors* questions value, wealth, procreation, doubling, unexpected gain, and shocking loss, all of which play out through interpersonal relationships and, more importantly, marketplace transactions. Specie money is the lifeblood of this play, and Ephesus is a place where one can amass an immeasurable fortune if one avoids the sorcerers and dark magicians who prowl the marketplace. An aged merchant,

¹⁶³ See Cartwright, “Introduction” 40.

¹⁶⁴ See Cosgrove, “The Commodity of Errors” 151.

Egeon, hails from the rival city of Syracuse. Both trade towns are locked in deadly conflict, and it is illegal for citizens to travel in between them; Egeon has been detained. The Duke of Ephesus scathingly informs Egeon that the harsh law in his land was in direct response to:

The rancorous outrage of your duke
To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,
Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,
Have sealed his rigorous statutes with their bloods. (1.1.6-9)

The Duke of Ephesus justifies his bloody statutes by claiming that equal treatment has befallen his own merchants and citizens when they have attempted to move through Syracuse, unable to pay their ransoms with “guilders,” gold or silver German and Dutch coins commonly used in trade.¹⁶⁵ As retribution for their treatment:

It hath in solemn synods been decreed,
Both by the Syracusans and ourselves,
To admit no traffic to our adverse towns. (1.1.13-5)

Even further, it has been decreed that if anyone “born at Ephesus” is so much as seen in Syracuse, let alone attempts to conduct business there:

he dies,
His goods confiscate to the Duke’s dispose,
Unless a thousand marks be levied
To quit the penalty and ransom him. (1.1.19-2)

The Comedy of Errors is one of Shakespeare’s plays that is most concerned with mercantilism and market exchange.¹⁶⁶ Despite its comedic, at times even farcical nature, it presents a nuanced portrait of the precariousness of a trading merchant’s social and financial statuses in early modern Europe.¹⁶⁷ The stakes are dire for characters throughout the story including loss of self, loss of family, and even loss of life. Kent Cartwright argues that “the play’s mysterious

¹⁶⁵ See Cartwright 140 and Fischer *Econolingua* 170.

¹⁶⁶ See Parker 56.

¹⁶⁷ For more on mercantile risk and the intertwining of family and economic responsibilities in several of Shakespeare’s plays, see Perry 42.

circulation of words and objects is matched by the market economy's circulation of obligations and goods. *Errors* is saturated with merchants ... the comedy's backdrop is a trade war; a luxury commodity plays a key role in the plot; and an international trader's urgency to collect a debt spurs the action into crisis" ("Introduction" 39).

Egeon bemoans the fact that he only traveled to such a dangerous place in an attempt to find one of his twin sons, a son "one so like the other / As could not be distinguished but by name," along with a servant boy attending his child who was also a twin (1.1.51-2). He lost these members of his household in a devastating shipwreck nearly twenty years ago. The Duke, moved by Egeon's plight, refuses to grant him clemency but allows a stay of execution and grants him one day:

To seek thy hope by beneficial help.
Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus;
Beg thou or borrow to make up the sum,
And live. If no, then thou art doomed to die. (1.1.151-155)

Errors takes place in a dramatized version of the Mediterranean, giving the play the freedom to explore the transformative, at times mystical elements of the thriving commercial marketplace as it increasingly relies on the circulation of precious metal specie as a space of frightening transformation as well as astounding accumulation for individual merchants.¹⁶⁸ Cartwright reminds us that what characters in the play believe to be magic is actually mercantilist practices, or rather, "the marketplace's power to multiply things almost by legerdemain" (38).

The play also introduces the threat of counterfeit coins as a stark reminder of the fungibility of wealth and how individual participants in the marketplace, be they merchants, traders, or skilled laborers, risk being commodified and reduced to the equivalent of gold pieces circulating and changing throughout the play: unknowable as individuals, unoriginal, un-served.

¹⁶⁸ For more on the suspicion of the early modern marketplace, see Hawkes *Idols of the Marketplace*.

For decades at the end of the sixteenth century, England faced gold shortages, and it is unsurprising that the monarchy's very real fears regarding the devaluation and shortage of English gold, demonstrated in *Errors*, can be seen in Elizabeth's 1600 *A Proclamation Concerning Coin, Plate, and Bullion of Gold and Silver* in which she declares that it is severely punishable, from forfeiture of wealth and up to death, to remove English gold from England's borders.¹⁶⁹

In particular, the circulation of Antipholus S, purse of gold coins reveals an anxiety repeated throughout the play about the individual's self as one predicated on economic practices and realities, even one collapsible into solely a commodity for use or exchange.¹⁷⁰ Although the purse is characterized several times as "a thousand marks," which unbeknownst to him is the exact amount needed to free his father from certain death, crucially it is also repeatedly characterized simply as "gold" (1.2.81, 1.2.70). Unknowingly following in his father's questing footsteps, Antipholus S arrives in Ephesus looking for his lost twin, his servant Dromio's twin, and his mother. He speaks with a merchant who cautions him not to reveal where he hails from for fear of his losing his life and confiscation of all his goods (1.2.1-8). The merchant with whom he speaks carries Antipholus S's money for him, the two pass it back and forth, and then Antipholus S gives it to Dromio S to keep safe for him as well (1.2.9-16).

This purse, these coins, this money changes hands and links these men in responsibility and social obligation.¹⁷¹ The gold purse is also a reference to a scrotum, however.¹⁷² This dissertation discusses the connection between purses and persons in Chapter One, but in brief, it

¹⁶⁹ See Cunningham 138 – 140 and Stow 290-1.

¹⁷⁰ There is tension between the body as a site of value, use or exchange, and the body as valueless, without a monetary equivalent. Karl Marx argues that capitalism demands not just that the laborer produce commodities, but that the laborers themselves become a commodity through the alienation from their labor: "The product of labor which has been congealed in an object, which has become material: it is the objectification of labor" (71)

¹⁷¹ For more on chains of obligation in the early modern English credit economy, see Muldrew.

¹⁷² See *OED Online* 7a.

is important to reiterate that the twin boys and the gold that they exchange are what Egeon seeks; the collapse of each individual twin into gold coins in service of their father's life calls back to their biological relationship to him, as well. The inadvertent sharing of the purse and the wealth inside implies that both Antipholus share (or even are limited to) socioeconomic and sexual status.¹⁷³

Despite many competing (systems of) authority such as state law, magic, and family loyalty, the play privileges the language of money and coin. Jesse Lander argues that the language of early modern coinage “provides a historically specific conceptual constellation” that “is used to articulate the peculiar relationship between authority and value in contexts far removed from the world of money and trade” (146-7). Once Antipholus S is alone, he laments:

I to the world am like a drop of water
That in the ocean seeks another drop,
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself. (1.2.35-38)

Antipholus S sees himself as so unknowable even to himself that although he seeks his brother, his “fellow,” in searching he continuously “lose[s]” himself (1.2.35, 38). It is Antipholus S's use of the word “confound,” however, that is significant here. “Confound” means “to defeat and confuse himself,” in that by searching for his lost family he understands even less of himself as he realizes how much he misses his family.¹⁷⁴ Economically though, it also means “to mix up or mingle so that the elements become difficult to distinguish or impossible to separate” (“confound, 6”) and “to mix up in idea, erroneously regard or treat as identical, fail to distinguish” (“confound, 7”). Like the nearly identical coins in his purse, he cannot distinguish one from the other, and in doing so, he is in danger of losing his own self.

¹⁷³ See Mark Albert Johnston for more on the eroticization of the young male body and its relationship to money, appeal, and status.

¹⁷⁴ See Cartwright “Introduction” 157.

The early modern marketplace demands that the individual voluntarily relinquish a notion of one's self, like coins being rubbed against one another in a purse, "sweating" themselves until they are diminished and intermingled. "Sweating" was a common form of counterfeiting in which coins were put in bags and shaken hard to slough off metallic shavings, which could then be redistributed or traded.¹⁷⁵ This image is deeply threatening; Theresa Nugent elucidates the relationship between illegitimate children and counterfeit coins that resonates here: "Both illegitimate offspring and counterfeit coins debase and undermine the authorized systems of circulation and transfer of property; moreover, such breakdowns in the hereditary or monetary systems threaten the authority of the state" (210).

Ultimately, the family is reunited and the Duke pardons Egeon, yet the play ends uneasily. The Dromios embrace, walking offstage together as Dromio E states:

We came into the
world like brother and brother;
And now let's go hand in hand, not one before
Another. (5.1.424-427)

This familial affection could be a cheerful ending to a plot that has treated these two characters as little more than cattle to be beaten at the whims of their masters. Instead, however, the play ultimately reinforces their interchangeability, replaceability, a "disturbing possibility that different characters might share the same identity" that in fact realizes the play's "anxieties about identity and the dissolution of the self" (Cartwright "Language" 332, 345). These two commodities are reunited, indistinguishable, only to continue to be controlled by their masters, just like the gold coins in the circulated purses of the marketplace. Even with the progression of the lines, the men begin as brothers and end as "Another" (5.1.427). Cosgrove argues that "the dominant logic of magic is transformation, or metamorphosis," which is how value transforms

¹⁷⁵ See Forman, "Marked Angels: Counterfeits, Commodities, and *The Roaring Girl*" 1538.

from money to commodities and back again in endless repetition (153). As Marx argues that commodities have both use and exchange value, the double-body is itself the very nature of money and value throughout *The Comedy of Errors*.¹⁷⁶

With the turn of the seventeenth century, the value of English specie continued to decline as Spain aggressively flooded its own economy as well as the international market with gold and silver ore mined from the New World. Chi-Ming Yang argues that “The beginning of global trade itself has been dated to 1571, when the first galleon voyaged from Acapulco to Manila to exchange silver for spices, textiles, and porcelain” (141). Chinese demand for silver rose significantly from the sixteenth through nineteenth centuries, and Spain enthusiastically supplied the market as well as their own.¹⁷⁷ Despite an increase in English piracy and privateering attempting to steal this new treasure, the increase in metal throughout Europe made it even easier to counterfeit English coins for foreign profit.¹⁷⁸ In order to combat potential loss, in 1600 Elizabeth issued *A Proclamation Concerning Coin, Plate, and Bullion of Gold and Silver* to forbid the removal of English gold from England’s borders. It was decreed:

through the covetousness of some of her Majesties naturall borne subjects, but chiefly through the cunning and practice of certaine ungratefull Strangers born in foreign parts, who have long time lived within this Realm under her Majesties safe conduct and protection, the Coine, Plate, and Bullion of Silver and Gold, and other treasure and jewels of this Realm, have been for these later yeres much more abundantly transported and conveyed out of this Realme and of her Majesties Dominions into the parts beyond the Seas than in any former times. (1)

It is significant that the proclamation acknowledges that the loss of gold coins has been caused in part by the “covetousness” of England’s own subjects, presumably in pursuit of wealth and trade

¹⁷⁶ Cosgrove argues that “Gold, the money ‘commodity,’ as Shakespeare understood the term, is represented as having a double body in the play,” and that “while the jewel is subject to degradation over time, gold is valuable or ‘bides still’ precisely because it is ‘often touch[ed]’, or circulates as money.” See “The Commodity of Errors” 154-5.

¹⁷⁷ See Yang, “Silver, Blackness, and Fugitive Value, ‘from China to Peru.’”

¹⁷⁸ See Sandra K. Fischer, *Econolingua* 82. See Yang, Fuchs.

with other powers outside of England's borders (1). Xenophobically, however, the main culprits are "cunning" and "certain ungrateful Strangers," unnamed Others who threaten England's national identity (1).

The edict decrees that it is forbidden for any English person to pay a foreign merchant or foreign inhabitant any gold that has been coined within England's borders or risk not only forfeiture of the gold, but forfeiture of double the value of the amount that was to be exchanged.

The edict states:

hereby it is ordeined and enacted, that no persons dwelling and inhabitting within this Realme should ... pay or deliver wittingly by way of exchange or otherwise to any Merchant or other person borne out of the King's obeisance for any merchandise or wares, or in any other maner wise, any pices of Golde coined in this Realme or any other Realme ... upon paine to forfeit and lose the double summe or the double value of all such Money or Golde coined, plates, or Bullion, or Jewel, paper, delivered or exchanged contrary to that Act. (1)

Forman argues that counterfeiting coins, or passing fraudulent coins off as legitimate, emerged in the late sixteenth century in particular response to this period's money shortage, particularly silver and gold, which was devastating for English trade in the early seventeenth century. The proclamation here is not only in response to the fact that prosperous international merchants were depleting England's coffers¹⁷⁹; the proclamation also speaks to an anxiety that these economic changes are affecting England's metaphysical self, as well. The emphasis on losing England's "jewels of this Realm" also speaks to England's inability to replenish its wealth or wealth as progeny, since "jewels" also connotes male genitalia and virility ("jewels, 7"). The decree's linguistic reliance on coins as representative of England's wealth, people, and children/subjects is understandable as Spain increased the amount of its gold in circulation, and English gold coins

¹⁷⁹ See Forman, "Marked Angels" 1538, and see Challis.

were being exported, traded, or sold and then altered, then re-circulated as authentic English coins (Forman, “Marked Angels” 1537-1538).¹⁸⁰

The edict urges all mayors and bailiffs to enforce these laws and threatens anyone caught exporting English gold be subject to fine, imprisonment, forfeiture, and “pain of the greatest punishment that by her Highness’s Laws may be inflicted,” which includes death (1). In practice, however, it was extremely difficult to prosecute counterfeiters. Forman points out that even legitimate coins could have different weights or be made from different material depending on how and when they were minted and how long they had been in circulation.¹⁸¹ The decrees proved ineffectual for generating long term solutions, as James continued to issue proclamations too, attempting to protect England’s dwindling specie and to combat counterfeiting.¹⁸²

Degenhardt argues that as England continued to lag behind other imperial European powers aggressively exploiting New World resources, trade became England’s nexus for accumulating influence and national wealth. She points out that England’s exchanges with the Ottoman Empire across the Mediterranean, begun under Elizabeth, required significant political negotiation, however, and this in part led to the rise in state-sanctioned privateering that this dissertation discusses in Chapter Two.¹⁸³ Under James’s reign, both legitimate merchant business and piracy thrived.¹⁸⁴ Lucian García García argues that international trade was critical in defining and negotiating a national identity; he proposes that business between England and “contact with the ‘other’ ... was a means of both constructing and expressing, and of enacting and symbolizing identity, while at the same time trying to avoid the undesired risks of contact

¹⁸⁰ For more on counterfeit coins in early modern England, see John Craig and Sandra K. Fischer.

¹⁸¹ See Forman, “Marked Angels” 1538.

¹⁸² See *By the King, A Proclamation against melting or conveying out of the King’s Dominions of Gold or Silver, coined or currant in the same* and *By the king, A Proclamation concerning the alteration of the prices of Gold* 1603.

¹⁸³ See Degenhardt’s argument on the explicitly anti-Spanish and anti-Ottoman elements of Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West*.

¹⁸⁴ See Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire* 120-1.

with the ‘other’” (57). Thomas Heywood’s *The Fair Maid of the West Part I, or A Girl Worth Gold*, written by 1603, struggles to reconcile England’s marketplace reliance on gold, its political significance, and its (in)ability to determine unchanging, internal value in a real-world based setting.

The Spanish and Portuguese exploitation and subjugation of the indigenous peoples of the New World was widely disseminated, and Degenhardt suggests that the English “were also sorely cognizant of their own failures to claim or even access gold through the same means” (156). Gold is deeply necessary as a symbol of international power and dominance, but the play stresses that England does not need to find or, more aptly, mine its own gold; the play attempts to prove that, as Degenhardt suggest, the country “purifies gold through its repossession from the Spanish” as a practice of international power (153).

Bess, a tavern owner turned privateer, embodies the belief that England is strong enough to seize gold from others, particularly Spain, and raise it to the value of English gold. When the Royal Mint creates an English coin, even if the gold is originally from a Spanish colony, the sovereign’s power creates an English artifact and a testament to the state’s authority. Degenhardt suggests that Bess herself moves intentionally throughout global trade networks to suggest English authority in these trade networks. She says that “Within this inter-imperial context, the play negotiates tensions about the production of value, both economic and moral, through its depiction of a heroine who circulates widely without ever compromising her sexual virtue” (154).

Heywood’s *Fair Maid* opens amidst the Anglo-Spanish war in approximately 1596.¹⁸⁵ Two captains discuss the Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux, and his most recent success against the

¹⁸⁵ See Turner xiii.

Spanish armada in the sack of Cadiz: “the great success” that has brought “golden spoil” to the English town of Plymouth as it “swells with gallants,” where the play begins (1.1.5,9,11).¹⁸⁶ The Earl is set to embark on what is known as the Islands Voyage, to the Islands of Azores, which historically took place in 1597 and was an unsuccessful military attempt to seize significant Spanish gold and destroy their naval fleet.¹⁸⁷ Nevertheless, the play opens shining with promise and wealth that has been sacked from Spanish ships. One of the captains boasts of Plymouth:

How the streets
Glisten with gold! You cannot meet a man
But trick'd in scarf and feather, that it seems
As if the pride of England's gallantry
Were harbor'd here. (1.1.11-15)

Fuchs argues that this opening scene imagines an optimistic, idealized conceptualization of the conflict with Spain, particularly with regard to an individual's ability to profit. She writes that “the nation imagined [here] is highly combative, gallant, and, more importantly, successful. The expeditions against Spain serve to gild the average man in Plymouth and raise him beyond his station, until the whole town seems both courtly and martial, marvelously restored to an epic time” (*Mimesis and Empire* 130).

Here, we see the spoils of a wealthy country, as streets glitter and well-dressed men show off their wealth proudly. Importantly, though, it is not just England's gold that is on display here, it is also England's “gallantry,” or its most fashionable, most magnificent members, recognizable through their ostentatious attire. There is a distinct sense of overcompensation in this opening scene; Fuchs argues that “scenes of elaborate cultural mimesis register the contradictions

¹⁸⁶ Sir Francis Drake sacked Cádiz in 1587 before the Earl of Essex repeated the attack in 1598 (see Fuchs, *Mimesis and Empire* 120). For further information on the Anglo-Spanish political conflict of the sixteenth century, see A.L. Rowse, *The Expansion of Elizabethan England*. For further information on the life and military history of Robert Devereux see Paul E.J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597*.

¹⁸⁷ See Andrews 30.

involved in translating the scripts for the emergent empires ... Different national experiences – such as England’s and Spain’s – prove to be interconnected even as these nations pursue their own process of individuation” (*Mimesis and Empire* 2). England’s desperation to present itself as a financially sound, ore-rich country troubles the reality that specie continued to decline in value and in quantity under James’s reign.

This is even more recognizable when the audience member remembers that this new gold swelling the streets of Plymouth is in fact seized from Spanish galleys. The play does not solely correlate wealth and good appearance to an intrinsic, moral Englishness. The play celebrates an English ability to appropriate and improve upon others’ specie as a form of expansion. Yang suggests that the play equates the very act of seizing Spanish gold known to be procured through the exploitation of indigenous Indians and repurposing the tainted metal as English is an act of heroism and moral superiority; then, the “English refusal to accumulate the extrinsic money-material of silver and gold enables their acquisition of heroic value [where] honor as linked to circulation becomes a new type of intrinsic value” (148). This stands in stark contrast to *Errors* where the double-bodied value of the commodity must always be negotiated; here the value of English coin is very much because it has been made externally English and stands as a metonymic extension of the crown’s political and economic power in international trade.

Before she enters onstage, other male characters describe Bess as “honest,” “wondrous modest,” “exceeding affable” and that she is “not proud” though she works in a popular tavern where soldiers, captains, and gallants congregate and harass her (1.1.24, 27-9). When one of the masters expresses incredulity that such a woman could be so upstanding yet not proud, a captain answers that “were she proud, she’d fall” (1.1.30). Bess’s unimpeachable morals are firmly grounded in a Biblical assurance that she is almost saint-like in her integrity and humility. Yet

she is also described as exceptionally beautiful, as though her exterior presentation and interior value match intrinsically. A captain insists that “her very beauty hath upheld that [tavern] house / And gain’d her master much,” despite the fact that Bess is in fact of low birth as the daughter of a tanner (1.1.32-33). As the character who embodies England’s virtues, she is unparalleled.

Bess holds the love of a man well above her station, Spencer, to whom she is faithful. Spencer, however, kills a man in a fight, and the two flee to escape prosecution. In his travels from Bess, Spencer is allegedly killed and leaves his fortune to Bess provided she remained a virgin in his absence. Bess takes charge of a tavern that Spencer owns, and encounters a character named Roughman who aggresses her (2.2.76-9). Convinced that a man who “so praise himself, / but prov’d in th’end a coward,” Bess cross dresses to confront him as her own brother (2.2.80-1). Surprisingly, she finds that she quite enjoys the act; she jokes to her companion, the clown Clem, that “methinks I have a manly spirit in me / In this man’s habit” (2.3.5-6), and even expresses confidence that she could be as “valiant” as any soldier in the field simply for having donned masculine attire (2.3.10). With her masculine exterior, Bess is determined that Clem understand her motivations for her plan to dominate and humiliate Roughman:

Let none condemn me of immodesty
Because I try the courage of a man
Who on my soul’s a coward; beats my servants,
Cuffs them, and, as they pass by him, kicks my maids;
Nay, domineers over me, making himself
Lord o’er my house and household. (2.3.27-32)

Bess intends to confront Roughman while embodying the same qualities that the captains and gentlemen at the outset of the play praised in her. She vows to maintain her modesty, but she also expresses her honesty, her lack of pride, and integrity as she protects others who cannot fight for themselves. Here, Bess’s drastically alters her outward self, yet she guards her values unchanged; she embodies the opposite of a counterfeit coin.

Bess refuses to be pinned down by a single outside signification or identity. When she hears of Spencer's death, she resolves to become a privateer and master of her own ship. She tells her crew that "for mine own wearing I have rich apparel, / For man or woman as occasion serves," and as they sack Spanish strongholds she prefers to habit herself in masculine attire and makes her crew swear "that howsoe'er we conquer or miscarry / Not to reveal [her] sex" (4.2.87-8, 4.4.81-2). She continues to amass wealth as a successful privateer against Spanish ships and strongholds while she grieves for her loss. The knowledge of her impressive piracy and her predilection for dressing in both women's and men's clothing attracts the attention of the powerful Muslim ruler of Fez and Morocco, King Mullisheg¹⁸⁸.

The play overtly equates Bess's value with Christian redemption against Ottoman sexual aggression in her interactions with King Mullisheg. Luciano García García points out that the play juxtaposes a rational, commercial English interest against the Moroccan king's sexual desire for Bess in order to manifest a white European economic, racial, and political superiority.¹⁸⁹ He argues that "Bess prototypically represents the first form of economy" as a private individual who benefits from "'free' exchange, production commodification and unfettering of commercial exchange," yet she also embodies the merchant class as "the representative, symbol and metaphor of the nascent capitalist mode of production" as an entrepreneur and privateer (59). Although the king enjoys vast wealth, Bess's value is superior; it is the exchange of English angel coins and her favor that secures an Italian merchant his freedom in Act V. Bess herself, however, is not solely representative of a hypothetical English superior mercantilist.

¹⁸⁸ Mullisheg is a version of the term *Mulai Sheik*, which was a title conferred upon three sixteenth-century Moroccan rulers. See Turner "Introduction," particularly xi-xii.

¹⁸⁹ See García 56.

She is a woman who owns a business, a woman character who prefers to wear men's garb, and she engenders desire in men around her as both a recognized man and woman. Bess is worth more than gold; she embodies queer value. This chapter does not argue that Bess's queer value emanates solely from her cross dressing; Walen argues that "Homoeroticism is not an inherent trait of the cross-dressed heroine," but that there is potentially transgressive power in a cross-dressed woman due to the celebration of the practice in fictional literature while it was condemned in nonfictional work (49). Bess represents an English fantasy fulfilled: the notion that economic value can circulate internationally yet retain its higher English value, exactly as James knew that gold could not.

Bess's queer value lies in her manipulation of her own position in the play's hierarchies of desiring economies; she is simultaneously a desired commodity, a merchant who controls the commodity, and a subject with desire. García posits that "She is a desiring subject, indeed, but only because she is able to successfully discipline her own condition of a desired object as required by the emerging capitalist formation," which allows her to circulate throughout economic, gendered, and racial spaces manipulating others' desire for her to her own financial advantage (64). She represents the circulation of English superiority and purity without compromising her own virtue, particularly in the hypersexualized and decadent Moroccan court. Howard even argues that Bess is able to reverse the gender and economic dynamics with Mullisheg, who is "sexualized and effeminated by his excessive adoration of the English Elizabeth. He is disempowered by a discourse of racial inferiority and by his effeminating enthrallment to a woman" ("An English Lash" 115-7). Bess's queer presence and her obvious investment in capitalist accumulation and piracy create a space in which the desire for her not only may be commodified, but she may profit from it. Garcia argues that the "very activity of

mercantilist commerce is obliquely presented in ways that may be read as a transaction between opposing and negotiable desires within a general framework of an economy of desire” (58).

The ramifications of the Anglo-Spanish War were also felt in London. Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody Part II* chronicles Thomas Gresham’s building of the London Royal Exchange and several key battles from the Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604) and emphasizes the crown’s reluctant/hesitant recognition of the necessity not just of privateers and pirates, but of wealthy merchants to maintain centralized power.¹⁹⁰ A generically dissimilar play, Heywood’s 1605 chronicle city play illuminates as well how crucial merchants are to England’s desire to expand its burgeoning trade and empire.¹⁹¹ In this play, the merchant Gresham is elevated to the protagonist, rather than aristocrats or monarchs, as his ventures play out with the significance of royal decrees. The queen is also heavily indebted to her own subjects, particularly wealthy merchants, throughout the play, and, more significantly, cannot repay her debts. Despite its overt propaganda for the monarchy’s control of mercantile operations, *If You Know* is a deeply pessimistic play about England’s overseas prospects being overly reliant on an uncontrollable recent merchant class that foreshadows the despair and disillusionment of said class during the Jacobean period. The play also interrogates the role of London as the center of England’s changing economic, social, and political power. Whereas *Fair Maid* glorifies the merchant turned swashbuckling privateer in order to celebrate England’s naval powers, even if they were exaggerated on stage, *If You Know* presents the merchants themselves as integral to England’s international expeditions not as adventurers, but as backers. Theodora Jankowski

¹⁹⁰ See A. L. Rowse, *The Expansion of Elizabethan England*.

¹⁹¹ Howard argues for the term “chronicle city play” to define a subsection of the genre of city comedies that foregrounds prominent London citizens, most notably merchants, to elevate them to the realm of monarchs in history plays. See “Competing Ideologies of Commerce in Thomas Heywood’s *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II*, pages 165-7, in particular.

writes that Heywood's play "valorizes those merchant adventurers who expand trade and capital beyond England's boundaries, and shows how the rise of capitalist society eliminates social ills at home and supports the government economically while providing financial reward to the adventurous capitalists themselves" (308). Importantly, however, the play also emphasizes the waning power that the monarchy wields over these merchants and the deep anxieties that this provokes, as their own desire for burgeoning empire and strengthened trade routes relies upon the capital that the merchants hold. These changes are particularly visible in the play's gold; the merchants who accumulate it such as Gresham, and those who do not, such as Elizabeth.

Howard argues that much of the significance of *If You Know* is its defiant declaration of England's efforts to establish itself as an international trade center. She posits that "until well into the sixteenth century, England was decidedly on the periphery of Europe, and London was no competitor for the grand commercial cities of Antwerp, Venice, and Constantinople. With the incredible demographic expansion of London from 1550 to 1600 and the commercial expansion signaled by the founding of the joint stock companies such as the Turkey Company in 1581, the Levant Company in 1592, the East India Company in 1599, and the Virginia Company in 1609, the international status of London had begun to shift" ("Competing Ideologies" 167). The actual London Royal Exchange, officially open in 1571, was not just a place for merchants to conduct trade and business; it was London's self-referential symbolic marker as an international trade hub.¹⁹² Thomas Gresham was the merchant who headed the project to build the Exchange, though his role in the play is quite anachronistic.¹⁹³

¹⁹² For more on the opening of The Exchange, see Howard, "Competing Ideologies of Commerce in Thomas Heywood's *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody, Part II* 168.

¹⁹³ The historical Thomas Gresham was a factor at the Antwerp Bourse and advised Edward VI, Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth I, and he built the London Royal Exchange. See Hawkes "Thomas Gresham's Law, Jane Shore's Mercy" 30-1.

Although Gresham and various other merchants ostensibly work with the queen to build the bourse and raise England's international reputation, *If You Know* foreshadows the pessimism and disillusionment of the Jacobean merchant class. The play emphasizes that the merchants have become not just influential, but the foundation of the crown's power, thus making them deeply threatening.¹⁹⁴ Heywood paints Thomas Gresham as a merchant (with the qualities of the dying aristocracy) but his actions, when considered with those of the haberdasher Hobson, illustrate the monarchy's vulnerable reliance on the new, powerful merchant class. As Howard points out, Gresham's "actions in many respects mimic aristocratic extravagance but who is utterly immersed in the emerging world of high-risk, high-profit venturing," even though historically the English merchant class was accumulating vast wealth through their international trade and work with and in trading companies ("Competing Ideologies" 173-8).

Gresham expresses frustration that London lacks a covered space for its merchants to conduct their business. While it rains on him, he bemoans:

It angers me,
That such a famous city as this is,
Wherein so many gallant merchants are,
Have not a place to meet in. (86)

Gresham's description of the merchants as "gallant" could allude to their beautiful or flashy clothing, symbols of their wealth ("gallant, 1a"). The term also connotes a connection to social standing and the courtier class, as though these merchants are a part of, if not replacing, the aristocracy theoretically above them ("gallant, 3"). The term also calls back to the glistering streets of *Fair Maid* where England's outward richness and beauty reflects its inner strength and

¹⁹⁴ See Barbara Baines for commentary on Thomas Gresham in the play as "a portrait of the 'new man' that came into power with the rise of capitalism in the last half of the sixteenth century" (34-5).

value. Gresham's gold then literally and figuratively builds the Royal Exchange. When he receives the news that he can start building the structure, he celebrates:

This seventh of June, we the first stone will lay
Of our new Bourse. – Give us some bricks.
Here's a brick, here's a fair sovereign.
Thus I begin; be it hereafter told,
I laid the first stone with a piece of gold.
He that loves Gresham follow him in this:
The gold we lay due to the workmen is. (108)

The use of "with" contains the double meaning that he pays for the bricks with his gold, but also that he literally lays his gold pieces alongside the bricks to create the Royal Exchange (108). The deep connection with the monarchy, however, is also seen in the use of the gold piece known as a "sovereign," calling both to the valuable gold specie and to Elizabeth who later christens and names the building itself (108). Given the difficulty of acquiring gold in England, there is a desperation here to consolidate this gold and wealth. Several characters follow Gresham's suit, including the Mayor of London and other prominent merchants in laying down their own gold into the foundation of the bourse.

Hawkes argues that Heywood's Gresham privileges the aristocratic form of money and market, where the sign and signifier are intimately embedded, over the mercantile one of independent representation.¹⁹⁵ In other words, he proposes that the character prioritizes use-value over exchange-value, even as a merchant, and he points to Gresham's spectacular financial losses as evidence. For example, before the play begins, Gresham had negotiated a trade deal with the King of Barbary to establish a sugar monopoly for a monumental sum, but said king was slain by his son. While waiting for news of his deal, he learns that a ship carrying very expensive

¹⁹⁵ See Hawkes, "Thomas Gresham's Law" 31-2.

paintings he commissioned of English royalty has sunk. To add insult to injury, when the new king takes the throne, he denies Gresham's claims and sends him:

As presents, not as satisfaction,
A costly dagger and a pair of slippers;
And there's all for your three score [thousand] pound. (118)

Gresham's monetary losses are catastrophic, yet he dismisses them as though they were nothing. He joyfully embraces the dagger and gleefully puts on the slippers, adding to his court that "You Gresham saw a pair of slippers wear, / Cost thirty thousand pound" (119). He even insists on purchasing a pearl so rich in price that not even a Russian oligarch would purchase it only to have it ground up into a fine powder so that he may drink it in a glass of wine. Stunned, Lord Ramsay cries:

You are an honour to all English merchants;
As bountiful, as rich and charitable.
As rich as renowned, as any of all. (119)

Gresham certainly puts on airs as though he cares not for the massive financial losses he has incurred, which could be in order to "defuse any threat implicit" in him as a wealthy merchant, as Jankowski argues (329). Hawkes suggests that this is because he does not pursue wealth for the sake of accumulation or exchange alone, but rather, for its use value.¹⁹⁶ Jankowski proposes that Gresham's extravagance and refusal to acknowledge his losses are deliberate on Heywood's part to diminish his influence over the economic world of the characters, but Howard argues that there is no denying that even if he is reckless, he is completely intertwined in the "emerging world of high-risk, high-profit venturing" as a trader (178). Gresham acts as though he is just as concerned at protecting his image as a powerful, controlling merchant as much as he is protecting his investments. Furthermore, Lord Ramsay's adulation solidifies his position

¹⁹⁶ Hawkes, "Thomas Gresham's Law" 35

amongst London's most powerful class and indicates that Gresham is still very much known for being "rich," "charitable," and "renowned" (119).

Jankowski traces instances throughout Elizabeth's reign in which she borrowed significant sums of money from her subjects in order to cover the crown's expenditures, willingly or not. Even Hobson, the far less refined haberdasher who appears to be a perfect and willing servant to the crown lends money to Elizabeth without her being able to repay him.¹⁹⁷ Hobson speaks with none of the grace or eloquence that Gresham maintains, and his bumbling ways clearly mean to act as comedic relief throughout the play. Yet he is still an extremely successful merchant, if not as internationally renowned as Gresham. He offers to lend Elizabeth twice as much as the one hundred pounds that she requests of him, spluttering:

Queen shall have two.
If Queen know Hobson once, her Hobson's purse
Must be free for her; she is England's nurse. (106)

Jankowski proposes that Hobson is meant to embody the ideal subject, eager to give away as much of, if not more than, his own wealth as the crown requires (313). Hobson even suggests that Elizabeth is the maternal caretaker of England, its "nurse," who will allow it to thrive (106). Unsurprisingly, however, the queen does not in fact know Hobson, and her pursuivant who requests the funds was merely making the demand because of Hobson's reputation and wealth. When he confronts her at the naming of the exchange, she knows him not, and Hobson replies:

Bones a me, woman, send to borrow money
Of one you do not know! There's a new trick.
... I, hearing that my Queen
Had need of money, and thinking you had known me,
Would needs upon the bearer force two hundred.
The Queen should have had three, rather than fail. (136)

¹⁹⁷ See Jankowski for the history of Queen Elizabeth I borrowing money "often from her sometimes unwilling merchants" (313).

Even more striking, the queen, or “Queen Bess” as Hobson refers to her, is unable to pay him back and must insist on her word that she will “see [herself] the money back repaid” (137). Hobson points out not only how desperately the crown relied on its city merchants to finance it, but also that the financial system of lending and borrowing had irrevocably changed to one based on credit and reputation through these city merchants.

The final section of the work changes genres to become a chronicle history play detailing events from Elizabeth’s life including Spain’s unsuccessful attempt to invade England’s shores. At one point the character of Sir Francis Drake boasts of a naval battle in which the English set fire to several Spanish ships so that the Spanish:

Cut their cables, let their anchors sink,
Burying at once more wealth within the sea,
Than th’Indies can in many years restore. (162)

Although this section of the play details a military battle, as this dissertation discusses in Chapter Two, the English crown encouraged the rise of privateering in the last decade of the sixteenth-century, which can be understood as a combination of England’s military and commercial interests.¹⁹⁸ Not only did the privateers disrupt the Spanish Armada’s military tactics, but they also stole wealth and goods from them, particularly precious metals from their mines in the Americas.¹⁹⁹ This specie, such as that glistening in *Fair Maid*, was a significant source of income to the English crown: as much as 100,000 to 200,000 pounds per year.²⁰⁰

Crucially, however, this end scene of *If You Know* claims that the English troops did not seize the wealth, presumably gold and precious metals, that were on the ships, and instead let them sink. This is not only due to the propagandist nature of the play itself, as though the English

¹⁹⁸ See Wernham 61.

¹⁹⁹ See Quinn and Ryan 84.

²⁰⁰ See Howard 320.

troops are above such acts that their foreign counterparts would enact, but it is also an attempt to move away from the importance or the valuing of gold itself. Ultimately, though, it is Hawkes' argument that Heywood, in these two plays, acknowledges and fears the new market's influence on methods of evaluation. Hawkes argues that Gresham struggles to privilege an aristocratic value system where "signs are naturally and inherently connected with their referents" while the play proves that in the new economy, "representation is independent of the objects to which it attaches" ("Thomas Gresham's Law" 31). These plays work through shifts in value systems not just from bullionist to representational, but also further that challenge the very mercantile system and the monarchy's (lack) of control over it.

Under James, there was still an immense dearth of gold specie in England, a problem that had not been resolved under Elizabeth's edicts. Indeed, the historical Gresham's Law argues that "bad money drives out good," or rather, that if there are two kinds of specie of differing content, but relatively close in stated value, the inferior pieces will stay in circulation as people hoard the superior ones.²⁰¹ In 1611, James prohibited gold or silver coins from being transported out of England with the express purpose of melting them down and reselling them since they were highly valued as precious metals, rather than as specie, in other countries, and the practice was common amongst international merchants.²⁰² Simon Wortham argues that James's obsessive attempts to control the limited amount of gold in England's circulation all but curtailed England's ability to trade effectively with other Western European, Mediterranean, and Ottoman powers (348). Instead, James attempted to solidify an "essentialist conception of value" in the gold coin itself, rather than acknowledge the mutable and shifting concept of money as relational

²⁰¹ See Hawkes, "Thomas Gresham's Law" 32.

²⁰² See Wortham 348.

based on constantly changing market conditions, enhancement, debasement, even clipping and counterfeiting (348).

That same year, James also began attending the annual Trial of the Pyx, during which English coins were tested for their specie content by a jury comprised of goldsmiths. He believed that the goldsmiths were profiting from the difference between the stamped, external value of the coins and their specie value, giving them significantly increased influence over their share of the marketplace and trade.²⁰³ Wortham argues that the new money-based early modern economy not only strained the relationship between a coin's intrinsic specie value and its price, but it also destabilized previously constant social statuses (349). Hawkes agrees that James' suspicions and other merchants' wariness towards the goldsmiths echoes the significant new anxieties regarding their growing power as well as the money economy's more generally novel representational system.

The monarchy was anxious not only about the rising power of the goldsmiths. As Elizabeth reveals in *If You Know*, the crown increasingly relied on influential English merchants to fund commercial and colonial expansion, rather than on merchant adventurers. Robert Brenner argues that those merchants took advantage of Portugal and Spain's instability regarding their colonial empires in order to attempt to grow English wealth.²⁰⁴ Both Elizabeth and James understood the financial and numismatic threats that Spain's gold and silver imports were to their own economies, particularly that of inflation and devaluing their own already unstable coins. The crown being unable to fund colonial attempts, Brenner suggests that under James, many powerful merchants "took charge of the original colonial ventures of the Jacobean era" particularly through Crown-chartered monopolies (Brenner 92). These ventures overwhelmingly

²⁰³ See Hawkes, "Thomas Gresham's Law" 37-8.

²⁰⁴ See *Merchants and Revolution*, particularly 3-5.

failed by the second decade of the seventeenth-century, however, and led to an extreme dissatisfaction amongst the backing merchants.²⁰⁵ Anthony Parr proposes that the crown increasingly turned to privateers, such as those who had sacked the Spanish fleets as in *Fair Maid* to finance and supply the early Virginia settlements while promising the settlers plentiful gold for themselves and their families.²⁰⁶ The merchants, Parr argues, had become increasingly apathetic towards the New World ventures, and Brenner too claims that city merchants looked to Eastern routes to increase their fortunes.

English subjects also continued to attend the playhouses as a hunger for knowledge about travel and “discovery” grew. Parr is careful to point out that while “the travel play is implicated in the material processes of Europe’s reconnaissance of the Old World and its ‘fortunate discovery’ of the New,” it should be considered more as “a very sensitive register of changing historical (and spatial) awareness” rather than as reliable documentation of fact (4-5). By the time Philip Massinger and Thomas Fletcher’s *The Sea Voyage* was first performed in 1622, gold onstage has metamorphosed again. It no longer glisters the English streets with proof that the English state is morally, economically, and militarily superior to its European counterparts; instead, it lies rank and spoiled on the ground as a valueless, contemptible reminder of men’s greed for quick profit – both English and foreign. The gold in this play resembles Shakespeare’s gold in *Errors*; it is interchangeable and vital to every man, yet it holds none of the adventurous or moral promise that it does in *Fair Maid* or *If You Know*. Rather, it realizes the worst English fears hinted at in *If You Know*; it is nothing more than a trap to tempt men to turn on one another, both on their fellow countrymen and on their supposed enemies. Furthermore, it reveals the peril

²⁰⁵ See Brenner 92-3.

²⁰⁶ For more on the tension between the official monarchy sanctioned companies competing with privateers into the 1620s, see Parr, “Introduction” 21-4.

of the new monetary economy and the lust for colonial gold; while its intrinsic value as gold remains unchanged, it is value-less on a barren island. This deeply pessimistic shift coincides with the disillusionment of many in the merchant class failing to recoup their heavy investments in Jacobean gold-seeking expeditions.

One of such popular travel plays, *The Sea Voyage* underscores the futility of desire for material wealth despite the relentless pursuit of it. When the French pirates are shipwrecked on a desolate island, they encounter two Portuguese individuals who offer to trade vast sums of gold and precious jewels for passage away. The French are hungry not only for food; they have previously abandoned all of their passenger's plate and bullion, and upon seeing the "heaps" of treasures, they are overcome with desire for "gold and jewels ... All perfect gold" (1.3.162, 164, 166). Upon seeing the heaps of gold, Albert, the French pirate, even refers to them like cuts of beef, and chides his men for lunging at them too aggressively, telling them that "You must / Not be your own carvers" (1.3.166-7). Sebastian freely bestows it all upon them, in exchange for passage off the desolate island. The gloomy Portuguese captain, laments:

This gold was the overthrow of my happiness.
I had command too, when I landed here,
And led young, high and noble spirits under me.
This cursed gold enticing 'em, they set
Upon their captain, on me that owned this wealth,
And this poor gentleman;
Gave us no few wounds, forced us from our own.
And then their civil swords - who should be owners
And who lords over all - turned against their own lives. (1.3.175-183)

Sebastian foreshadows that this gold will be the downfall of the French pirates as it was for the Portuguese, that the "cursed gold" is too enticing to resist, turning men against one another, even against their own commanding officers, until his crew was decimated (1.3.178). True to his prediction, the French begin to fight amongst themselves for larger cuts of the bounty, and in the

fray the Portuguese steal their vessel and escape the island, leaving the pirates behind. *The Sea Voyage* is a play deeply concerned with the question of value, as this chapter is concerned with the movement and transition of gold as a way to articulate economic and social changes taking place from the Elizabethan to Jacobean periods as well as the transition from a mercantilist value system to a representational economy. The play, like terminology regarding gold, challenges articulations of subjectivity and value in the self.

Yang examines the movement of precious metals and ore from the New World to China through the lens of fugitivity, both in terms of the liberated metal and in terms of an escaped African enslaved body, as a way to examine the debates over value's location: intrinsic in the metal specie, or through its worth in an exchange economy.²⁰⁷ She argues that the "actual and imagined trajectories of silver's movement shaped European conceptualizations of blackness and economic freedom" and challenged conceptualizations of where to position value; intrinsic in precious metal, or external through the metal's exchange (142). These trajectories may be seen in the precious metal throughout *Sea Voyage* as well, testing the changed nature of gold and self as England's national wealth waned under James's strained relationships with merchant adventurers and an economic downturn in the 1620s.²⁰⁸

On this island, Portuguese gold that would bring immense wealth in Europe is utterly worthless. One of the stranded sailors laments "This gold was the overthrow of my happiness" and another swears:

Covetous base minds have no reason.
I am hurt myself, but whilst I have a leg left
I will so haunt your gilded souls. (1.3.200-02)

²⁰⁷ See Yang, "Silver, Blackness, and Fugitive Value "from China to Peru."

²⁰⁸ See Zachary Lesser 890-1.

The gold in this play corrupts the characters, rather than feeds their pride, a far cry from Heywood's plays previously examined in this chapter. If anything, the gold here changing hands is far more similar to the interchangeability and anxiety of *Errors* or *A Christian*. There is a mystical power in the gold to affect the sailors' most private selves, their very souls. In this instance, the non-English European adventurers are interchangeable – first the Portuguese have the gold, then the French, and neither one could profit from it. And yet, both groups of men blindly pursued acquiring it to their extreme detriment. Furthermore, the French sailor points out that the pursuit of this monetary wealth has tainted the soul of his brethren – their “gilded souls” ringing in their ears.

Parr points out that when the play debuted, the first English colonies in Virginia had just reported severe problems, such as food shortages, unrest, even cannibalism. It is likely that many of Fletcher and Massinger's audience would have recognized the growing unease that English subjects felt with regard to their colonial attempts as it was reflected in the play. Yang also argues that while stories of Spanish cruelties in their New World ventures circulated, there was also a range of economic and literary writings in which England presented itself as ideologically superior to a state that took advantage of colonial mines, as a way to re-imagine the dearth of English bullion as moral wealth.²⁰⁹ This calls back to England's ability to create English gold from gold taken from the Spanish treasure fleet in *Fair Maid*. In *The Sea Voyage*, the true value is not in the gold or jewels that have been stolen from the allegedly Amazonian women. Instead, it is in the restoration of family order and leaving the island. There is no inherent value in the metal specie as long as they remain trapped on the island; ultimately, however, they are nevertheless ensnared in further economic exchange in their eventual escape.

²⁰⁹ See Yang 144-5.

Value in this play seems to work antithetically to how it should – or at least, how it has historically; the so-called Amazonian women act like men, the men act like women, the gold is valueless absent an exchange economy. By the end of the play, gold is absent entirely. As the travelers and the now revealed Portuguese women prepare to leave the island, Tibalt joyfully embraces Crocale and brags “She’s mettle, steel to the back, and will cut / my leaden dagger if not used with discretion” (5.4.106-7). As Gitanjali Shahani argues, the gold with which the travelers are so obsessed throughout the play has been replaced by metal (homonym for “mettle”) and steel. Although Sebastian claims that “well that voyage ends / That makes of deadly enemies, faithful friends,” his words ring hollow (5.4/112-3). Parr points out that Sebastian glosses over the fact that the voyage was initially a “seedy venture” of piracy, as well (31).

The utterly worthless gold on the island creates a kind of queered capitalism; where does the value for exchange come from when the intrinsic value of a supposed commodity is erased? The values on the island come into tension with one another, as the Europeans try solely to survive – sometimes on one another’s flesh – while the Amazonian women wield a sexual prowess historically reserved for European males.²¹⁰ It is not only that the Amazonian women embody a sexually role reversed position in the play’s hierarchy, but rather, it is that the economy of the play is predicated on entirely new use and exchange values that queers it; those values are inherently corporeal and carnal.²¹¹ Forman and Zachary Lesser argue that plays such as *The Sea Voyage*, plays that are tragicomic, in fact turns the economic loss of wealth into

²¹⁰ Parr argues that although Rosellia encourages the Amazonian women to shun their attraction to men, the women are nevertheless in danger of succumbing to their sexual desires much the way that the Europeans nearly eat Aminta; “in both situations the search for immediate gratification is seen as an inadequate response to the demands of survival” (27).

²¹¹ See Claire Jowitt’s “‘Her flesh must serve you’: Gender, Commerce and the New World in Fletcher’s and Massinger’s *The Sea Voyage* and Massinger’s *The City Madam*, particularly pages 99-103.

redemption and possibility, just as loss is reimagined as a natural and positive aspect of venture capitalism.²¹² Lesser argues, however, that the play instead emphasizes the external value of gold, rather than its metal content, as that which will lead to wealth.²¹³ Representation-based exchange, rather than intrinsic worth, is only where value lies. Even further, the play suggests that the precious metal, while it has no worth on the island, must be traded; as Lesser terms it, “treasure depends on trade,” both from the merchants themselves and from their respective nations (898).

This chapter explores how gold specie and the language surrounding these coins and their usage symbolize England’s rapidly changing economy as well as rapidly changing conceptualizations of self and of value. Gold coins in the four plays examined here offer a variety of ways in which to read specie onstage as indicative of England’s extreme anxieties toward its foreign competitors and its own lack of the precious metal, leading to certain inabilities to compete on a global scale. This specie also, however, broadens the question of economic value in these plays as they work through the question of internal against external worth. Is gold valuable because it is gold, or is a gold coin valuable because the sovereign says that it is so?

Value’s indeterminacy and slipperiness reveal its inherent queerness, ultimately interrogating and threatening the very binary between intrinsic and external worth that the specie seeks to represent. By following the circulation of coins, these plays highlight how the movement of gold onstage reacted to as well as influenced changing English conceptualizations of selfhood and the equation of economic and global dominance with the ability to create, rather than to counterfeit, in an increasingly global trading world and increasingly queer

²¹² See Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage*, and Lesser.

²¹³ See Lesser 894-5.

conceptualizations of value. The plays also trace the transformations surrounding the understanding of gold and its figure for greater capitalist changes taking place in international trade throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Importantly, the final play analyzed in this chapter turns to new metals – particularly steel and lead – to begin creating new conceptualizations of value. Value continues to be questioned and renegotiated through the evolving and expanding exchange economies of the seventeenth century.

Conclusion

When England began to participate more aggressively on the global economic stage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ramifications were felt throughout the country's social, political, religious, cultural, and economic realms. In many ways, the state was attempting to catch up to other European countries who had been exploring, trading, and profiting more significantly and for longer than England had.²¹⁴ The meteoric rise in popularity of the London playhouses and the Renaissance play medium would not have been possible without the influx in capital, sociocultural significance, and adventure that England's economic practices brought. England's economy, however, also benefited greatly from plays that interrogated these new practices, and the impact that literature had on the economy should not be ignored.

This dissertation combines early modern economic criticism with an increased awareness on the importance of a global historical perspective and utilization of queer theory's methodologies and practices. By combining feminist theory, critical race studies, queer theory, and an economic lens to examine early modern theater, this dissertation seeks to elucidate a nuanced understanding of how onstage representations of desire – desire for wealth, desire for pleasure, desire for agency, desire for power – influenced a range of English practices and understandings, from rhetorical possibilities of selfhood to international exchange. This dissertation explores how individuals may enact specific, subversive agency working against capitalist mandates of exploitation and commodification on an unprecedented scale through representations onstage. This dissertation also explores, however, when these moments of subversion are impossible or repressed.

²¹⁴ See Fuchs, *The Poetics of Piracy*.

Theater neither reflects nor rejects reality because there is no one real life; the theater's place in Elizabethan and Jacobean England exists within and contributes to a much larger "field of signification," in Traub's term, and said field is comprised of social, political, economic, and cultural phenomena (*Thinking Sex* 39). Sanchez acknowledges the complexity of contemporary early modern scholarship as it is indebted to New Historicist foundations. She articulates how "any single text includes multiple temporalities through its influences, allusions, fears and fantasies, material conditions of production and circulation, engagement and experimentation with form and genre, and considerations of reception ... not to mention the residual, dominant, and emergent cultural norms and contexts that coexist at any given moment" (132). In examining the mundane through the lens of the sensational, the theater creates space to think more deeply about the relationship between the two and the limits therein. Laura Kolb, discussing plays that examine the early modern culture of credit, suggests that this literature's contribution "is not a straightforward critique of monetized society," but rather "emplotted analyses of the possibilities for selfhood, language, and sociability inherent to a world fictionalized by credit. The work they do is analytical and descriptive, rather than palliative or prescriptive" (20).

This dissertation examines how the proto-capitalist drive towards "profit [as] the only impetus for human action" influences the representation of both capitalism and desire on the early modern stage as well as destabilizes these boundaries (Fischer 28). There is productive tension between the body as a site of value, use or exchange, and the body as valueless, without a monetary equivalent. Simultaneously, Madhavi Menon argues that in certain Renaissance theater, particularly in Shakespeare, theatrical representation "names that condition of desire in which the body is nonmaterial. Theatrical desire neither confers subjectivity nor materializes objects" (73-74). In other words, desire eliminates the self – in trying to commodify desire, the

theater ultimately creates a space in which the bodies expressing desire cannot be replicated, which leads to a paradox of commercial commodification and theatrical expression. Using queer theory to understand desire transgresses and transgresses, as “queer theory teases out different, and differing, structures and versions of that desire” (Stanivukovic 6). Utilizing a queer theoretical paradigm “captures the split between representation and embodiment; the changing of texts between linguistically different cultures of the early modern period; it bridges gaps between different kinds of community, and material objects and texts” (Stanivukovic 16).

Each of the three chapters of this dissertation interrogates the mercurial nature of value and its economic and social transformations and repercussions. How does one negotiate the relationship between intrinsic and external value and value systems? This dissertation also analyzes the transformations, and transforming power, of economic practices. Usury, for example, metamorphosed from immoral, unchristian, and dangerous to necessary and practical in order to strengthen England’s international relationships. In the sixteenth century, the English economy became more heavily influenced by venture capitalism, which relied upon credit and debt systems of exchange in order to function. As this dissertation traces, the increase in monopolistic trading companies and merchant adventurers relied heavily on these credit-based relationships, relationships that linked men together in intimate bonds of friendship and economic obligation. England aggressively expanded its trade routes and importation of luxury goods, received an influx of foreign immigrants and rural laborers to their cities (particularly London), negotiated a cash poor economy with new reliance on credit, trust, and debt.²¹⁵ Mukherji and Tomlin argue that “procedures of valuation, and the concept of value itself, were drastically altered over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries” due to these

²¹⁵ See Mukherji and Tomlin 4.

widespread systemic changes (4). They propose that literature played a crucial role in understanding, appropriating, and experiencing these “new modes of experience and emerging ‘economic’ concepts” (4).

This dissertation explores an economy of representation in conversation with the economy of the marketplace. The reliance of male selves in connection with one another creates chains of queer capitalist practices that form the foundation of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century credit and reputation sharing. The marriage of two individuals from differing nations explores the growing anxieties of a national self and identity increasingly in flux in the face of increasingly necessary international commerce and fluid gender roles/expectations. The gold coin is the symbol of the most basic tension explored in this dissertation; the tension between internal and external value created in an international capitalist system. The coin as a commodity and as a unit of exchange circulating throughout the world represents the shifting of value toward the later seventeenth century and the simultaneous, at times paradoxical, potential and risk of competing value systems. Literature exploring these tensions and negotiations, in this dissertation theater, interrogates how “selfhood is shown to be both performable through, and irreducible to, the material accoutrements of mercantile credit ... pictorial language complicates the economically inflected values that constitute it” (Mukherji and Tomlin 9). The plays throughout this dissertation tease apart the relationships between self, desire, and material representation. The theater may become a space in which it effects, as well as challenges, the marketplace.

The very understanding of a person’s relationship to the economy and economic practice changed during this time period. As the concept of *oeconomia* went from “household” to larger social systems predicated upon participation, coding, and interpretation by the individual of other

individuals, one's investment in the marketplace grew in significance. Mukherji and Tomlin suggest that "*Oeconomia* in the Renaissance (much like the ancient Greek meaning of *oikonomia*) referred chiefly to the science or art of the regulation (*nomos*) of the household (*oikos*): its boundaries, resources and occupants; scarcity and excess; ingress and egress. This definition contains the potential for a dispensation that straddles the physical and the metaphysical, the material and the mental, the domestic and the political" (3-4). The shift in value, what is valuable, altered the individual.

I was fortunate to participate in a virtual annual conference earlier this year at which our topic for discussion was "Race-Ing and Queering Queens." It was a privilege to participate in sharing my arguments and discussion with colleagues, particularly during a global pandemic. The experience also allowed me to consider several lines of inquiry that were pertinent to my own scholarship as well as, I believe, to the future of the fields of early modern scholarship and queer theory. Much of the work in the seminar examined the desire to uncover inherent subversiveness in queer critique or analysis of our early modern texts, systems, and figures. How does the language of economic transaction relate to the language of desire on a global scale, particularly as understood through performed modes of authority, power, and desire – unacceptable and acceptable? In understanding the intimate overlapping between gender, race, sexuality, and class in a capitalist system, how can desire challenge the existing heteronormative, exploitative capitalist paradigms that global trade demands in order to create space for new kinds of value to be recognized and, more importantly, prioritized? How do individual agency and desire resist the process of capitalist commodification? When do they not?

David Eng's conceptualization of "queer liberalism" is beneficial to incorporate here. Eng argues that the neoliberal capitalist empowerment of white homosexual individuals comes

with the costs of racializing intimacy and refusing to recognize racial difference as still fundamental to access of wealth, resources, and rights.²¹⁶ Sanchez argues that although historically, queer critics when analyzing *The Merchant of Venice* “have tended to imagine queerness as disrupting the Venetian world of exchange, whether by exposing the perverse logic of marriage or by demonstrating the hypocrisy of Christian values,” in conducting queer criticism of the play, we actually recognize that there are no relations outside the economic realm, no relationships not impacted by commerce (*Shakespeare* 123). The relationships throughout the play, exemplified in Antonio and Bassanio’s intimacy, are not private and separate from the marketplace; they are a necessary, profitable part of it. Loomba also argues that throughout the play, English concerns regarding the relationships between the marketplace, racial difference, and sexuality converge, and ultimately the successful marriages in the play maintain the economic, racial, and religious power systems of Venice.²¹⁷

Hawkes claims that the concurrent reliance on representation in both sexuality and economics imbricate one another as “aspects of experience” (*The Reign* 20).²¹⁸ Barbara Foley argues that because “class is a relationship, a social relation of production,” and because the current capitalist system is predicated upon a class-based society in which the majority of the population works against one another’s interests in order to generate wealth for a select few, it is most productive to employ “*class analysis* as a mode of structural explanation” (11-12, emphasis original). In response, Ashley J. Bohrer claims that in order to understand the ways in which capitalism exploits and oppresses marginalized groups to perpetuate inequity and wealth

²¹⁶ See Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*.

²¹⁷ See Loomba, *Shakespeare, Race, and Colonialism*.

²¹⁸ Hawkes argues that both sexuality and economics rely on “performativity” (*The Reign* 20). He claims that “Those who argue that performativity is politically progressive tend to neglect its manifestations in the sphere of finance. Yet to ‘queer’ gender by rendering it performative is to risk connecting, or even identifying, the cultural prominence of queer sexuality with the economic dominance of financial representation” (*The Reign* 20).

disparity, it is necessary to recognize that “class is always-already raced, gendered, sexualized” (“Response”). Reincorporating material from this dissertation, only by interrogating the relationship between capitalism, queerness, and the related racial, social, cultural, and religious hierarchies can we attempt to understand their complicity (and possibly separate them). This foundational relationship between capital and queerness allows me to bring disparate plays such as these into conversation in order to understand more clearly how nonnormative sexualities, practices, and ways of thinking are intertwined with global economics. Queer capitalism does not only mean identifying and understanding when capitalism subsumes queer practice or identity, however. This dissertation also seeks to illuminate the opportunity to see the queer moments in capitalism itself.

Hawkes points out that the early modern stage is a space where the sign and the signifier, where the delineation between internal and external value, and where fantasy against fiction, collapse. He states that “The Renaissance stage is crowded with characters who are shown to be determined by their practice of magic, their unnatural sexuality or gender, their delight in punning rhetoric, their usurious pursuit of money, and very often by all four at once” (*The Reign* 93). As I have illustrated, the plays in this dissertation, along with many others in Elizabethan and Jacobean London, expose how the changing economic practices of early modern England impacted more than market trajectories for profit, loss, and venture. They reveal the conflation of the individual as a commodity, how one’s body was both use and exchange value, the anxiety regarding England’s status on an increasingly international stage, and they question how to understand oneself as English when that very definition seemed to shift rapidly. These plays change the language and understanding of how to create, defend, understand, perform, interpret, and value oneself.

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