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***RAM ALLEY, OR MERRY TRICKS* (LORDING
BARRY, 1611): A CRITICAL EDITION**

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SUBMITTED FOR EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

to

THE UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

JULY 2013

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been, and will not be, submitted in whole or in part to another university for the award of any other degree.

Signature:

So here I am, in the middle way, having had twenty years –
Twenty years largely wasted, the years of *l'entre deux guerres* –
Trying to use words, and every attempt
Is a wholly new start, and a different kind of failure
Because one has only learnt to get the better of words
For the thing one no longer has to say, or the way in which
One is no longer disposed to say it. And so each venture
Is a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate
With shabby equipment always deteriorating
In the general mess of imprecision of feeling,
Undisciplined squads of emotion. And what there is to conquer
By strength and submission, has already been discovered
Once or twice, or several times, by men whom one cannot hope
To emulate – but there is no competition –
There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

T. S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, *East Coker*

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Summary

Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks (Lording Barry, 1611): A Critical Edition, by Robert Duncan Fraser, submitted for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to the University of Sussex, June 2013.

The object of this thesis is to produce a critical edition of Lording Barry's play *Ram Alley* (first published in 1611 by Robert Wilson and printed by George Eld). This edition will consist of (a) an annotated, modernised spelling version of the text, that text being based on a bibliographic study of the first quarto, and (b) an introduction which will cover: the printing of the first quarto, the life of Lording Barry and his critical reception, the play's place in and contribution to early Jacobean city comedy (particularly in relation to the use of wit and bawdy in masculine self-definition), and the problems of annotating a text which is so reliant for its humour on bawdy innuendo.

The annotation will be very much fuller than is normal for an edition of an early modern play text, aiming to provide not just explanation but also commentary on and contextualisation of the language, contemporary and cultural references, characterisation, and action.

This play is something of a by-way in the early Jacobean drama, and, like its author, is little known. It is, however, a competent example of the type of comedy produced for the private theatres and reflects, therefore, on the work of other, better known dramatists, in particular Thomas Middleton.

In terms of original contribution to the field of study, this thesis will, it is hoped, add to our knowledge and understanding of:

1. the text of *Ram Alley*
2. the production of the first quarto of *Ram Alley*
3. the working practices of the printer, George Eld (who was also responsible for the first quarto of *Troilus and Cressida* and of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*)
4. the nature and hermeneutics of wit in *Ram Alley*
5. approaches to editing early modern dramatic comedy
6. Jacobean city comedy as a genre.

Acknowledgements

I have been extraordinarily fortunate in my supervisors for this doctoral thesis and to both I owe a huge debt of gratitude. The first, Professor John Russell Brown, introduced me to the subtle discipline of bibliographic scholarship and oversaw the earlier stages of this work which led to the establishment of the text; the second, Professor Andrew Hadfield, supervised the completion of the annotation and the writing of the critical introduction, giving far more generously of his time and expertise than I – a part-time student and pensioner working for no other purpose than my own gratification – deserved to receive. Support staff in the English School, the staff of Sussex University library, and the general university administration all helped in many ways to smooth the path towards completion, whilst the early modern department in the English School at Sussex provided an environment that was both intellectually and socially stimulating.

Although many of them will now, like me, be retired, I would like to thank the staff at the libraries which hold first quartos of *Ram Alley* for providing copies of their quartos, and for answering so promptly and thoroughly, at the earlier stage of this research, my questions about matters that cannot be determined from photographic reproductions. The annotator of literary texts has to be, like Autolycus, ‘a snapper-up of unconsider’d trifles,’¹ as well as something of a jack of all trades, but of course there is an inevitable corollary to that and one frequently needs to seek the assistance of experts in the scholarly community in order to settle certain points. I have been constantly and pleasantly surprised at the generosity of those experts in answering my many queries.

I am indebted to Professor Paul Raffield of the University of Warwick and Professor Sir John Baker of St Catherine’s College, University of Cambridge, for their more than generous assistance with questions about seventeenth century law.

Dr Susan North of the Victoria and Albert Museum Costume Department gave me detailed assistance with questions about early Jacobean dress, concerning which Hazel Forsyth of the Museum of London also provided helpful advice on reading.

Christopher Whittick, Senior Archivist for Document Services in the East Sussex Record Office, answered questions about secretary hand and offered helpful and creative suggestions for some of the more doubtful readings in Q1.

Dr Ian Littlewood’s assistance with Latin was very much appreciated.

¹ Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*, IV iii 26.

Professor Jennifer Richards of the University of Newcastle kindly read through and checked a lengthy footnote on midwives.

Raya McGeorge, archivist of the Worshipful Company of Fishmongers, gave considerable help with interpreting the Quarterage Books of that company and also gave me extremely useful information about its history, whilst Wendy Hawke, Senior Archivist at the London Metropolitan Archives, helped me with reading and finding my way around the company's early seventeenth century manuscript documents.

Other staff at the London Metropolitan Archives provided assistance on a number of occasions: Jeremy Smith, of the Graphics Collection, guided me through the cartography of early modern London, and Bridget Howlett, Senior Archivist, gave me extensive information on the powers and responsibilities of constables in the suburbs of London, as well as pointing me towards of some very helpful reference books on the law.

To all of these people, many of whom responded at length to e-mails that appeared out of the blue in their in-boxes from a person completely unknown to them, I am extremely grateful. As always the caveat applies that any misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the information they gave me is entirely my fault.

I must also thank two people who took on complex tasks at extremely short notice in the very final stage of this work: Nigel Philips for drawing the map of early modern London, and Linda Brooks, whose expert and meticulous copy-editing saved me from the numerous errors, great and small, that littered the penultimate version of this thesis.

Finally, there are three people without whom this project would never have been started and would never have been finished, and to whom I therefore owe a special and particular debt. My wife, Lyn Thomas, encouraged me, when I retired, to explore the possibility of returning to and completing my long since abandoned doctoral thesis, then gave her unwavering support during the eighteen months in which I almost entirely disengaged from the domestic and horticultural in order to concentrate on this last part of my protracted hike along *Ram Alley*. She also read through and gave me valuable advice on the final draft of the introduction. My mother and father, Doris and Alex Fraser, both died some years before I even set out on this road, but I will always remember that it was they who prepared me for the journey in the first place.

Preamble

This doctoral thesis was completed over two distinct and widely separated periods of time. The first period ran from September 1978 to late 1982; the second from January 2012 to July 2013.

In the first period the bibliographic study was completed, the text established and laid out, the spelling modernised, and the first draft of the annotation of Act I completed. Alongside this work went, of course, the reading of relevant contemporary plays and other literature.

In the second period the annotation was picked up from where it left off. Once a full first draft had been completed (and the annotation of Act I revised and cross-referenced in the light of the annotation of Acts II – V) an attempt was made to catch up on the intervening thirty years of relevant critical and textual scholarship; again, this was accompanied by reading (and re-reading) related literature.

Since the first stage of this research was concluded *The Oxford English Dictionary* has published a new edition. The annotation of Act I, completed in the earlier period of work, used the 1971 edition, and the annotation of Acts II - V and the revision of Act I used the 1989 edition; *OED* definitions in the notes to Act I have been referenced to the more recent edition of the dictionary. One of the advantages of the new edition is that it is available electronically, making searching not just quicker but more extensive and thorough.

Electronic technology, generally speaking, has developed beyond what would have been imaginable in the early 1980s and these developments have had their effects on the production of this thesis— indeed, it sometimes seems as though the earlier stages of this work were done using technologies closer to those used to write and print *Ram Alley* in the early 1600s than to those used to complete and print this project in 2013. Changes to the procedures of academic research have been enormous. For example, the availability of early modern texts through the Early English Books Online database and its associated search engines means that huge quantities of material can be trawled through in a matter of minutes rather than weeks, and from one's own desk.

Were the bibliographic study (which was completed in the first stage of the work using laborious and limited techniques) to have been done in the second stage it would have been done using electronic technology, and consequently would have been much more

thorough, making its conclusions, I suspect, more persuasive. That said, though, I believe that what has been learnt about the printing habits of George Eld's printing shop remains valid (and, I hope, useful) and it was decided that revision of that aspect of the thesis would therefore be limited to considering work done on Eld since 1982 only if it threw new light on this particular text (that being, of course, the reason for the interest in him here) rather than on his general practices as a printer and the habits of his workmen. However, a review of the literature based on specific searches of the pertinent literary journals² and a general search on the LION and JSTOR databases (using a variety of key words and formulations of those words) revealed nothing relevant or helpful. Of the critical work done since 1982 on *Ram Alley* and its place in the early Jacobean theatre, by far the most useful for me has been Mary Bly's *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage*,³ and though I take a different line from Bly on how we might read the homoerotic wit in this play, I owe her a considerable debt of gratitude for rescuing me from the doubts I had felt about my annotations on that aspect of the humour (my annotation of the text having been completed before I found her book) and for vindicating the hours I had spent wading, so it seemed, through the deepest cesspits of Jacobean obscenity – for *Ram Alley*, alas, thoroughly deserves its reputation as being coarse, low and vulgar (to use only three of the terms commonly applied by its early critics⁴) and though I have done my best to rescue it from being summarily dismissed as having no literary value merely because of that tendency, there have certainly been times when I felt I would have made a credible witness for the prosecution in a trial under the Obscene Publications Act 1959, on the grounds that this is a work likely to deprave and corrupt its readers.

² They were: *The Library*, *Studies in Bibliography*, *Shakespeare Studies*, and *Shakespeare Quarterly*.

³ Bly, M., *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁴ See Introduction, The Author, Barry's critical reception.

The Text

The 1611 first quarto

The title page of the first edition of *Ram Alley* reads as follows:

RAM-ALLEY: / Or / Merrie-Trickes. / A COMEDY / Diuers times here-to-fore
acted / By / *the Children* / of / the Kings Reuels. / VVritten by *Lo: Barrey.* /
(double rule) / AT LONDON / Printed by *G. Eld*, for *Robert Wilson,* and are to
be sold at his shop in Holborne, / at the new gate of Grayes Inne. / 1611.

In his *Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration* W. W. Greg has /Written/ for /VVritten/ in the description of the title page of Q1, specifying the /VV/ as a variant in the title page of Q2;⁵ Q1, however, clearly has /VV/ in all the copies examined for the present edition.

The head title is /Ramme-Alley./ and the running title /MERRY-TRICKS./ or /MERY-TRICKS./ throughout.

The book is a quarto collating A2 B4 Bb2 C-I4, making thirty-six leaves in all. The pages are not numbered. The title page is on A1, Alv being blank. A2 contains the prologue, set in italics, and A2v the *dramatis personae* under the general heading /Actorum nomina./. The names are set in italics, and the female parts are listed separately under the heading /Women./. There are ornaments above and below the *actorum nomina*.

The text starts on B1, the head title being followed by /Actus I. Scæna I./. It finishes on I4v with /FINIS./ set in capitals from the roman and italic founts used for the text. The epilogue, set in italics, follows immediately below this under the heading /Epilogus./.

This, too, is followed by /FINIS./, but the word is set in larger, roman only, capitals here. The text is divided into acts only, though the first scene is also always specified. For Acts I, III, and IV the act and scene are in numerals, Act I being roman and III and IV being arabic numerals. For these three acts the scene is written /Scæna I/. For Acts II and V the format is /Actus Secundi. Scena Prima./ and /Actus Quinti. Scæna I./.

Six copies of this edition have survived. They are located at the Bodleian Library, Liverpool University Library (lacking A and Bb), the National Library of Scotland,

⁵ Greg, W. W., *A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, 4 volumes (The Bibliographical Society, 1939), Vol. 1, entries 292a and b.

Glasgow University Library, The Folger Shakespeare Library, and Yale University Library.

Two other seventeenth century quartos were printed, both for Robert Wilson: one in 1611, also by Eld, and one in 1636, by John Norton. Pollard and Redgrave's *Short Title Catalogue* describes Q2 as a second issue,⁶ but it is quite clearly, as Greg describes it, a separate edition: it collates A-I4 and was completely reset (as a comparison of the catch-words will immediately show).⁷ Both Q2 and Q3 are straightforward reprints with minor differences and occasional obvious corrections. Although some care was apparently taken to revise the text for Q3, the results are not always intelligent and none of these changes suggests authoritative editing or emendation.

Jones⁸ notes that three other seventeenth century editions of 1610, 1635 and 1639 'are mentioned by one or another of the bibliographers,' but concludes, surely correctly, that these are phantom issues, the result of typographical errors or misinformation. No copies with those dates on are extant.

The publisher

'A booke called Ramme Alley, or Merry Trickes'⁹ was entered in the Stationers' Register on 9th November 1610 to Robert Wilson. It was the first entry made to this bookseller who had taken up his freedom some eighteen months earlier, in 1609. R. B. McKerrow tells us in *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers, 1557-1640*¹⁰ that Wilson sold both new and second-hand books. His shop was near the New Gate of Gray's Inn, in Holborn – on the furthest edge, that is, of the suburbs of London.¹¹ Entries in *Records of the Court*

⁶ Pollard, A. W. and Redgrave, G. R., *A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640* (The Bibliographical Society, 1926). The entry has been corrected for the forthcoming first volume of the second edition.

⁷ Greg, *Loc. Cit.*.

⁸ Jones, C. E. (ed.), *Ram-Alley or Merrie-Trickes* (University of Louvain, 1951), p.xxiii.

⁹ All quotations from the Stationers' Register are from Arber, E., *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640*, 5 volumes (The Stationers' Company, 1875-94).

¹⁰ McKerrow, R. B., *et al.*, *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books, 1557-1640* (The Bibliographical Society, London, 1968), entry for *Wilson (Robert)*.

¹¹ McKerrow (*Loc. Cit.*) states that Wilson had shops in Holborn, Gray's Inn Gate, and Fleet Street or Chancery Lane; since Gray's Inn Gate was in Holborn, the first two should presumably be read as the same address – as in fact it is given on all Wilson's title pages that I have seen: 'Holborn, at the New Gate of Gray's Inn', or a very similar variant. (I have seen about half of the extant title pages, spread throughout Wilson's career.)

of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640 show that Wilson did not rise above the rank of Yeoman in the company.¹² He died in 1639 or 1640.

Except for a brief period in the early part of his career, Wilson acted as a publisher on a modest scale only. The number of books known to have been published by him is small for the length of time he was in the trade – twenty-one books in thirty years.¹³

Up until 1615, the business appears to have thrived. *Ram Alley*, with its two editions in one year, must have given Wilson a particularly good start.¹⁴ After this play he published a miscellany of works: the second edition of *The discovery of a London Monster called the Black Dog of Newgate* (1612), by the Elizabethan criminal Luke Hutton; the third edition of Robert Johnson's *Essaies* (1613); the second edition of Henry Austin's poem, *The Scourge of Venus* (1614); *The Charge of Sir F. Bacon Touching Duells* (1614); *Cobbes Prophecies his Signes and Tokens* (1614); *The Maske of Flowers, Presented by the Gentlemen of Graies-Inne* (1614); and an instructional manual on letter writing, *A President for Young Pen-Men* (1615), by one M. R..

1614, however, with its four publications in that one year, was the high spot of Wilson's career. From 1615 until 1619 he reverted to one book a year and opted for the more certain investment offered by religious tracts and sermons – Spicer's *David's Petition* (1616), the third edition of Goodman's *The Fall of Man* (1618), and *The Young Man's Guide to Godlinesse* (1619). The one exception to this general tendency was an anthology of Sir Edward Coke's writings, *Fasciculus Florum* (1617).¹⁵

1619 seems to have brought a yet deeper decline in Wilson's fortunes. Between then and 1635 – a period of sixteen years – he appears to have published only three books: one in

McKerrow does warn the reader that he has given every possible form of address in case one does represent a separate establishment, but even so, Fleet Street is a long way from Holborn. Perhaps one of Wilson's co-publisher's addresses has been inadvertently attached to his name (as, for instance, Becket, 'near the Temple Church' or Boulton, 'at Chancery Lane End').

¹² Jackson, W., *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640* (The Bibliographical Society, 1957), pp.426 and 431. The entries are for 1623 and 1638 and refer to charges levied upon members of the Company (according to rank) for the death of Doctor Lamb and for the renewal of the City's charter respectively.

¹³ This figure includes further editions of books he had already published, of which there were four: two of *Ram Alley* and one each of two other books.

¹⁴ See Stern, T., *Making Shakespeare: From Stage to Page* (Routledge, 2004), p.47: 'a printer / publisher would gain little money from issuing playtexts only once, but would profit considerably from reprints.'

¹⁵ Wilson also published, in 1617, something described in the *STC* as 'a notice' and titled 'The office of General Remembrance is kept in Cursitor's Court.' The British Library, unfortunately, has no knowledge of their copy: it cannot be traced through the catalogues.

1623 (a sermon by Thomas Aylesbury) and two in 1628 (another sermon, this one by Roger Hacket, and *The Anchor of Faith*, by W. W.).

An entry in *Records of the Court of the Stationers' Company, 1602-1640* for March 1619 (New Style) tells us:

it is ordered that Edw. more shalbe dischargd from his master Rob. Wilson for that the said Rob. Wilson is not able to teach him his trade.¹⁶

Many things could account for such an inability but, given the decline in Wilson's publishing activities at this time, one possible explanation is that he was doing insufficient business even to keep an apprentice usefully occupied.¹⁷

So, after a promising start in the first five years of his career, Wilson's business seems to have gone into a gradual decline, with fewer books being published and safer material being chosen.

In 1636 and 1638, though, perhaps in an attempt to revive his flagging business, Wilson brought out three reprints: *Ram Alley*, in 1636, and Hutton's *Black Dog of Newgate* and Johnson's *Essaies* in 1638. Presumably, by choosing works to which he already held the rights he kept down costs (though there would still have been the printers' fees) whilst the selection of old successes took a good deal of the risk out of the venture.

It would be nice to think that *Ram Alley* – the book that might have set him off to a good start in 1611 – had sufficient success again in 1636 to revitalise Wilson's business somewhat. Whether that was the case or not, Wilson seems to have regained his interest in publishing (or the financial means to carry on) as he brought out the fifth edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's *The Scornful Ladie* in 1639,¹⁸ and possibly started negotiating

¹⁶ Jackson, *Op. Cit.*, p.108.

¹⁷ That is, however, by no means the only possible explanation. Edward More was first bound to Thomas Harper, printer, in January 1614. He was subsequently transferred to John Bill, also a printer, in May 1615. He was transferred to Wilson only a few months later, in December 1615. Neither transfer was caused by the death of the master from whom More was being transferred, and both Harper and Bill appear to have had financially healthy establishments. It looks very much, therefore, as though More was an unusually troublesome or stupid apprentice. However, even if this disability was his rather than Wilson's, we might still see the latter's financial difficulties at the root of the matter: one of the laws governing movement in the employment market is that the weakest businesses attract the lowest quality employees, and 1615/6 is the period at which the decline in Wilson's fortunes would seem to have begun.

¹⁸ This book was last published by Augustine Mathewes; there is no record of the transfer of the rights to Wilson, but it was printed for him by Parsons (the printer of Wilson's

for the purchase of Henry Glapthorne's *The Hollander* just before he died.¹⁹

In these last ventures, Wilson seems also to have regained an interest in publishing dramatic texts, this being a type of material that he neglected after his first book, *Ram Alley* – rather oddly, we might think, given that book's apparent success.²⁰ It is true that he brought out *The Maske of Flowers*, but that should perhaps be considered a special case – Gray's Inn was right opposite Wilson's shop, so this book would have had a particular topical appeal to his regular customers.

Possibly the contacts which brought him *Ram Alley* did not develop. On the other hand, he may have decided quite deliberately not to handle many dramatic texts. That could explain his behaviour with regard to Markham's comedy *The Dumbe Knight*, which, along with four other books, was signed over to Wilson by John Bache (its original publisher in 1608) on 19th November 1610, ten days after the entry of *Ram Alley*.

Wilson made no use of this right, and the play did not appear in print again until 1633 when it was published by William Sheares.²¹ However, since only one of those five books seems to have been published by Wilson (Johnson's *Essaies*), and since that was brought out three years after the 1610 entry, it is quite possible that lack of capital lay behind the decision not to make use of the other four rights. Another possibility is that Bache was using some redundant stock to push up the effective price of the book with the better sales potential.²²

Since *The Dumbe Knight* was a play from the repertoire of the Children of the King's

previous two books) who had recently taken over Mathewes' press. In July 1641 the play was transferred to J. Raworth by Mathewes, not Wilson or Parsons. That Wilson got the play through his connections with Parsons seems, then, fairly likely; a little doubt, perhaps, attaches to the propriety of this arrangement, but the deal could quite possibly have been made with Mathewes' knowledge and consent.

¹⁹ This book is entered to 'Widow Wilson' (22nd May, 1640) and has a title page stating that the book was printed for her ('to be sold at her shop at Grayes-Inne Gate in Holborne'); she might well, therefore, have published the book on her own account. As she published nothing else, though, it would seem more likely that she simply carried through an arrangement initiated by her husband before his death.

²⁰ It must be borne in mind, of course, that we might not have everything that Wilson published.

²¹ There is no record of the transfer from Wilson to Sheares.

²² Johnson's *Essaies* had gone through two editions before Wilson took it, and he published it twice; *The Dumbe Knight*, however, was published only once by Bache (in 1608) and Sheares' edition, twenty-five years later, appears to have been the only other in the seventeenth century. The other three books (*A Yong Mans Inquisition or Triall*, by William Guild, *Myrra, the Mother of Adonis, or Lustes Prodigie*, by William Barksted, and *The Prentices Practise in Godlines*, by B. P.) were each published once only by Bache.

Revels, and was entered to Wilson such a short time after the entry of *Ram Alley*, one might wonder whether *Ram Alley* also came to him through Bache. However, Bache, as far as I can discover, had no connection with the Children of the King's Revels apart from that through *The Dumb Knight*;²³ his activity as an intermediary in Wilson's purchase of *Ram Alley* can, therefore, be no more than a matter of speculation.²⁴

The printer

In 1604 George Eld married Frances, the widow of Richard Reade (and previously the widow of Gabriel Simpson, another printer) thereby succeeding to Reade's business and becoming a master printer with premises in Fleet Lane. It is interesting to note that, calculatedly or not (and there is no necessity for cynicism) Eld thus bettered himself in exactly the way that Barry's hero does in this play.²⁵

Between 1604 and 1624, when he died of the plague, Eld printed a substantial number of books. He was also a printer of ballads, and became one of the five allowed ballad printers in 1612. The overall impression of his output is that it was of a generally high literary quality, being mainly works of history (Eld printed the first edition of Camden's *Remaines* in 1605), translations (often of continental histories), and sermons and religious tracts. He also printed first editions of eleven play texts (amongst which were Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*, 1609, and Jonson's *Volpone*, 1607)²⁶ and reprinted over twenty more (including *Hamlet*, Q3,²⁷ in 1611 and *Doctor Faustus*, Q2, in 1609). Eld is also known as the printer of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* (1609), the publication of which is, of course, surrounded with mystery. Some mystery also lies behind the publication of *Troilus and Cressida*, the preface to which implies that the play was obtained 'against the grand possessors' wills.' The sense of sharp business practice surrounding the publication of this play is reinforced by the fact that the preface was

²³ And here the connection may have been with Machin, rather than the Company: *Myrra, the Mother of Adonis* (see previous note) contained some eclogues by Machin.

²⁴ The only information McKerrow has on Bache is the dates of his activity in the trade and the titles of two books that he published.

²⁵ For discussions of marriage between younger men and widows both in the drama and in reality in the early modern period see Panek, J., "'My naked weapon': Male Anxiety and the Violent Courtship of the Jacobean Stage Widow," *Comparative Drama*, Vol. 34, Iss. 3 (2000) and Hanson, E., 'There's Meat and Money Too: Rich Widows and Allegories of Wealth in Jacobean City Comedy,' *ELH*, Vol. 72, No. 1 (2005).

²⁶ For the assignment of *Volpone* to Eld see Lavin, J. A., 'Printers for Seven Jonson Quartos,' *The Library*, 5th Series, XXV (1970).

²⁷ For the assignment of *Hamlet* Q3 to Eld see Lavin, J. A., 'The Printer of *Hamlet* Q3,' *Studies in Bibliography*, XXV (1972).

added after the original title page (claiming that the play had been acted by the King's men at the Globe) had been cancelled.

Eld was, of course, merely the printer for those books, not the publisher, but he must have had some awareness of the backgrounds to the various business wrangles before he agreed to act as printer. He did, however, also act as a publisher in his own right (though not a very successful one, apparently, where plays were concerned) and with regard to his own publishing ventures he seems to have been just as sharp.

D. L. Frost suggests in *The School of Shakespeare*²⁸ that Eld deliberately misassigned *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1607) to the King's Men in order to promote sales, and for the same reason gave the author of *The Puritan* (1607) as one 'W. S.' – quite possibly the true initials of the author, but a transparently strategic abbreviation. He was fined three times for printing ballads 'disorderly' (in 1606, 1609, and 1610 – before, that is, he became a licensed printer of ballads)²⁹ and in 1619 he was fined for violating another man's copyright (Jackson's right in *The Madmen of Gotham*).³⁰

To that picture can be added another detail which suggests a fairly hot-headed man: in 1613 Eld was imprisoned for 'vsinge vndecent and vnfittinge speeches to the wardens'³¹ of the Stationers' Company (this from the man who published in 1611 *A Sword Against Swearers and Blasphemers*).

Such a record is by no means unusual, of course, for a Jacobean printer, but it must be acknowledged that Eld was no model of scrupulosity. He seems to have been an irascible man not likely to have allowed himself to be put upon by irksome regulations or laws that might have cramped his style – a conclusion interesting not only for its own sake, but also because it has some slight bearing on the question of the size of his establishment.

It is known that he had, officially, two presses,³² but that he had, unofficially, more than two is quite possible. In 1615, an order was made to control the erection of the 'multitude of presses' amongst London printers; this increase in the number of illicit presses having been a cause of concern for some time.³³ After the order, the printers (Eld being named as

²⁸ Frost, D. L., *The School of Shakespeare* (Cambridge University Press, 1968), pp.260-1.

²⁹ Jackson, *Op. Cit.*, pp.439, 446 and 450.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p.110.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p.60.

³² *Ibid.*, p.75. The same note is recorded in the Stationers' Register; see Arber, *Op. Cit.*, Vol. III, p.699.

³³ It had been the subject of a complaint made to parliament in 1614 by the Freemen and Journeymen Printers.

one of them) ‘brought in their barres to shew their Conformitie therevnto,’³⁴ a clear indication that many of them had been running more than their legally allowed number of presses. There is no proof that Eld specifically had more than his two presses but, given his temperament and his position of importance in the trade, it seems reasonable to assume that he, along with many others, had erected an extra press (or presses) in his shop.

Whether he needed three presses or more is hard to say. Throughout his working life Eld averaged an output of twelve works a year, many of these being substantial folio volumes such as Augustine's *City of God* (1610), Serres' *General History of France* (1611), Fougase's two-volume *General History of Venice* (1612), and Gervase Babington's *Works* (of which there were two editions in the same year, 1615). He was also, as has been noticed, an assiduous printer of ballads, and so a small proportion of work would have disappeared, leaving us with a slightly distorted picture of his true output.³⁵

To estimate the resources Eld would have needed at any given point would require a painstaking study of a large number of his books. Merely to know that, for instance, the surviving work dated 1611 totals approximately five hundred sheets is of little use as a guide to what was printed during that year as we do not know the edition sizes for most of these books. Moreover, a large folio volume like *The General History of France*, containing around three hundred and sixty sheets and so taking nearly a year to print, would have been started well before 1611. Similarly, to get the two-volume *History of Venice* into his shop by 1612, Eld must have started work on it some time during 1611 (the year it was entered in The Stationers' Register). Whether these books overlapped in the shop and how other work was fitted around them could be established only by a study such as that done by Charlton Hinman on the First Folio of Shakespeare.

Two presses could perhaps have handled the amount of work passing through Eld's shop in an average year, providing that it was evenly spread out. D. F. McKenzie has suggested, however, in his article ‘Printers of the Mind’,³⁶ that an even workflow is the last thing that seventeenth century workshops benefited from. A third press to take on extra work when the occasion arose – or even a standby to cover against the possibility of

³⁴ Jackson, *Op. Cit.*, p.158.

³⁵ We must also bear in mind that he did not always put his name on title pages, as, for instance, was the case with *Hamlet*, Q3 and *Volpone* so there may well be a number of more substantial works which were, unknown to us, printed by Eld.

³⁶ McKenzie, D. F., ‘Printers of the Mind,’ *Studies in Bibliography*, XXII (1969).

breakdown – would have been very useful.³⁷

The staffing of such an occasionally used press would probably have been no problem as employers seem to have been able to call on a pool of casual workmen. Moreover, a first glance at the numbers of apprentices in his shop seems to indicate that Eld would have had to employ casual workmen: his output equalled that of such printers as Nathaniel Field and Thomas Dawson, Senior, but whereas Eld seems never to have had more than three apprentices in his shop at a time, Field seems usually to have had between three and five and Dawson no fewer than seven.³⁸

Those figures, though, may well indicate quite the opposite – that Eld, in fact, had a larger permanent senior workforce than either Field or Dawson: apprentices were contractually bound to a master, and had to do as they were told, whilst freed men could come and go as it suited them. Obviously, therefore, apprentices had their attractions as employees (though this presumably had to be balanced against their ability to do the work). If Eld, then, could get by with fewer apprentices than other shops of a similar size, that might have been because he had a more stable workforce of journeymen than they had.

Whatever the nature of his workforce, though, the volume of output suggests that Eld's establishment was fairly large. Moreover, on his death his partner Miles Fletcher took the business over, and within a very short time had become one of a trio described by H. R. Plomer, in *A Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers, 1641-1667*, as 'the largest capitalists in the trade for many years.'³⁹ It seems unlikely that such success could have been so quickly raised upon any but solid foundations. Although thirteen years lay between Fletcher's succession and *Ram Alley*, all the signs suggest that Eld ran, throughout his career, a substantial printing establishment.

³⁷ Such events as breakdowns would not have been uncommon, as R. G. Silver points out – 'hardly a month went by without some sort of work being needed.' ('The Cost of Mathew Carey's Printing Equipment,' *Studies in Bibliography*, XIX (1966), p.90). Though Silver is speaking of the late 18th century, it is a hand press to which he refers, and the 17th century press was, presumably, no less prone to certain ills than its descendants.

³⁸ These happen to be the actual figures for 1611, the year *Ram Alley* was printed, but they are typical of the figures for the three shops throughout the careers of their masters. They are taken from McKenzie, D. F., *Stationers' Company Apprentices, 1605-1640* (University of Virginia Bibliographical Society, 1961).

³⁹ Plomer, H. R., *A Dictionary of Booksellers and Printers Who Were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641-1667* (The Bibliographical Society, 1968), p.76.

* * *

A chance meeting when George Eld went to register a book called *Heart's Ease* might have been the start of the long and fruitful business relationship between himself and Robert Wilson, for the only other person mentioned in the Register that day, 9th November, 1610, is Wilson, who was, of course, entering *Ram Alley*. Whether or not that is how it started, Wilson and Eld certainly maintained a strong association from then on. Of the fifteen books published by Wilson between 1611 and 1624 (when Eld died) at least ten were printed by Eld. *The Anchor of Faith*, possibly the first book Wilson published after Eld's death, was printed by Miles Fletcher, but after that, and for the remainder of his life, Wilson had most of his books printed by Marmaduke Parsons.

The printing

The quality of the work done in Eld's shop seems to have varied according to the nature of the book. He was capable of producing books over which much trouble was taken such as Tooker's *Duellum Sive Singulare Certamen cum M Becano Jesuita* (1611), each page of which is enclosed in a box of double rules and to which was added an *Errata*. Other work, however – and particularly his play texts – looks rather hastily produced and, except when a reprint of work not originally produced in his shop, crowded so as to fit into the least possible number of sheets.

Quite possibly Eld treated play texts as mere get-penny work (the dramatic writing of that period was not, after all, generally regarded then as it is now) which he took on to maintain a reasonable cash-flow whilst he produced his more prestigious historical and religious works. It was noted above that he was engaged between 1610 and 1612 in the printing of two large works which he was also publishing, and the time required to produce each of these books would itself have represented a considerable capital investment. No money would come in from this kind of work until the book was finished and in the shop. *Ram Alley* was, presumably, just the sort of work that helped to keep things going whilst the large books were in production.

Like the other plays, *Ram Alley* suffers from being crowded: speeches, for instance, are printed continuously almost without exception; there is no attempt to impose a consistent house style on the stage directions, the placing of which seems to have been dictated mostly by the copy but occasionally by the desire to save space. Pressure on space also caused some irregularity in the page lengths of the last two sheets.

A little care was taken over the proofreading, but this was, at best, a fairly hasty business, there being only one occasion when copy appears to have been consulted. That said, the focus of this reading does seem to have been mainly on the sense of the writing and not merely the correction of turned letters and foul case errors (a good number of which remain in formes where corrections or improvements to sense have been made). We can reasonably expect, I think, that there will be errors which escaped this proofreading, but the text presents few major difficulties and despite the untidiness of the presentation one has the impression that this is a fairly faithful setting of the copy delivered to Eld's shop, and basically a sound text.

The interpolated half-sheet Bb

The most obvious error made in the printing is the omission during the setting of Cl of a long passage. This passage was subsequently printed on a half-sheet signed Bb which was bound in between signatures B and C (except in the Liverpool copy, where it is lacking). This was clearly not a manuscript interpolation, nor was it, as Kenneth Palmer suggests in his edition of *Troilus and Cressida*, the interpolation of some additional 'material of topical interest'⁴⁰ as it is not a discrete episode, nor a lengthy addition in the middle of a scene, but the greater part of one scene and about half of another.

The passage was probably contained on one folded sheet of the printer's manuscript copy. Greg suggests that it was a leaf⁴¹ but the passage in the printed text is 155 lines long and that amount could occupy two sides of a leaf only if the hand were very cramped and the speeches written continuously (which is possible, but generally speeches seem not to have been written continuously in manuscripts). If the speeches were not written continuously, Bb would represent about 185 lines of manuscript copy which would certainly be too much for two sides. But even 155 seems too much for foul papers (the probable basis for Q1 – see Printer's Copy below); a very small and neat hand such as that seen, for example, in the manuscript of *The Fatal Marriage*, or that of *Love's Changeling Changed*⁴² achieved only roughly 80 lines to a page. Written over four pages (that is, a sheet folded to make two folio leaves which Greg suggests in his *Dramatic Documents*⁴³ was standard for both rough and fair copy) this passage would run to 40 or

⁴⁰ Palmer, K. (ed.), *Troilus and Cressida* (Methuen, 1982), p.305, fn.

⁴¹ Greg, *Bibliography*, Vol. 1, entry 292a.

⁴² See *The Fatal Marriage* and *Love's Changeling Changed*, in BM MS Egerton 1994.

⁴³ Greg, W. W., *Dramatic Documents of the Elizabethan Playhouses*, 2 volumes (Oxford University Press, 1931), Vol. 1, p.205.

46 lines per page – a much more probable norm for foul papers, in which we would hardly expect neat writing. The folded sheet could have been cut along the spine to make two separate leaves but, if this passage was contained on a sheet, that sheet was probably uncut: two separate consecutive leaves would have been harder to misplace than one folded sheet.

What happened, then, seems obvious enough: the man setting Cl, having set five lines of that page, came to the end of one manuscript sheet at the line, ‘Yet sayes the prouerbe, the deeper is the sweeter,’ and then went on to the next but one sheet which began, ‘I should intreat your secresie sir, fare you well.’ A hundred minor accidents in the workshop – some possibly too peculiar to be imagined – could have been responsible for this error, but two possibilities may be considered here: first, that the copy was already disordered when it came into the shop; second, that the copy was disarranged in the printer’s shop as a result of some error, possibly made by one of the compositors.

Had the copy come in disordered, whatever method of setting was employed the work would have gone ahead quite normally. The error need not have been noticed until the proofreader came upon it⁴⁴ – that is, at some time during the machining of Co – but we can be reasonably sure that the error was noticed at this stage because the first five lines of Cl were not distributed but were kept standing and transferred en bloc to the top of Bbl (see below).

If the copy had come into the shop complete and properly ordered, and had been cast off for setting by formes in that state (whether for two men setting simultaneously or for one at a time does not matter) it would have been nearly impossible for this mistake to have occurred. The casting off marks would have indicated which portions of the manuscript were to be set on which pages, so that, even if the man setting Cl mistook one of these marks, anyone following on from him would have noticed the error before the forme got as far as the imposing bench.⁴⁵ This method of casting off automatically required the workmen to check where they were at any given point, since they might have been

⁴⁴ That the proofreader should have noticed the error is not surprising given his tendency, noticed already, to read for the sense.

⁴⁵ For instance, since the equivalent of half a sheet of printed material had been missed, the point marking the end of C and the beginning of D would have appeared halfway through what was being set as C, whilst the man setting the final page of C would have found marks referring to D on the manuscript from which he was working. See Greg, W. W., ‘An Elizabethan Printer and his Copy,’ *The Library*, 4th Series, IV (1923-4); and Hill, W. S., ‘Casting Off Copy and the Composition of Hooker’s Book V,’ *Studies in Bibliography*, XXXIII (1980).

obliged to add to or change the marks in the event of not setting exactly to the original casting off mark.

However, that method of casting off was probably not the one used for *Ram Alley* (see Order of setting, below). The copy was most likely cast off into formes as composition went ahead (that is, 1 was set, lv and 2 cast off; 2v and 3 were set, 3v and 4 cast off, and then 4v was set). Seriatim setting is a possibility, but less likely.

Had the copy, then, come into the shop properly ordered, and been set either by continuous casting off or seriatim, we would have to imagine that the man who was setting C1 went to collect the next sheet of copy after setting line 5 of 4v,⁴⁶ and in the process removed and immediately mislaid a sheet so thoroughly that it was not seen again until it was sought on discovery of the mistake. Alternatively, and on the whole more probably, some other agent could have removed this sheet from the top of the copy (this, of course, could have been anything - a sudden draught, for instance, which blew the sheet under a table).⁴⁷

We are thrown back on speculation. For what it is worth, I think it more likely that the copy came into the shop disordered. A printing shop, used to handling piles of loose sheets of paper, could be expected to take more care than the chance possessor of what was most probably foul papers – and after all, during the two years between the breaking of Barry's company in 1608 and the copy's arrival in Wilson's hands in late 1610, those papers could well have led a rough life.

Highly speculative also is the question of when this half-sheet was set and machined. The obvious place would have been immediately after C. Alerted to the mistake by the proofreader, the misplaced sheet could have been sought, found, and dealt with before any work was done on D. Since, as we shall see, the outer forme of C was first to be machined and probably to be set, there should have been time to do that without any great delay or disruption. On the other hand, the misplaced sheet could have proven difficult to find or the man responsible for organising the work could simply have decided to fit the work in at any time that seemed convenient.

The possibility that the missing sheet took some time to replace and came from an

⁴⁶ This is assuming that the copy was kept in one place and the individual leaves carried to the compositors' cases.

⁴⁷ Such accidents presumably could and did happen; a manuscript note at the end of the copy for Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V, reads: 'Good Mr Hooker, I pray you be so good as to send me the next leaf that followeth this, for I know not by what mischance this of ours is lost, which standeth uppon the finishing of the book.' (The Copy for *Ecclesiastical Polity*, Book V, Bodleian MS Add. C165, f.226v.)

entirely different copy such as the company's prompt book will be considered briefly in the discussion of the printer's copy below, but the evidence for that is not at all convincing. The most persuasive evidence here is that the initial five lines of type in C1 were transferred directly to Bb1, not distributed and reset. Obviously, those lines could have been taken out, tied, and put aside for any amount of time, but the degree of disturbance is absolutely minimal, as might be consistent with their having been placed on the bench after the forme had been stripped – or even left in the forme – the old type moved away from them, and the new placed below.⁴⁸ That points strongly (though by no means definitively) to the conclusion that the error was rectified very quickly and without recourse to any other material than was already to hand.

How Bb and the other half-sheet, A, were imposed will be discussed below in the discussion of the skeletons.

Compositor analysis

Two men, designated here X and Y, appear to have worked on the setting of *Ram Alley*. Of these, X appears to have been the more experienced workman (liable, perhaps, to revert to what might have been earlier practices in Eld's shop) whilst Y appears to have been less experienced and likely to follow copy more rigorously than X, perhaps even to the extent of varying what elsewhere seems to be a firm personal preference.

This variation of Y from his normal habits is, on some pages, so marked that one is forced to wonder whether these pages were set by another man altogether – either another compositor from Eld's shop or a casual workman brought in when the shop was unusually busy. Oddities do occur throughout the book, but particularly in the final sheet (I) and in the latter half of sheet G (though the oddities there could have been the result of extraordinary carelessness, or some temporary aggravation such as illness). The possibility must be kept in mind, however, that a third man might have helped set some of these pages. There could even have been two separate helpers, one working in G and

⁴⁸ A fuller study of the watermarks might provide some more evidence. As it is, I have so far been able to inspect only the Bodleian copy of Q1 in full; libraries holding other copies of Q1 have kindly supplied me with sketches of the watermarks in A and Bb but (and no criticism of their often detailed drawings is implied here) it is difficult to be certain about identifications based on drawings in several hands; I must, however, express my gratitude to these librarians, who replied so fully to my request for information. Such information as I have gathered does point to Bb being printed between C and D (or, possibly, after I, but that is very much less likely); however, the truth of the matter, I suspect, is that the heaps laid out for *Ram Alley* were made up of a considerable number of remnants of old stock.

the other in I.

Compositor analysis is further complicated by the fact that the number of significant preferences that distinguish X and Y is so small (only the first two in the list below are really useful) that it requires just a slight imbalance in the pattern to blur the distinction between these two men. Under these circumstances it seems safer to offer tentative assignments wherever possible and to acknowledge the few really doubtful pages, leaving open the possibility of a third or fourth man.

Five usages distinguish X from Y, as follows:

| | X | Y |
|------|--|-----------------------------|
| i) | prefers /e/ but will set /ee/ in /he, she, we, me, be/ | almost exclusively sets /e/ |
| ii) | /./ at ends of speeches | often other than /./ |
| iii) | /'Tis, 'Twere, 'Twill/ | /Tis/ etc. |
| iv) | abbreviated /is/ usually /-'s/ | usually /-s/ |
| v) | /mistresse/ or /mistrisse/ | /mistris/ |

The spelling of names, the abbreviation of speech prefixes, and the placing and form of stage directions would all seem to have been determined by the copy⁴⁹ and turned out to be of no help in the compositor analysis. The length of a full line remains consistent to within ½ mm throughout the book, and there is no observable difference in the distances between left margin and speech prefixes or between prefixes and text. Both roman and italic founts are the same all through the book, swashed italic forms appearing randomly in the pages of both compositors.

Certain other items considered in this study might well be significant in the habits of these men, but they occur in such small numbers that it is hard to tell whether their presence in various pages is other than chance. More to the point, though, they occur only in pages that are easily assigned on the basis of the evidence described above, and so are of no help in determining doubtful pages.

On the basis of the data set out in Additional tables (i), the work on *Ram Alley* can be divided as shown in Table I (setting seriatim) on the following page.

Three pages remain unattributed (indicated by U in the table), whilst the three pages in half-sheet A which contain type have been left out of the account altogether as they contain either insufficient material on which to base a judgement (as is the case with A1, the title page, and A2v which contains the *Actorum nomina*) or material that is qualitatively different from the rest of the text (as is the case with A2, which contains the

⁴⁹ For a fuller discussion of the stage directions see below, The printer's copy.

Prologue).

Compositor X is thus credited with 33 pages, and Y with 32, though three of X's pages and seven of Y's have some doubt attached to them (and will be discussed more fully

| | | |
|---|-----------------------|------------------|
| X | B1, 1v, 2, 2v, 3, | 2v?, 3, 3v, 4, |
| Y | 3v, 4, 4v | 1v, 2, 4v |
| U | | C1, |
| | | |
| X | 1v, 2, | 2, 2v, 3, 3v, |
| Y | Bb1, 2v | D1, 1v, 4, 4v? |
| U | | |
| | | |
| X | 2?, 2v, 3, 3v, 4, | F1, 1v, 2, |
| Y | E1, 1v, 4v | 2v, 3, 3v, 4, 4v |
| U | | |
| | | |
| X | 2, 2v, 3, | H1, 2, 2v, 3?, |
| Y | G1?, 1v, 3v?, 4?, 4v? | 1v?, 3v, 4, 4v |
| U | | |
| | | |
| X | 2v, 3, 4, | |
| Y | I1, 1v?, 2, | |
| U | 3v, 4v | |

Table I (setting seriatim)

below). Of the pages to which no doubt is attached, X is credited with 30 and Y with 25. A consideration of the misprints on these pages will help in the attribution of some of the doubtful pages. More importantly, though, it will provide valuable information for the editing of the text by giving us some idea of the nature and quality of the work of these two men.

Out of a total of 76 fairly certain accidental and substantive misprints in the 54 definite pages, 26 fall on X pages and 50 on Y pages. Leaving aside foul case errors (which appears to be far and away X's most frequent error, accounting for approximately two fifths of his mistakes, as against about one fifth in the case of Y) X would appear to be prone to misreading the copy (4 errors) and to missing out letters (4 errors). Y would appear to be very prone to missing out letters (10 errors) and to using the wrong case (9 errors); he, too, is prone to misreading the copy (6 errors). He is also slightly prone to misplacing a type in word or line, and to adding extra type (4 errors of each kind). Clearly, then, compositor X is the more careful and probably the more experienced workman of the two. He makes half as many mistakes in a greater number of pages, and

the majority of these errors derive from the inevitable problems of setting by hand from manuscript, rather than from mere carelessness. In contrast, Y's typical mistakes are of the sort that can be ascribed to carelessness – missed or extra letters, wrong case and misplaced types. The editor of *Ram Alley* will, therefore, in cases of doubt, be more inclined to trust the text where X is believed to have been at work.

One compositorial distinction brought out by this study will not, unfortunately, be of any help in editing the text: the handling of punctuation differs only in relation to the ends of speeches, and not generally. This is a great pity, as the punctuation in *Ram Alley* is very poor. Were we able to say that X was generally more competent in this respect than Y and liable therefore to improve the punctuation throughout the pages that he set, we might feel less inclined to tinker with the pointing in those pages. As it is, the best that we can make of this distinction is to note that the poor punctuation clearly derives from the manuscript and hence that Y presumably follows the manuscript more rigorously than X, who at least tidies up the ends of speeches.⁵⁰

While taking care not to make over-confident generalisations from this conclusion, we might also suspect Y of following copy more closely in other respects – perhaps, for example, in not setting apostrophes in abbreviations, following odd spellings in the text, or even, under certain pressures (as, say, more than usual difficulty in reading the manuscript) setting /ee/ forms despite his strong preference for /e/. However, not too much reliance should be placed upon this supposition, particularly with regard to Y's variation of his usual /e/ forms. One might ask, for example, why X sets the occasional /ee/ form – is he, too, following copy there (and if there, why not elsewhere?) or is it simply that he does not have a preference. That is, X will arbitrarily vary, whereas Y has a preference that can be deflected, albeit by causes unknown. This way lie muddy waters. A third compositor, responsible for those pages with both poor end of speech punctuation and a large number of /ee/ forms, becomes a quite attractive notion, but, as was remarked above, the evidence produced by this study will not support any further differentiation.

⁵⁰ For the same reason we cannot assume that Y might be that compositor A in Eld's quarto of *Troilus and Cressida* accused by Alice Walker in her edition of the play of being unable to punctuate intelligently (Walker, A. (ed.), *Troilus and Cressida* (Cambridge University Press, 1957), p.129). On the other hand, we might reasonably wonder whether either or both of these men worked on Q1 of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, in which, notes George Price ('The Early Editions of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, *The Library*, 5th Series, XXII (1967), p.212), 'the compositors ... felt it proper to end speeches with periods or other full stops, except when they absent mindedly follow copy by using a comma.' Price makes no comment on the possibility that there is any correlation between 'absent mindedly using a comma' and compositors' stints.

Doubtful X pages

H3 is a problem simply because it contains almost no useful evidence at all. The only positive indication is the freedom of the page from observable errors. This would suggest X, and as there is no evidence to contradict that it seems reasonable to assign the page to him whilst acknowledging the inevitable doubt.

C2v is probably X's. This page contains the major misreading of /insets/ for /mussers/ (see below, Press variants) but that could as easily have been Y's mistake. What makes the attribution difficult is the presence of two /-s/ forms and a /w/ for /W/. The two /-s/ forms could have been caused here by the desire to avoid over-running the line in which they both occur, and the /w/ for /W/ by a shortage of /W/ types. On the other hand, one would not have thought it necessary to go to such lengths to save one /W/, and wrong case errors are typical of Y, as is the lack of consistency over apostrophes a possible Y tendency. However, the general pattern of this page is so like X that I think the attribution of the page to him is fairly safe.

E2, a very doubtful page, has to be assigned to X on the basis of the fairly high incidence of /ee/ forms and the end of speech punctuation, though in some other respects it is very unlike his work. E2 contains one slight oddity that is worth remarking upon: three times a colon is used after or in a speech prefix instead of the usual full stop. Odd colons appear (for no obvious reason) on pages set by both men, but the only others to appear in speech prefixes are in I4 (a fairly certain X page) and G1 (a possible Y page). There is no obvious reason for the occurrence in I4 – it seems to be a pure aberration; in G1, though, where there are two such occurrences, the compositor seems to be eking out a supply of full stops that is running short. In E2 the cause is certainly type shortage; in this page only italic full stops or colons are used after line 20, so presumably the compositor used the colons to eke out his remaining supply of italic full stops.⁵¹ The most useful lesson that we can learn from this (and the point would remain valid whether X or Y set the page) is that the end of speech punctuation would appear not to have been determined by type shortage – of which more will be said below.

Before leaving X, it might be worth noting that B1, the first page of text, has been assigned to him. There seems little to challenge this, though it is not the most typical of X's pages. The main oddity is the setting of names in roman in the first two of the three

⁵¹ The use of colons in speech prefixes seems to have been acceptable in Eld's shop. *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608) has them, as well as the usual full stops.

stage directions (which are otherwise in italic). This typographical practice is adopted in only one other page in the book, B3, another X page. Distracted, perhaps, by the writing to which he had not yet accustomed himself, X may well have followed the copy more closely in some respects on this page (/ee/ spellings, for instance) and possibly reverted momentarily to a practice which appears to have been followed once in Eld's shop (possibly, of course, by this man): the occasional name in roman occurs in italicised stage directions in *Troilus and Cressida* (1609), *A Trick to Catch the Old One* (1608), and *The Puritan* (1607).

Doubtful Y pages

G3v, G4, and G4v are unusually full of mistakes, some of them of a kind that suggests lack of familiarity with the text. There are 17 errors altogether, mostly misreadings and missed or extra types – all mistakes characteristic of Y but in greater abundance than is normal even for him. However, the general pattern on G3v and 4 is Y's, and only two /-s/ forms on G4v argue against him for that page.

Two particular kinds of mistake, though, which occur twice each in these pages and nowhere else in the book, might give us cause to question whether these pages were set by one of our regular men: first, type is pied and badly reset on G3v and 4, suggesting a rather clumsy man is at work, and second, /will/ is set on G3v and /Will/ on G4, both in roman and hence as *verbs* rather than as the *name* (otherwise italicised) required by the contexts.

The two cases of pied type are easily put down to the carelessness which characterises all three pages. The treatment of /Will/ as a verb, though, is more of an oddity. It suggests, of course, lack of familiarity with the text, and that, in association with the overall strangeness of these pages, might suggest a new compositor.

The kinds of mistake that occur on 4v are all characteristic of Y, and despite the two /-'s/ forms, that page is much more like his normal work, so if a third man did work on these pages, I think we could assign only G3v and G4 to him – these being the pages on which the quite extraordinary mistakes occur. This would tally with the apparent unusual care that was taken over the proofreading of G inner, the forme in which these two pages appear (see Press variants, below).⁵²

⁵² Were the man who set G3v and 4 an extra hand we might wonder why he appears to do so little; by way of answer (and whether he was an apprentice or a casual worker) I think

Another possible explanation for the /Will/ error is that there was a considerable break in the work, during which time the compositor forgot that one of the characters in the play is called William. Such a theory cannot, however, be supported from any other evidence.

Here then, if only in G3v and 4, is one of those places where we might suspect that another man was at work, but the general and overall drift of the evidence does point to Y – albeit in a very careless mood – and all these pages have, therefore, very tentatively been assigned to him.

Noting that in giving him G4v (the most likely of these three pages to have been set by him) Y is credited with the setting of those two /-’s/ forms mentioned above, we might now be inclined to assign D4v (which contains one /-’s/ form) to him also. The pattern there is otherwise fairly strongly indicative of his work.

H1v should also be given to Y despite the three /-’s/ forms. The lack of /ee/ forms and the mispunctuated ends of speeches point to him, and at least one of the words with abbreviated /is/ is unusual – /blad’s/ – as is, perhaps, /Heer’s/ also. These unusual words might have been the cause of Y’s swerving from his normal habit.

I1v, with its high incidence of /e/ forms and the two mispunctuated ends of speeches, probably belongs to Y if it is granted that he is capable of setting the odd /-’s/. However, the two mispunctuations are both cases of missing rather than wrong types, and, as the missing apostrophe could be the result of a sin of omission, the /-s/ form might be X’s mistake along with the two missing stops. Other possible Y indications are the odd /buffolne/ (line 2) and /sigthes/ (line 22)⁵³ along with the spelling /zeart/ (line 29) which is unusual for this book. However, /zeart/ could easily be a copy variant, whilst the other two odd spellings could result from difficulty with the manuscript (if they are not actually copy spellings). That said, the latter two spellings do look more like extra letters – a typical Y error – and the page generally has the look of Y’s work, so the page has been assigned tentatively to him.

Finally, G1 has been given to Y on the grounds of the poor end of speech punctuation. If Y did set this page, though, he varied his preference for /e/ forms quite considerably.

Indeed, G1 ought, perhaps, be left unassigned.

we need do no more than imagine the master’s reaction on seeing the proofs of this forme.

⁵³ *OED* gives no variant spelling of /sighs/ that includes a /t/. The word is spelt /sithes/ in D1v (l.24) which is a Y page so this might be a spelling tendency of that man – though it could equally, of course, be a misspelling in both instances.

Unassigned pages

That C1 should be doubtful is more than a little annoying, since whoever set this page was also possibly responsible for missing out the passage that occupies Bb (if, that is, any person in the workshop was to blame). Of the available evidence, the use of apostrophes points to Y whilst the good end of speech punctuation points to X. Concerning the former, there are three /-s/ forms and two unusual /-'s/ forms. The two latter occur in two separate instances of the same word, but in different places in the word in each instance: /monei's/ and /mone'is/. The word is not a common one to find with abbreviated /is/ (compare /blad's/ and /Heer's/ above) and so it might not be fair to treat it as equivalent to, say, /what's/ or /she's/. Moreover, the misplacing of the apostrophe in /mone'is/ suggests either uncertainty over its function or a misplaced type error, either of which would be suggestive of Y. (The spelling /monei/, incidentally, is of no help: it occurs nowhere else in the book, whilst /money/ and /mony/ do appear elsewhere and both in pages clearly assignable to X or Y.

As it is possible that the poor punctuation originates from the copy which Y simply follows but which X corrects, the good punctuation here could result from the copy's having had, quite by chance, a long run of full stops at the ends of speeches. We should be uneasy, though, about thus trying to explain away the punctuation evidence, which is generally so consistent. The page is therefore best left unassigned.

Of course, someone other than X or Y could have set this page. That would account for both the conflicting evidence and the unique spelling /monei/. Another compositor, however, would not help to explain how the passage of copy was missed; such a man might have been a casual worker, and hence unfamiliar with this shop's method of marking copy (if, indeed, differences did exist in this respect between one shop and another). But if the copy had been previously marked up (which was by no means necessarily the case anyway) one of the regular men could still have been expected to notice the mistake later in this sheet.

The reverse of the situation in C1 exists in I3v: here, poor end of speech punctuation suggests Y, whilst X is suggested by the apostrophe evidence. I3v has therefore been left unassigned.

I4v lacks useful evidence and, like A2, is typographically untypical, half of it being taken up with the Epilogue. Though the poor end of speech punctuation suggests Y, the incidence of /ee/ forms is too high to allow even a tentative assignment to him. Similarly in C4v, the poor end of speech punctuation points to Y, but here the /ee/ forms actually

outnumber the /e/ forms. These pages, too, must be left unassigned.

Finally, as has already been noted, A2, which contains only the Prologue, must also be left unassigned. Typographically and literarily it is quite untypical and so lacks most of the forms which have provided the evidence for this study. The only form which it does contain in any quantity (the /e/ /ee/ variation) shows a completely uncharacteristic distribution for either of the two identified men.

One further thing, already glanced at in the discussion of E2 above, remains to be considered: the possibility that X and Y are not two men, but one. Since the Y forms all require less type than the corresponding X forms, the distinction made between them could be an artificial one – the result, in fact, of type shortages in /ʹ/, /./, /e/ and /s/. Were that the case, the X/Y distinction would indicate not the work of two compositors but the pattern of distribution, the beginning of each ‘X’ stint being the point at which replenishment of the cases occurred. This argument is affected, of course, by the question of whether setting was seriatim or by formes. As the latter procedure seems to have been more likely (see below, Order of setting) the division of compositorial labour ought to be set out accordingly and as shown in Table II (setting by formes).

| | | | | |
|---|------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|
| X | B1, 2v, 3, | 1v, 2, | 2v?, 3, | 3v, 4. |
| Y | 4v; | 3v, 4. | 4v; | 1v, 2, |
| U | | | C1, | |
| | | | | |
| X | | 1v, 2. | 2v, 3, | 2, 3v, |
| Y | Bb1, 2v, | | D1, | 4v?; 1v, 4. |
| U | | | | |
| | | | | |
| X | 2v, 3, | 2?, 3v, 4. | F1, | 1v, 2, |
| Y | E1, | 4v; 1v, | 2v, 3, 4v; | 3v, 4. |
| U | | | | |
| | | | | |
| X | 2v, 3, | 2, | H1, 2v, 3?, | 2, |
| Y | G1?, | 4v?; 1v, 3v?, 4?. | 4v; | 1v?, 3v, 4. |
| U | | | | |
| | | | | |
| X | 2v, 3, | 4. | | |
| Y | I1, | 1v?, 2, | | |
| U | 4v; | 3v, | | |

Table II (setting by formes)

We must note, first of all, that as a pattern of distribution this conflicts with the pattern of distribution implied by shortages of certain italic types (see below, Order of setting (ii):

type shortages). The italic shortages provide, it is true, no very obvious pattern of distribution, but that those types were in short supply is unquestionable, whereas that full stops and apostrophes were generally in short supply is highly questionable.

To begin with, as we have seen, E2 clearly reveals a temporary shortage of full stops, and the way that problem was dealt with: italic stops are used at the ends of speeches, and colons replace full stops in speech prefixes. Moreover, the variation in the end of speech punctuation is quite random in those pages in which it occurs; it does not change abruptly, as would be expected in the case of type shortage.

Second, the apostrophes are obviously not in short supply. Neither of the two identified men has any fixed habit concerning the use of apostrophes in abbreviated /-ed/ past tense forms; /-'d/ occurs as much on Y pages amongst his /tis/ and /-s/ forms as it does on X pages amongst his /'tis/ and /-'s/ forms.

Finally, accepting that the X/Y distinction is only a matter of type shortage involves accepting also a considerable coincidence: that three such common sorts as /e/, /./, and /' / ran short almost invariably at the same time all the way through the book, despite the fact that the demands made upon them vary considerably from page to page. We might add that other works were probably making unequal demands on these sorts at the same time, thus decreasing the likelihood of any such definite pattern of shortages developing.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the longer X and shorter Y forms do indicate two separate men and are not the result of type shortages.

The resultant pattern of work is by no means regular. None of the signatures would appear to have been set by formes by the look of the above analysis. On the other hand, such a pattern as this does not necessarily preclude setting by formes. The question needs to be put off now and discussed further after consideration of the skeletons and type shortages.

The running titles and skeletons

The running title throughout *Ram Alley*, on both recto and verso pages, is the subtitle, *Merry Tricks*. A variation in spelling produces two forms: /MERRY-TRICKES./ and /MERY-TRICKS./. The identification of individual running titles is thus difficult, so photographic enlargement has been used to help in identifying them. Using the negative provided by the Folger Shakespeare Library, x2 enlargements were made of all the

running titles.⁵⁴

Eight running titles were thereby identified, the specific characteristics of which are as follows:

| Number | Seen on | Characteristics |
|--------|---------|---|
| 1a | B1v | The /M/ has the right hand diagonal broken away almost entirely. |
| 1b | B4 | The /Y/ is broken just above the serif at the foot of the vertical, this serif being slightly skewed in consequence. |
| 1c | B3v | This running title has no very obviously distinct letters in this instance, unless we count the second /R/ in /MERRY/, which has lost the heel of the serif at the bottom of the vertical. Other running titles have a similar second /R/, but they are distinguishable from 1b by other means. This /R/ is therefore of little help. Another letter in this running title appears to go through a change very early, but this is by no means certain: the serif at the top of the vertical of the /R/ in /TRICKS/, missing in B3v, is clearly present in B4v, and missing again (or merely vestigial) thereafter. Though a study of other /R/s suggests that this might be merely a quirk in the way this sort prints, and hence of no real significance here, this does point tentatively to B4v (outer forme) having preceded B3v (inner forme) through the press. These two deficiencies in the /R/s are, though, slight. The identification of 1c has to rely on the relationship of the letters to one another in the line – a relationship which, of course, changes sometimes, if only slightly, as the line is moved from forme to forme. The wide spacing of /TR/, /IC/ and /KS/ in this running title, and the slight raising of the baseline of /RICKS/ are quite distinctive and, in combination with the features mentioned above, make it reasonably easy to identify. |
| 1d | B2 | This title has, unfortunately, no obvious distinguishing features. Again, we have to depend on the disposition of the letters along the baseline, coupled with the rather negative fact that the individual letters are all good and clear – a fact which helps to separate it from other running titles, but which does not, of course, help to determine whether this one and not a new one is being observed. The most distinctive feature of the disposition of the line is a downward droop of the last four letters. In the last sheet of I this appears as normal in the outer forme (I2v) but straightened out in the inner (I2). I outer would therefore appear to have preceded I inner through the press. |
| 2a | C4v | This running title contains one of the two /MERY/ spellings. The /T/ has an odd protuberance in the centre of the horizontal as |

⁵⁴ This is not the ideal way of obtaining enlargements: magnifying through the camera would have been far better than magnifying through the enlarger. However, by checking any doubtful instances against other copies, and by making random sample enlargements from other microfilm copies, a fair degree of certainty has, I hope, been achieved.

| | | |
|----|-----|---|
| | | though the vertical has pushed through it slightly. In H inner (H1v) the left hand curve of the /Y/ is broken, whereas it is undamaged in H outer (H2v). Again, it looks as though the outer forme was first through the press. |
| 2b | C1 | Also spelt /MERY/, this running title has no damaged types. As before, we have to rely on the disposition of the letters, which remains fairly constant throughout the book and always distinctive, in that the /I/ and the /C/ separate a little in the transfer from this page to C2 in C inner, remaining as in C inner for the rest of the book. This provides some slight evidence that C outer was first through the press . |
| 2c | C2v | This one spelt /MERRY/, is readily recognisable by a damaged letter: the second /R/ has the heel of the serif at the foot of the vertical broken off, giving the vertical a turned-in appearance. Here the /E/ is good in C outer, but damaged in C inner (C3v) and thereafter, the top horizontal of the letter being slightly shortened by the loss of its serif. This supports the conclusion just noted in 2b that C outer was first through the press. |
| 2d | C3 | Like the preceding one, this running title is spelt /MERRY/. Identification depends once again on the relationship of letters to one another and to the baseline, the main feature here being the isolation of the first /R/ from /ME/ and /RY/. |

The first observation that can be made from this preliminary discussion of the running titles is that four of the nine sheets of *Ram Alley* (B, C, H, and I) appear to have been printed outer forme first. This was confirmed by an examination of the Bodleian copy of *Ram Alley* with a lamp of the type described by K. Povey in ‘The Optical Identification of First Formes.’⁵⁵ The examination was carried out after completion of the above photographic analysis of the running titles, and it showed that all sheets were printed outer forme first (including the half-sheet Bb, of which more will be said below).⁵⁶ Having thus identified the running titles, it can be seen that they appear throughout the book in two skeletons (see Table III, below).

Half-sheet Bb, it will be noted, uses running titles from both skeletons in such a way that suggests it could have been worked together with half-sheet A, one forme using skeleton I and the other skeleton 2. The two skeletons could have been combined temporarily in order to work Bb separately by work and turn half-sheet imposition, but had that

⁵⁵ Povey, K., ‘The Optical Identification of First Formes,’ *Studies in Bibliography*, XIII (1960).

⁵⁶ Povey shows, in ‘Working to Rule – 1600-1800,’ *The Library*, 5th Series, XX (1965), that of the 37 sheets in Camden’s *Remaines*, printed by Eld in 1605, 21 were printed inner forme first; the remaining 16 were printed outer first, including a run of the eight final sheets. Eld does not appear to have worked to any particular rule with regard to the order of printing formes.

happened we would expect to find, surely, much more confusion of the two skeletons in the immediately following formes.

Support for the theory that the two sheets were worked together comes from the optical inspection, which showed that (in the Bodleian copy, at least) the outer pages of Bb and the inner of A were printed first, this being what one would expect were the two half-sheets to have been imposed in the manner employed for working two half-sheets in

| | Outer forme | | | | | Inner forme | | | | |
|-----|-------------|----|----|----|--|-------------|----|----|----|----------|
| Sig | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 | Skeleton |
| B | - | 1a | 1b | 1c | | 1a | 1d | 1c | 1b | 1 |
| C | 2b | 2c | 2d | 2a | | 2a | 2b | 2c | 2d | 2 |
| Bb | 2d | 2b | - | - | | 1a | 1b | - | - | 2/1 |
| D | 2b | 2a | 2d | 2c | | 2a | 2d | 2c | 2b | 2 |
| E | 1d | 1a | 1b | 1c | | 1d | 1a | 1c | 1b | 1 |
| F | 2d | 2a | 2b | 2c | | 2a | 2d | 2c | 2b | 2 |
| G | 1a | 1d | 1b | 1c | | 1d | 1a | 1c | 1b | 1 |
| H | 2d | 2a | 2b | 2c | | 2a | 2d | 2c | 2b | 2 |
| I | 1a | 1d | 1b | 1c | | 1a | 1d | 1c | 1b | 1 |

Table III

one. Inspection of only one copy is, however, obviously insufficient: in the work and turn method, each sheet will have one ‘outer forme’ printed first and one ‘inner’ at each impression of the white paper; mere chance could therefore have provided the Bodleian copy with a pair of half-sheets printed by work and turn but which appear to indicate the other method. Indeed, even if all five of the complete extant copies of Q1 agreed with the Bodleian copy, this would do no more than increase the *probability* that A and Bb were worked together.⁵⁷ The weight of evidence so far, though, leans towards the conclusion that the two half-sheets were worked together, A inner and Bb outer being imposed in skeleton 2, A outer and Bb inner in skeleton 1, and all further consideration of A/Bb will work on that assumption.

⁵⁷ There are watermarks, of course, but the evidence they provide is very slippery: as they appear in the five complete copies of Q1, they indicate that the two half-sheets were worked together – marks appear, that is, in both A and Bb but they lie across the spinal fold in opposite directions (i.e., the bases of the ‘pots’ are in A1/v and Bbl/v) as they would were the two half-sheets to have been imposed together and the paper placed in the tympan with the mould side facing the same way up but the mark sometimes at the press end, sometimes at the other. There is no reason, though, why the mould side should lie consistently one way and, given that, the disposition of the marks in the five complete copies of Q1 could be caused by a random selection of half-sheets printed by the work and turn method.

The use of two skeletons for that sheet – a slight disruption of the normal use of skeletons for this book – will be discussed below. In the meantime, we might note that Eld had no regular practice with regard to the use of skeletons. G. R. Price tells us, in ‘The First Editions of *Your Five Gallants* and of *Michaelmas Term*’⁵⁸ that *Your Five Gallants* (1607) was printed, as *Ram Alley* was, with two skeletons, one being used for ‘both formes of gatherings A, C, E, G, and I; the other for gatherings B, D, F, and H’ – that is to say, alternately, as they would have been used for *Ram Alley* had the need to print half-sheet Bb not intervened.

The Devil’s Charter (1607) also tends to use one skeleton for both formes of each sheet, though by no means in a regularly alternating pattern, and by no means exclusively. J. C. Pogue provides the following analysis of skeletons for this book in his doctoral thesis, ‘*The Devil’s Charter: A Critical Edition*.’⁵⁹ (The presentation of this material in Table IV has been slightly modified.)

| Sig | inner | outer | | Sig | inner | outer |
|-----|-------|-------|--|-----|-------|-------|
| A | 1 | 1 | | G | 2 | 2 |
| B | 1 | 1 | | H | 2 | 1 |
| C | 1 | 1 | | I | 2 | 1 |
| D | 1 | 1 | | K | 2 | 1 |
| E | 2 | 2 | | L | 2 | 2 |
| F | 1 | 1 | | M | 2 | 1 |

Table IV

Similarly, R. McLeod shows, in ‘A Technique of Headline Analysis,’⁶⁰ that although several skeletons were used for the printing of Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* (1609) the same one was always used for the two formes of a sheet.

Finally, however, we learn from W. R. Dawson’s thesis, ‘A Critical Edition of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*’⁶¹ that the practice of printing inner and outer formes of the same sheet with different skeletons is followed predominantly in the printing of that play.

Towards the end of the book, moreover, running titles move from one skeleton to

⁵⁸ Price, G., ‘The First Editions of *Your Five Gallants* and of *Michaelmas Term*,’ *The Library*, 5th Series, VIII (1953), p.24.

⁵⁹ Pogue, J. C., ‘*The Devil’s Charter: A Critical Edition*’ (Doctoral Thesis, University of Missouri, 1964).

⁶⁰ McLeod, R., ‘A Technique of Headline Analysis, with Application to Shakespeare’s *Sonnets*, 1609,’ *Studies in Bibliography*, XXXII (1979), p.206.

⁶¹ Dawson, W. R., ‘A Critical Edition of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*’ (Doctoral Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1969).

another. (Again, I have modified the presentation of the information a little in Table V.)

| Sig | inner | outer | | Sig | inner | outer |
|-----|-------|-------|--|-----|-------|-------|
| A | 1 | - | | E | 1 | 2 |
| B | 1 | 2 | | F | 1 | 2 |
| C | 1 | 2 | | G | mixed | 2 |
| D | 1 | 2 | | H | 2 | mixed |

Table V

Eld, then, apparently had no ‘normal’ procedure with regard to the use of skeletons and running titles (or, we might recall, with regard to the order of machining within the sheet) in at least the first four or five years of his life as a printer, and we have no reason to assume that he had settled to any regular manner of working by 1613.

Order of setting (i): the number of cases

The same fount of type is used throughout *Ram Alley* – even the italics in the cases were a mixture of plain and swashed types. No help is forthcoming from that quarter, therefore, in determining the number of cases used. A very little help is provided, however, by type

| | B | C | A/Bb | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| /N/ | | 4 X(i) | Bb1v X(i) | | 2v X(o) | 1 X(o) | | | |
| /G/1 | 1v X(i) | 4 X(i) | | | 2v X(o) | 3v Y(i) | | | 1v Y(i) |
| /G/2 | | 4v ?(o) | | | 4v Y(o) | | 1 Y(o) | | |
| /A/ | | | | 4v Y(o) | | | 4v Y(o) | 4 Y(i) | |
| /W/ | | | | 1 Y(o) | 1v Y(i) | | | | |
| /C/ | | 3 X(o) | | 3v X(i) | | | | | |
| /P/ | | | A2 ?(o) | 4 Y(i) | | | | | |

Table VI

recurrence evidence, thin though it is.⁶² This evidence is set out in Table VI where we can

⁶² Not having access to a collating machine I have had to rely again on photographic enlargement from the microfilm copies, combined with checks against the xerox copies done with a magnifying glass. This method is obviously far from ideal, and I do not wish to put too much weight on the findings. Care was taken to note when identified types

see that, with one exception (the appearance of /G/1 in F3v and I1v), each identifiable piece of type is consistently associated with one of the compositors. This points to two separate sets of cases.

Order of setting (ii): type shortages

Three italic sorts, /B/, /S/, and /W/, were in heavy demand for setting speech prefixes and persistently ran short in the setting of this book. /P/ can also be added to that list, though it was required in quantity in only two sheets, whilst /T/ was in short supply up to sheet D but ceased to be a problem after that. The figures are set out in full in Additional tables (ii): type shortage figures.

A brief consideration of those tables provides some support for the view that two sets of cases were used: a single set, whether being used for setting seriatim or by formes, would have been replenished, according to these figures, before or during nearly every page of the book. Such a finicky procedure seems most unlikely, though it could have resulted from the stints on *Ram Alley* being very short (say, a page set at a time) and fitted in between work on other books, but there is no evidence that the stints on *Ram Alley* were that short. The possibility is there, but it cannot, as yet, be demonstrated. If, on the other hand, we assume that two cases were used and set out the figures accordingly, a much more regular pattern of distribution emerges. (This can be seen in the diagrammatic tables in Appendix III.)

Mere regularity should not, of course, be taken as proof. The most that can be said given this and the foregoing evidence is that two pairs of cases were more likely employed than one.

The next thing to be noted about the types in short supply is that the number of them apparently available (in both sets of cases) varies markedly from sheet to sheet. Type was being distributed in quantities different from the quantities used in previous sheets. The obvious conclusion to draw from this is that other work was being set from the same cases alongside *Ram Alley*.

Table VII (on the following page) shows the availability in the two compositors' cases of the number of the italic types of each specified sort for each sheet. Brackets indicate that the amount of type available was adequate to cover requirements; differences of one – or two in the larger quantities – are ignored as likely to be accidental; a zero indicates that

were in positions that would render them vulnerable to stripping accidents and the like and hence likely to turn up in anomalous positions.

no types of that sort were available at all; a dash indicates that the sort was not required in that sheet; unassigned pages have been left out of this account.

/T/ provides the most dramatic example. For the first two sheets both men find it hard to raise even a few of these types, but then, to all intents and purposes, it ceases to be a problem.⁶³ Obviously some other work was absorbing (or had absorbed) almost their entire stock of /T/s but now was making little or no demand on that sort.

| | B | C | Bb | D | E | F | G | H | I |
|----------|-----|-----|------|----|------|------|------|------|------|
| X case | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>B</i> | 8 | 5 | 0 | 10 | 0 | (10) | 7 | - | 8 |
| <i>S</i> | 8 | 12 | 1 | 2 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| <i>T</i> | 8 | 4 | 22 | 28 | (39) | 20 | (1) | (14) | (23) |
| <i>W</i> | 8 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 8 | 6 |
| <i>P</i> | (1) | (1) | (2) | - | 10 | - | (2) | - | - |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Y case | | | | | | | | | |
| <i>B</i> | 4 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 14 | (3) | 9 | 5 | (11) |
| <i>S</i> | 0 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 14 | 6 | 18 | 7 | 1 |
| <i>T</i> | 2 | 2 | (13) | 15 | 20 | (19) | (17) | (21) | (3) |
| <i>W</i> | - | 5 | (1) | - | 20 | (10) | - | (8) | 11 |
| <i>P</i> | (1) | - | - | 6 | - | - | - | - | - |

Table VII

Less dramatically, but no less obviously, /B/, /S/ and /W/ all show a variation in the number of types available in the two cases, whilst /P/, even though used very little, shows some variation in Y's case.

Tracing groups of type through the book in order to determine a pattern of distribution is, then, out of the question. Type distributed from *Ram Alley* could have gone into other work before these cases were used for *Ram Alley* again, whilst conversely, type from other work could have been used to replenish the cases just before some setting was done for this book. Since different books (even different pages within the same book) would make varying demands on each sort, the possibilities of variation within the pattern are enormous and, without knowing much more about the other books involved, quite undiscoverable.

Given, then, that we cannot trace an overall pattern of distribution, is there any information to be gleaned about distribution within each sheet or forme that will help to

⁶³ The numbers required for the last five sheets are only one or two more than those available; foul case could easily explain these slight discrepancies.

establish the order of setting employed? The tables in Appendix III set out the type shortage figures in diagrammatic form, first for setting by formes and then for seriatim setting. A comparison of these two tables, taking note particularly of the points at which distribution could have taken place, suggests that setting by formes would have required less distribution *during* a compositor's stint than setting seriatim. That is to say, the first table suggests that for the most part when one man needed to replenish his cases another man took over the setting. For reasons of either efficiency or mere convenience that would have been the more probable procedure. However, the difference between the two tables in this respect is slight, and in either procedure a certain amount of distribution during the setting of a page would appear to have taken place. The fact that the italic cases were probably quite badly fouled must also qualify this evidence somewhat.

Order of setting (iii): other evidence

Other evidence for the order of setting must therefore be sought. Unfortunately, even though there is some (and though it is slightly more substantial than that provided by the type shortages) nothing here is very clear either, and although this evidence points also to setting by formes, some doubt must remain that seriatim setting could have been the method employed. We ought to note, however, that the only positive indication of seriatim setting is that the compositors' stints look more coherent when set out as for that procedure, and such slender evidence as that can bear hardly any weight.

In favour of setting by formes, for example, is the fact that such a procedure would have helped to save type – an important consideration if other work was being set at the same time.⁶⁴ The shortages of italic sorts which are obviously in use in other work demonstrates the need for such care to be taken here.

The fact that the outer forme was always first on the press strongly suggests setting by formes. There would be little sense in setting seriatim – thereby completing the inner forme before the outer – and regularly machining the outer forme first. Such a procedure would have made seriatim setting more than usually uneconomic in terms of both time and type resources. Moreover, had setting been seriatim (and whether the outer or the inner forme was the first on the press) one of the formes would have been lying complete whilst the other was machined; there would have been, therefore, plenty of time to

⁶⁴ 'On the face of it, the most important reason for setting by formes in quarto is unlikely to have been urgency, nor even an unusually small fount, but a fount depleted because of concurrent printing.' (McKenzie, 'Printers of the Mind,' p.40.)

impose that other forme and have it ready for the reiteration immediately the other was finished. Under those circumstances we might expect to find two skeletons being used in each sheet, not one. As it is, the use of one skeleton in each sheet implies that the composition of the second forme in each sheet was finished either at the same time as or slightly after the first was finished with at the press and that, of course, could happen only if setting were by formes.

The clue that would most obviously reveal setting by formes – variation in page lengths – is not very evident. Some variation does exist and the resultant pattern points towards setting by formes, using that method by which the outer forme was set first with the inner pages being cast off by the compositor as he worked through the sheet. Apart from the final sheet, however, such variation as there is could well be accidental.

A rough comparison of inner forme with outer forme pages creates the impression that outer forme pages are more regularly and neatly set than those in inner formes. In C inner, C1v has an empty line above and below the act division whilst C2 is one line short. C outer, on the other hand, is set regularly throughout. In the inner forme of D, D1v has an extra line whilst the act division in D1v has space above only, suggesting that the amount of manuscript cast off to fit into D1 was slightly over estimated. F2 in F inner has what would appear to be the normal space above and below the act division, but in F3v two half lines are set separately, not continuously, suggesting that the copy required slight stretching there. The outer formes of both D and F are neatly and regularly set.

E3v and G4 both have empty lines before stage directions, which might be loose setting; however, this could possibly have been determined by the copy, since these directions introduce new scenes.⁶⁵ G outer, however, does provide an exception: G2v is overset by one line whilst G4v has two separate half lines, and looks generally loosely spaced. But sheet G is very odd altogether, and I suspect that this is just one more instance of its oddness.

Sheet H was set tightly all the way through. H1v is one line short, but the end of that page coincides with the end of an act and one line is obviously inadequate for the act division which was carried over to the head of the next page.

Sheet I, lastly, is the only really clear example of a cast off sheet. The number of lines in each page are as follows:

⁶⁵ It is, though, the placing rather than the spacing of the stage directions which one would expect to have been most affected by copy.

| 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
|----|----|----|--------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| 40 | 40 | 40 | ends with epilogue | 39 | 39 | 40 | 40 |

Again, the slight unevenness of the inner forme suggests that it followed the other.

Cautious because setting to the limit of the page, the compositor seems to have aimed to under rather than over estimate the amount left for 1v and 2. But, knowing that he had to get the maximum into the first forme, he set all those pages (except the final, irregular page) to their limits and left any necessary adjustments until later.

Given that sheet I is the only really clear example of casting off, and is also the final sheet, we might consider that it was, in fact, the only sheet to have been thus set, the remainder of the book having been set seriatim. That, however, would seem most unlikely. Though less obviously than sheet I, the earlier sheets do show signs of variation in the inner formes. Moreover, the change in the number of lines per page from 38 to 40 before work started on sheet H suggests not only that *Ram Alley* was cast off all the way through, but that it was cast off in the manner described above – continuously as setting proceeded.

Before any setting started, someone had evidently calculated that 38 lines per page would get the text into eight and a half sheets (it being intended, therefore, from the outset that the preliminaries should be set with the final half-sheet – an arrangement only slightly modified by the need to interpolate half-sheet Bb). After G it was apparently realised that the remaining copy would need to be crammed a little to get it into two sheets, so a revised page length of 40 lines was decided upon. Had the whole manuscript been cast off all at once, the thirty odd extra lines that had to be crammed into H and I could have been accumulated by carrying over a few lines from each sheet (in order to observe the 38 line standard) and adjusting the casting off marks after each sheet. On the other hand, though, complete initial casting off would have warned the compositors how little room there would have been for such manoeuvring – or at least, should have alerted them far earlier than sheet H. One might expect, therefore, that had that procedure been adopted a little more irregularity would have appeared in the earlier sheets, where the need to get in the full amount allotted to the sheet would have been anticipated. As it is, the pattern suggests the kind of extempore revision that might be expected with continuous casting off.

Finally, one more small point can be taken from the table of recurrent types (Table VI).

If *Ram Alley* was set by formes, outer forme first always, we could expect to find at least

one forme between any two appearances of a distinctive type; that is, we would find (a) types that first appear in an outer forme recurring no sooner than the outer forme of the next sheet and (b) types that first appear in an inner forme recurring no sooner than the inner forme of the next sheet. We should not expect to find types from an inner forme appearing in the outer forme of the succeeding sheet since, unless there was a considerable gap between the setting of each sheet,⁶⁶ that inner forme would have been on the press whilst the outer was being set. Such a pattern of recurrence is, in fact, observable in the table: on the six occasions when type appears in two consecutive sheets there is at least one forme between the two appearances. For example, the /N/ appears in E outer and then F outer, the /A/ in G outer and then H inner.

A number of distinctive types moving from the inner forme of one sheet to the outer of the next could indicate equally seriatim setting or long breaks between the printing of each sheet; the appearance of a number of types in both formes of the same sheet would clearly indicate setting by formes, but with considerable gaps between each forme. These type recurrences provide, of course, only negative evidence which, being based on woefully thin data,⁶⁷ must be treated with caution. However, consideration of type recurrence provides one more small corroborative point which, along with the other evidence reviewed above, suggests that *Ram Alley* was set by formes.

The press schedule

One final question about the press-work remains: on the basis of the information about the skeletons and the method of setting, can a composition and press schedule be constructed? The answer is that certainly one can be suggested, but it involves building hypothesis on hypothesis and inevitably the ghost of Occam squeaks and gibbers in the corner of the room, reminding us that how much credence this suggestion deserves is another matter.

As the same skeleton was used for both formes of a sheet, we might assume that the second forme to be set (the inner) was always completed *after* machining of the outer had been completed (so that the skeleton of the outer forme lay ready to hand for imposition

⁶⁶ Such gaps are possible. Some of the oddities in G could have been caused by a fairly substantial break in the work.

⁶⁷ In fact, I would not be surprised if further study did reveal types both in inner and immediately succeeding outer formes of separate sheets – or even in both formes of a sheet. The former on its own would obviously weaken my point, but the latter would, of course, support it.

of the inner). Correspondingly, as the skeleton used for the first forme of each sheet was not the one used in the previous sheet, we might assume that the outer formes were regularly finished before the reiteration had been completed.

A/Bb would have disrupted this pattern twice; first, we might expect the confusion following the discovery of the omission to have delayed the setting of Ai/Bbo, so that the skeleton from the previous sheet (skeleton 2) was available for its imposition; second, the large amount of white space in Ao/Bbi might have caused it to have been completed faster than the usual inner forme, in turn allowing time for it to be imposed in the now spare skeleton 1. Skeleton 2 would then have been free for D outer which was, as usually for the outer forme, imposed in the skeleton not used for the previous forme. The whole schedule could be represented as follows:

| | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Set | Bo_____ | Bi_____ Co_____ | Ci_____ AiBbo_____ |
| Skeleton | _____ 1 | _____ 1 _____ 2 | _____ 2 _____ 2 |
| Machined | | Bo_____ Bi_____ | Co_____ Ci_____ |
| Set | AoBbi_____ Do_____ | Di_____ Eo_____ | Ei_____ Fo_____ |
| Skeleton | _____ 1 _____ 2 | _____ 2 _____ 1 | _____ 1 _____ 2 |
| Machined | AiBbo_____ AoBbi_____ | Do_____ Di_____ | Eo_____ Ei_____ |
| Set | Fi_____ Go_____ | Gi_____ Ho_____ | Hi_____ Io_____ |
| Skeleton | _____ 2 _____ 1 | _____ 1 _____ 2 | _____ 2 _____ 1 |
| Machined | Fo_____ Fi_____ | Go_____ Gi_____ | Ho_____ Hi_____ |
| Set | Ii_____ | | |
| Skeleton | _____ 1 | | |
| Machined | Io_____ Ii_____ | | |

Table VIII

Two obvious weaknesses in that scheme present themselves immediately: first, it depends on assumptions about the relative speeds of composition and machining (assumptions that may or may not be confirmed if we knew more about the edition size); second, it depends on deductions from the use of skeletons – a type of evidence which McKenzie has shown to be very unreliable.⁶⁸ The scheme is, too, unconvincingly tidy and regular. Though the tidiness might be seen as merely the inevitable consequence of schematising the work thus (that is, one might argue that such a scheme could be extracted from the total pattern of work done in the shop) it is hard to believe that the regularity of the alternating relationship between compositors and press crew could have been maintained through several working days, each day probably making entirely different demands upon the

⁶⁸ In 'Printers of the Mind.'

various elements of the workforce. Without first knowing a lot more about the precise details of those working days, any attempt at describing, let alone abstracting, the schedule for this particular book is bound to be little better than guesswork.

Press variants

The states of the formes of the six known copies of Q1 of *Ram Alley* are as follows.⁶⁹

| Forme | Var/Inv | Number of states | Copies in each state | | |
|--------|---------|------------------|----------------------|---------|--------|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Bo | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Bi | Var | 2 | E | Others | - |
| Co | Var | 2 | Others | Y | - |
| Ci | Var | 3 | E | Y | Others |
| Ai/Bbo | ?Var | ?2 | ?EFY | ?Others | - |
| Ao/Bbi | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Do | Var | 2 | L | Others | - |
| Di | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Eo | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Ei | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Fo | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Fi | Var | 2 | O | Others | - |
| Go | Var | 2 | EGL | OFY | - |
| Gi | Var | 3 | E | G | Others |
| Ho | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Hi | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |
| Io | Var | 2 | O | Others | - |
| Ii | Inv | 1 | All | - | - |

Table IX – the states of the formes

Variants in the formes that underwent correction at the press are as follows.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Copies are referred to by the following abbreviations: E – National Library of Scotland; F – Folger Shakespeare Library; G – Glasgow University Library; L – Liverpool University Library; O – Bodleian Library; Y – Yale University Library.

⁷⁰ NB: signatures Bb and I are lacking in the Liverpool copy.

| Bi | | | | | | | |
|-----------|------------|-------|--------|--------|----------|---------|------------|
| | B1v,31 | B2,cw | B3v,27 | B3v,34 | B4,2 | B4,3 | B4,35 |
| E | maintai'nd | To | gives | buite | broke | trus'd | maestique |
| F | maintai nd | - | gins | quite | broke; * | trus'd, | maiestique |
| G | maintai'nd | - | gins | quite | broke; | trus'd, | maiestique |
| L | maintai'nd | - | gins | quite | broke; | trus'd, | maiestique |
| O | maintai'nd | - | gins | quite | broke; | trus'd, | maiestique |
| Y | maintai'nd | - | gins | quite | broke; | trus'd, | maiestique |

* /;/ very faint in F

(A variant /;/ after the word /gob/ apparently exists in Blv,2 in L, G, O and Y; this is not, however, a semi-colon at all, but a comma with a speck above it. In L, G and Y, and even more markedly in O, the upper point is well to the left of the lower one and too high above it, whilst if there is a point above the comma in E, it is well away from that comma. In F the upper point seems to be attached to the /b/, which is irregular in shape.)

| Bbo | |
|------------|--------------|
| | Bb1,18 |
| E | I twas |
| F | I twas |
| G | It was |
| O | It was |
| L | [Bb lacking] |
| Y | I twas |

| Co | | | |
|-----------|---------|-----------------|--------|
| | C2v,6 | C2v,37sd | C3,13 |
| E | insets | <i>Frances</i> | longer |
| F | insets | <i>Frances</i> | longer |
| G | insets | <i>Frances</i> | longer |
| L | insets | <i>Frances</i> | longer |
| O | insets | <i>Frances</i> | longer |
| Y | mussers | <i>Frances,</i> | larger |

| Ci | | |
|-----------|--------|--------|
| | C1v,26 | C2,27 |
| E | becks | growne |
| F | becks | growe |
| G | becks | growe |
| L | becks | growe |
| O | becks | growe |
| Y | becks, | growe |

| Do | | |
|-----------|-------|--------|
| | D1,23 | D4v,1 |
| E | to be | busie |
| F | to be | busie |
| G | to be | busie |
| L | to he | sbusie |
| O | to be | busie |
| Y | to be | busie |

| Fi | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|-------------|------|------------|---------------|
| | F1v,1/2 | F1v,16 | F1v,17 | F2,24 | F4,7 | F4,20 | F4,24 |
| E | And / If | Dash, | Soe | Catchp ole | Inne | chamber-ly | [faint /l/] |
| F | And / If | Dash; | Soe | Catchpo le | Inne | chamber-ly | [partial /l/] |
| G | And / If | Dash, | Soe | Catchpo le | Inne | chamber-ly | [faint /l/] |
| L | And / If | Dash; | Soe | Catchp o le | Inne | chamber-ly | [faint /l/] |
| O | And / If* | Dash; | See | Catchp ole | in | chamberly | [dropped /l/] |
| Y | And / If | Dash, | Soe | Catchp ol e | Inne | chamber-ly | [partial /l/] |

* the /I/ of /If/ is raised above the line in O

| Go | | |
|-----------|---------|------------|
| | G1,24 | G1,33-38 |
| E | ptotest | [askew] |
| F | protest | [straight] |
| G | ptotest | [askew] |
| L | ptotest | [askew] |
| O | protest | [straight] |
| Y | protest | [straight] |

| Gi | | | | | | |
|-----------|---------------------|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------------|
| | G1v,30 | G3v,7 | G3v,26 | G3v,30 | G3v,33 | G3v,34/35 |
| E | <i>Theophrastns</i> | hold | In to | dropes | asses; | Pate ... / That ... |
| F | <i>Theophrastus</i> | held | Into | dropst | asses | That ... / Pate ... |
| G | <i>Theophrastus</i> | held | Into | dropes | asses | That ... / Pate ... |
| O | <i>Theophrastus</i> | held | Into | dropst | asses | That ... / Pate ... |
| L | <i>Theophrastus</i> | held | Into | dropst | asses | That ... / Pate ... |
| Y | <i>Theophrastus</i> | held | Into | dropst | asses | That ... / Pate ... |

| Gi, cont. | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------|-------------|--------|
| | G4,4 | G4,17/18 | G4,25 | G4,30 |
| E | thee :I now willtrudge | datue / strinke | He futhers | Moones |
| F | thee: I now will trudge | statute / drinke | Her fathers | Moone |
| G | thee: I now will trudge | statute / drinke | Her fathers | Moone |
| L | thee: I now will trudge | statute / drinke | Her fathers | Moone |
| O | thee: I now will trudge | statute / drinke | Her fathers | Moone |
| Y | thee: I now will trudge | statute / drinke | Her fathers | Moone |

| Io | I1,cw | I2v,9 | I2v,22 | I3,22 |
|----|-------------|-------|--------|----------|
| E | <i>Bou.</i> | thou | W.S. | silence |
| F | <i>Bou.</i> | thou | W.S. | silence, |
| G | <i>Bou.</i> | thou | W.S. | silence |
| L | [Lacking] | | | |
| O | <i>Bo</i> | rhou | W.S.* | silence, |
| Y | <i>Bou.</i> | thou | W.S. | silence, |

* /S/ dropped in O

Nine of the eighteen formes in *Ram Alley* show no press-stop variants in the six copies examined for this edition. Of that nine, five (Bo, AoBbi, Di, Ho, and Hi) contain no observable variants whatsoever. The remaining four (Eo, Ei, Fo, and Ii) contain variants, but only of the kind that can be accounted for by loose type. The most glaring example of that occurs in the first two lines of F2v (Fo) which seem to have been poorly locked up: the first letter on the page – /S/ – moves up and down whilst the comma at the end of that line and all three letters in the last word of line two – /nod/ – wander back and forth quite at random.

The status of one forme – AiBbo – is uncertain, though the one variant it contains seems to have been caused more by deliberate intervention than accident: a single letter, /t/, moves one space along the line. As far as can be judged in the six available copies this letter makes one precise movement. It does not edge across little by little. No other letter in the line moves, the /l/ and the /w/ remaining in exactly the same places in all copies.⁷¹ It looks as though the press was stopped, a space taken from between the /l/ and the /t/, the /t/ moved up to the /l/ and the space between the /t/ and the /w/ replaced. On the other hand, the possibility remains that loose type could have caused such a change.

The remaining eight formes are all clearly variant as a result of press correction. Six (Bi, Co, Do, Fi, Go and Io) are in two states, whilst two (Ci, and Gi) are in three. Rather than treating these formes in their (probable) order of printing, I will take the simpler cases first and the more complex last. The order will therefore be: Do, Go, Io, Bi, Ci, Fi, Gi, Co.

In Do, L, with /to he/ and /sbusie/, is clearly the incorrect state, the remainder being correct.

⁷¹ The position of individual letters was checked by measuring (with a good quality technical ruler) the relationships of those letters to others *in the same copy* in surrounding lines and then comparing that with the same relationships in the other copies. I hope that this is an acceptably accurate way of checking for movement of type when dealing with photographic reproductions.

The only variants in Go are on G1 and again there is no doubt as to the incorrect state. This is shown by E, G and L, which contain the foul case error /ptotest/ and the skewed final lines. O, Y, and F are correct.

In Io, O shows the incorrect state; /Bo/ was corrected to /Bou./, /rhoul/ to /thou/, and the /S/ in /W.S./ raised to create the state seen in Y and F. Whether the comma after /silence/ was subsequently removed to produce the state seen in E and G, or whether this third state was caused by an accident is not certain, but there would have been no obvious reason for removing this point. It comes at the end of a line and before an /and/ (possibly to indicate a pause). Both are common positions for commas in *Ram Alley* – there are six /, and/ constructions on this same page. This third state of Io is, therefore, most likely a matter of accident, the comma having dropped, broken off, or been pulled out.

Bi is a little more complicated. All four pages of this forme contain variants, or apparent variants. A general pattern can be seen, though, suggesting that E is the only uncorrected copy. The variant in B1v,31 might appear to confuse things, but I believe that this apostrophe is merely loose. It prints consistently poorly, varying in strength from copy to copy until eventually it fails to print at all. The remaining variants divide clearly into two groups showing E, with its turned and missing letters, to be the incorrect state. The unlocking of the chase to make these corrections resulted, however, in the catch-word on B2 dropping – a loss which appears to have gone unnoticed.

The punctuation changes in this forme – both on B4 – are worth noting since they suggest that some care was taken over the matter of pointing in the printing of *Ram Alley* – or at least, in the proofreading. They suggest also that the proofreader read with some intelligence if not always with care (for instance, he missed the /?t/ for /it/ two lines above the misprint /maestique/, which he did notice on B4). Only one of these two changes is strictly necessary or useful: the /;/ in line 2, which prevents us from reading /broke/ with the next word /up/, when that word should be read with /comes/ (giving /up comes/ rather than /broke up/). The comma in line 3 after /trus'd/ is not so useful as there would be no difficulty without it, but it seems to be in keeping with the general style of pointing.

Other explanations could, of course, account for the presence of this punctuation in the second state. Bad inking in the E copy could, for example, be the cause of its apparent absence there. The fact that there is evidence of movement of type in line 2 (it is slightly longer in the second state) whilst there is no such evidence of movement in line 3 would suggest yet another explanation: the /;/ added and when that was being done a dropped

comma in line 3 was noticed and simply raised.

A comma is, however, clearly subjected to stop press correction in Ci, a forme which is in three states: /growne/ was clearly wrong, and was corrected to /growe/; subsequently a comma appears (observable in Y only) which must have been either added or raised. The difference it makes is slight. It merely separates two nouns in a list, possibly preventing /becks/ being read as a verb. However, this does confirm the impression that some attention was paid to punctuation at this stage of the printing process.

In Fi, as in Bi, a fairly obvious regular pattern is spoiled by some apparently irregular variants. As with Bi again, though, these variants are most likely not stop press corrections. The problem in F1v,16 is possibly loose type but, more probably I suspect, it is the consequence of print-through from the other side of the page. That is what it looks like in the O copy certainly, and it is interesting to note that Claude Jones, in his reprint edition of 1951,⁷² has a comma, even though the mark appears to be a semi-colon in both the copies he worked from (O and F), and O, the copy he apparently used as his copy text, has the semi-colon more pronounced than does the F copy.

The other irregularity in Fi – F2,24 – is obviously loose type. The only letters to move are the /o/ and the /l/, everything else, including the /p/ and the /e/, remaining stationary in respect to the surrounding lines.

Apart from those two irregularities, we have a regular pattern, even down to the /l/ in F4,24 which appears to have been reset, but nonetheless to have remained obstinately loose. This pattern shows the O copy to be in the incorrect state and the remainder to be correct, making it clear that F1v,17 should read /Soe/ rather than /See/ (a reading which, in terms of sense, would be acceptable).

This fact – that /See/ could be sensibly read as an imperative, the surrounding punctuation being acceptable for the text generally – brings into question the possibility that sheets were proofread against copy. On the other hand, this is perhaps no more than further evidence of the intelligence of the reader: there is sufficient oddity in this error to give pause, and the fact that it was changed warrants no greater assumption than that the copy was used to check whether correction was in fact required once the possibility of error had been remarked.

Gi, which occurs in three states, is notable for the large number of corrections it contains, but again the order of events is quite clear. The E copy is in the first state, corrected to that of the G copy. /dropes/ in G3v,30 was later noticed and changed to /dropst/, making

⁷² Jones, C. E. (ed.), *Ram-Alley or Merrie Trickes* (University of Louvain, 1951).

the state seen in O, L, Y, and F. Each stage of correction obviously required a press stop.⁷³

However, one of these changes – that of /asses;/ to /asses/ in G3v,33 – seems to be a mistake. The semi-colon after /asses/ performs a useful function, whereas without it the line is not very sensible, despite Claude Jones' suggestion that we understand 'ass's head.'⁷⁴ Obviously some error was noticed and a correction effected, but either the proof sheet was not clearly marked or the /;/ was accidentally removed instead of the /s/. That the semi-colon simply dropped of its own accord is most unlikely as the spacing appears to have been amended after the type was removed.

We should also note the misprints that occur in G3v,34/35 and G4,17/19 in the E copy. The first of these errors could just possibly have been caused by the compositor's catching /Pate/ when reading the manuscript and making the same mistake in reverse, as it were, when setting the next line. Such an error, though, is likely to have been noticed as it was being made, or to have come out as /Pate... Pate/. This mistake is far more likely to have been caused by the same sort of accident as caused the similar one in the E copy on G4, which can have, I think, only one explanation: while transferring his type from stick to galley, the compositor dropped the first part of the lines as far as /The statut/ and /To drinke/, and then replaced them, for the most part, in the wrong lines, losing the third /t/ of /statute/ in the process. I can see no other way in which two pairs of letters could have been so precisely transposed in the middle of the lines with such nonsensical results.⁷⁵

The combination of the large number of errors in the two pages and the clumsiness suggested by these particular ones could indicate either the work of an inexperienced man or a man working under some sort of abnormal strain (see above, Compositor analysis).

Taking the forme as a whole there are eleven corrections, ten of which occur in two pages. In these two pages there are only two possible uncorrected misprints (G4,1, /this/ for /thus/, and G4,2, /reueng/ for /reuenge/). It seems reasonable to assume that these pages were subjected to greater scrutiny by the proofreader (whose success rate is not

⁷³ In G1v,34 of O there is another apparently variant /;/ which seems to be shared by F. The upper point of the mark in F, however, is irregular in shape – a stroke not a dot – and an inspection of the Bodleian copy shows the mark to be print-through from a heavily printed speech prefix on the recto side. Jones prints /;/ but I am certain that he is mistaken in doing so.

⁷⁴ Jones, of course, did not know of (or, at least, did not collate) the E copy.

⁷⁵ The double occurrence of an error in which only two lines are involved would suggest a two-line composing stick; a larger stick would have created, I imagine, a greater muddle on one, if not both, of the occasions.

always so high) perhaps because he expected there to be more than the usual number of errors. Such an explanation might indicate more definitely that the man who set these pages was not one of the regular two.

We come now to Co, the forme in which the most substantial and the most puzzling variants occur. One of these variants – the comma after */Frances/* in the stage direction on C2v – can be dealt with straight away. The attention given to punctuation in Bi and Ci shows that such small matters were not considered unworthy of care when correcting at press, so this type could quite conceivably have been added or raised. Certainly it is useful, separating as it does two names which could easily be read together. That in itself, however, does not help in deciding whether the point was added or raised when the other changes were made, or whether it simply disappeared by accident when (or shortly after) a change in the opposite direction was made. The status of this comma, therefore, depends upon the other two variants rather than vice versa.

Two kinds of evidence – palaeographic and lexical – need to be examined in discussing the two verbal variants. The former type, however, is thin and inconclusive. With regard to the */longer – larger/* variant I can find no help whatsoever, and things are only marginally better for */insets - mussers/*.

Confusion of */r/* and */t/*, such as we find at the end of */insets - mussers/*, is fairly common; I have noted twelve clear examples of it in *Ram Alley*. Most, though – if not all – of these can be more sensibly explained as foul case rather than as misreading: I cannot believe that any compositor thought that such words as */inwatd/*, */ftom/*, or */ptotest/* existed in English; and, if a man could set */ftom/* twice in one line, thinking that he was setting */from/*, I think it more likely that he set, for instance, */nor/* thinking it to be */not/* than that he misread */not/* as */nor/* where the latter did not make good sense. Moreover, */t/* and */r/* are not difficult to confuse in this fount, particularly where there has been damage to the extremities of the letters.

All that provokes the interesting though complicating thought that */mussers/* itself (if the correct version) contains an error, and should be */mussets/*. The *OED* does give */musser/* but its only example of that spelling is this very passage with a note ‘if not a misprint for *musset*,’ that being the normal spelling. If */insets/* is wrong, then, the possibility of a foul case confusion of */r/* and */t/* would argue for emendation not to */mussers/* but to */mussets/*. But we are entering William of Occam’s territory again and should perhaps retreat, as he is waving his razor ominously in our direction.

Certain other misprints suggest that the person who wrote the manuscript could have been

inclined to add flourishes. Thus, either /w/ or /e/ might have been exaggerated to look like /wne/ in /growne/ for /growe/ (C2,27), and an /n/ flourished to look like /ues/ to create /giues/ for /gins/ (B3v,27). /Whats/ for /What/ (B3v,19) might have been caused by flourishing, though this looks like simple anticipation since /is/ follows /Whats/. Simple repetition was almost certainly the cause of another mistake concerning /n/ – /demannds/ for /demands/ (G4v,4). On the other hand, all these mistakes occur on Y's pages (one of the pages being doubtful) and that man was particularly prone to misreading the copy, so the fault might have been more in him than the writing. All in all, it seems there is little help to be gained from this quarter.

In deciding this question, I am entirely dependent on the lexical evidence, which, I believe, shows the Y copy is correct.

Taking C3,13 first, superficially /longer/ might seem the more attractive reading, implying that the kiss given by Frances to Sir Oliver has lasted longer than modesty would normally permit. William's remark, 'I dare be sworn she has,' thus has a meaning something like, 'I bet she has, the slut,' and would be delivered as an aside.⁷⁶

However, a more careful reading of Frances' speech shows that, whilst /longer/ might fit in with William's remark, it does not make such good sense in the rest of the speech in which it occurs. Frances is here pretending to be the heiress Constantia Somerfield, and what, after all, is her supposed 'venture'? It is not her kissing of Sir Oliver, but her elopement with William, this being made clear by her expressed fear that Sir Oliver's 'graver wit' will not commend an act which goes beyond the limits of conventional modesty and mature consideration. Such a 'venture' is far better described by /larger/ than by /longer/ – it is, simply, 'of greater magnitude.'

The word /venture/ itself, moreover, refers primarily to 'Constantia's' risky undertaking in eloping; the word has the same sort of meaning as it does in the phrase '*to give venture*, to make the attempt' (*OED*), though obviously an element of the more usual meaning is also in play – 'an enterprise ... in which there is considerable risk of loss as well as chance of gain' (*OED*). /Larger/ thus has some such meaning as 'lavish ... prodigal' (*OED*) as well as the normal one.

It might also be worth adding that the primary meaning given by /larger/ to William's 'I dare be sworn' makes the acting of the scene slightly easier. His 'That kiss shall cost your chain,' four lines earlier can quite easily be dealt as an aside since at that point Sir Oliver is otherwise engaged – in the manner described by the aside. William's next line, though,

⁷⁶ That it is not marked as an aside would be quite normal for *Ram Alley*.

would have no such action to cover it. Since this group has to be very closely arranged (for Frances to kiss Sir Oliver and for William to whisper to Frances) and since Sir Oliver's next speech ('Not so ... so will he.') is a reply to either Frances or William, an aside at this point would leave Sir Oliver hanging rather vacuously, waiting to make his reply. The exchange would run much more smoothly if William's remark is not treated as a private cynicism which Sir Oliver cannot hear, but as an open comment (whatever secondary meaning it may have for those who know what is going on) upon what 'Constantia' has just said, allowing Sir Oliver to listen and then reply either to William or to her.

The exchange following, between William, Frances and Beard, creates, it is true, a hiatus for Sir Oliver, but he is not then in the midst of a conversation, so he is not left hanging as he would be above. Also, he can on this occasion be immediately reinvolvement with Frances (perhaps because he *is* paying too much attention to the others and not enough to her) by William's 'Beg his chain, wench.' Frances would then distract him with the sigh which he next comments upon whilst William and Beard mutter to one another.⁷⁷

The reason for preferring /mussers/ to /insets/ in C2v,6 is, lexically, quite straightforward; /insets/ makes no sense at all – or as good as none – whilst /mussers/ makes perfectly good sense. The word, however, is rare, and, as noted above, this spelling of it unusual. The variant occurs in a speech by Sir Oliver – more specifically in an extended metaphor based on the vehicle 'pursuit of game,' the tenors being Sir Oliver (the pursuer) and William (the pursued). A suggestive undercurrent also takes account of William's activity as himself a pursuer of the sexual quarry 'Constantia.'

The predominant type of hunting that Barry obviously had in mind was hare-coursing (possibly picked up from a quibble, deliberate or not, on 'heir', the word which immediately precedes this metaphor).

The phrase, 'Your wildest paths, your turnings and returns,' certainly fits with the activity of a hare, which follows a quite dramatically erratic and twisting path when pursued (and

⁷⁷ There is, too, a possible pun on /venture/ here which would, if we read /larger venture/, allow a degree of irony in William's, 'I dare be sworn she has.' This would depend upon a recognition of the sense 'a prostitute' (*OED*, n.8). Given Barry's propensity to develop maximum vulgarity I think we are entitled to suspect such a meaning in /venture/. In this case /longer/ would make no sense at all (what is a 'longer prostitute?') / whereas /larger/ still makes good sense: 'in giving myself I give a more brazen whore.' This would give some edge to William's (otherwise ostensibly supportive) 'I dare be sworn she has' – that is 'she's quite right there!' It would also allow an ironic suggestion to develop behind Frances' 'true modesty.'

so ‘wildest’ in the superlative sense of ‘wild’ – ‘of game, afraid of or avoiding the pursuer’).⁷⁸

The two words which refer most directly to hares are, interestingly, on either side of the variant word; a ‘squat’ is ‘the place where an animal squats or crouches down in order to avoid observation; *spec.* the form or lair of a hare,’ whilst a ‘form’ is ‘the nest or lair in which a hare crouches.’

If, then, we put /mussers/ in between those two words we get a perfect flow of sense: /musser/ is equivalent to /muset/ which in turn is equivalent to /meuse/ for which *OED* gives the following definition: ‘1. An opening or gap in a fence or hedge through which game, *esp.* hares, habitually pass, and through which they run, when hunted, for relief. 2. The ‘form’ of a hare.’ The first is, in view of ‘wildest paths,’ the more likely sense.⁷⁹

If, on the other hand, we put /insets/ in the line the result is little better than nonsense. A very remote series of connections centring on angling *could* be forced out of the word, but not at all convincingly.⁸⁰ If we accept /insets/ and read it in that sense, we must,

⁷⁸ The phrase ‘turn and return’ would appear to have been commonly associated with the way a hare runs. Cf. Shakespeare’s *Venus and Adonis* (703-4): ‘Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch | Turn, and return, indenting with the way.’ [This and all subsequent quotations from the works of Shakespeare are from Evans, G. B. (ed), *The Riverside Shakespeare*, Houghton Mifflin, 1974.] That poem also, interestingly, refers to ‘The many musits through the which he goes’ (683), which suggests that musets were also commonly associated with the hare. This in turn suggests that if the word caused the compositor difficulty it might have been the spelling used by Barry rather than the word itself that caused the problem. Since, however, the most contentious aspect of the spelling – /ɪ/ for the more usual /t/ – is more than likely a foul case error I do not feel that this is a particularly useful line of argument. Indeed, I feel more convinced than ever that it was the writing which caused the difficulty here.

⁷⁹ We might also remark that, first, the hare was popularly associated with lechery (see note to II i 52-6) – a glance, perhaps, at William’s role as himself a sexual pursuer – and second that the hare was connected to its muset (or muse) by a proverb. Tilley quotes, under the reference for H155, from Robson’s *Choice Change* (1585): ‘Three things, very hard or not at all to be found. A hare without a muse. A fenne without a sluse. A whore without a skuse.’ Perhaps not too much should be made of the relevance of the third ‘thing’ to *Ram Alley* (though the connection is interestingly suggestive in relation to Frances’ first entrance); more to the present purpose is the fact that the proverb confirms the bawdy associations mentioned above: ‘fenne’ was slang for ‘whore’ (Partridge in his *Dictionary of Slang* dates the usage as late seventeenth century, *OED* slightly later; this quotation suggests that it might have been in common use in the late sixteenth century) and ‘sluse’ was slang for ‘the female pudend’ (Partridge – where again the date, late seventeenth century, may be too conservative). The series of connections thus made in the proverb both echo the general tenor of Sir Oliver’s speech and confirm the vulgar pun he would be making specifically on ‘muset.’

⁸⁰ An /inset/ could be ‘a place where water flows in, a channel,’ whilst a /return/ could be a ‘bend, turn, or winding in a stream’ and a /hole/ ‘(of fish) a deep place in a stream.’

correspondingly, see Sir Oliver as mentally jumping to a radically different form of sport and back again in the space of three words (the difference being that between active pursuit and passive enticement). Apart from its obvious obscurity, such a break in the flow of the metaphor would completely rupture the sense of the general vehicle, which is based on the idea of active pursuit. I can see nothing in favour of a reading which offers such a broken-backed metaphor when another reading is available (not precluded by other, more strictly bibliographical evidence) which allows a perfectly sensible and clearly developed extended metaphor.

As to the adoption of /insets/ in the first place, I would suggest that the compositor was, after his initial inability to decipher the manuscript, either sufficiently confused or sufficiently frustrated to take /insets/ for a variation of 'sets,' the 'set' being the home of a badger. Seeing correctly the kind of word that was required, he subtracted, as it were, one or two minim strokes from the script in order to get a word that he understood and which sounded approximately correct in the context.

We must finally consider why the correct reading is present in only one out of the six surviving copies of the play. That suggests either that the mistake took a very long time to correct, or that it was rectified in the normal time and for the majority of the printed sheets and we therefore have a statistically misrepresentative (even statistically improbable) sample of the total print run in these six copies.⁸¹

Possibly in support of the latter theory is the fact that Q2 (and Q3, though presumably following Q2) has /mussers/ and /larger/. Were there to be a majority of copies containing the errors one would imagine it to be a matter of pure luck that a copy with these particular variants was chosen as copy for Q2, and if our sample *is* representative, that would mean the chances were around one in six, which in turn would make the choice of copy for Q2 a very fortunate accident. On the other hand, as Q2 was produced within less than a year of Q1, it is possible that someone in Eld's shop remembered these errors and either chose a copy that was correct or marked the Q1 copy if it was wrong at these points. That argument, though, would equally apply if the mistake took a long time to correct – there would still have been a large number of copies with the error, so either the

⁸¹ A third possibility is, of course, that the Y copy is actually the original state and that the other copies represent a 'corrected' version which, for all three variants, actually made things worse; however, the arguments set out here for Y's being a second state seem to me much stronger than the argument for its being the first state, and even if it is a first state, the readings it provides are preferable in all three cases and I would argue that it was more 'miscorrected' than 'corrected.'

choice of copy for Q2 would have been pure luck or the result of deliberate intervention. In favour of the delayed correction theory, we might note that late press correction is not that uncommon a feature of printing at this period. Greg observes in ‘A Proof-Sheet of 1606’ that corrections to D inner of *Monsieur D’Olive* ‘were not made until most of the impressions had been taken, and are found in only a quarter of the extant copies.’⁸²

McIlwraith also comments on the occasional very late press correction in ‘Marginalia on Press-correction in Books of the Early Seventeenth Century,’⁸³ whilst, most pertinent of all to *Ram Alley*, G. R. Price notes in ‘The Early Editions of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*’⁸⁴ that Eld made a very late correction in E outer of that play that is observable in only one extant copy.

The most obvious cause of such a delay would be the checking of the whole sheet against copy, which might in turn explain the discovery of the fairly subtle /larger – longer/ error, though it could be that it also looked odd to the reader who, as has been suggested, seems to have been an intelligent if not always careful person, and who, having the manuscript to hand after checking /insets – mussers/ simply checked /longer/ as well. However, several other misprints which one may expect to have been noticed in the more painstaking process of checking against copy remained unobserved.⁸⁵ On the whole, I doubt that this procedure was followed here.

One other possible cause of the delay could be that the proofreader jibbed at /insets/ but, just as the compositor before him had been perplexed, simply could not make out the right word for some time or until after some lengthy consultations had been held with colleagues.

The evidence, then, which provides the argument in favour of accepting copy Y’s readings in Co is lexical rather than strictly bibliographical. We might finally note, however, that the *concurrence* of three superior readings in the Y copy argues very strongly in favour of that one being correct.

⁸² Greg, W. W., ‘A Proof-Sheet of 1606,’ *The Library*, 4th Series, XVII (1936-7), p.455.

⁸³ McIlwraith, A. K., ‘Marginalia on Press-correction in Books of the Early Seventeenth Century,’ *The Library*, 5th Series, IV (1949-50), p.245.

⁸⁴ Price, G. R., ‘The ‘Early Editions of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*,’ *The Library*, 5th Series, XXII (1967), p.217.

⁸⁵ The most obvious ones are as follows:

| | | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------|
| C1,38 | /mone’is/ for /monei’s/ | C3,12 | /choice’/ for /choice./ |
| C2v,11 | /who/ for /Who/ | C3, 16 | /ha’s/ for /has/ |
| C2v,23 | /felfe/ for /selfe/ (i.e., long /s/) | C4v,11 | /pauca/ for /Pauca/ |

This examination of the press variants has, I hope, established four corrections of substance:

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|-----|----------------------|
| C2v,6 | /mussers/ | not | /insets/ |
| C3,13 | /larger/ | | /longer/ |
| F1v,17 | /Soe/ | | /See/ |
| G3v,33 | /asse;/ | | /asses/ or /asses;/. |

The printer's copy

The printer's copy for *Ram Alley* was possibly in Barry's hand, and possibly his foul papers in a reasonably clean state or perhaps mixed, some sheets being fairly clean and some even revised, but the copy as a whole not fully revised. Certain stage directions suggest that much of the writing was done with stage production in mind. Though we have no reason to suspect an unusually poor hand, neat writing is hardly to be expected in an author's draft whatever the stage of composition, and the writing does appear to have caused difficulty now and then.

The theory that the copy was foul papers, possibly in varying states and only partially revised, is supported by the presence of the odd prose passages in the latter half of sheet G (pages G3, 3v, and 4v). Whilst it was not at all uncommon for plays in this period to contain scenes in which prose and verse are mixed, often for no apparent reason whatsoever,⁸⁶ these passages are all within a very limited space in *Ram Alley*, being concentrated in the second half of one signature, and so look odd; it is felt that they therefore deserve some discussion.

First, no one compositor was responsible for these passages. Second, given the probable method of casting off (particularly the fact that these pages were still being set to the original length) and the position of these passages on the page, the possibility that they were passages of obvious verse deliberately mis-set in order to save space is most unlikely. Presumably, therefore, they stem from the copy.

That Barry intended them to be prose seems the least likely explanation. The play is otherwise in verse, and the characters speaking here are mostly major ones, not minor or

⁸⁶ Stern (*Op. Cit.*, pp.131-3) argues that shifts from verse to prose and vice-versa in Shakespeare's plays carry information about emotion, tone, states of mind and social status, but that clearly isn't necessarily the case with other dramatists. Middleton, for instance, frequently breaks into prose, sometimes even in the middle of verse, and for no obvious reason.

lower class characters that might conventionally speak prose even when others are speaking verse around them: the first passage (on G3 – IV ii 189-93 in this edition) is spoken by William Smallshanks and occurs in the middle of a speech by him which is otherwise set as verse; the second (on G3v – IV iii 6-14 in this edition) is an exchange between an unnamed gentleman and Thomas Smallshanks; the third (also on G3v – IV iii 19-20 in this edition) is spoken by the same unnamed gentleman; the last (on G4v – IV iv 36-46 in this edition) is spoken by Justice Tutchim and is in response to a speech by a servant whose lines are set as verse.

Despite the fact that Barry's metre is never very regular (any randomly selected passage showing lines of nine, eleven, twelve, and even thirteen syllables) it is not easy to arrange the first two of these prose passages convincingly as verse (though the first, which appears in Cotgrave's miscellany *The English Treasury of Wit and Language*, is actually versified in that volume); the third and fourth passages, however, are amenable to versification and, *pace* Jones, it is too strong to say that 're-casting in regular lines is well-nigh impossible.'⁸⁷

A number of explanations with varying degrees of plausibility present themselves. First, it is possible that they are early rough drafts in prose which Barry for some reason neglected to versify.⁸⁸ Second, they were in verse but had been so heavily revised that they ended up not only looking like but to all intents and purposes actually reading as prose. Third, they were actually written as verse but crowded into a margin so tightly that they baffled the compositors who gave up and set them as prose. Fourth, were the copy a scribal one done by more than one scribe, a less intelligent or experienced scribe could have done this portion of the script and failed to make sense here either of Barry's hand or his lineation, and so rendered the passages in prose.

None of these explanations is entirely satisfactory for all the passages, each seeming to have a different probable cause. The first (on G3) reads as though it is not in the right place: it does not follow sensibly from what precedes it, and could have been added as an untidily scribbled marginal afterthought with its place merely indicated; the second two (on G3v) could simply be early versions of the speeches not properly polished; the third

⁸⁷ Jones, C., *Op. Cit.*, p.xvii.

⁸⁸ This procedure would seem to have been adopted by some writers of the period. Drummond, in his *Conversations*, reports that Jonson 'wrott all his [verse] first in prose, for so his master Cambden learned him.' (Harrison, G. B. (ed.), *Discoveries 1641, Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden 1619* (Edinburgh University Press, 1966), p.16.)

(on G4v) could quite acceptably be set out as verse without further change, given the looseness of Barry's verse generally. In that fourth passage, moreover, line 44 *is* set as a single line of verse, and line 43 looks as though it set out as verse (it starts with an upper case /A/ – 'A Punke ...') but then continues as prose to the end of the speech.

Every one of those explanations, and especially the particularly random arrangement of the fourth passage, would quite strongly suggest that this section consisted of rather messy foul papers giving the compositors an unusually hard time. They suggest, moreover, that the final pages of the manuscript were either from an earlier stage of composition than the preceding pages, or that these later parts of the manuscript were more hastily (or for some other reason more carelessly) written or revised. This last possibility is somewhat strengthened by evidence from the treatment of entrances and exits which will be considered next.

Of the 134 entrance and exit points in the play, 39 have no stage direction in Q1 – over 25%. Many of these omissions are obvious exits (at the ends of scenes or acts) but seven entrances are left out (of 67 required), whilst of the exits (of which the same number are required) at least eight are of the type that one might expect would have been given more attention by a book keeper had this been a prompt book (these being occasions where either the timing of the exit or the specific characters who are to leave are not clear from the text).

Some of these omissions are possibly the fault of the compositors rather than the copy. Of the seven omitted entrances, four are omitted from pages set by compositor X, two from pages set by Y, and one from an unclear page.

Three of these omissions could have been deliberate. In the case of Y's omission on E4v we are dealing with an entrance which is present but inadequate; however, this inadequacy (the omission of the main character from those who are to enter) is not as bad as it sounds when seen in context (this character having left the stage and then re-entered immediately) and the space in which the compositor had to fit the direction is very small. Moreover, this kind of mistake is as likely to have been the author's as a compositor's. X's omission on G2v occurs where the text happens to be very crowded just at the point where a direction – for a major character – is required. Again, the compositor might have quietly dropped this direction, though that would seem uncharacteristic of X, who is the more careful of the men.

Another, in Bb2, like Y's in E4v, just happens to occur on a line which uses the full width of the page. There is certainly no room on this page to give the direction a line to itself,

but it could have been squeezed in at the end of the previous line (or even the one before that) where it would have been half a line early, such latitude being tolerated elsewhere (mid-line entrances being necessarily put in the previous line because speeches are set continuously). X could, however, have decided to disregard this entrance.

For the remaining two omissions in X's pages (H2 and H2v), the Y omission in I1v, and the one in the uncertain page (I3v) no such excuses can be made. Though space is short in all these pages the omitted directions would have required very little room and they could have been fitted in without much trouble at all.

We have, then, whittled down the errant entrance directions to about 5% of the total required, this 5% occurring on pages set by both compositors, and all in the last few pages of the book. This percentage is, however, small, and, concentrated as they are in one part of the book, could be the consequence of extra pressure of some sort being put on the men temporarily.

They could, however, equally well be a consequence of the author's getting slipshod towards the end of his work. That explanation is given some support by the presence of the prose passages in sheet G. It is given support, also, by the placing of the stage directions, concerning which the compositors seem to have been scrupulous in their following of the copy, and if they were careful over such a matter as the placing of directions, it would seem likely that they took care to include them when they were present in the copy.

The rationale behind the placing of stage directions would seem to be the author's. Two (or more) compositors could not have achieved such coherence as obtains here. Were there a house style it would have had to have been imposed by a copy editor, and the presence of the interpolated half-sheet Bb implies, as has been suggested, that no such editing was done on the copy of *Ram Alley* – and even if there was, one would doubt that it extended to anything as detailed as this.

Entrances introducing a new scene (that is, a new group of players and the start of a separate event) are always centred; entrances during scenes are sometimes centred, but are more usually put to the right, either of their own line or simply to the right of the text in the margin (though always in the text space). Although lack of space might sometimes have forced the compositors to put directions in the margin, no general consistency is observable in the habits of either compositor in this matter. The majority of marginal directions are also of a fairly specific type, being either directions for minor characters (such as servants) or directions about stage business (such as the handing over of a letter).

They are very much in the nature of such notes as might have been added in the flow of writing, or very soon after writing, and which would therefore have appeared in exactly the same position in the manuscript.

If, then, the compositors were reasonably careful in the treatment of stage directions, we may conclude that these omitted entrances were probably missing from the copy, from which in turn it follows that the copy was probably not a prompt book. The omission of exits can now, too, presumably, be blamed on the copy, and though missing exits would not necessarily point away from a prompt book the pattern of omissions that exists here would be odd in such a copy: the marking of exits stops entirely after page G3 (the last exit to be marked being in the final line of that page) whilst those missing exits that look least likely to have been omitted by the compositors occur in the last pages of the book. All this tallies with the theory put forward above that either the author became hurried or negligent towards the end of his work, or the copy for the latter part of the play was of a different quality from that for the earlier part.

Obviously compositors could get tired as well as authors, but I find it hard to believe not only that both men got tired at the same time, but that they got selectively tired all at once with respect to the word */Exit/*. Moreover, though space is short in the last two sheets, it is not so short that exits needed to be jettisoned, these directions being almost always put in the margin alongside the relevant line of text when included. The evidence points, then, to the author as being responsible for the missing exits as well as the missing entrances in the final pages of the book.

Before leaving the matter of stage directions, two final points might be noted. First, there are no true anticipatory directions of the sort that can be indicative of prompt book copy. Two directions (on Blv and Flv) are one line early, but this is hardly significant. A very few directions also, as has been mentioned, anticipate an action by half a line, these occurring where the habit of continuous printing forces the direction out of its natural place between two half lines and into the space before the first half line. These directions are, however, only about three in number and, though they are probably set there because of the desire to save space, they are, I believe, special cases which do not affect the general conclusions reached above concerning the placing of directions. Second, the long direction at the bottom of Bblv looks, at first sight, like a prompt book type of direction, with its full list of the props required for the following scene. This might suggest that the copy for at least the interpolated half-sheet was provided from a separate copy which was, in fact, a prompt book. However, we can dismiss such a theory with some

confidence because this list is incomplete: it leaves out a gown which Throat calls for some fifty lines into the scene. Such an omission is understandable in an author, who would be roughly setting the scene for its opening effect and a few lines ahead, and besides, it may well not have been necessary for the gown to be visible on stage as the other listed props are. But such an omission would be very careless for a book holder, whose job it would have been to furnish full instructions for the whole scene, including those props which an actor might slip offstage to get. (See also the discussion of the interpolated half-sheet, Bb, above.)

The most persuasive argument, however, against prompt book copy is the confusion about the naming of the braggart captain, called variously /Face/ and /Puffe/. It will help, perhaps, to have the usage of these two names set out in a table (Table X).

| Episode Scene | Page | Comp. | Text | Stage directions | Speech prefixes |
|---------------|------|-------|-----------|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| Act. nom. | A2v | ? | Face (1) | - | - |
| A II iii | D2 | X | Face (1) | - | - |
| B III ii | D4 | Y | Puffe (3) | Captaine Puffe (1) | Puf. (3) |
| | D4v | Y | - | Puffe (2) Cap. Puffe (1) | Pu. (1) |
| C III iv | E2v | X | Puffe (1) | C. Puff (1) | Cap. Puf. (2) |
| | E3 | X | Face (1) | - | C. Pu. (6) |
| | E3v | X | - | Face (1) | C. Pu. (2) |
| D IV iii | G1v | Y | - | Captaine Face (1) | Cap. (6) |
| | G2 | X | Face (1) | - | Cap. (4) |
| | G2v | X | - | - | Cap. (5) |
| | G3 | X | - | - | Cap. (2) |

Table X

In the *Actorum nomina* he is named as /Captain Face/. In the play he is first mentioned in a scene between Taffeta and Boutcher (episode A), though he does not appear in that scene; he then appears in three episodes which are denoted in the table by episodes B, C, and D. In B he meets Sir Oliver and Justice Tutchim in a street, and threatens to kill the former if he pursues his suit to the widow Taffeta; in C, the Captain bursts into Taffeta's house, finds Sir Oliver hiding there under the widow's skirts, and is thrown out by the

servants (C thus following naturally upon B); in D the Captain is humiliated by Boutcher and William Smallshanks in a tavern, this being what was set up between Taffeta and Boutcher in A. It should be borne in mind that this table records only the /Face – Puffe/ distinction; the character is also referred to as plain /Captain/ throughout all three of these scenes as well as being called /Captain Face/ and /Captain Puffe/. (The figures in parenthesis indicate the number of times that form – or a slight variant of it – occurs on the page; italicisation is ignored.)

First, we may note that, even allowing for the uncertainty about the assignation of one of the pages, no pattern exists which could suggest a compositorial distinction: both men set /Face/ and /Puffe/ at different times, whilst the two names occur in the same page in both E3 and in E3v.

The confusion exists, then, in the copy, and the table makes it plain that the extent of the confusion is such that it could not have been tolerated in a prompt book: throughout the play, the audience would have heard this character called by two different names (assuming, that is, that the confusion also existed in the actors' parts having been carried over from the prompt book or arriving there from a common source⁸⁹), whilst in the tiring room, the actor playing the part would have been referred to at one point as /Puffe/ and at another as /Face/ as he was being prepared for entry. Such confusion could not have got past the stage of rehearsal.

Another small detail which one might expect to have been corrected in a prompt book is Taffeta's naming of a second maid, Fabia, who appears to be a ghost character. She is mentioned only on B4 (I ii 75) when Taffeta calls to two maids to fetch the handkerchief that she has deliberately dropped as a lure for Boutcher: 'Aye me, my handkercher.

Adriana, Fabia.' No second maid is mentioned in the stage directions for that scene, and none speaks, Adriana being the only one to attend upon the widow here or at any other time. We might therefore think that Taffeta is inventing a second maid to make herself appear more grand to Boutcher, or that this is merely an oversight on the author's part or evidence of the intention to give Taffeta a second maid, later forgotten or discarded.

However, an unnamed girl, given the speech prefix /Vi./ appears on H4v (V iii) with Adriana 'strewing hearbs' and the *Actorum nomina* mentions a /Chamber-maide/ immediately below Adriana. Taken together, these two points might suggest something more substantial than a ghost character.

⁸⁹ And if the actors noticed and cleared up the confusion, can we imagine that the copy holder was not also alerted to it somehow?

The speech prefix /Vi./ might be for /Virgo/ or /Virgin/, or perhaps for some such name as /Viola/. If the former, it could be only the loosest of descriptions suggesting a very young girl; if the latter, then we can surmise only that Barry did intend Taffeta to have two named female servants (and certainly this girl comes from, and returns to, Taffeta's house, though she is not otherwise seen attending upon Taffeta personally), that the naming of the second girl was never settled (he thought first of Fabia and then later of a name beginning Vi-), and that she might have been remembered in the *Actorum nomina*, though anonymously.

The entry /Chamber-maide/ in the *Actorum nomina* is, however, itself ambiguous: since /Adriana/ is followed by a comma (where all but one of the other names are followed by a full-stop) this entry might have been intended merely to describe her. Moreover, the list is by no means entirely trustworthy: such minor characters as the three gentlemen, the constable, and the drawer are mentioned, but the various servants required are not mentioned, and nor is the sergeant, who has a small speaking part.

On balance, I suspect that this /Chamber-maide/ does not refer to Adriana (who is, after all, strictly a waiting maid) but to the character /Vi./ (whose activities suggest much more the office of a chambermaid). /Vi./, though, is not necessarily the same character as /Fabia/, who may well be a ghost. More to the present point, all this indicates some confusion in the copy, but nothing like that over the naming of the Captain.

The passages of prose in sheet G, the missing stage directions, the various indications that the later sheets were written more hurriedly than the earlier ones, the confusion over the naming of the Captain, and the vagueness surrounding Fabia and the character designated /Vi./ all combine to suggest strongly that the copy for *Ram Alley* was foul papers, or at least a stage precedent to the prompt copy. The theatrical directions such as the description of Throat's study on Bblv, the specifications 'above' and 'below' for certain entrances, and the division of the play into acts indicate that Barry had performance in mind when he wrote, which in turn might be taken as indicating that this copy was intended for use as the basis for the prompt copy. Bearing in mind Greg's cautionary observation that even fair copy 'was subject to alteration at a late stage of the proceedings',⁹⁰ we may conclude with reasonable certainty that this was an early autograph copy, with some of the sheets possibly being in an earlier or less finished state than others.

Finally, in relation to the question of whether the copy might have been a prompt book,

⁹⁰ Greg, *Dramatic Documents of the Elizabethan Playhouses*, Vol. I, p.198.

we might note that the entry in the Stationers' Register is not in the form that would suggest a prompt book ('the book of ...' or 'a book called the book of ...') but is simply, 'a booke called Ram Alley or Merry Trickes.'⁹¹

Concerning the handwriting, we may note that certain misprints suggest that it was not always easy to read and that the writer may have been prone to adding flourishes to his letters. All of the major emendations determined by this study could have a difficult hand behind them – /longer/ for /larger/ on C3, /insets/ for /mussers/ on C2v, and /see/ for /soe/ on Flv indicate as much, and /buffolne/ on I1v also looks odd. All that said, the manuscript seems to have been no worse in this respect than many that found their way to printers' shops in this period and was possibly better than some. If, moreover, the copy was foul papers, we surely would expect to find some traces of poor handwriting – the more so if other oddities in various parts of the manuscript were caused by haste.

* * *

So much, then, for the nature of the copy. We are, though, still left with two questions related to the copy and to one another: (1) is it possible to say whether the author himself ever came to any decision about the naming of the Captain, and (2) did he – or anyone else – prepare the manuscript in any way for publication? These questions are related, I would suggest, because the main piece of evidence we have for deciding the former question is that the Captain is named /Face/ in the *Actorum nomina*, which would have been added to the manuscript either by the author on the completion of composition or because the copy was being prepared for publication, whether by the author or someone else.

In considering the first of these problems, we can immediately, I think, dismiss the notion that the error over the naming of the Captain occurred as a result of the conflation of two characters into one either at some stage during the composition or at a later stage of fairly thorough revision. Clearly, the author always thought of the Captain as one character. Two braggart captains claiming to be married to Taffeta – one who bullies Sir Oliver and another who is himself later bullied by Boutcher – would have created clumsy and unnecessary confusions in the plot. Even if passage A on D2 was written (or conceived of) *after* episodes B and C had been written (or conceived of) and in order to motivate

⁹¹ Arber, *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London 1554-1640*.

episode D, it is obvious that Barry was thinking of the same captain in D2 as he had used in the first two episodes in which that character appears: Taffeta describes him to Boutcher on D2 as:

that fleshly Captain Face
Which swears in taverns and all ordinaries,
I am his lawful wife.⁹²

And this is precisely what the Captain himself claims to be in both D4v (episode B) – ‘she is my wife by oath’ (III i 54) – and in E3 (episode C) – ‘How, am I not thy spouse? ... Thy word is passed’ (III iv 73-6). This then, was clearly the same character in the writer’s mind; the change of mind has been not about his role or function but about his name.

When, though, that change of mind took place is not at all clear; nor can we be entirely certain whether one name or the other was finally fastened upon. The confusion in the quarto is pretty thorough: in episode B the character is consistently /Puffe/, and in D, /Face/ or /Cap./, but in C he is referred to as both /Puffe/ and /Face/ in the dialogue, whilst later in that same episode (on E3v) /Face/ occurs in the same line as the speech prefix /C. Pu./. There is also the puzzle about his very first designation in Taffeta’s speech on D2 as /Face/.

One explanation for this is that (as was purely hypothetically suggested above) Barry started with /Puffe/ and then later wrote in the A passage (on D2) to motivate scene D, itself conceived after B and C had been written, and after the decision to change the name to /Face/. However, this seems most unlikely, as nothing in the passage on D2 suggests that it is an insert. Indeed, if anything, it looks more as though the A passage was slightly misremembered when episode D was written, since nothing happens in D that would allow Taffeta to laugh, as she had hoped to do, ‘at the disgrace they both endure’ – the Captain alone is disgraced and Boutcher’s dislodgement as a suitor occurs later and by other means.

Another possible explanation is that Barry wrote the whole, or the most part, of the Captain’s role as either /Face/ or /Puffe/ and then at some point, either towards the end or after finishing completely, changed his mind and revised. If that was the case, the revision was extremely careless, as a glance at the table above will show.

⁹² *Ram Alley*, II iii 105-7.

It might also be considered that the confusion arose because Barry was working with a co-author and somehow (for reasons now quite undiscoverable) they never made a clear decision about the name of this character. Stern⁹³ suggests that co-authorship was often a pretty casual business, with the various authors having little knowledge of the whole play. However, even if there was another author I see no merit in that as an explanation for this confusion: episode C contains both names; we can assume, I think, that one person wrote that episode and if one author is capable of using both names in one scene, it is as likely to be Lording Barry as the hypothetical second writer, and therefore as likely that he wrote the rest of the play. Whilst a co-author for *Ram Alley* must be considered a possibility this confusion is neither explained by the presence of a second author, nor is it evidence for the existence of that second author.⁹⁴

The most likely explanation, it would seem to me, is that Barry either toyed with both names from the beginning or started with /Face/, changed his mind to /Puffe/, but then changed his mind again and went back to the first choice, revising scene C inadequately

⁹³ Stern, *Op. Cit.*, p.36.

⁹⁴ Whether *Ram Alley* was co-authored (or, indeed, written by someone other than Barry) is not a question that will be addressed in this present study; we might note, though, that Mary Bly, in *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queens on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford University Press, 2000) makes a convincing case that the Whitefriars group of playwrights was particularly close-knit (even to the extent of taking a kind of corporate approach to writing for their company) and thus more than likely often collaborated with one another; however, her assertion that the writer John Cooke (who was not actually a member of the Whitefriars group) ‘had a hand in writing *Ram Alley*’ (*Op. Cit.*, p.116) is, for me, unconvincing, being based almost solely on the unsupported claim that similarities to Barry’s play in Cooke’s *Greene’s Tu Quoque* are the ‘reappropriation of his [Cooke’s] own work on *Ram Alley*’ (*Op. Cit.*, p.178); the verbal similarities involving single words or brief phrases in Cooke’s play are little more than common linguistic or proverbial usages that are found in other plays of the period – as Bly herself says, ‘the coincidence might point to collaboration, but just as easily to linguistic fashion’ (*Op. Cit.*, p.120); there is one similar comedic device (the ‘revenge’ quotation by Gartred of her sister’s words mocking her reluctance to countenance Geraldine’s suit is similar to Boutcher’s mocking repetition at V iii 159-62 of Sir Oliver’s words from an earlier scene) but this is by no means repetition and in Cooke’s hands it has a quite different purpose making it both a narrative and a comic episode; the only extended passage in *Greene’s Tu Quoque* which clearly is derived, in some way, from *Ram Alley* is the violent ‘wooing’ of the Widow by Spendall, which closely parallels the way William gains the widow Taffeta; however, this looks, given the way the Widow tricks Spendall after giving in to him and then accepts him again, much more like a deliberate comic intertextual play on a scene that Cooke knew his audience would recognise (possibly plagiarising Barry, but equally possibly complimenting its author with a friendly pastiche or borrowing) rather than mere repetition of his own previously written work. See also on this subject, Cathcart, C., ‘Plural Authorship, Attribution, and the Children of the King’s Revels,’ *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (2005), pp.357-74.

and B not at all; that is, he never properly made up his mind during the writing of the play. This is at least consistent with the similar apparent vagueness about Taffeta's second maid, and might explain episode C – that is, during the period of maximum uncertainty the confusion is at its greatest, and consistent with other indications that the manuscript was not fully revised. Entailed in that explanation is the conclusion that Barry's final preference was for /Face/.

Before considering the implications of the *Actorum nomina*, some other types of evidence for determining the Captain's name should at least be considered, though they are of a rather slippery, speculative nature.

/Puffe/ was obviously quite strongly favoured at one point, since Taffeta puns on the name (in episode C):

is this the fittest place
Your Captainship can find to puff in – ha?⁹⁵

But this is purely local, occurs in the episode where both names are used, and so proves nothing for the whole.

We might speculate that Barry could have started with /Puffe/ and then remembered (or have been reminded of) the character called *M. Puffe* in Marston's *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1601) and decided to avoid confusion with a character who 'puffs' in the sense of using inflated or extravagant language (*OED*, v.6.a) when he was thinking of 'one who brags or behaves insolently ... a boaster, a braggart' (*OED*, n.8a).

He could have considered that the name /Puffe/ was too obvious after all, and opted for the slightly more subtle suggestions of /Face/, which carries such meanings as 'to brag, boast, swagger ... to confront with assurance or impudence' (v. 1 and 2), as well as implying deceit (though in a way different from Jonson's later use of the name in *The Alchemist* in 1610). Perhaps Barry was finally attracted by the notion of having a Captain Face to his Lieutenant Beard, and making up a decorous trio with his lawyer Throat.

However, interesting though it may be to speculate thus, there is no real evidence there.

We must rest, I would suggest, on the fact that /Face/ is the last name used in the text, and is the name used in the *Actorum nomina* (which would have been something added in

⁹⁵ *Ram Alley*, III iv 71-2.

preparation for publication,⁹⁶ or at the end of the writing process) and if we knew that the author wrote that list, we could be certain almost beyond doubt that /Face/ was his final choice; unfortunately, we cannot be absolutely sure who wrote it.

Concerning the possibility that it was added just before publication, we have to start by acknowledging that we cannot be entirely sure where Barry was in November 1610, when Wilson entered *Ram Alley* in the Stationers' Register (signifying, presumably, that he had recently obtained it); one might surmise, though, that since he had narrowly escaped being hung as a pirate in London in late 1609 and that he had skipped bail leaving two men with responsibility for his £200 debt, that city would be the last place Barry was likely to have been.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, he could still have prepared his play for publication⁹⁸ before leaving England so hurriedly in August 1608 (leaving the play behind) and perhaps just possibly – though this is extremely unlikely – could have prepared the manuscript in Ireland and sent it to England.⁹⁹

As to the possibility that Barry could have tagged the *Actorum nomina* on to the end of his manuscript before handing it over to his company, we might note that D. J. Lake, in his discussion of Barry's possible involvement in *The Family of Love*, observes striking similarities in the terminology and the layout of the *Actorum nomina* in that play and *Ram*

⁹⁶ That this was a common practice is suggested by Greg, *Dramatic Documents of the Elizabethan Playhouses*, Vol. I, pp.194-5.

⁹⁷ See, however, the The Author, Lording Barry, for a fuller discussion of whether Barry could have been in London in 1610.

⁹⁸ It was not normal, of course, for playwrights to sell their work to publishers because publication was generally regarded as likely to discourage attendance at the playhouse; however, as the Whitefriars theatre folded in 1608 it is possible that its writers may have sold off their plays in a last-ditch attempt to make some money out of them or to provide funds for the ailing company: of the ten extant plays that can be identified as being written for the Children of the King's Revels, five (*Cupid's Whirligig*, *The Family of Love*, *Humour Out of Breath*, *Law Tricks*, and *The Dumb Knight*) were published in 1607 and 1608, the period of time that the company was active.

⁹⁹ The scrap of information that makes it at least worth mentioning this possibility is that in one of the depositions relating to the trial which Barry so mysteriously avoided he is described as 'a poet,' that is to say, a playwright, the term for a writer of plays being 'poet' until circa 1617, when 'playwright' began to come into use (see Stern, *Op.Cit.*, p.132). The examinant – a Somerset man called Baker who had lived in Ireland for the past four years – presumably picked up this information either from his brother-in-law (who knew Barry from London, had lent him money, and had taken Baker with him to meet Barry and collect the debt) or from Barry himself at the meeting on Barry's ship. Were the information to have come from Barry this would imply that he was willing to keep his reputation, or image, as a writer alive whilst pursuing his alternative career, and we might therefore wonder whether he could have, even then, taken pains to see his work into print.

Alley;¹⁰⁰ this provides a shred of evidence that the addition of a list of parts was Barry's practice, and if that is the case, a shred of evidence also that the designation /Face/ was Barry's last decision.

However, that Barry had any part at all in the publication of his play, or even any thoughts of publication, are, I think, unlikely: he, we may presume, treated this draft purely as a theatrical copy. More likely is that this draft remained in the playhouse (to which Barry presumably delivered it) until the breaking up of the company, passed then into the hands of one of the members of that company (probably one of the managers rather than one of the boy actors) and thus to Wilson, possibly through John Bache (see above, The publisher). If the presence of a list of actors or parts derives here from preparation for publication we might assume that it was more likely to have been added some time between the dissolution of the company and the receipt of the manuscript by Wilson, and that it was added by whichever member of the company ended up in possession of this copy of the play.

That it was not added by either publisher or printer is, I think, suggested by the fact that /Face/ is chosen in preference to /Puffe/. A quick reading would almost certainly leave the impression that this character is called /Puffe/, this being the name that has the greater numerical and strategic weight over all: 9 /Puffe/ to 5 /Face/, a speech prefix which is either a variant of /Captain Puffe/ or plain /Captain/, and an initial introduction to the character on his first actual appearance in episode B (D4) by Justice Tutchim with the words, 'marke this Captaines humor, his name is *Puffe*' (D4, line 18).

The likelihood that this list was added by someone connected with the old Children of the King's Revels company is, however, just as interesting for present purposes as the possibility that it was added by Barry himself, since such a person would, almost certainly, have known the play in performance, and would therefore have used that name for the Captain by which he was known on the stage. The overall evidence is thin, it is true, but it is the best of the little that we have, and it points fairly clearly towards /Face/ as the name that was finally settled on for this character.

Conclusion

The manuscript of *Ram Alley* delivered to Eld's printing shop was probably Barry's foul papers, the hand being fair to poor, some parts written in greater haste than others or in

¹⁰⁰ Lake, D. J., *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), p.101.

varying states of foulness, but the copy generally clean on the whole. The draft would appear to have been written for theatrical use in some way – to provide the copy for parts or for the prompt book – and, if it was prepared for publication, was probably thus prepared by a member of the old company rather than Barry himself.

The play was set by at least two men, with perhaps some occasional extra help. Of the two identified compositors, one, Y, seems to have been more careless – or less experienced – than the other, and the editor of this play will place less confidence in the work done by this man when it comes to matters of doubt, particularly in cases involving possibly missing or extra types. Unfortunately, though, our greater trust in X's work cannot be extended to his general treatment of the punctuation; his improvements there are confined to the ends of speeches only, and for the rest he appears, like Y, to follow the pointing of the manuscript.

Setting was probably by formes, the inner pages being cast off as the outer ones were set. Work might have been arranged so that one man set whilst the other was engaged on such tasks as stripping, washing and distributing, and probably also on setting other material. The effective speed of composition would thus have been that of one man setting without interruption. Theorising about that matter is, however, merely academic, as the men were almost certainly employed on other work at the same time as they were working on *Ram Alley*. No conclusions can be drawn, therefore, about the relationship of composition to press-work, or the edition size.

Proofreading appears to have been intelligently done on the whole, if not always scrupulously. However, proofs seem not to have been read against copy as a matter of course.

Perhaps the most useful point to emerge from this study of the text from the editorial point of view is that from sheet G on there are signs of haste or growing carelessness on the author's part, particularly in the stage directions. An editor will pay special attention to these pages, and will, perhaps, feel most justified in making changes or additions where there are matters of doubt in this part of the text. On the whole, however, the text that issued from Eld's shop is good, and presents few major editorial problems.

Additional tables (i): compositor analysis

The following tables are arranged so that the work of compositor X is more readily apparent in the upper group of four lines, and that of Y in the lower.

In the line denominated 'other than ./ at end of speeches' the superior figure indicates the number of speeches which end with some sort of punctuation mark other than a full stop, whilst the inferior figure indicates the total number of speech endings on that page.

In the information for half-sheet Bb (given after sheet C, as it followed the printing of that sheet) a figure before an oblique line indicates that these instances of the spelling in question occur in the repeated passage (that is, the first five lines of the page) which were set for and carried over from Cl.

| Sheet B | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 4 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| /’Tis/etc. | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| / -’s/ | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 9 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 7 |
| /Tis/etc. | | | | | | | | |
| / -s/ | | | | | | | | |
| /mistris/ | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{1}{11}$ | $\frac{0}{9}$ | $\frac{0}{10}$ | $\frac{0}{15}$ | $\frac{0}{7}$ | $\frac{4}{12}$ | $\frac{4}{12}$ | $\frac{6}{20}$ |

| Sheet C | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | 5 | | 8 |
| /’Tis/etc. | | | | 1 | | 2 | 1 | |
| / -’s/ | 2 | | | | | 2 | 2 | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 7 | 5 | 10 | 5 | 14 | 9 | 7 | 6 |
| /Tis/etc. | 2 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | |
| / -s/ | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 | | | |
| /mistris/ | | | | | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{0}{12}$ | $\frac{2}{10}$ | $\frac{0}{13}$ | $\frac{1}{11}$ | $\frac{0}{25}$ | $\frac{1}{15}$ | $\frac{1}{22}$ | $\frac{3}{12}$ |

| Sheet Bb/A | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|--|----|
| | Bb1 | Bb1v | Bb2 | Bb2v | | A2 |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 1/0 | 1 | 2 | | | 5 |
| /ʹTis/etc. | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| / -ʹs/ | | 3 | 3 | | | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | | 2 | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 2/7 | 6 | 4 | 9 | | 1 |
| /Tis/etc. | 2 | | | 5 | | |
| / -s/ | 3 | | | 1 | | |
| /mistris/ | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{1}{5}$ | $\frac{1}{26}$ | $\frac{1}{14}$ | $\frac{7}{9}$ | | |

| Sheet D | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | | 1 |
| /ʹTis/etc. | | | | 1 | 2 | 2 | | |
| / -ʹs/ | | | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 1 |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | | 2 | 2 | | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 10 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 13 |
| /Tis/etc. | 3 | | | | | | 1 | |
| / -s/ | 3 | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | |
| /mistris/ | | 3 | | | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{4}{16}$ | $\frac{6}{15}$ | $\frac{0}{25}$ | $\frac{0}{11}$ | $\frac{0}{20}$ | $\frac{1}{17}$ | $\frac{5}{14}$ | $\frac{1}{6}$ |

| Sheet E | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| /ʹTis/etc. | | | | | | 1 | | |
| / -ʹs/ | | | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | | | | 2 | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 6 | 10 | 11 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 9 |
| /Tis/etc. | 1 | 1 | | | | | | 2 |
| / -s/ | | 3 | 1 | | | | | 1 |
| /mistris/ | | | 1 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{4}{14}$ | $\frac{6}{27}$ | $\frac{1}{13}$ | $\frac{1}{19}$ | $\frac{0}{12}$ | $\frac{0}{13}$ | $\frac{0}{15}$ | $\frac{3}{19}$ |

| Sheet F | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 1 | 1 | 2 | | | 1 | | 2 |
| /ʹTis/etc. | 1 | | 2 | | | | | |
| / -ʹs/ | 5 | 6 | 2 | | | | | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | 2 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 11 | 13 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 10 | 16 |
| /Tis/etc. | | 1 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 2 |
| / -s/ | | | | 3 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| /mistris/ | | | | 1 | 1 | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{0}{18}$ | $\frac{1}{29}$ | $\frac{0}{5}$ | $\frac{3}{11}$ | $\frac{2}{7}$ | $\frac{6}{15}$ | $\frac{2}{4}$ | $\frac{2}{7}$ |

| Sheet G | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 4 | | | 1 | 2 | | | |
| /ʹTis/etc. | | | 1 | 1 | 1 | | | |
| / -ʹs/ | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | | | 2 |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 7 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| /Tis/etc. | | | 1 | | | | 1 | 1 |
| / -s/ | | | | | | 2 | | 3 |
| /mistris/ | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{5}{11}$ | $\frac{3}{20}$ | $\frac{1?}{8}$ | $\frac{1}{18}$ | $\frac{0}{16}$ | $\frac{1}{6}$ | $\frac{1}{6}$ | $\frac{1}{15}$ |

| Sheet H | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 1 | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | |
| /ʹTis/etc. | | | 1 | 1 | | | | |
| / -ʹs/ | 3 | 3 | | 2 | | | | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | | | | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 6 | 8 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 8 | 5 |
| /Tis/etc. | | | | 1 | | | 1 | 1 |
| / -s/ | | | | | | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| /mistris/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than ./ at end of speeches | $\frac{1}{12}$ | $\frac{2}{16}$ | $\frac{1}{7}$ | $\frac{0}{13}$ | $\frac{0}{1}$ | $\frac{4}{17}$ | $\frac{1}{2}$ | $\frac{4}{14}$ |

| Sheet I | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| /ee/ in /bee/ /shee/etc. | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| /’Tis/etc. | 1 | | | 1 | | 1 | | |
| / -’s/ | | 2 | | 2 | | 2 | 3 | |
| /mistre(i)sse/ | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| /e/ in /be/ /she/etc. | 4 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 5 | 4 |
| /Tis/etc. | 1 | | | | | 1 | 1 | |
| / -s/ | 1 | 1 | | | | | | |
| /mistris/ | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | |
| other than /./ at end of speeches | $\frac{3}{13}$ | $\frac{2}{9}$ | $\frac{3}{15}$ | $\frac{0}{24}$ | $\frac{1}{14}$ | $\frac{4}{26}$ | $\frac{1}{14}$ | $\frac{2}{8}$ |

Additional tables (ii): type shortage figures

| Sig | Page | Comp | /B/ | | /S/ | | /T/ | | /W/ | | /VV/ | | /P/ | |
|-----|------|------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|
| | | | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro |
| B | 1 | X | 1 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | | | | |
| | 1v | X | 3 | | | 3 | 2 | | | 3 | | | | |
| | 2 | X | | 5 | | 7 | | 1 | | 6 | | 3 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | 4 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | | 6 | 1 | | | 1 | |
| | 3 | X | | | | 1 | 3 | 2 | | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | Y | 4 | 1 | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | |
| | 4 | Y | | 6 | | | | 5 | | | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | | 4 | | | 2 | 1 | | | | | | |
| C | 1 | ? | 5 | | 2 | | | 5 | | | | | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 1 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | |
| | 2 | Y | 1 | 3 | 2 | 9 | | 1 | 5 | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | 1 | | 5 | 9 | | 1 | | 6 | | | | |
| | 3 | X | 1 | 1 | | 23 | | 2 | | 11 | | 2 | 1 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | X | 3 | 3 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 4 | | | | | |
| | 4 | X | | 4 | | 11 | | 16 | 4 | 2 | | 2 | | |
| Bb | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1 | Y | | 2 | | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | X | | 5 | | | 15 | | | | | | 1 | |
| | 2 | X | | | 1 | 1 | 7 | | | | 3 | | 1 | |
| A | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | ? | 3 | | | 5 | 14 | | 4 | | 1 | | 11 | |
| | 2v | ? | 2 | | 4 | 2 | 5 | | 1 | | | | | |

| Sig | Page | Comp | /B/ | | /S/ | | /T/ | | /W/ | | /VV/ | | /P/ | |
|-----|------|------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|
| | | | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro |
| D | 1 | Y | 4 | 4 | | 1 | | 2 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 7 | | | | 3 | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | X | 3 | | | | 10 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | | | | | 2 | 4 | | | | | | |
| | 3 | X | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | X | 2 | | | 9 | 12 | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | Y | | | 2 | 5 | 7 | | | | | | 2 | 5 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | | | | 3 | 5 | | | | | | 4 | |
| E | 1 | Y | 4 | | | 8 | 6 | | 5 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 8 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 3 | | | | |
| | 2 | X | | | 3 | 6 | 10 | | | | | | | 1 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | | | 4 | 2 | 7 | 1 | | | | | 5 | |
| | 3 | X | | | | 2 | 4 | | | | | | 5 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | X | | | | 4 | 8 | | | | | | | 2 |
| | 4 | X | | 7 | 1 | 6 | 10 | | 3 | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | 2 | | 10 | | 9 | 1 | 7 | | | | | |
| F | 1 | X | 2 | | 3 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | X | 6 | | | 8 | 10 | 1 | | 7 | | | | |
| | 2 | X | 2 | | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | | 1 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | Y | | | 1 | 4 | 8 | | | | | | | |
| | 3 | Y | | | | 4 | 2 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | Y | | | 4 | 7 | 5 | | 7 | | | | | |
| | 4 | Y | | | | 3 | 3 | | 2 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | 3 | | 1 | 4 | 1 | | 1 | | | | | |

| Sig | Page | Comp | /B/ | | /S/ | | /T/ | | /W/ | | /VV/ | | /P/ | |
|-----|------|------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|----|------|----|-----|----|
| | | | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro | It | Ro |
| G | 1 | Y | 2 | | 5 | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 4 | | 4 | 1 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | X | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | 4 | 2 | | 5 | | | 2 | 3 | | | | |
| | 3 | X | 1 | 6 | | 7 | | | 1 | 5 | | | 2 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | Y | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 | | | | | | | |
| | 4 | Y | | | 2 | 5 | 4 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | | | 3 | 6 | 8 | | | | | | | |
| H | 1 | X | | | | 1 | 8 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 3 | 6 | | | 13 | | | | | | | |
| | 2 | X | | | 1 | 5 | | | 6 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | | | | 7 | 6 | | 1 | 6 | | | | |
| | 3 | X | | | 1 | | | | 1 | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | Y | | | 7 | 3 | 8 | | 8 | | | | | |
| | 4 | Y | | | | 3 | | 2 | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | Y | 2 | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I | 1 | Y | 7 | | 1 | | 1 | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1v | Y | 3 | | | 4 | 2 | | 4 | | | | | |
| | 2 | Y | 1 | | | 14 | | | 7 | | 1 | 2 | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 2v | X | 3 | | 1 | 16 | 9 | | 1 | 6 | | | | |
| | 3 | X | 2 | | 3 | 5 | 8 | | 4 | 2 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 3v | ? | 6 | | 9 | 8 | 9 | | 3 | 4 | | | | |
| | 4 | X | 3 | 2 | | 6 | 7 | | 1 | 3 | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 4v | ? | 4 | | 1 | 5 | 4 | | 2 | 3 | | | | |

Additional tables (iii): type shortage diagrams for five italic capitals

The type shortages are here set out in graphic rather than numeric form as this gives a more immediate idea of the pattern of shortages.

With most of these sorts, but particularly /S/ and /B/, the italic face is difficult to distinguish from the roman; when distributing speech prefixes the compositor doubtless often thought that a roman type (used there because of italic shortages) was in fact an italic simply because he expected an italic in that context. The italic cases are therefore likely to have been quite badly fouled, and these diagrams have been simplified slightly to take account of that probability.

The unassigned pages have been included on a separate line, but have been left out of account in suggesting points of replenishment.

The two pages of signature A have been omitted since, besides the doubt about who set A2v, nothing can be said about the order of these pages in relation to the Bb pages other than that A2 was probably set along with Bbl and 2v, and A2v with Bblv and 2.

Moreover, since the A pages are almost entirely in italic type it seems reasonable to suppose that, whenever these pages were set and whichever cases were used, those cases were replenished immediately before setting them in order to ensure that the italic sorts were well stocked.

| Key to symbols | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ | case full |
| o | case empty |
| ▽ | italics run out during page |
| ▲ | italics gained during page |
| M | italic and roman type mixed |
| ↓ | replenishment |

(a) Setting by formes

| Comp | Sort | Signature B | | | | | | | | | Signature C | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|--|-------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|
| | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
| X | B | o | ▽ | | | ■ | o | | | | | ■ | ▽ | | | | ▽ | o |
| | S | M | ▽ | o | | o | o | | | | | ▽ | o | | | | ▽ | o |
| | T | ■ | ■ | ▽ | | ■ | o | | | | | o | o | | | | ▽ | o |
| | W | ■ | ▽ | o | | o | o | | | | | o | o | | | | ■ | ▽ |
| | P | | ▼■ | | | ▼ | | | | | | ▼ | ■ | | | | ▼ | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Y | B | | | | o | | | ▽ | o | | | | | ▽ | o | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | o | | | | | | ▽ | o | | | |
| | T | | | | ▽ | | | o | o | | | | | ▽ | o | | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ▽ | | | |
| | P | | | | | | | ▼ | ■ | | | | | ▼ | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ? | B | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | o | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | ■ | | | | |
| | T | | | | | | | | | | o | | | o | | | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| | P | | | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | |

| Comp | Sort | Signature Bb | | | | | Signature D ¹⁰¹ | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------------|----|----|---|--|----------------------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|
| | | 1 | 2v | 1v | 2 | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
| X | B | | | o | | | | | ▲ | | | ■ | ■ | |
| | S | | | | ▽ | | | | ▽ | | | | o | |
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| | W | | | | o | | | | ▽ | | | | | |
| | P | | | ▼■ | ■ | | | | ▼ | | | ▼ | | |
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| Y | B | o | ▽ | | | | ▲ | | | | ■ | | | |
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| | T | ■ | ■ | | | | o | | | ■ | ■ | | | ■ |
| | W | | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | P | ▼ | ▼ | | | | ▼ | | | ▼■ | ▼ | | | ▽ |

¹⁰¹ Replenishment for D4v is questionable.

| Comp | Sort | Signature E | | | | | | | | | Signature F ¹⁰² | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|--|----------------------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|
| | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
| X | B | | | | | | | | ■ | | | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| | S | | ▽ | o | | | ▽ | o | o | | M | | | | o | ▲ | | |
| | T | | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | ▽ | | ▽ | | | | o | o | | |
| | P | | ▼ | ■ | ▽ | | ▼ | o | o | | ▼ | | | | | ▼ | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Y | B | ■ | | | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | | | ■ | | | | |
| | S | o | | | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | ▽ | o | o | | | ▽ | o |
| | T | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ |
| | W | ■ | | | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | | | ■ | | | ■ | ■ |
| | P | | | | ▼ | | | | | | | ▼ | | | | | ▼ | |

| Comp | Sort | Signature G | | | | | | | | | Signature H | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|--|-------------|----|---|----|----|---|----|---|
| | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
| X | B | | ▲ | o | | | ▽ | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | o | o | | | ■ | | | | o | o | ■ | | | ▽ | | |
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| | W | | M | o | | | ■ | | | | | o | ■ | | | ■ | | |
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| Y | B | ■ | | | | ■ | | ▽ | | | | | | ■ | ▽ | | | |
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| | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | o |
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¹⁰² Relenishment for F2 is questionable.

| Comp | Sort | Signature I | | | | | | | |
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| | | 1 | 2v | 3 | 4v | 1v | 2 | 3v | 4 |
| X | <i>B</i> | | | | | | | | |
| | <i>S</i> | | ■ | ■ | | | | | ▽ |
| | <i>T</i> | | o | ▽ | | | | | o |
| | <i>W</i> | | ■ | ■ | | | | | ■ |
| | <i>P</i> | | o | ▼ | | | | | o |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Y | <i>B</i> | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| | <i>S</i> | ■ | | | | o | o | | |
| | <i>T</i> | ■ | | | | ■ | | | |
| | <i>W</i> | | | | | ■ | ▽ | | |
| | <i>P</i> | | | | | ▼ | | | |
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| ? | <i>B</i> | | | | ■ | | | ■ | |
| | <i>S</i> | | | | o | | | M | |
| | <i>T</i> | | | | ■ | | | ■ | |
| | <i>W</i> | | | | ▲ | | | M | |
| | <i>P</i> | | | | | | | | |

(b) Setting seriatim

| Comp | Sort | Signature B | | | | | | | | | Signature C | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|--|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| X | B | o | ■ | o | ▽ | | | | | | | | | ■ | ▽ | ▽ | o | |
| | S | M | o | o | ▽ | o | | | | | | | | ▽ | o | ▽ | o | |
| | T | ■ | ■ | o | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | | | o | o | ▽ | o | |
| | W | ■ | o | o | ▽ | o | | | | | | | | o | o | ■ | ▽ | |
| | P | | ▼ | | ▼ | ■ | | | | | | | | ▼ | ■ | ▼ | | |
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| Comp | Sort | Signature Bb | | | | | Signature D ¹⁰³ | | | | | | | |
|------|------|--------------|----|---|----|--|----------------------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| X | B | | o | | | | | | ■ | | ▲ | ■ | | |
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| Y | B | o | | | ▽ | | ▲ | ■ | | | | | | |
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| | W | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | |
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¹⁰³ Replenishment for D4v is questionable.

| Comp | Sort | Signature E ¹⁰⁴ | | | | | | | | | Signature F | | | | | | | |
|------|------|----------------------------|----|----|----|---|----|---|----|--|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| X | B | | | | | | | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| | S | | | ▽ | ▽ | o | o | o | | | M | o | ▲ | | | | | |
| | T | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
| | W | | | | | | | ▽ | | | ▽ | o | o | | | | | |
| | P | | | ↓o | ↓■ | ▽ | o | | | | ↓ | | ↓ | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Y | B | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| | S | o | ▽ | | | | | | ■ | | | | | ▽ | o | ▽ | o | o |
| | T | ■ | ■ | | | | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | W | ■ | ▽ | | | | | | ■ | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| | P | | ↓ | | | | | | ↓ | | | | | | | ↓ | | |

| Comp | Sort | Signature G | | | | | | | | | Signature H | | | | | | | |
|------|------|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|--|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| X | B | | | ▽ | ▲ | o | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | ■ | o | o | | | | | o | | ▽ | o | ■ | | | |
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| | W | | | ■ | M | o | | | | | | | ■ | o | ■ | | | |
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| | S | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ▽ | ▽ | | | | | | | M | o | |
| | T | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | ■ | | | | ■ | | |
| | W | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | o | |
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¹⁰⁴ Replenishment for E1v is questionable.

| Comp | Sort | Signature I | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|----|---|----|---|----|---|----|
| | | 1 | 1v | 2 | 2v | 3 | 3v | 4 | 4v |
| X | <i>B</i> | | | | | | | | |
| | <i>S</i> | | | | ■ | ■ | | ▽ | |
| | <i>T</i> | | | | o | ▽ | | o | |
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| Y | <i>B</i> | ■ | ■ | ■ | | | | | |
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| | <i>S</i> | | | | | | M | | o |
| | <i>T</i> | | | | | | ■ | | ■ |
| | <i>W</i> | | | | | | M | | ▲ |
| | <i>P</i> | | | | | | | | |

Additional notes to type shortage diagrams:

B1 and F2: foul case could explain the few /S/s present.

D1: Y gains /B/s halfway down the page after using the two /T/s; if he replenished *during* D1 he could also have gained the /T/s for D4v (without gaining /S/s). Hence the doubt about replenishment before D4v if setting by formes.

H3: as this page has only two italic types – /*W.S.*/ – the full case symbols may well be misleading here.

I4v: the cases may well have been specially replenished for the Epilogue, which is set in italics.

The Author

Lording Barry

What we now know about Lording Barry, poet and pirate, suggests a somewhat larger than life character, a man in many ways rather like his fictional protagonist, William Smallshanks: a bit of a chancer, a person willing to take on debt under inauspicious circumstances and prepared to use his blade to deal with the inevitable consequences. It seems a little ironic, therefore, that the theatrical and scholarly world completely lost sight of this possibly rather ostentatious character so soon after his death – or, perhaps more accurately, so thoroughly obfuscated his biography.

That he was probably still known and, at least as a playwright, considered with some esteem into the 1630s is suggested by the printing of the third quarto of *Ram Alley* in 1636 on the title page of which he is listed, as he was on the first quarto, as ‘Lo: Barrey.’ By 1656, however, things were beginning to slip.

In that year the play’s title was included in two lists, printed in two separate publications. In ‘the Alphebeticall Catalogue of all such Plays that ever were printed,’ appended to Thomas Goffe’s *The Careles Shepherdess*,¹⁰⁵ the title was given but without the author; in the list appended to Massinger, Middleton and Rowley’s *The Old Law*,¹⁰⁶ however, despite the boast that it was ‘an exact and perfect catalogue of all the playes, with the Authors Names ... more exactly Printed than ever before,’ the author is given as ‘Philip Massenger.’

The later ‘true, perfect and exact catalogue of plays,’ published by Francis Kirkman in 1661 and 1671 and attached to *Tom Tyler and his Wife*¹⁰⁷ restored Barry’s name to the play using the version on the title pages of the quartos and giving it thus as ‘Lo. Barrey,’ but the second version of Kirkman’s list – an ‘Exact Catalogue of all the English STAGE-PLAYS printed, till this present year 1671,’ published with Corneille’s *Nicomede*,¹⁰⁸ sowed the seed of what was to flower into a substantial confusion by calling him ‘Lord Barrey,’ either on the simple assumption that ‘Lo:’ stood for ‘Lord,’ or perhaps in the belief that he was a member of the extensive (and thus probably well-known in England) aristocratic Irish Barry family from whom came the Viscounts

¹⁰⁵ T. G., *The Careles Shepherdess* (printed for Richard Rogers and William Ley, 1656).

¹⁰⁶ Massinger, P., Middleton, T., and Rowley, W., *The Old Law* (printed for Edward Archer, 1656).

¹⁰⁷ [Unknown], *Tom Tyler and his Wife*, 2nd impression (1661).

¹⁰⁸ Dancer, J. (trans.), *Nicomede* (printed for Francis Kirkman, 1671).

Buttevant of Munster.

The antiquary Anthony à Wood either then reinforced this idea, or possibly himself proposed it, by elaborating the perhaps merely careless ‘Lord Barrey’ of Kirkman’s second list. In his 1691 edition of *Athenae Oxoniensis*, after correcting the misattribution in the 1656 edition of *The Old Law*, Wood states confidently that ‘all readers of Plays cannot but know that *Ram Alley, or merry Tricks*, was pen’d by the lord *Barry*, an *Irish* man, and that it was acted by the Children of the Kings revels, before 1611.’¹⁰⁹

In the same year Gerard Langbaine, in his *Account of the English Dramatick Poets*, took a different line on Barry’s forename, lengthening it to ‘Lodowick,’ and this was how he was referred to throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the additional details that he was a lord and that he was of Irish descent being added according to the whim of the writer.¹¹⁰ This sorry catalogue of assumptions and misapprehensions thus turned Lording Barry of London into Lodowick, Lord Barry of Ireland, laying a false trail for future historians of the theatre and threatening any chance of their recovering the true identity of the person who now lay hidden in this fog of errors.

Just how deep-rooted these misapprehensions were was evidenced in the attempts made in the early twentieth century to find out more about Barry.

In 1912, J. Q. Adams noted in *Modern Philology*¹¹¹ that a ‘Lording Barry’ was mentioned in Chancery Proceedings relating to debts incurred in 1607-8 by the lessees of the Whitefriars theatre,¹¹² the theatre in which *Ram Alley* had been performed, and he concluded, not unreasonably, that this ‘Lording Barry’ and the ‘Lo: Barrey’ on the title page of *Ram Alley*, 1611, were most likely the same person. In 1917, however, W. J. Lawrence, whilst accepting Adams’ rejection of the forename ‘Lodowick’ and his identification of the author with the debtor, returned to the notion that Barry was a

¹⁰⁹ Anthony à Wood, *Athenae Oxoniensis* (printed for Tho. Bennet, 1691), p.536.

¹¹⁰ David Erskine Baker, in his *Companion to the Playhouse* (printed for T. Becket and P. A. Dehondt, *et al.*, 1764), gives him as ‘Barry, Lodowick, Esq,’ and, acknowledging that his rank was difficult to determine, lists those writers who style him ‘Mr’ and those who style him ‘Lord,’ but then adds, ‘let this be as it may, all authors agree that he was of an ancient and honourable family in Ireland.’ Sir James Ware, in *The History of the Writers of Ireland in Two Books* (printed for Robert Bell, 1764) gives ‘Lodowick Barry’ and states that ‘*Anthony Wood* hath complimented him with the Title of Lord Barry.’ Philip Bliss, in the index to his edition of *Athenae Oxoniensis* (1813-20), dubbed him ‘Lodowick, Lord Barry’ (cited in Ewen, C. L., ‘Lording Barry, Poet and Pirate,’ p.2).

¹¹¹ Adams, J. Q., ‘Lordinge (alias ‘Lodowick’) Barry,’ *Modern Philology*, Vol. IX, No. 2 (1912), pp.567-70.

¹¹² Papers relating to these proceedings, the suit of Androwes v. Slaiter, were discovered and published by J. Greenstreet in 1888.

nobleman of Irish parentage and argued that he was the elder son of the Irish peer, David, Lord Barry, ninth Viscount Buttevant, who had been sent to London to be educated under the auspices of no less a person than Sir Robert Cecil, and not finding the course of life proposed by Sir Robert to his taste, took to the theatre and died young.¹¹³

Some twenty years later, Cecil L'Estrange Ewen published his monograph, 'Lording Barry, Poet and Pirate,'¹¹⁴ bringing together, amongst others, papers relating to the law-suits that flew 'like wild geese | In flocks, one in the breech of another'¹¹⁵ just before the eventual collapse of the Children of the King's Revels theatre company, the wills of members of the Lording and Barry families of London, papers relating to a trial concerning an act of piracy in the Thames in 1608-9, and papers of a trial held at Southwark in late 1609 relating to the taking of a pirate ship near Baltimore on the south coast of Ireland. Putting these together he reconstructed the life of Lording Barry, and presented to us a man who must have been one of the more colourful – though by no means trustworthy – members of the London theatre world for the short time he was a part of it.

According to Ewen's account, Barry was born in London and baptised in 1580, the fourth child of Nicholas Barry, a citizen fishmonger, and his second wife Alice, née Lording, the daughter of a merchant-taylor. Nicholas Barry had his own coat of arms¹¹⁶ which suggests he was a man of some substance and standing in his guild, and situated his son Lording firmly in that class, rather ironically one might think given the attitude to citizens evinced by *Ram Alley*.

Nothing is known of Barry's education (concerning which Ewen says only that 'his signature is ample proof of education,'¹¹⁷ and his younger brother John is recorded as having attended Merchant Taylors' School¹¹⁸) nor what he was doing until 1607 when, aged at least 27, he became involved in setting up the Whitefriars Theatre and its boy-company, the Children of the King's Revels. Two things, though, that we might reasonably surmise about his life up to that point are, first, that he had had sufficient

¹¹³ Lawrence, W. J., 'The Mystery of Lodowick Barry,' *Studies in Philology*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (1917), pp.52-63.

¹¹⁴ Ewen, C. L., *Lording Barry, Poet and Pirate* (privately printed, 1938). The remainder of this section is substantially based on that monograph.

¹¹⁵ *Ram Alley*, IV i 27-8.

¹¹⁶ Ewen, *Op. Cit.*, p.4, fn..

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.4.

¹¹⁸ Matthew, H. C. G. and Harrison, B., (eds), *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography In Association with the British Academy* (Oxford University Press, 2004), entry for Barry, Lording.

formal education as a child to have learnt Latin,¹¹⁹ and second, that he had possibly already written *Ram Alley*, one of his motives for getting involved in a theatre company quite likely having been that he saw it as a vehicle for the production of this play. Whether he attended university or that other finishing school for the rising middle classes, the Inns of Court, is not known, though Oxford or Cambridge is not impossible: his eldest full brother, George, presumably did attend one of the universities as he became Rector of Walkerne;¹²⁰ brother John took a B.A. and an M.A. at Cambridge,¹²¹ and John Mason, one of Barry's co-sharers in the Whitefriars group (and hence possibly a friend of his youth) is proclaimed 'maister of artes' on the title page of his one play, *The Turke*. There is nothing in *Ram Alley*, however, that suggests a writer educated to university level, and as to the Inns of Court, the legal knowledge necessary to have written *Ram Alley* was no more than any bright young man could have picked up by fraternising with law students,¹²² or even by haunting the courts themselves, something Barry was later to do much of, and not as a disinterested spectator (though that would certainly have been after he had written the play).

That he spent much time during his youth in his father's shop learning the trade of fish-monger is hard for us to imagine but that is entirely possible: according to the entry for Barry in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, he 'became free of the Company of Fishmongers by patrimony through his father,'¹²³ and though no date is given this

¹¹⁹ IV iv 74 shows that he was familiar with the standard school Latin primer of the time, William Lily's *A Short Introduction of Grammar*.

¹²⁰ See the family tree given by Ewen, *Op. Cit.*, p.5.

¹²¹ *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, entry for Barry, *Lording*.

¹²² It would, I think, be reasonable to surmise that Barry did exactly this: it would fit with the decision made by himself and his co-venturers in the Whitefriars company to set up a theatre so close to the Temples, and to write with the Inns of Court students so obviously in mind as their main audience. See also Subha Mukherji's observation in *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.179, that *Ram Alley*'s 'distinct interest in law entails a knowing vision of legal life.'

¹²³ Unfortunately no source is cited for this information; it may be based on deduction from two separate pieces of information: first, that Barry is recorded in Guild Hall Library MS5578A/1 (The Fishmongers' Quarterage Book, 1610-1642) and was therefore presumably free of that company by the year that record starts (records for the previous decade are missing) but is *not* recorded in either Guild Hall Library MS5587/1 (The Fishmongers' London Freeman Livery and Court of Assistants, 1592-1752) or Haskett-Smith, W. P., *The Worshipful Company of Fishmongers of the City of London* (privately printed, 1916); as these two documents list only those made free through service or redemption, it would follow that if he was made free of the company it must therefore have been by patrimony. For further discussion of this point see the end of this section.

could have been as early as 1605.¹²⁴ But whatever he was doing to earn money¹²⁵ what we can assume with some justification is that in his spare time he moved in a literary milieu, albeit one of minor talents, and practised the art of writing: *Ram Alley* is a well-crafted piece of work and, whilst it was probably Barry's first piece to enjoy public performance (as is suggested by the Prologue's promise to write more if this gains the audience's favour) it is hard to believe that this was the first thing Barry had written (that also being implied by the Prologue's statement that the author 'a friend to muses is' ¹²⁶). Whatever his son had been up to, Nicholas Barry seems not to have been displeased with him as, when he died in 1607, he left Lording £10 in his will, this being an equal amount to the money left the other children. This small, but, nonetheless at that time, useful sum of money (about half the annual salary of a priest or schoolmaster) was probably immediately put into the Whitefriars theatrical venture.

Unfortunately for Barry and his partners 1607 was a bad year for the plague and the theatres were frequently closed for lengthy periods. Whether because of the plague, poor financial management, or even dissension between the partners, the company failed the following year leaving Barry in debt to the tune of some £200. Having found two people willing to bail him from the Marshalsea he promptly fled London, an act which left the men who bailed him to pick up his tab. He and some companions found their way to Tilbury where they took by force a Flemish flyboat (thereby automatically committing an act of piracy) and later, in Kent, another Flemish ship which they sailed as far as the Isle

¹²⁴ The entry for Barry in *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature* (Sullivan G., Stewart A., Lemon, R. and McDowell, N. (eds.), Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) states that he obtained his freedom in 1611 but I suspect that to be pure surmise based on a misunderstanding of the *Dictionary of National Biography* entry: no authority is cited for the date and the author of the note perhaps did not realise that the the Fishmongers' records of quarterage dues are missing for the first decade of the 1600s – the decade in which Barry was most likely to have taken up his freedom.

¹²⁵ And earn money he would have had to do – we must here resist the temptation to romanticise Barry into a William Smallshanks type of character, living a dissolute and bohemian life in the suburbs; he was a citizen's son, not a member of the landed class, and the pressure to establish for himself a secure and future income would have been powerful, whether in his father's trade or in some venture of his own (such as the theatre) or both. We might also recall that in the Prologue he presents himself as a writer who has to 'Spend his time, his lamps, his oil' (21) as he works through 'the silent hours of night' (23) in order to write his plays (though this could, of course, be conventional posturing).

¹²⁶ *Ram Alley*, Prologue, 32; and whilst I accept completely Bly's description of the Whitefriars group as 'novice playwrights' (*Op. Cit.*, p.3), most of them writing either their first – and in some cases only known – work for the Whitefriars company, nevertheless there are degrees of novitiate-hood, and all writers must serve a term of apprenticeship during which most of what they write will never see the light of day.

of Wight.

By 1609 he was in Ireland and a pirate on *The Fly*.¹²⁷ This ship left Baltimore around Easter, carrying on it two men who were later to claim that Barry had shanghaied them – Roger Notting, a poulterer from London, who had come on to *The Fly* on the promise that he would be paid money owed to him by Barry, and his brother-in-law Richard Baker of Youghall, who had accompanied him. Three weeks later the ship was returning to Baltimore when it was taken by a king's ship and everyone on board arrested.

The crew was sent from Ireland to London for trial, but Barry, mysteriously, was not amongst them, and hence was not one of the nineteen men (including Notting and Baker) who were hung in December 1609. It is possible that he played upon that very coincidence of name which was later, ironically, to almost obliterate him from history, since one of the commissioners in piracy in the south of Ireland was none other than the Lord Barry, Viscount Buttevant.¹²⁸

The remainder of his life is not entirely clear. According to Ewen, undeterred by that close escape from the hangman, Barry continued his piratical life, moving to the Mediterranean in 1614-15¹²⁹ then joining Sir Walter Raleigh's ill-fated expedition to the Orinoco in 1617, possibly falling out with Raleigh and abandoning the expedition to continue his piratical activities in Newfoundland.¹³⁰ In 1629, he died in London, apparently a seafarer and merchant since he describes himself in his will as 'captaine and part owner of the good shippe called the Edward,'¹³¹ which vessel probably traded with the new colonies in North America.¹³²

That account could be contradicted, though, by the regular appearance of his name in the Quarterage Book of the Company of Fishmongers for 1610-42, both in the lists of

¹²⁷ He thus followed the same route as many of his countrymen – Daileader tells us, in her note to 5.2.9 of Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters*, that Ireland was 'a notorious refuge for English debtors.' Whether they all became pirates, though, is another matter.

¹²⁸ Moreover, Barry's father's coat of arms, Ewen notes, 'were those borne by the cadets of the Lords Barry of Ireland!' (*Op. Cit.*, p.4, fn.).

¹²⁹ This is based on Ewen's identification of Barry with one 'Captain Barrowe ... who was a player in England' (*Op. Cit.*, p.4) but that seems a slightly strained interpretation as the names share only one syllable, and, whilst it was common for playwrights also to be actors, we have no evidence to suggest that Barry was anything other than a writer, or that he saw himself in any other way.

¹³⁰ Ewen, *Op. Cit.*, p.15.

¹³¹ Barry's will, quoted by Ewen, *Op. Cit.*, p.16.

¹³² See footnote 139 below.

freemen and in the records of dues owed and paid,¹³³ suggesting that he might have been back in London by 1610 and in his father's trade.

The quarterage records are, however, by no means unambiguous. To begin with, the records for the first decade of the seventeenth century have not survived, so if Barry took up his freedom some time before 1610 he may well have been appearing in the missing lists from that point on, not just from 1610/11. If that were the case they would obviously have to be discounted as evidence of residence in London, since he was clearly not there throughout most of 1609.

Second, in the lists that seem to record the due payments Barry has a sum of money written to the left of his name (as all those listed do, this possibly being the payment due for that year) but no smaller sums recorded to the right (which the majority of those on the lists do, these possibly being the payments actually made¹³⁴); the omission of figures to the right of his name could indicate that, at least for the period after 1610, he was not in London to make those payments.¹³⁵

Perhaps more to the point, it was apparently not unusual for younger sons of guildsmen who had taken up the freedom of their father's company by patrimony (rather than by service – that is, apprenticeship – or redemption – that is, by payment of a fee) to subsequently follow another trade entirely;¹³⁶ whilst they might therefore be listed in the company's quarterage books they would probably not be required to pay the dues, and this also could explain why Barry has no figures to the right of his name.¹³⁷ From whenever he took up his freedom, then, he may well have been pursuing another career,

¹³³ The Fishmongers' Quarterage Book, 1610-42, MS5578A/1, Guild Hall Library, London. Barry's name occurs definitely up to 1620; for the period 1620-28 the entries are a little less clear – though the handwriting at this point is atrocious – and he seems to disappear entirely from these records after 1626.

¹³⁴ As a full history of the Fishmongers' Guild has not yet been written the precise meaning of these figures is not yet understood, but both Raya McGeorge (the archivist of the Fishmongers' Company) and Wendy Hawke (senior archivist at the London Metropolitan Archives) suggested that this would be a likely explanation for these figures.

¹³⁵ However, this still leaves open the question of what precisely the left hand figure means, and whether, if it was a sum owed, how that sum was arrived at – whether, for example, it was simply a sum decided by the company regardless of individual circumstances, or whether it was an assessment based on, say, income or wealth; if it was such an assessment, presumably Barry would have to have had some sort of presence in London in order (a) to produce that income or wealth there, and (b) for the company to have access to information about that income or wealth in order to generate their assessment.

¹³⁶ I am indebted to Raya McGeorge for this information.

¹³⁷ Again I am indebted to Raya McGeorge for this suggestion.

first as a writer and impresario in London up to 1609 and then, between 1611 and 1617 (after his brief period of work-experience in the south of Ireland) either as a full-time pirate in the Mediterranean (as Ewen suggests) or in a perfectly legitimate job at sea elsewhere in the world. That could have led to the connection with Raleigh, and that in turn to activity in the new western colonies of North America (an area the Company of Fishmongers apparently had a particular interest in ¹³⁸). Contacts made there perhaps led to his eventually becoming captain and part owner of ‘the good shippe called Edward of London’¹³⁹ – that city, by then, being safe for him to return to.

If he had returned to London in 1610 one might well expect him, after so short an absence, to have returned to the theatre, especially since barely a year ago he still had – perhaps was himself keeping alive – a reputation as a ‘poet,’¹⁴⁰ and moreover his going back to live in London as a fishmonger in 1610 would leave us with two other questions: first, how did he later become a sea-captain and part-owner of a ship (a career development that would be much more easily explained had he continued living a seafaring life off Newfoundland after 1617) and second, what of those two men who had stood him bail only to be left holding at least one of the offspring of his brief relationship with the theatre, his £200 debt – would they not be hounding him if he was in London in 1610? London hardly seems the best place for him to have been, and the more so since he had only narrowly escaped being hung in that city in December 1609. Taking it all together, one has to conclude that such evidence as we have points to his absence from London for some time after the flight from his creditors followed by a return to that city at some unidentifiable point when it was safe for him to do so.

There is, however, one other possible explanation that perhaps should be considered, and

¹³⁸ Information also provided by Raya McGeorge.

¹³⁹ Barry’s will, quoted by Ewen, *Op.Cit.*, p.16. The other owner of this ship was Edward Bennett, an active member of the Virginia colony and commissioner of Virginia at the Court of England, a fact which would strengthen the argument for Barry’s having been active off the west coast of North America at some point after his time in Ireland (see Lopez, J., ‘Success the Whitefriars Way: *Ram Alley* and the Negative Force of Acting,’ *Renaissance Drama, New Series*, Vol. 38, p.215). Lopez also notes that this ship was in 1627, with a neat irony, ‘granted a Letter of Marque by the Duke of Buckingham to take pirates and enemy ships’ (*Ibid.*).

¹⁴⁰ See footnote 99. On the other hand, his brief flirtation with the theatrical world had hardly ended happily. Perhaps he now saw the financially secure occupation of fishmonger as his ‘best retired life’ (*Ram Alley*, I i 41) and perhaps selling the play to Robert Wilson in November 1610 was the Prospero-like renunciation of a man who felt that, after all, he lacked ‘Spirits to enforce, art to enchant’ (Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, Epilogue 14).

that is that there were two Lording Barrys in London in the first quarter of the seventeenth century: one a poet (and pirate) and the other a fishmonger.

That ‘Lo: Barry,’ author of *Ram Alley* and ‘Lording Barry,’ failed impresario, were one and the same person seems incontrovertible, and that this person then fled to Ireland to become a pirate, where he shanghaied two men (one of whom knew him from London and was owed money by him, and the other of whom identified him as a ‘poet’) also seems clear given the evidence presented by Ewen.

However, there is nothing, other than the name, to connect that person with Lording, son of Nicholas Barry, fishmonger of St Lawrence Poultny. Could that Lording Barry have been an entirely different person – one who never wrote a line of verse in his life but simply carried on his family business quietly from the time his father died in 1607? Could these two Lording Barrys even have been related – and hence the coincidence of name? Was one perhaps a younger nephew named for his more exotic uncle but who continued in the mundane family business of fishmongery? If so, he perhaps inherited some of that uncle’s fecklessness given that he appears not to have paid the quarterage dues to the Worshipful Company of which he was a member. Against this, though, is the unusual name. It surely would be too much of a coincidence to have two people living in London at the same time called Lording Barry.

We have entered, perhaps unwisely, the realm of pure speculation; nonetheless, it has to be acknowledged that the recent emergence of Barry’s name from the documents of the Company of Fishmongers has, rather than illuminating matters, once again thrown a veil of mystery over the latter end of his life.

But why, in the end, all this irritable searching after fact and person? Does it matter? Is it necessary? Is it even helpful? To be realistic, we have to admit that we will never know anything more than the barest outline of this man’s life, and even much of that is in doubt. Moreover, a playwright is only one person responsible for the authorship of an early modern theatrical text (most of the others being completely unknowable) and only one element in the multifarious complex of intersections that constitute a read or performed literary text;¹⁴¹ when that element is, as here, so protean there seems even less than usual to be gained from the pursuit of an identified author with a traceable presence in the text. However, to avoid having to refer to ‘the person (partly known) and perhaps

¹⁴¹ For discussion of the concept of the author in relation to early modern theatre see Brooks, D. A., *From Playhouse to Printing House: Drama and Authorship in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

other persons, possibly actors (unknown) who, along with composers (unknown but to some extent distinguishable) working for George Eld in 1611, produced the text as we have it of *Ram Alley or Merry Tricks*’ I will henceforth, and for the sake of brevity if for no other reason, refer to the originator of this play by the term ‘Lording Barry’ – or ‘Barry’ for short.

Barry’s critical reception

That *Ram Alley* was ‘divers times’ acted before 1611 by the Children of the King’s Revels is proclaimed on the title page of the first quarto, and we have no reason to doubt the veracity of that statement, but whether it was ever performed again in that century is unknown. It was performed in Drury Lane, according to Genest, in 1723 or 1724,¹⁴² with Theophilus Cibber playing William Smallshanks. After that the play seems to have disappeared from the stage more or less entirely, though a Manchester University production in 1981 and one by Jeremy Lopez at the Robert Gill Theatre, University of Toronto, in 2008 gave it two brief, fully staged revivals, whilst in 1998 Globe Education performed a staged reading of the play in their Read Not Dead series at the Globe Theatre, London.

In terms of its readership, *Ram Alley*, as has already been noted, went through two editions in 1611, and a third was published in 1636, indicating that during Barry’s life and shortly after his death his play was known and fairly popular.¹⁴³ In 1655 John Cotgrave included thirteen passages from *Ram Alley* in *The English Treasury of Wit and Language*¹⁴⁴ (three times as many as from *Pericles* and four times as many as from *Antony and Cleopatra*); as Mary Bly points out¹⁴⁵ what is perhaps more interesting than the fact that they were chosen by Cotgrave is the fact that a later reader (or readers) annotated one copy of this book, correctly identifying these passages as coming from

¹⁴² See Jones, C., *Op. Cit.*, pp.xix-xx.

¹⁴³ Stern (*Op.Cit.*, p.47) notes the link in the economics of early modern publishing between reprinting and stage popularity: ‘popular stage plays – the kind that might be assumed to lead swiftly to reprinting – were sought after [i.e., by publishers and printers].’

¹⁴⁴ Cotgrave, J., *The English Treasury of Wit and Language, Collected out of the most and best of our English Drammatick Poems* (printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1655). The passages are: I ii 120-7 (p.27); II iii 55-60 (p.41); III ii 46-57 (p.46); IV ii 189-93 (p.85); IV i 122-37 (p.115); I iii 34-49 (p.165-6); I ii 200-3 (p.180); IV iv 10-14 (p.182); IV ii 177-81 (p.205); V ii 4-11 (p.206); I ii 17-27 (p.225); V i 8-19 (p.259); V iii 38-44 (p.300).

¹⁴⁵ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.30.

Ram Alley.¹⁴⁶

The phrase in Anthony à Wood's entry in *Athenae Oxoniensis* (1691), 'all readers of Plays cannot but know',¹⁴⁷ and Wood's giving the correct date and reference to the theatre company (both of these details presumably taken from the title page of one of the quartos) suggest that, even though Barry himself was beginning by then to fade into a mistaken identity, his play remained known and read until the end of the seventeenth century.

Fifty years later, and well into the eighteenth century, the play was still clearly being read with enjoyment as Thomas Hayward included three passages from *Ram Alley* in his miscellany, *The Quintessence of English Poetry: or a Collection of all the Beautiful Passages in our Poems and Plays* (1740).¹⁴⁸

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, it seems to be losing that popular appeal suggested by its appearance in miscellanies, and becomes more or less entirely the preserve of scholars with an antiquarian interest in the drama. In 1780 it was added by Isaac Reed to Dodsley's *A Select Collection of Old Plays*, in which collection it was re-edited in 1825 by Collier and again in 1875 by Hazlitt. It was also included by Scott in his *Ancient British Drama* of 1810.¹⁴⁹

In the mid-twentieth century it was edited by Claude Jones for the University of Louvain's facsimile series, *Materials for the Study of the Old English Drama* (1951), with a thorough textual and critical apparatus and fuller explanatory annotation than any of the nineteenth century editors had provided; this edition was, though, still very much for the scholarly market.

In 1981, Peter Corbin and Douglas Sedge produced a modernised spelling version for the Nottingham Drama Texts series; this edition, with its minimal textual commentary, substantial annotation and very basic publication format clearly aimed to widen the audience for this and other similarly less well-known early modern play texts, being aimed at students and lecturers in both literature and drama departments of universities.

¹⁴⁶ Bly (*Loc. Cit.*) gives the number of *Ram Alley* passages in Cotgrave's collection as twelve, so presumably this reader missed one.

¹⁴⁷ See footnote 109.

¹⁴⁸ Hayward, T., *The Quintessence of English Poetry: or a Collection of all the Beautiful Passages in our Poems and Plays, from the Celebrated Spencer to 1688*, 3 volumes (printed for Olive Payne, *et. al.*, 1740). The three passages are all in volume I, and are I ii 184-7 (p.26), V i 78-87 (p.178), and V iii 145-8 (p. 189).

¹⁴⁹ This, though, seems to have been no more than a reissue of Reed's 1780 edition in a selection from Dodsley's collection, renamed and printed in Edinburgh for publication in London.

* * *

The production of the third quarto and the inclusion of extracts of the play in miscellanies suggest that seventeenth century readers enjoyed and admired *Ram Alley*, and it seems reasonable to infer that this appreciation, especially in the case of the miscellany compilers, was based on a positive assessment of its literary merits along with, as Bly surely correctly surmises, a taste for its salacious wit.¹⁵⁰ There are, however, no explicit critical commentaries on the play from that period or through the eighteenth century: Reed, Scott and Collier in the brief introductions to the play in their editions confine themselves to discussing the identity of ‘Lodowick’ Barry, concerning which they admit to knowing little (and indeed, they are quite correct on that score) and the provenance of the play’s plot.

We must wait for Hazlitt’s edition in the late nineteenth century (1875) for the first critical assessment, and when it arrives it is clear that the early enthusiasm for the play has waned: Hazlitt is complimentary in so far as he commends it as ‘a strongly written and well-constructed domestic drama,’¹⁵¹ but considers it valuable only ‘as a social monument of the times.’¹⁵² He then gives voice to what is to become one of the standard themes in critiques of *Ram Alley* for the next century when he complains that it is ‘full of gross passages, allusions, and innuendoes.’¹⁵³

A more positive assessment from that period was given in *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature*¹⁵⁴ where the Rev. Ronald Bayne, writing about Middleton’s influence on city comedy, starts by rating *Ram Alley* as superior to Sharpham’s two plays *The Fleer* and *Cupid’s Whirligig*, but, as we might expect from a reverend gentleman, then quickly notes that: ‘Ram alley was a particularly disreputable lane, leading from Fleet street to the Temple and of the coarseness promised by the title of the play we find, as it proceeds, a full supply.’¹⁵⁵ However, he continues, somewhat

¹⁵⁰ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.31.

¹⁵¹ Hazlitt, W. C. (ed.), *A Select Collection of Old English Plays*, 4th Edition (Reeves and Turner, 1875), Vol. X, p.265.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ Ward A.W., Waller A.R., Trent W.P., Erskine J., Sherman S.P. and Van Doren C. (eds), *The Cambridge History of English and American Literature: An Encyclopedia in Eighteen Volumes* (Cambridge University Press, 1907–21).

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. VI, chap. ix, sect. 4, p.13.

more in the vein of Christian charity: ‘this realistic indecency is relieved by some breath of life and character. Many echoes from Shakespeare’s plays are introduced, both by way of parody and of imitation. There is much of the London of the period ... in this comedy; and it not only shows force in its presentation of life and character, but is also marked by a vigour in its blank verse, which, in one or two places almost reaches distinction.’¹⁵⁶

Commenting on Barry’s promise in the prologue to produce in the future a play ‘That puritans themselves may see,’¹⁵⁷ the Rev. Bayne ends his appreciation with the wry observation that ‘Barry, no doubt, overrated the complaisance of puritans; but he was right in feeling that he had in him the power to produce work of a higher rank altogether than his *Ram alley* obscenities. It is disappointing that this one play and his name are all that we know of him.’¹⁵⁸

Harold Hillebrand, in his 1926 book, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History*, was more blunt, judging *Ram Alley*, along with the rest of the Whitefriars oeuvre, ‘dull, imitative, second hand material.’¹⁵⁹ Similarly, in 1977, Michael Shapiro’s *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare’s Time and their Plays* summarily dismissed Barry and his fellow Whitefriars authors as a group that ‘cheapened and coarsened as they imitated.’¹⁶⁰

However, the later 1900s were kinder to Barry, and as the century progressed certainly less deterred by the bawdry; we also begin to see a wider range of opinion concerning the literary value of his play.

Claude Jones, in the introduction to his mid-twentieth century edition of *Ram Alley*, provides the first substantial discussion. Taking as his starting point Barry’s claim to have observed ‘those ancient streams | Which from the Horse-foot fount do flow | (As time, place, person)’¹⁶¹ Jones covers the narrative structure and characterisation of the play, its literary style and versification, the staging, and what he sees as its satirical tendency, judging Barry’s performance in all these areas positively on the whole and with only the one cavil at the ‘vulgar humour’ which, he complains, ‘despite the author’s protestations to the contrary in the Preface [i.e., the Prologue] – is decidedly low.’¹⁶² One suspects that even if he had not made the mistake of taking Barry’s protestations at face value he

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ram Alley*, Prologue, 26.

¹⁵⁸ Ward, *Loc. Cit.*.

¹⁵⁹ Cited in Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.29.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ *Ram Alley*, Prologue, 7-8.

¹⁶² Jones, C., *Op. Cit.*, pp.xvii.

would still have come to that conclusion.

To entirely escape the uneasiness about Barry's humour one has to move on to Corbin and Sedge's brief but useful introduction to their 1981 edition. They see in *Ram Alley* a 'skilful eclecticism in the use of character and situation and a sound grasp of the techniques of staging.'¹⁶³ Like Jones, they recognise that the tight plotting adroitly constructs and reinforces the comic situations, and they appreciate also the beneficial effects (both commercial and dramatic) of the play's topographical grounding in the area of London adjacent to the theatre it was written for.

In between these two editions came Brian Gibbons' consideration of *Ram Alley* in his *Jacobean City Comedy*, which seems to recognise the qualities of Barry's work but is reluctant to allow that those qualities move beyond the conventional. Gibbons starts with the measured assessment that this play 'is in some respects the most successful of the conventional plays.'¹⁶⁴ He goes on to praise the 'firm syntax of the verse and the economy of statement,'¹⁶⁵ but then adds that 'the dialogue is without the vigour, the subtlety or variety of its [Middletonian] model';¹⁶⁶ he observes that the plotting is 'complex but also witty,'¹⁶⁷ calling it 'firm and intelligent'¹⁶⁸ with Throat's absurd entry into Lady Somerfield's house being 'admirable situation comedy,'¹⁶⁹ but again qualifies this with the objection that it 'lacks that assurance, that clarity and order of Middleton's dramatic articulation,'¹⁷⁰ and despite a summary of the play that describes the well-motivated interaction of the characters he says of them that they 'are not given full vigorous independence.'¹⁷¹ In summary this is, for him, a 'wholly undistinguished conventional play.'¹⁷²

Despite what might look like a drift towards critical recognition, on the cusp of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries Mary Bly, like Gibbons, gives Barry only qualified approval, stating that 'no great claims can be made for the literary merit of any

¹⁶³ Corbin P. and Sedge D. (eds.), *Ram Alley* (University of Nottingham, 1981), p.iii.

¹⁶⁴ Gibbons, B., *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton* (Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), p.147.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p.149.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.148.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p.151.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.149.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p.151.

Whitefriars play,¹⁷³ dismissing them all as ‘tawdry and imitative,’¹⁷⁴ and saying that she will ‘not try to rehabilitate the plays’ aesthetic value.’¹⁷⁵ Coming from the scholar who has done more than any other to determine and articulate the contribution made by the Whitefriars playwrights to the cultural milieu of early Jacobean London this is surprising to say the least, and I will later suggest that Barry’s use of bawdy wit is both more inventive and a good deal more purposeful than Bly, Gibbons and the majority of other commentators give him credit for.¹⁷⁶

Just before Bly’s book appeared, Gary Taylor, Paul Mulholland, and MacDonald Jackson, in discussing the authorship of *The Family of Love* seem to consider that one of the reasons for attributing that play to Barry rather than Middleton is that ‘Middleton’s career begins with ironic social satire . . . not sectarian bigotry, scatology, and literary parody,’¹⁷⁷ and whilst that is primarily a comment on *The Family of Love* (published 1608) it is hardly a ringing endorsement of the literary abilities of the writer generally acknowledged to have been responsible for the later *Ram Alley*.

Since Bly’s book, two essays focusing on *Ram Alley* have, *inter alia*, offered critical commentaries on the play but both ultimately condemn it as lacking any literary merit, despite seeming to recognise that the play has its virtues as an example of city comedy. Of the two, Elizabeth Hanson seems most in sympathy with the play, though even she calls it ‘plotty, conventional, and a pretext for endless sexual innuendo,’¹⁷⁸ and concludes by lumping it amongst ‘commercial playwriting [...] cranked out by fly-by-nights like Barry and his collaborators.’¹⁷⁹

Jeremy Lopez, in an essay that superimposes an unconvincing, highly speculative version of Barry’s life onto the play in order to provide (for me, at any rate) an even more unconvincing psychologising of the interplay between author and artefact, notes initially that ‘*Ram Alley* has enjoyed a small critical renaissance in recent years,’¹⁸⁰ and continues, ‘criticism has rarely been kind to the play,’ but then refers to its ‘universally acknowledged vacuity’ and agrees ‘with the critical consensus that *Ram Alley*’s expethent

¹⁷³ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.29.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p.28.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.29.

¹⁷⁶ See below, The Play, Sex, money, power, wit and machismo.

¹⁷⁷ Taylor, G., Mulholland, P. and Jackson, M. P., ‘Thomas Middleton, Lording Barry and *The Family of Love*,’ *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, Vol. 93, No. 2 (1999), pp.240-1.

¹⁷⁸ Hanson, *Op. Cit.*, p.229.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p.233.

¹⁸⁰ Lopez, *Op. Cit.*, p.199.

(*sic*) and encyclopedic deployment of city-comedy conventions shows it to be a cipher into which the playwright projects his own desires.¹⁸¹

It is therefore surprising – but pleasingly so – to find Lopez describing *Ram Alley* more positively, in the 2012 entry for Lording Barry in *The Encyclopedia of Renaissance Literature*, as ‘bawdy, funny, and wildly theatrical,’¹⁸² and a play that ‘might have appealed to students from the nearby Inns of Court ... or to theatre-goers from elsewhere in London, seeking an evening of rowdy entertainment in a bad part of town.’¹⁸³ He observes approvingly that the ‘overlap between dramatic location and the theatre’s location suggests that Barry was ... a playwright immersed in his milieu,’¹⁸⁴ and concludes that were it not for the plague that closed down his theatrical venture, ‘Barry might today be a more immediately recognizable figure in the pantheon of early modern dramatists.’¹⁸⁵

Finally, Subha Mukherji, in her substantial discussion of the play in *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (2006), describes it enthusiastically as ‘a romp of a play,’¹⁸⁶ and notes that it has ‘an unerring feel for the pulse of city life.’¹⁸⁷

Before leaving this assessment of Barry’s critical reputation, we should return to Gibbons’ assessment of the play and note that, following the main line of his book’s argument, and in tune with Claude Jones’ commentary, Gibbons focuses on the satirical intent of city comedy as he sees that exhibited in *Ram Alley* and claims that this play ‘lacks the serious implications and the satiric purpose of Jonson or Middleton.’¹⁸⁸ In so doing, however, I believe he underestimates the importance of Barry’s understanding of his audience and thus possibly misses the point of the play: *Ram Alley* has the flavour of a coterie play in which the butts of the humour are generic types familiar to a particular group of people (in this case the Inns of Court students) rather than the broader targets of

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p.200.

¹⁸² Sullivan, Stewart, Lemon and McDowell, *Op. Cit.*, p.49.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp.49-50.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p.50.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ *Op. Cit.*, p.160.

¹⁸⁷ *Idem.*, p.179.

¹⁸⁸ Gibbons, *Op.Cit.*, p.29. Although Barry himself says in his Prologue that ‘The satire’s tooth and waspish sting, | ... | By this play are not affected’ (2-4), given the tongue-in-cheek tenor of this opening verse we need to treat any such disclaimer with considerable caution.

writers such as Jonson and Middleton.¹⁸⁹ If the concomitant of that narrower focus is seen to be a narrowing of the play's literary quality then one might agree with Gibbons *et al.*, but for those comfortable with Dewey's assertion that 'the local is the only universal'¹⁹⁰ it might be argued that by situating his play so precisely within a specific geographical locality and socio-cultural milieu Barry is making a cultural statement that carries the same weight and deserves the same attention as those literary works which it is claimed convey 'profound ideas and universal truths' – and I have to admit here that I, for one, have never been convinced by that formulation of literary valorisation and even less by its application in critical practice.¹⁹¹

With that in mind, we should turn our attention to the audience and the topography of the play.

¹⁸⁹ We might note in passing here that Gibbons seems also to miss the point of Barry's playful and, I would argue, quite complex meta-theatrical pastiche of lines from *The Spanish Tragedy* in the final scene; Gibbons accuses Barry of 'parody in the manner of early Marston' (*Op. Cit.*, p.151) which is executed 'unimaginatively, unwittily' (*Ibid.*), but, quite aside from the neat twist of one of these lines towards bawdry (see V iii 89 and note), the point is most likely not to parody Kyd but to take a swipe at the acting style of the adult actors, and in particular Burbage (see note to V iii 78).

¹⁹⁰ Dewey, J., 'Americanism and Localism,' originally in *The Dial*, 68, 6 (1920), p.687, quoted in Marsh, A., *Money and Modernity: Pound, Williams, and the Spirit of Jefferson* (University of Alabama Press, 1998), p.192.

¹⁹¹ An instance of its application to *Ram Alley* is provided by Mario DiGangi in his review of Bly's *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (*Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (2002), p.405): 'For devotees of Shakespeare, the names of Robert Armin, Lording Barry, Michael Drayton, Lewis Machin, John Mason, Gervase Markham, or Edward Sharpham are unlikely to command respect. And the plays they wrote ... hardly promise philosophical insight or emotional profundity: these are plays of which one is not ashamed to confess complete ignorance.'

The Play

The Whitefriars audience

The Whitefriars theatre was situated in the precinct of that name, the one-time London base of the Carmelites (or White Friars), which covered an area between Fleet Street to the north and the Thames to the south, and the Inner Temple to the west and Water Lane (now Whitefriars Street) to the east.¹⁹²

After its dissolution in 1538 everything in the Whitefriars monastery except the refectory was torn down, and it was presumably that building that was referred to as the ‘message or mansion howse p’cell of the late dissolved monastery called the Whitefriars, in Fleete streete in the Suburbs of London’¹⁹³ in the lease taken by Michael Drayton and Thomas Woodford¹⁹⁴ in March 1607/8 in order to provide a base for a new theatre company, the Children of the King’s Revels. The latter lessee had already assigned his part in these premises, ‘together with the moitie of divers plaie books, apparrell and other furnitures and necessities vsed and imployed in and about the said message and the Children of the revells there beinge in makeinge and settinge fourth playes, shewes and interludes and such like’¹⁹⁵ to one Lording Barry.

Being the site of a religious building, the Whitefriars precinct was entitled, after the monastery was dissolved, to maintain the privilege of sanctuary (a right that Ram Alley, possibly a part of the precinct, also benefited from) and hence became the resort of ‘disreputable characters of all kinds ... the riff-raff of London ... a lawless community of fraudulent debtors, refugees from justice, and women of the streets’¹⁹⁶ – just the sort of characters, in fact, that populate the diegeses of the Whitefriars plays, and not that dissimilar from some of the writers who created them.

The close contiguity of the Whitefriars to the Inner Temple (a gate linked the two) meant, of course, that this area of London was occupied by another group of people, one, rather ironically one might think, not dissimilar to the ‘riff-raff’ described by Sugden – the Inns

¹⁹² Sugden, E. H., *A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and his Fellow Dramatists* (University of Manchester Press, 1925), entry for *Whitefriars*.

¹⁹³ Ewen, *Op. Cit.*, p.7.

¹⁹⁴ Drayton was a playwright, but nothing that he wrote is known to have been performed by the Children of the King’s Revels; Woodford was a merchant and purely an investor of the venture capitalist type; he was later to be one of the many people who sued Barry for debt.

¹⁹⁵ Ewen, *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁶ Sugden, *Ibid.*

of Court law students. It was clearly this group that the sharers in the new theatre saw as their main audience.

As a group they were predominantly young and unmarried¹⁹⁷ – though perhaps not that young given that the average life-expectancy was only a little more than twice their age,¹⁹⁸ and at this period people married quite late, some time after sexual maturity had set in.¹⁹⁹ They were privileged members of an exclusively male society, being taught and studying in an entirely male environment, eating communally with other men, and even sharing a bed at night with another member of their own sex.²⁰⁰ They were from the middle to upper-middle ranks of society (mainly the sons of landed gentry), and educated;²⁰¹ they had time on their hands, most had money in their purses, and (theoretically at least) were training their minds to think efficiently and flexibly, as would be required for a career in the law. They would have found much of their entertainment in the ale-houses and brothels of the Whitefriars, and no doubt were delighted when an indoor theatre opened there to provide them with another source of highly congenial entertainment.

They also had a confirmed reputation for wild behaviour, as is illustrated by Throat when he reminisces about his own student days:

The time has been when scarce an honest woman,
Much less a wench, could pass an Inn of Court
But some of the fry would have been doing
With her. I knew the day when Shreds, a tailor,
Coming once late by an Inn of Chancery
Was laid along and muffled in his cloak,

¹⁹⁷ Up to 70% were in this category at the time John Marston was a member of the Middle Temple; see note to III v 53 of the play text.

¹⁹⁸ The average life-expectancy for the period between Barry's birth (1580?) and the writing of *Ram Alley* (1607-8) was 38.5 years according to figures given in Wrigley, E. A. and Schofield, R. S., *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge University Press, 1989), Table 7.15, p.230.

¹⁹⁹ For the first half of the seventeenth century the mean age of marriage for men was 28 (Wrigley and Schofield, *Op. Cit.*, Table 7.26, p.255).

²⁰⁰ This description of the daily life of an Inns of Court student is derived from Bruce Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England* (University of Chicago Press, 1994), p.84.

²⁰¹ Philip Finkelpearl, in *John Marston of the Middle Temple* (Harvard University Press, 1969), p.5, calls them 'the largest single group of literate cultured men in London' at the end of the sixteenth century.

His wife took in, stitched up, turned out again,
 And he persuaded all was but in jest.
 Tut! Those brave boys are gone. These which are left
 Are wary lads, live poring on their books
 And give their linen to their laundresses.
 By tale they now can save their purses.
 I knew when every gallant had his man,
 But now a twelpenny-weekly laundress
 Will serve the turn to half a dozen of them.²⁰²

That this group of young men was not entirely dedicated to study is hardly surprising given that ‘during the last thirty years of the sixteenth century, only fifteen percent of those admitted to the Inns of Court pursued their studies far enough to be admitted to the bar.’²⁰³ The majority were destined not to become lawyers but ‘the knights of the shire and the Justice Shallows of Clement’s Inn.’²⁰⁴ These students were there merely to acquaint themselves ‘with the minimal knowledge necessary to run their estates and their counties,’ and no doubt had been put to school in the Inns as ‘a place to grow up, to learn about life, to make useful contacts, even to misbehave a bit.’²⁰⁵ Whilst we have to remember that Baker is talking about the period between 1450 and 1550, it seems reasonable to assume that this state of affairs – or a very similar one – obtained fifty years later, and that the misbehaviour he refers to had also changed little, that behaviour being ‘often rude and sometimes violent ... sometimes resulting in death.’²⁰⁶ ‘Gaming and loose living were rife,’ he notes, and ‘in 1506 a future chief justice was fined for

²⁰² *Ram Alley*, III ii 15-29. As far as the character is concerned, though, the reminiscence is entirely fictional since Throat clearly was never a student of the law; either Barry forgot this or he was slipping in a passage that he knew would amuse his audience, reminding them of the old lawyers they probably heard indulging *ad nauseam* in similar nostalgia after a good dinner, very much in the manner of that more famous old bore, Justice Shallow – ‘and I may say to you, we knew where the bona robas were and had the best of them all at commandment ... and the very same day I did fight with one Samson Stockfish, a fruiterer, behind Gray’s Inn. Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent’ etc. etc. ... (2 *Henry IV*, III ii 22-33) – and that, in his case too, as Falstaff caustically remarks, ‘every third word a lie’ (*Ibid*, III ii 307).

²⁰³ Finkelpearl, *Op. Cit.*, p.10. John Baker (‘The third university 1450-1550: law school or finishing school?’ p.9) tells us that, for the first half of the sixteenth century, ‘fewer than ten per cent of Inns of Court men ... took to the legal profession as a career.’

²⁰⁴ Baker, *Op. Cit.*, p.21.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, p.10.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.14.

frequenting a brothel.’²⁰⁷

But if they were wild, still they were exposed to subtle argument and were in contact with what were probably some of the best minds of their generation; would it be surprising, therefore, if along with the wild behaviour went wild thinking – a kind of intellectual license that permitted the consideration of a wider than normal range of possibilities,²⁰⁸ and hence, when it came to humour, a capacity to find things funny that the rest of society would have found merely morally repugnant?

That such was the case is convincingly argued by Mary Bly who sees in the frequently homoerotic bawdy of the Whitefriars plays a form of humour designed to appeal to a rather specialised audience – not one that formed ‘a consistent homoerotic “subculture”, but an altogether hazier fellowship,’²⁰⁹ rather, as she puts it, ‘a theatrically canny community that apparently appreciated homoerotic wit.’²¹⁰ However, as I will explain later, I find her suggestion that this ‘homoerotic double talk is ... celebratory’²¹¹ less convincing.

* * *

Whether there was an established, discrete homoerotic subculture in early Jacobean London is open to debate.²¹² That some men did engage in various forms of sexual activity with other men is, though, surely undeniable, and that the Whitefriars playwrights made homoerotic jokes, sometimes overt and sometimes subterranean, sometimes crude and sometimes subtle, is equally undeniable.

There was also clearly an audience for those jokes, and, *pace* Bly, not only at the

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ That this might well have been the case was confirmed by J. Darvill Mills in her paper “‘A hotchpotch they, and mingle mangle make of things divine and human’: Catholicism, conscience and early modern common law’ (given at The Pope and Papacy in Early Modern English Culture, University of Sussex, June 2013).

²⁰⁹ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.24. Bly also states (p.5): ‘by no means do the bawdy puns I discuss in *Queer Virgins* produce a seventeenth-century “homosexual”, an identity that controls a person’s subjectivity.’

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.131. See also the chapters, ‘Bawdy Virgins and Queer Puns,’ pp.1-27, and ‘Homoerotic Puns and Queer Collaborations,’ pp.116-145.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p.5.

²¹² See, *inter alia*, Smith, *Op. Cit.* and Bray, A., *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (Columbia University Press, 1995).

Whitefriars theatre. In Middleton's *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*,²¹³ Hippolito's servant is confused but also clearly sexually excited by the appearance of an effeminate youth (the courtesan Bellafront dressed as a boy) describing her first as 'a youth, a very youth ... If it be a woman, marrowbones and potato pies keep me for meddling with her, for the thing has got the breeches; 'tis a male varlet [masculine whore] sure, my lord, for a woman's tailor ne'er measured him.'²¹⁴ And later: 'Slid, you are a sweet youth to wear a codpiece, and have no pins [penis] to stick upon't.'²¹⁵ In the same play Fustigo, on hearing that his sister's wife 'has not all things belonging to a man,'²¹⁶ exclaims, 'God's my life, he's a very mandrake.'²¹⁷

In *Michaelmas Term*,²¹⁸ Quomodo encourages Shortyard to corrupt Easy in stages: 'Ravish him with a dame or two, be his bawd for once; I'll be thine forever. Drink drunk with him, creep into bed to him, kiss him and undo him, my sweet spirit.'²¹⁹ And one wonders what the contemporary audience made of the description of a house for rent in that play: 'the house not only endued with a new fashion forepart, but, which is more convenient for a gentleman, with a very provident back door.'²²⁰

Bly focuses on the subversive possibilities of Whitefriars homoerotic humour, and she may well be right that some of the audience took delight in those possibilities, but how audiences responded to these jokes is almost impossible to determine from textual evidence. Humour is notoriously resistant to authorial – or, indeed, authoritative – jurisdiction: any joke can be, for one individual or group, an affirmation and reinforcement of predominant social values and, for others, subversive of those same attitudes, and what the humorist responsible for the joke intended need have nothing to do with its reception. We will probably never know whether, to put it at its crudest, the

²¹³ Probably first performed at the Fortune Theatre in 1604 according to Mulholland's introduction to the play in Taylor, G., Lavagnino, J. *et. al.* (eds), *Thomas Middleton, The Collected Works* (Oxford University Press, 2010). (All subsequent references to the plays of Middleton relate to this edition.)

²¹⁴ *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*, 10.97-102.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.195-7.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.68.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 2.69. Mulholland's annotation for 'mandrake' is: 'the dominant sense here is apparently a 'bugger' or 'sodomite,' i.e. a homosexual.'

²¹⁸ Performed according to the 1607 title page by The Children of Pauls, like Barry's Children of the King's Revels, a boys' company that performed in a private theatre.

²¹⁹ *Michaelmas Term*, 1.2.128-31.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.2.139-42. We might note also, from Middleton's non-dramatic text, *The Black Book*, 331-9: 'Lusty vaulting gallants that ... keep at every heel a man, beside a French lackey (a great boy with a beard) and an English page which fills up the place of an ingle [homosexual boy].'

Whitefriars audience was laughing with the sodomites or at them, and for most of the homoerotic humour of *Ram Alley* – the humour, that is, deriving from Constantia's being dressed as a boy – it is not now possible to tell which direction the laughter might have taken.

In the second scene of the play Constantia, seemingly keen to throw herself into the role of pageboy, starts flirting with Adriana, declaring 'Now will I fall aboard the waiting maid.'²²¹ The humour of the ensuing dialogue, which develops a series of bawdy innuendos based on a metaphor of naval combat, derives for the most part from the audience's recognition that it knows what Adriana does not know – that this 'boy' is actually a 'girl.' When the maid ridicules the page's height (and hence, of course, his boyish penile dimensions) with, 'Blurt, Master Gunner, your linstock's too short!'²²² Constantia's reply, 'Foot! How did she know that!'²²³ not only reminds the audience of her disguised state but, for those sensitive to the idea, also hints at a fear that she might have been found out making homosexual advances to Adriana.

As the two exit, Adriana threatens the page, 'Faith, I should breech thee!'²²⁴ 'Breech' forces an orthographical choice in a printed text that makes the pun less obvious, but it leaves an inescapable ambiguity hanging in the air when spoken ('breech/breach') so that the exchange ends, as Bly points out, in 'a welter of possible erotic signifiers'²²⁵ in which 'virtually any combination of genders can be imagined.'²²⁶ Similarly, in the second meeting between Constantia and Adriana (II iii), the now sexually predatory Adriana suggests to the 'page', 'Come home tonight. | ... I love a'life | To play with such baboons as thou,'²²⁷ and Constantia's one word reply – 'Indeed!'²²⁸ – carries an unmistakeable homoerotic frisson.

But the actor playing Constantia is, of course, doubly cross-dressed – a boy actor is playing the girl now playing a boy – and that enables a further exploitation of the possibilities for homoerotic humour latent in the situations 'Constantia' finds herself in. In these scenes with Adriana, the audience, at the level of theatrical illusion, sees Adriana

²²¹ *Ram Alley*, I ii 107.

²²² *Ram Alley*, I ii 110.

²²³ *Ram Alley*, I ii 111.

²²⁴ *Ram Alley*, I ii 117.

²²⁵ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.80.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* There are only three such combinations, of course, but we might note that the proposed delights could include at least heterosexual or homosexual (male or female) activities, sadism, and masochism.

²²⁷ *Ram Alley*, II iii 92-5.

²²⁸ *Ram Alley*, II iii 95.

trying to seduce someone she thinks is a boy who is ‘actually’ a young woman, whilst at the level of theatrical reality that audience also knows that both the ‘women’ are being acted by boys. This adds an extra level of homoerotic potential, and though it might be argued that the conventionality of using boys to play women in the early modern theatre would sublimate any homoerotic suggestiveness in a way that, say, modern drag acts clearly do not, the boy companies were seen by some commentators as the purlieus of pederasts and breeding grounds for sodomites (and even if this was a possible misperception on the part of an ultra-moralistic minority it was nonetheless a publicly expressed perception²²⁹). How far the audience moves towards understanding this second level of homoerotic suggestiveness is dependent no longer on the dialogue but, first, on how far that audience is aware of itself as an audience, second, how far they are aware of the perceptions of the actors’ sexuality, and third, at what point they therefore might stop undressing the ‘page.’

Such multi-layering of sexuality is again evident when, in I iii, Constantia jokingly puts a hypothetical law case to Throat’s servant, Dash, and asks, ‘What action lies for this?’²³⁰ Dash, who, like Adriana, thinks he is talking to a boy, responds with the highly suggestive: ‘An action, boy, called firking the posteriors,’²³¹ quickly following up this sly sexual proposal with the apparent retraction: ‘With us your action seldom comes in question.’²³² And indeed, lawyers, Smith tells us, would probably have had little to do with such sexual practices in their working lives: ‘during the forty-five years of Elizabeth’s reign and the twenty-three years of James I’s reign only six men are recorded

²²⁹ Stubbes is quoted by Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p.155: ‘marke the flocking and running to Theaters ... to see Playes and Enterludes ... Than [i.e., then], these goodly pageants being done, every mate sorts to his mate ... and in their secret conclaves (covertly) they play *the Sodomits*, or worse. And these be the fruits of Playes and Enterludes for the most part.’ See also Bray, *Op. Cit.*, pp.54-5: ‘The Elizabethan and Jacobean theatre acquired a reputation for homosexuality, as Philip Stubbes graphically claimed. It was also a claim made by Edward Guilpin in similar terms in his *Skialethia*, which describes a sodomite as someone “who is at every play and every night sups with his ingles”; and it is repeated in Michael Drayton’s *The Moone-Calfe*, where the theatres are denounced as one of the haunts of the sodomite.’ Bray also quotes from Jonson’s *Poetaster*, I ii 15-16, ‘What? shall I haue my sonne a stager now? an enghle for players?’ as evidence for homosexual activity in the theatres; however, one might question whether we should read this line as Jonson’s direct and uncomplicated acceptance that the theatre is a source of playthings for pederasts: it could equally well be read as a thrust at the likes of Stubbes who asserted such things on the basis of their own prejudices.

²³⁰ *Ram Alley*, I iii 110.

²³¹ *Ram Alley*, I iii 111. For an explication of the exchange see the note to this line.

²³² *Ram Alley*, I iii 112.

as having been indicted for sodomy in the Home County assizes,²³³ whilst, for a student of law in the seventeenth century, ‘out of the dozens of commentaries and court reports that a student might study, only one makes any mention of homosexuality ... For a law student or practicing (*sic*) attorney the implication is clear: sodomy is not the kind of case one can expect often, or ever, to encounter.’²³⁴

But there may be an additional and topical point to this line that could have resonated for the audience of *Ram Alley*: in 1607-8 (precisely the period in which the play was probably written and certainly when it was first being performed) such a case had ‘come in question’ when ‘a certain H. Stafford ... was indicted, attainted, and executed by the Court of King’s Bench ... for having anal intercourse with a sixteen-year-old boy,’²³⁵ and the act occurred in the parish of St Andrew in High Holborn – the parish exactly in the centre of the play’s diegetic geographical range.

The homoerotic humour involving Constantia and Adriana, and Constantia and Dash has, then, little to offer in terms of evidence for attitudes. As has been suggested, how far any member of the audience might have responded to the suggestiveness of these episodes will have depended on purely individual factors that we have no access to. However, the episode in IV ii in which Captain Face is intimidated into giving up his pretensions to Taffeta is a different matter.

This humiliation is sexual: first, Face is called ‘an admirable ape [who] can do | More feats than three baboons,’²³⁶ and apes were seen as figuring the sexually-acting human; second, he is to be chastened for his own sexual boasting – boasting which is couched in language designed to aggrandise his own sexual prowess:

Have I not placed
My sakers, culverins, demi-culverins,
My cannons, demi-cannons, basilisks
Upon her breach, and do I not stand
Ready with my pike to make my entry.²³⁷

²³³ Smith, *Op. Cit.*, p.48.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.49.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.51.

²³⁶ *Ram Alley*, IV ii 123-4.

²³⁷ *Ram Alley*, III iv 105-9. See notes to 106-7, 108 and 109 for an explication of the language.

But he must also be sexually humiliated because this self-aggrandisement is false – he is not the man he pretends to be, but ‘a coward rogue | That dares not look a kitling in the face.’²³⁸

If he is not a man, he must be the opposite – he must be essentially female, and a female man, so the logic goes, is a catamite. William therefore turns his wit against Face and ridicules him accordingly as:

an outlandish beast
That has but two legs, bearded like a man,
Nosed like a goose, and tongued like a woman,
Lately brought from the land of Catita.²³⁹

Face, that is to say, is being represented as an androgynous sodomite, and he is clearly, on that account, *persona non grata*. There is no sympathy for him amongst the characters, and there will be no sympathy for him, we can safely assume, in the audience: this is the sodomite as the excluded person, and there can be little doubt that the laughter will be at his expense.

Wit is here used as a weapon which defines one character’s lack of masculinity and, by a corollary, defines the proper masculinity of those attacking him. It is another version of the bawdy wit used elsewhere in the play – a weapon that can be deployed by one man against another in a kind of phallic combat, in which the loser is the sexually humiliated victim of the humour.

The episode of Face’s humiliation, I would further argue, recontextualises the humour around Constantia’s cross-dressing: we can now see that Dash’s ‘with us your action seldom comes in question’ is actually a neat sleight of hand which shuffles off any implication of complicity in the innuendo and reasserts the heterosexual. Where there are jokes in this play about homoerotic desire they are of the nod-and-wink variety – ‘yes, we are men of the world and know about that sort of thing, but of course we don’t condone it, you know.’

The homoerotic humour that Bly identifies in the Whitefriars oeuvre clearly does exist in *Ram Alley*, but it is not, I would argue, in subversive pursuit of homosexual approbation, nor does it seem to me to be appealing to a corresponding personal sexual orientation. It

²³⁸ *Ram Alley*, IV ii 131-2.

²³⁹ *Ram Alley*, IV ii 148-51. See note on 149-53 for an explication of this speech.

is offered to, and indeed requires, an audience that is capable of recognising and enjoying that kind of humour – an audience bound together in a kind of freemasonry of wit founded on a willingness to ignore the normal boundaries of humour²⁴⁰ – but it does not ask the audience to thereby celebrate the sexual orientation it refers to. Rather, it invites that audience to recognise and affirm the heterosexuality it defines by antithesis, aggressively defining masculinity in opposition to homosexuality and inviting not self-affirmative laughter *with*, but antithetical, self-defining laughter *at* those who come ‘from the land of Catita.’

* * *

Before leaving the audience, one final question is worth considering: is there not something slightly puzzling about the fact that, in a play aimed at an audience of lawyers and students of the law, it is a lawyer that is the main butt of the humour and the one who in the end is bested by the penniless younger son of a member of the lesser gentry?

On one level, of course, we should not be surprised at this. There will always be some people in any professional group who are able to enjoy a joke against themselves, and the Whitefriars plays contain many jokes at the expense of lawyers and legal practices which no doubt went down well with their audience.²⁴¹ However, the depiction of Throat as an unacceptable representative of the law is more substantial here, and three possible answers to this question are worth considering.

The first, and perhaps the most convincing, is that Throat is not a real lawyer, but a counterfeit; he is a pseudo-lawyer, an ‘Ambo-dexter, ... Some common bail or counter lawyer’²⁴² ‘a fellow | That never saw the bar but when his life | Was called in question for a cozenage.’²⁴³ Basically he is no more than a corrupt moneylender and – even worse – he is ‘a summoner’s son’²⁴⁴ and so of lower social rank than the scions of the gentry who formed the bulk of the Inns of Court students. This comic antagonist could therefore have been offered up as an object of both professional and class suspicion, someone Barry

²⁴⁰ We might note here the similar boundary-defying willingness to treat the taboo subject of incest humorously – see footnote 335.

²⁴¹ For example, in Day’s *Humour Out of Breath* (printed for John Helmes, 1608), F3: ‘*Asp[ero]*: Shalt be my Lawyer boy and counsell me. | *Boy*: Ile looke for my Fee then. | *Asp[ero]*: If thy Counfell prospers. | *Boy*: Thats an exception Lawyers neuer respect.’

²⁴² *Ram Alley*, IV iv 79-81.

²⁴³ *Ram Alley*, I i 110-12.

²⁴⁴ *Ram Alley*, IV iv 80.

could rely on his audience to take a hearty dislike to.

A second answer could be that if most of the Inns of Court students were not actually intending to be lawyers but expecting to return to life on their family estates, it may be that they looked with distaste, even horror, upon the law as a form of employment, seeing in that career trajectory a serious loss of social status.²⁴⁵ Their very presence at the Inns of Court would thus involve a considerable tension in their sense of identity, both personal and social. William's reclamation of his land and Throat's discomfiture would provide a satisfyingly cathartic restitution of their position in the landed class.

That explanation is slightly contentious as it requires seeing Throat as in some sense a proper representative of the legal profession rather than merely a pseudo-lawyer but, as the play is somewhat ambivalent at times on this point, that is not implausible, and if one does see him in that light a third – albeit even more contentious – answer becomes possible: as far as the Inns of Court loafers were concerned (and they formed the bulk, one would imagine, of the audience of the Whitefriars as well as the bulk of the student population) that minority of their peers who were genuinely studying to become professional lawyers were quite likely perceived as the 'oiks' – the sad unfortunates who were required, perhaps by material circumstance, perhaps under the parental cosh, to buckle down, 'live poring on their books,'²⁴⁶ as Throat puts it, and actually take their studies seriously. Would the loafers not have loved this parody of a lawyer, revelled in the lampoon, and perhaps even seen his final humiliation as a sweet revenge for all the Malvolioesque animadversions they had to suffer from the oiks? It is, I grant, unlikely, but it is a rather seductive theory.

The topography of the play

The other aspect of *Ram Alley* which we can be sure was enjoyed and appreciated by its first audiences is the specific location of the action in the area of London immediately adjacent to the Whitefriars.

That the setting will be known to those in the theatre is promised at the very opening of the play when the Prologue tells them that it is 'Home bred mirth our muse doth sing,'²⁴⁷ where 'home' has, partly, the sense of 'local.' But they would have come to the

²⁴⁵ In this respect we might note that one of Throat's objectives in cheating William is to obtain land, and hence, by a reverse process, gain access to the gentry class through a career as a lawyer. Cf. Overreach in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

²⁴⁶ *Ram Alley*, III ii 24.

²⁴⁷ *Ram Alley*, Prologue, 1.

performance with that expectation already in their minds, since the Ram Alley which gives the play its title lay very close to Serjeants' Inn in Fleet Street and was contiguous to the Whitefriars precinct.²⁴⁸ Being famous for its ale-houses and cook-shops, it was no doubt a place of frequent resort for most of those in the audience.

The play actually opens a little further away. Within a few lines of her appearing on the stage, Constantia Somerfield tells us that she is 'In the skirts of Holborn ... near the field,'²⁴⁹ thereby locating the action in the suburbs about ten to fifteen minutes' walk from the theatre. We learn later that she was standing in Hosier Lane which ran east off Smithfield (probably the 'field' she refers to in that line) and the street in which William Smallshanks lodged and kept his 'wench.'²⁵⁰

We have to wait a little longer, and a little further into the same scene, before Ram Alley itself is named when, we are told, there 'lies a fellow, by name | Throat – one that professeth law.'²⁵¹ As the other house we learn the location of is that of Lady Somerfield in St John's Street, which becomes a focus for several characters' movements at the latter end of the play, we can say that the main axis of the action is roughly a north-east / south-west line between Ram Alley and St John's Street (which was just north of Smithfield) with Shoe Lane (which ran due north-south between the conduit at the eastern end of Fleet Street and St Andrew's church at the eastern end of Holborn) probably the main route between the two.

That Shoe Lane is imagined as the main north / south route on this axis of action is strongly suggested – though the road is not specifically named here – in the movements

²⁴⁸ Precisely where Ram Alley was is not easy to ascertain; Sugden identifies it as the modern Hare Place which comes directly off Fleet Street between what is now Old Mitre Court (directly opposite the southern end of Fetter Lane) and 46 Fleet Street; it would thus have run down the west side of what was the Serjeants' Inn. It presumably took a right angled turn westward (perhaps part way down Serjeants' Inn) to the back of the Mitre Tavern which fronted on to Fleet Street west of Old Mitre Court, and which had a back entrance into the alley. Sugden's entry for Ram Alley says that it 'ran down to the footway from Serjeants' Inn to the Temple,' that 'footway' possibly being what is now Mitre Court Lane which leads to King's Bench Walk, off which there is an entrance into the Inner Temple. If the identification with Hare Place is correct, that would put Ram Alley well outside the Whitefriars precinct, leading one to wonder on what basis it claimed its right of sanctuary; one wonders, therefore, if an alternative siting would be to have it running all the way down the east side of the Inn and then turning west to join what looks on the Agas map very like a path along the southern side of the Inn which, at its western end, joins Temple Lane. See maps on pp. 379 and 380.

²⁴⁹ *Ram Alley*, I i 12.

²⁵⁰ See *Ram Alley*, V iii 237.

²⁵¹ *Ram Alley*, I i 108-9.

set in train by William's plot to deceive Throat into returning the mortgage on his lands in the first scene of the play.

William first arranges to meet his brother, asking Boutcher to

procure

My elder brother meet me on the way

And but associate me unto his [Throat's] house.²⁵²

Boutcher duly makes this arrangement with Thomas Smallshanks immediately after this scene, but offstage, so we do not know exactly what he says to Thomas; it may be that he sends Constantia (his page) to deliver a verbal message, or, since Thomas crosses the stage in I ii reading a letter, it may be that he sends Constantia with that letter. Boutcher then goes to Throat's chambers to prepare the ground for William's later arrival there with his brother (I iii). After that he returns to meet William and Thomas just after those two have left their father at the end of II i.

The phrasing of William's instruction to Boutcher is slightly elliptical, but the point seems clearly to be that Thomas is to meet him 'on the way' to Throat's house, in order that they can then continue together to Ram Alley, and that would put the meeting with Thomas (and their father, as Thomas and Sir Oliver have by chance already met up when William, Frances and Beard join them) somewhere along that main north-east / south-west axis of the action. The most direct way from Hosier Lane to Ram Alley is down Cow Lane, bearing right at Holborn Conduit into the western end of Holborn, over the Fleet by means of Holborn Bridge to St Andrew's church, left down Shoe Lane to the conduit at the western end of Fleet Street near Fleet Bridge, then right into Fleet Street proper, and down to Serjeants' Inn. It might therefore seem reasonable to assume that the meeting with Thomas and Sir Oliver Smallshanks takes place somewhere along that route.

William's instruction to his brother as given to Boutcher is, however, very vague: 'on the way' allows not only for any number of possible meeting points, but also for a number of possible routes, the one just described being only the most direct; there are at least two other more circuitous possible routes,²⁵³ and people in early modern London did not, it

²⁵² *Ram Alley*, I i 120-2.

²⁵³ These are: (a) as before, go into Cow Lane, but bear left at Holborn Conduit down Snow Hill, following that into Old Bailey, then continue southwards down Old Bailey

appears, necessarily take the most direct way to their destinations.²⁵⁴ I think, though, that we might reasonably hazard a guess that the Shoe Lane route was the one Barry, as the writer, had in mind, as it seems more likely that one would *imagine* the most obvious route – which it seems reasonable to assume is also the most direct one – even if in reality, and enticed by the possible vagaries of the moment, one would actually *walk* a less direct one.

As to the precise meeting place, that is obviously ‘filled in’ by Boutcher in his message to Thomas, since in response to Sir Oliver’s, ‘Is this the place you were appointed to meet him?’²⁵⁵ Thomas replies, ‘So Boutcher sent me word.’²⁵⁶ This, too, is not specified, but again we might reasonably surmise that it was a place where there was space for a group to gather, as for example, in the area around St Andrew’s church, or by the conduit in Fleet Street. That would make sense not only in terms of the logistics of such an arrangement but also account for the slightly odd imaginative vacancy of the staged space of this scene.²⁵⁷

That quality of emptiness might derive in part, of course, from the fact that early modern theatres had no production-specific scenery (other than what could be placed on the stage – chairs, beds, etc.) and that there would probably not have been any crowd-scene actors to help create the sense of a busy street. A modern reader with that sort of knowledge would therefore imagine a stage space without visual street detail, but, even allowing for that, it is the lack of verbal detail about location that makes this scene hover rather uncomfortably in the imaginary geography of the play, giving the episode an odd detachment from the rest of the play’s location, not so much, perhaps, in itself as in its

alongside the city wall and turn right at Ludgate (where the wall takes a right angled turn towards the west) to follow the road up Fleet Hill, over Fleet Bridge and along Fleet Street to Ram Alley; (b) head east out of Hosier Lane into Smithfield, turn right and head south along Pie Corner into either Giltspur Street or St Sepulchre’s Alley, both of which come out into Snow Hill near its junction with Old Bailey, then follow as for (a).

²⁵⁴ I am indebted to Jeremy Smith, of the Graphics Collection, London Metropolitan Archives, for this interesting detail about the way seventeenth century Londoners moved about their city.

²⁵⁵ *Ram Alley*, II i 1.

²⁵⁶ *Ram Alley*, II i 2.

²⁵⁷ Meeting places in London seem mainly to have been indoors (in, for instance, a tavern) or in major public spaces such as the nave of St Paul’s cathedral (which was possibly the main place to meet acquaintances and a favourite haunt of those with spare time on their hands); however, at II iv 104-5 Throat does tell Dash to ‘meet me straight | At the Mitre door in Fleet Street,’ indicating thereby an outdoor rendezvous.

relation to the surrounding action.²⁵⁸

That it is in a London street, however, is given some sense of material reality at the very end of the scene when William gathers the group's attention with: 'Come now to Ram Alley,'²⁵⁹ thereby also reminding us of his original intention to meet his brother 'on the way' to Throat's chambers there.

That Shoe Lane is, in Barry's mind, the main route between the Fleet Street and Holborn areas is confirmed by another event which is, in contrast to the meeting with Sir Oliver, carefully plotted through the geography of the suburbs – the abduction of Frances by Throat and the ensuing pursuit by William, Beard and Thomas (or, in the case of the first two, pretence at pursuit).

The instructions for this abduction are given by Throat at the beginning of III ii, he being, at that point, in Fleet Street outside the Mitre Inn²⁶⁰ which had a back door into Ram Alley:

Let the coach stay at Shoe Lane end. Be ready –
Let the boot stand open, and when she's in
Hurry towards Saint Giles in the Field.²⁶¹

St Giles in the Field lay at the extreme western end of Holborn, and since Shoe Lane is east of where they are standing the plan clearly is to hustle Frances east along Fleet Street to the waiting coach and use Shoe Lane to get to St Andrew's church at the eastern end of Holborn, which road would then take them to St Giles church. To go further east before turning north would lose time (and Throat insists that they hurry) while to return west down Fleet Street to, say, Fetter Lane and then go north would mean turning back towards their pursuers. The pursuing party overshoots Shoe Lane and ends up nearer St

²⁵⁸ There is almost a sense that the action has moved outside London, into the countryside; a similar sense of being outside London occurs at the beginning of Act III, when Justice Tutchim meets Sir Oliver and greets him with the line, 'A-hunting, Sir Oliver, and dry-foot, too?' (III i 1), but we have to remember that London, and especially the north-eastern suburbs, were very close to open countryside, almost to the point of the two being indistinguishable along some of the main thoroughfares such as Holborn; many Londoners would have taken advantage of the various recreational possibilities that proximity allowed, as Tutchim seems to assume Sir Oliver might be about to.

²⁵⁹ *Ram Alley*, II i 156.

²⁶⁰ We know this because at II iv 104-5 he tells Dash to go to St John's Street and then return to 'meet me straight | At the Mitre door in Fleet Street,' which Dash duly does at III ii 30.

²⁶¹ *Ram Alley*, III ii 1-3.

Bride's church at Fleet Bridge where they pause to take stock of the situation and Beard quite correctly surmises that they 'took along Shoe Lane.'²⁶²

This discussion of Shoe Lane has further implications, as it has a bearing on the location of another space which seems to be left, rather oddly, unspecified in the dialogue – the widow Taffeta's house.

As the widow of a mercer (that is, a draper who dealt in the more expensive cloths such as silks and velvets) one might expect Taffeta to live in the Cheapside area of the City near the Mercers' Hall (situated between Ironmonger Lane and Old Jewry) where the more prestigious drapery shops were located. However, this would have taken Boutcher well out of his way as it lay in the diametrically opposite direction to Ram Alley. It would also mean that one of the locations for the action lay a long way outside the area in which the rest of the action takes place (especially the main Ram Alley / St John's Street axis) and would not, therefore, be somewhere that people would constantly be turning up at by chance in their movements to and from those other identified places.

There is only one detail in favour of a City location: when Taffeta is being harassed in her house by Captain Face she calls for someone to 'run to the Counter! | Fetch me a red-bearded sergeant.'²⁶³ The Counters were the two debtors' prisons attached to the City court, one being at Wood Street, just off Cheapside and west of St Paul's, and the other in Poultry, further east and nearer the mercers' area of the City. Both were some way from the direct route between Hosier Lane and Ram Alley and even if someone were to run from there it would be some time before assistance arrived, even from the nearer Counter at Wood Street. However, one could equally well explain Taffeta's instruction as no more than an attempt to frighten Face, and, taken with the other evidence we have, this detail does not persuasively support the placing of Taffeta's house in the City.

One passage that contra-indicates the City as the location of Taffeta's house occurs in IV i, when Taffeta says to William:

Come not near me.

I forbid thee my house, my out-houses,

My garden, orchard, and my back-side.²⁶⁴

²⁶² *Ram Alley*, III iii 8.

²⁶³ *Ram Alley*, III iv 98-9.

²⁶⁴ *Ram Alley*, IV i 162-4.

If the reference to a garden and orchard is to be taken literally (that is, aside from the bawdy innuendo afforded by those words) this would indicate clearly that her house is outside the city walls as that area was too densely built to allow for such open spaces behind or around the houses. In such roads as Cow Lane, Holborn, Shoe Lane, and Fleet Street, though, it would still have been possible to have a garden. In *Richard III* Gloucester remarks to the Bishop of Ely, whose London residence was at the City end of Holborn, ‘when I was last in Holborn, | I saw good strawberries in your garden there,’²⁶⁵ and whilst, as a great magnate of the church, the Bishop might be expected to have more space than a mercer’s widow, nonetheless, both the Agas and Norden maps show considerable space around or behind all the houses in that part of London at the very end of the 16th century.²⁶⁶

However, the strongest evidence for the location of Taffeta’s house is provided by the movements of other characters at the two extreme ends of the play.

That she lives somewhere along the route between Hosier Lane and Ram Alley is suggested in I ii by the fact that Boutcher is waylaid by Taffeta between leaving William in Hosier Lane at the end of I i and arriving at Throat’s chambers in I iii. He is spied by Adriana at II i 28 walking past Taffeta’s house on the way to Ram Alley with Constantia, who has just rejoined him after she has delivered the message from William to Thomas.²⁶⁷

It is at the other end of the play, though, that we get the most specific indications of the street in which the house is located. In IV iii, Thomas Smallshanks and a group of ‘gentlemen’ attack Beard and abduct Frances (Thomas, of course, thinking her to be the rich heiress Constantia Somerfield). During that scene Thomas tells his companions to take Frances, once they have seized her, to Fleet Street where ‘my father and I will this morning be married.’²⁶⁸ His father is to marry Taffeta and we learn later that the wedding will be in her local church, that being clear from Adriana’s telling the maid with whom

²⁶⁵ Shakespeare, *Richard III*, III iv 31-2

²⁶⁶ Though we might also note, as a possible corrective to this, that by 1605, towards the end of his 80-odd years of life, John Stow noted that the fields that he had known on the edges of London had been largely built over (Forshaw, A. and Bergström, T., *Smithfield: Past and Present* (Robert Hale Ltd, 1990), p.29) and this may well also have applied to many of the green spaces within the built-up area.

²⁶⁷ Boutcher asks Constantia, ‘spake you with Master Smallshanks?’ (I ii 34) to which she replies, ‘I did.’ As Thomas has just preceded them in walking past Taffeta’s house (I i 14s.d.) we can assume that Constantia met with him immediately before she rejoined Boutcher.

²⁶⁸ *Ram Alley*, IV iii 13-14.

she is strewing flowers outside Taffeta's house that they are for her 'to walk to church on.'²⁶⁹ Though there are complications about exactly where the wedding will take place – whether at St Bride's church or in the notoriously disreputable Liberties of the Fleet Prison²⁷⁰ – this argues persuasively for Fleet Street as being the location of Taffeta's house, a location that would fit with her being rich since it was, according to Sugden, 'a fashionable suburb.'²⁷¹

Beard's behaviour following the abduction of Frances by Thomas further confirms Fleet Street as the most likely location of Taffeta's house. At the end of that same abduction scene, Beard, thinking that it was William, not Thomas, who abducted Frances mistakenly deduces that the girl really was Constantia Somerfield all along and so determines to go to St John's Street to 'inform the Lady Somerfield'²⁷² and 'prevent the match.'²⁷³ On arriving at St John's Street he tells the assembled company that Constantia 'Is hurried now to Fleet Street.'²⁷⁴ Tutchim responds to this by ordering the servants to pinion both Throat and Beard 'And guard them hence towards Fleet Street,'²⁷⁵ with the result that, in the final scene of the play, Lady Somerfield's party lands up outside Taffeta's house at the point when Boutcher and Sir Oliver are in the street berating William for supplanting them in the widow's bed.

The final piece of this jigsaw is provided when another group turns up a few moments later at Taffeta's house: a constable has apprehended Thomas and Frances, and he explains to Lady Somerfield, in true Dogberry style:

And it like you, madam,
We were commanded by our deputy
That if we took a woman in the watch
To bring her straight to you, and hearing there
You were come hither, hither we brought them.²⁷⁶

That is to say, having first gone to St John's Street he was redirected by a servant (who

²⁶⁹ *Ram Alley*, V iii 2.

²⁷⁰ See the note to IV iii 13 for a discussion of this point.

²⁷¹ Sugden, *Op. Cit.*, entry for *Fleet Street*.

²⁷² *Ram Alley*, IV iii 40.

²⁷³ *Ram Alley*, IV iii 41.

²⁷⁴ *Ram Alley*, IV iv 128.

²⁷⁵ *Ram Alley*, IV iv 137.

²⁷⁶ *Ram Alley*, V iii 256-60

clearly overheard what Tutchim had last said) to Fleet Street, which is where he now is. This last bit of barely comprehensible constabulary evidence uncontrovertibly, I believe, settles the location of Taffeta's house as Fleet Street.²⁷⁷

Given that Taffeta's house is one of the three major narrative interior spaces it is rather odd, one might think, that its location is never made explicit, but it may well be that Barry expected his audience to fill in this detail for themselves on the basis of the street names specified elsewhere in the diegesis, the movements of the characters along those streets, and their overall familiarity with the area.

Another puzzling aspect of all this to a modern reader is that whilst various characters might mention Fleet Street as a destination – Beard, Tutchim, the constable – none of them actually specifies *which* house in that street is intended. However, that would not have been the habit in Jacobean London. Buildings in streets were not numbered,²⁷⁸ and houses were known by such bits of information as what shop was below them, what inn or church was nearby, or who lived in them.²⁷⁹ Amongst a group of friends it is entirely likely that a person's house would be referred to simply by the street name, as is the case, of course, with Lady Somerfield's house which is simply 'in St John's Street,' yet Throat and Beard, who have never, within the diegesis, been there before, have no trouble in locating it.²⁸⁰

This is to some extent still the way a group of acquaintances might think of each other's

²⁷⁷ It will be clear from this discussion that I disagree with Lopez (*Op. Cit.* p.203) when he suggests that 'the movement of [the play's] plot is back [from the suburbs] toward the City, where Throat the lawyer and Will Smallshanks the bankrupt gallant hope to end up, where the widow Taffeta lives, and where the Lady Sommerfield must come in search of her daughter.'

²⁷⁸ As is obvious from the addresses of booksellers given on the title pages of early modern books – and possibly not always with much success: John Bache, on the title page of *The Dumb Knight* (1608), gives the address of his shop as 'in Popes-head Palace, neere to the Royall Exchange;' in *Knave of Hearts* (1613) he tries 'at the entring in of the royall Exchange,' but a year later, perhaps finding that still not enough customers were beating a path to his door, altered it, in *Newes of the present Miseries of Rushia* (1614) to 'on the backe-side of the Royall Exchange.'

²⁷⁹ This was the habit even as late as the middle of the last century in the Somerset village I grew up in – if strangers ever asked where such and such a house was they would invariably be asked, 'Who lives there?' in order that they could be sent in the right direction.

²⁸⁰ It seems to have been recognised, though, that strangers were often confused by the way London addresses were given: at the opening of *Sir Gyles Goosecappe*, I i 1-4, Bullaker, a French servant, complains: 'This is the Countesse *Eugenias* house, I thinke. I can never hit of theis same English City howses, tho I were borne here: if I were in any City in *Fraunce*, I could find any house there at midnight.'

houses – ‘Did you go to Pavilion Road last Saturday?’ might be a way of asking, ‘Did you go to Mary’s party last Saturday?’ – and it is not implausible that Barry had constructed in his own mind, as any author might, exactly such a social group out of his cast: they are simply a group of people who all inhabit the same fictional space in his imagination; in a sense they must all know each other, and strictly realistic boundaries of knowledge about each other’s lives may well have been erased or elided. So, when Fleet Street is mentioned as the destination by Beard, Barry as it were slides into Tutchim’s mind and allows him to understand ‘the house of our acquaintance Taffeta’ which, of course, he has only recently left.

A hint of this kind of thinking is possibly behind the odd moment in II iii when Taffeta briefly considers Throat as she goes through the list of prospective husbands available to her: ‘What dost thou say | To Throat the lawyer?’²⁸¹ she asks Adriana. The widow and the lawyer are not involved in the same plot at all, and do not even appear on stage together until the final scene, but Adriana’s reply suggests that they know him quite well:

I like that well
 Were the rogue a lawyer, but he is none.
 He never was of any Inn of Court
 But Inn of Chancery, where ’a was known
 But only for a swaggering whiffler
 To keep out rogues and prentices. I saw him
 When ’a was stocked for stealing the cook’s fees.²⁸²

There are a number of possible explanations for this: it might be, as I have surmised, that Barry has conflated his cast list into a single coherent social group, or it might equally be that he momentarily went back to, or failed to revise, an instance of an earlier but now completely removed element of the narrative; it might even have been thrown in as a fragment of backstory around Throat. Whatever the answer, though, it does additionally provide another piece of evidence for the location of Taffeta’s house, suggesting as it does the proximity of Ram Alley to that house – these two are neighbours, so the author has it in his mind that they must know of and be frequently seeing one another. It may be objected that this pursuit of Taffeta’s house is being laboured unnecessarily.

²⁸¹ *Ram Alley*, II iii 5-6.

²⁸² *Ram Alley*, II iii 6-12.

But that house is more than just one of three narrative spaces – it is perhaps the most important of those spaces, being the hub of the narrative as a whole and the site of its resolution: while Throat is on his wild goosechase round the streets of London, William is outwitting his father and securing his own future in the widow's house (and bed), and it is outside that house that the whole cast assembles in the final scene to sort out the sorry mess of relationships that William set in motion in the first scene.

It is also the most fluid of stage spaces, being the only one for which the upper stage is used and the only one that is conceived of as both interior and exterior – indeed, at times it lies on the boundary between the two²⁸³ and at one point even seems to comprehend both at once, when Taffeta comes 'down'²⁸⁴ to meet William in a chamber in her house though, up to that point, he has been in the street outside the house talking to Adriana above him on the balcony.²⁸⁵

One might, then, object that Barry is not entirely consistent – and hence not entirely successful – in his creation of the staged space, either in relation to Taffeta's house or the wider London geography. However, that he has attempted, with considerable care, to locate the action securely in the locale of the theatre is, I think, uncontested. And this is not the symbolic space which Stern suggests Shakespeare creates on his stages, a space which can be different for each member of the audience and each character on the stage.²⁸⁶ This created space gives the poet's 'aery nothing | A local habitation and a name.'²⁸⁷ It refers directly and unambiguously to the material London, the streets and houses inhabited by the audience and made visible and recognisable to them not as metaphor, nor as a moral metonym (as Gibbons suggests is the case with Jonson's staged London) but as an experienced space. The effect of making that space so concrete must have been to reinforce the sense of community in this audience – a sense of community that the Whitefriars playwrights, as Bly so successfully argues, also fostered through their

²⁸³ In the first scene involving Taffeta's house (I ii) Adriana and Boutcher move between the upper and lower stages, those spaces indicating respectively the interior upper balconied chamber of Taffeta's house and the street which that balcony looks on to.

²⁸⁴ *Ram Alley*, V i 48.

²⁸⁵ I am inclined to see this as the kind of 'theatrical "jump cut"' that Cohen suggests Middleton plays with in *Your Five Gallants* (Taylor, G., Lavagnino, J. *et. al.* (eds), *Op. Cit.*, p.596) but it may well be Barry just momentarily losing his sense of the space; see Location note for V i.

²⁸⁶ See Stern, *Op. Cit.*, p.93: 'descriptions spoken by characters onstage should not be assumed to take the place of scenery, or to be about environments that are often designedly unclear and carefully uncharacterised.'

²⁸⁷ Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, V i 18-17.

very particular style of perhaps cliquy, maybe even avant garde, but certainly risqué wit. However, before turning to the way Barry develops and uses that wit, we need to consider some of the criticisms that have been, or could be, levelled at his play.

Reconsidering *Ram Alley*

As we have seen,²⁸⁸ one of the persistent criticisms of *Ram Alley* is that it is imitative and conventional. Specifically, several critics complain that Barry took that part of the plot in which Frances is married to Throat on the pretence that she is a wealthy heiress from Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.²⁸⁹ In that play a mildly dissolute young gentleman, Witgood, loses his lands to his uncle Lucre, a conniving usurer, so persuades his mistress, Jane, to pretend to be a wealthy widow in order to trick the uncle into marriage and into returning the mortgage to his lands. However, Hoard, another usurer and enemy of Lucre, gets the widow by means of a 'cunning plan' which, like Throat's, is hardly a masterpiece of plotting: he arranges to meet the 'widow' when she is with Witgood and surprise him with some 'gentlemen' who carry her by boat to Cole Harbour where there is to be a priest who will 'clap it up instantly'.²⁹⁰

There are other, more detailed similarities. Once his plan has been accomplished Hoard, in much the same way as Throat does when he believes he has secured the rich heiress Constantia Somerfield, congratulates himself and imagines himself a rich man with a great following:

to ride to her lands in state and order following my brother and
other worshipful gentlemen, whose companies I ha' sent down
for already, to ride along with us in their goodly decorum
beards, their broad velvet cassocks and chains of gold twice or
thrice double. Against which time I'll entertain some ten men of

²⁸⁸ The Author, Barry's critical reception.

²⁸⁹ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.53, asserts that the Frances plot is 'unsightly borrowed from Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.' See also Gibbons, *Op. Cit.*, p.148: 'the main plot has certain recognisable similarities to ... *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.' Wayne, in her introduction to that play (p.373), also observes that Middleton's play 'was successfully adapted during the seventeenth century for Lording Barry's *Ram Alley*,' but then goes on to point out, perhaps with a greater degree of equitableness towards Barry, that Massinger also used the plot in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

²⁹⁰ Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.1.224-5

mine own into liveries, all of occupations or qualities ...²⁹¹

Later in the same scene, Witgood and Jane pretend to fall out with one another over her perfidy in marrying Hoard and have, in the midst of this 'row,' a whispered conversation in which Witgood checks the state of play – 'Will he come off, think'st thou, and pay my debts roundly?'²⁹² – just as William does with Frances when he returns to Throat's chambers having supposedly arranged a priest – 'has the gudgeon bit?'²⁹³

Both plays contain hints of incestuous relationships. In *A Trick*, Lucre's wife rather alarmingly says to her son, 'if I were a widow, I could find it in my heart to have thee myself,'²⁹⁴ whilst Tutchim, clearly referring to his sister, Lady Somerfield, tells Sir Oliver and Taffeta, 'We'll lie together without marrying.'²⁹⁵

There are, also, usages in both plays of the same, sometimes slightly unusual words. 'Decorum,' which occurs in the passage from *A Trick to Catch the Old One* quoted above, is interestingly also correlated with facial hair by Sir Oliver who 'wore the bristle on my upper lip | In good decorum,'²⁹⁶ and 'stinkard' meaning 'an old man' – 'She's as fine a philosopher of a stinkard's wife as any within the liberties'²⁹⁷ – is used in the same sense by both William and Boutcher of Sir Oliver.²⁹⁸

The legal term 'to save harmless' crops up in both: the host in *A Trick* talks of 'saving myself harmless,'²⁹⁹ and William declares, 'Do but bail me and I will save you harmless.'³⁰⁰ Jane, in her vow to be honest to Hoard, refers to 'treading of toes, | Wringing of fingers'³⁰¹ as ways of secretly flirting with an intended lover, and Sir Oliver, too, reminiscing about his youthful prowess as a courtier, tells us, 'I had my ... treads on the toe, | Wrings by the fingers.'³⁰²

Both plays use the oak as an image of an old husband capable of providing security or

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 4.4.12-18. (For Throat's somewhat grander fantasy see *Ram Alley*, III v 176-85.)

²⁹² *Ibid.*, 4.4. 175-6.

²⁹³ *Ram Alley*, II iv 55.

²⁹⁴ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 2.1.390-1.

²⁹⁵ *Ram Alley*, IV i 23.

²⁹⁶ *Ram Alley*, II i 13.

²⁹⁷ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.3.65-6.

²⁹⁸ *Ram Alley*, IV i 94 and 154, and V iii 113-7.

²⁹⁹ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.1.120-1. Middleton also uses the phrase in *Michaelmas Term* and *The Puritan Widow*.

³⁰⁰ *Ram Alley*, III v 89.

³⁰¹ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 5.2.169-70.

³⁰² *Ram Alley*, II i 16-17.

protection, Jane rather slightly describing Hoard as ‘such a dry oak as this.’³⁰³ and Sir Oliver presenting himself to Taffeta as ‘An old grown oak [that] | Can keep you from the rain, and stands as fair | And portly as the best.’³⁰⁴

Less unusual is Lucre’s use of the word ‘smack’ for ‘kiss’ when he welcomes Jane, his nephew’s supposed bride-to-be to his house, but the word does occur in the same context as it does in *Ram Alley* when Sir Oliver welcomes his supposed prospective daughter-in-law with a kiss and comments, ‘It smacks, i’ faith.’³⁰⁵ And perhaps more interestingly, in those same scenes both of the older men find a rich gift to give the women, in Lucre’s case ‘some jewel, a good piece ’o plate, or such a device,’³⁰⁶ and in Sir Oliver’s a gold chain.

Similar innuendos are worked in both plays: the various properties belonging to the ‘widow’ Jane are enumerated by a scrivener, the ambiguity increasing as the list continues: ‘her manor, manor houses, parks, groves, meadowgrounds, arable lands, barns, stacks, stables, dove-holes and coney-burrows,’³⁰⁷ this being echoed in Taffeta’s somewhat more obvious ‘I forbid thee my house, my out-houses, | My garden, orchard, and my back-side.’³⁰⁸ Jane’s allusion to male shortcomings – ‘’tis a very small thing | That we [widows] withstand, our weakness is so great’³⁰⁹ – is present in Tutchim’s ‘a small matter stays them.’³¹⁰

These verbal parallels and their occurrence in similar contexts can, of course, be accounted for by the linguistic habits and tendencies of the time. More interesting, perhaps, are the slippages in the linkages of the narrative that characterise both plays: in *A Trick to Catch the Old One* the return of Witgood’s mortgage in 4.1 comes across as more a matter of chance than a direct consequence of his strategy (though that was his declared object at the beginning of the play) and whilst he gets Hoard to pay off his debts in return for giving up any claim he might have on Jane (4.3.133ff.), just as William Smallshanks does in relation to ‘Constantia’ in return for his mortgage, this too comes across as a matter of luck rather than the direct result of his clever planning; in *Ram Alley* Beard leaves the tavern after the feigned arrest of Frances talking of a rendezvous which

³⁰³ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 4.1.63.

³⁰⁴ *Ram Alley*, III iv 11-13.

³⁰⁵ *Ram Alley*, II i 106. Sir Oliver also later refers, at IV i 64, to ‘love-stolen smacks.’

³⁰⁶ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 2.1.370-1.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.4.262-5.

³⁰⁸ *Ram Alley*, IV i 163-4

³⁰⁹ *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.1.152-3.

³¹⁰ *Ram Alley*, IV i 29.

is not accounted for elsewhere (IV ii 62), and in IV iii, after she has been abducted by Thomas Smallshanks, despite the fact that when they are first seen together they talk as though they know each other well, he talks about her as though he had never met her before William brought them together. In that same scene the lack of clarity around Thomas's intentions concerning where 'Constantia' is to be taken is also uncharacteristically vague.³¹¹ These considerations, however, take us in an entirely different direction of enquiry, leading away from questions of borrowing and towards questions of authorship – into, furthermore, the slippery area of authorial predispositions rather than habits – and although, as has already been said, the question of authorship of *Ram Alley* is not part of this study,³¹² it is perhaps worth noting in passing that these observations give us sufficient grounds to ask not whether Barry borrowed too freely from Middleton but whether possibly Middleton wrote both plays, whether Barry did, or whether there was some collaboration between them.³¹³

To return, though, to the question of borrowing, whether those who complain that Barry is here unduly reliant on another writer for material are applying more modern and hence anachronistic attitudes to imitation is a moot point. That the Elizabethans and early Jacobean had only the loosest notions of such concepts as intellectual property or plagiarism seems undeniable, though Stern is wrong to say that plagiarism was 'a term that did not exist at the time';³¹⁴ we might recall Robert Greene's diatribe against 'those Puppets ... that spake from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours' and, most famously of all, that 'upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that ... is in his owne

³¹¹ For fuller discussion of these points in the play see notes to *Ram Alley*, IV ii 62, IV iii 28, and IV iii 13-4.

³¹² See footnote 94.

³¹³ Two lines in Middleton plays are, in the light of this hypothesis, rather intriguing: first, in *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 5.2.22-4, Hoard welcomes to his wedding feast two fishily named guests, Lamprey and Spitchcock (a lamprey is an eel-like fish and a spitchcock an eel prepared for the table) with the diegetically speaking irrelevant greeting: 'Master Lamprey and Master Spitchcock, two the most welcome gentlemen alive! Your fathers and mine were all free o'th' fishmongers!' second, in *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 3.2.114-5, the French bawd Margarita rather arbitrarily introduces the idea that Young Franklin's father was a fishmonger: 'his *père*, what you call his fadre? He sell *poissons*.' Are these possibly sly references to the social origins of a friend, collaborator (or even a rival), or are they merely coincidental jokes playing on the slang meanings of 'fishmonger' – 'a frequenter of whores' or 'a bawd' – as in Hamlet's jibe at Polonius: *Polonius*: Do you know me, my lord? | *Hamlet*: Excellent well, you are fishmonger.' (*Hamlet*, II ii 173-4) ?

³¹⁴ Stern, *Op, Cit.*, p.44; the word is given by *OED* in the sense of 'literary theft' from 1621 (see *plagiarism*, 1) whilst 'plagiary' – 'a literary thief' – existed as a noun from 1601 (A.n.2) and as an adjective from 1597 (B.adj.2).

conceit the onely Shake-scene in a countrey.’³¹⁵

But there was also an acceptance, it would seem, that borrowing was part of the game. Writers borrowed frequently and openly,³¹⁶ and one wonders whether Barry’s contemporaries would have upbraided him if he had lifted a plot-line from Middleton rather than simply acknowledging that he knew a good plot element when he saw it, just as Massinger did when writing *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* a few years later, and as I have suggested above, perhaps Cooke did in relation to the violent wooing of the widow by William Smallshanks.³¹⁷

However, leaving aside questions of whether these modern objections to Barry’s borrowing are a-historical, even the modern critical line would be modified by how the borrowing is used. If borrowing results in something new, then the accepted view would be that it ceases to be ‘tawdry imitation’ and becomes ‘creativity.’ In that light it seems to me that much of the negative criticism of Barry seems misdirected, for whilst there clearly are similarities between *Ram Alley* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, there are also substantial differences, the main ones being that, first, both the old usurers from *A Trick* are combined in *Ram Alley* in the single role of Throat: Witgood intends to use the disguised Jane not to gain revenge on him by tricking him into marrying a prostitute but purely to regain his money from his uncle Lucre; it is Hoard who ‘steals’ Jane from Witgood in a happy by-product of Witgood’s original plan that provides Jane with a husband and a place in society. Second, the reverse happens with Jane herself, the prostitute who pretends to be a rich and much sought after widow being split into two quite different roles in *Ram Alley* – the genuine widow Taffeta and the disguised prostitute Frances – around whom two distinct plots are woven.

Moreover, this is not the wholesale transference of a single plot from one play to another, but the weaving of a plot element that makes up the single narrative of one play into a wider and much more complex plot of another – a plot that as we have seen is one of the aspects of *Ram Alley* that has attracted positive comments from most of its critics; and,

³¹⁵ Robert Greene, *Greenes Groats-Worth of witte, bought with a million of Repentance* (1592), F1v.

³¹⁶ See Stern (*Op. Cit.*, p.42) for the probable use by writers of commonplace books to store memorable phrases they had heard or read, and jokes (the latter often culled from published ‘jest books’).

³¹⁷ See footnote 94. We might also note that some recent writers on the early modern theatre have suggested Ben Jonson was not above borrowing from *Ram Alley* when he was writing *Epicene* (see, for example, the entry for Barry in *The Encyclopedia of English Renaissance Literature*).

perhaps more to the point, Barry uses this plot for an entirely different thematic purpose than does Middleton.

* * *

Ram Alley is thematically focused on – some might even say obsessed with – sex, and the plotting provides the vehicle for Barry's elaboration of this theme, the three narrative strands each, in some way or other, revolving around sexual disguise or pretence and, crucially, the idea of women's sexual potential as a kind of currency.³¹⁸

In the opening scene two narratives are set up. The first one is very basic and forms little of the play's substance. This plot (which I will call plot C) involves a rich young heiress, Constantia Somerfield, disguising herself as a pageboy in order to gain employment with (and so follow) a gentleman, Boutcher, whom she loves and wishes to marry.

Immediately after she has persuaded Boutcher to employ her the central plot of the play (which I will call plot A) is set going: William Smallshanks, the penniless younger son of a knight, persuades Boutcher, his friend, to assist him into fooling Throat (a corrupt lawyer-cum-usurer who has cheated William out of the land his father gave him) into thinking that Frances (a prostitute kept by William) is that same wealthy heiress Constantia Somerfield and that William has eloped with her; the aim of this deception is to lure Throat into stealing 'Constantia' from William in order to marry her himself; William will thereby, first, regain the mortgage for his land from Throat and, second, exact revenge on the lawyer for cheating him out of that land.

In this plot, Frances, the pseudo-heiress, is seen as an object of exchange: as a supposedly rich woman she is a marketable resource who is the object of both sexual and financial desire for three of the male characters;³¹⁹ throughout plot A she is therefore the subject of a number of violent abductions; as the prostitute, though, she is primarily a tool in the hands of the protagonist, employed by him to sexually humiliate Throat through this marriage to a woman who in reality has a debased market value.³²⁰ In plot C, more

³¹⁸ One is reminded here of Luce Irigaray's concept of the patriarchal economy in which 'woman is traditionally use-value for man, exchange-value among men. Merchandise, then' ('Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un,' trans. Reeder. C., in *New French Feminisms* (Harvester Press, 1981), p.99.)

³¹⁹ Again, cf. Irigaray (*Idem.*): 'Woman is never anything more than the scene of more or less rival exchange between two men.'

³²⁰ Though there is another element to this which perhaps should not be overlooked, and that is his claim to be setting her up with as good a marriage as she could expect, given

interestingly perhaps, the woman – the person whom those in the other plot *think* they are in pursuit of and hence who is the genuine form of sexual currency – is, through her disguise, able to participate fully in the world of male gendered behaviours and is also able to make, at the end of the play, her own choice of sexual partner quite without reference to the market arena within which both other plots take place.

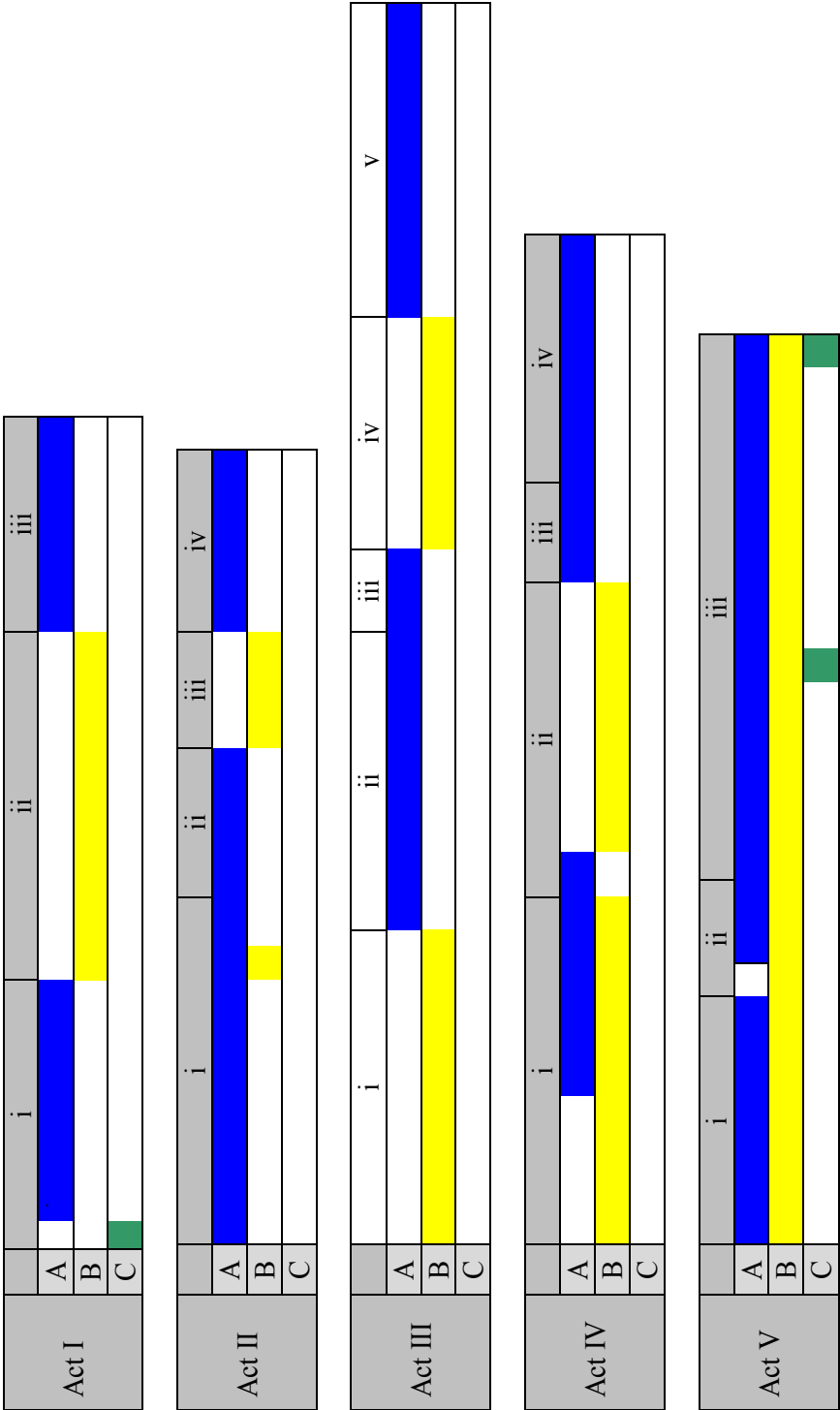
The third narrative (I will call this plot B) runs first alongside and then into the other two and involves the search for a husband by a rich widow, Taffeta, who, initially at least, controls this search through the sexual manipulation of her suitors. Each of her first three suitors is, or turns out to be, in some way inappropriate as a marriage partner: Boutcher, because he is too hesitant; Sir Oliver, initially her main choice, because he is too old – and is ultimately outwitted by his son; and Captain Face (a *miles gloriosus* in the Pistolian mode and a mentally unstable fantasist) because she has not chosen him; in fact, it is in his imagination only that she loves him and has agreed to marry him, and he harasses the widow with a violence which she refuses to tolerate; she puts an end to this by persuading Boutcher, through a false promise of marriage, to frighten him off. She finally accepts William Smallshanks as her husband after he has ‘wooed’ her with even more outright violence than that offered by Face. William’s action here, which modern audiences would perceive as a good deal further along the spectrum of sexual violence than that perpetrated by the captain, is presented as a vigorous and masculine grasping of an opportunity which fate offers him, and a timely corrective to Taffeta’s unfeminine sexual manipulateness – a correction which she finally concedes is acceptable, thereby acknowledging in the end her ‘true’ socio-sexual status: ‘Give me that lusty lad | That wins his widow with his well-drawn blade.’³²¹

Plots A and B are thus brought together through the protagonist’s stabilising himself financially, once he has reclaimed the property the lawyer cheated him of, by marrying the widow who was originally intending to marry his father. The focus of the action has also shifted from Ram Alley to Taffeta’s house, that being the location for the whole of Act V, throughout which both plots A and B run together.

In the meantime, plot C, which is introduced in the opening lines of the play and has been running through both plots A and B, is concluded in the final scene (after a showdown between the newly married – or at least, bedded – widow and her two disappointed

her social and sexual status: ‘I’ve passed my word to keep this gentlewoman | Till I can place her to her own content’ (*Ram Alley*, I i 78-9); see also note to I i 80.

³²¹ *Ram Alley*, V i 149-50.



The plot structure of *Ram Alley*

NB: the representation of scene and episode lengths is approximate only.

suitors) when the ‘page’ reveals herself to be the rich heiress and is accepted by the man she has been following who was one of the widow’s disappointed suitors. This plot thus puts the whole play in a kind of parenthesis, and although it is not developed in between the first and last scenes (Constantia’s romantic relationship with Boutcher making no progress) it never quite disappears from view as it constantly intersects with both plots A and B: with plot A because William chooses to pass off the prostitute Frances as Constantia Somerfield (now conveniently disguised as a boy) and with plot B because Boutcher is one of those who is seduced by Taffeta’s charms, leading Constantia, rather contrarily to her own objectives one might think, to act as his advisor in trying to obtain the widow’s hand but thereby (a) as a woman demonstrating her constancy through this self-denying devotion to the man she loves and (b) in the persona of pageboy consistently pursuing the role of the witty and sexually knowing male servant.

This is, then, a complex and well-structured narrative in which the two main elements are initially kept discrete but in the last two acts become increasingly interrelated until all three plots finally merge (as is visually demonstrated in the diagrammatic representation of the plot on page 129).

As promised in the Prologue, the action also conforms on the whole to the unity of time,³²² in that it starts in the morning at William’s lodging in Hosier Lane and carries on through the afternoon and night until early in the morning of the next day when Sir Oliver turns up at Taffeta’s house with the expectation of taking her to church as his bride. Moreover, the passage of time takes on metaphoric significance since things become more confused as the first day progresses until, with the onset of darkness, maximum confusion prevails and people’s behaviour becomes increasingly bizarre, the focus for this being the house from which Constantia, the sexual and economic prize whom most of the characters think they are pursuing, is absent: following the abduction of Frances by Thomas, Beard nonsensically assumes that she actually is Constantia Somerfield, leading him to head for the Somerfields’ house, where Tutchim, Lady Somerfield’s brother, has been making sexual overtures to her, and Throat has arrived to announce himself as her new son-in-law and take over the running of the household. With dawn comes the denouement and clarification, and the satisfying (at least in comic terms) distribution of males to females in three marriages,

³²² See *Ram Alley*, Prologue 6-8, and note to 8.

with a fourth marriage – that of Sir Oliver to Lady Somerfield (also a widow) – proposed.

The narrative carried by this plot is, moreover, at all points clearly related to the main thematic drive of the play, and if it depends for one of its elements on a certain degree of borrowing, Barry has made that borrowing his own through its relationship to the other elements and to those thematic concerns.

One criticism that could be made of the plotting (and this has already been noted) is that some of the narrative linkages are not clear. This is at its most obvious in IV iii (the scene in which Frances is taken from Beard by William's elder brother Thomas); Beard's explanation for the abduction, though comic, neither makes sense, nor does it fit with the way he and Frances behaved towards one another when they first met.³²³

That scene also shows some uncertainty about when and where Sir Oliver and Thomas intend to have their marriages solemnised,³²⁴ but as this is the point in the text where, also, some inconsistent passages of prose occur I suspect these uncertainties in the plot are as much as anything the result of hasty composition or poor revision rather than fundamentally poor construction.

* * *

This complex plot is enacted by a group of characters who are entirely in tune with the sexual focus of the plot.

On the whole Barry's characterisation is limited, being generic and restricted to the requirements of the plot and, perhaps more importantly, the comedy. In other words, it is of the level one might expect from, say, a high quality modern television sitcom, where simplicity of personality is necessary to enable the rapid development of a wide variety of comic situations – where, indeed, that one-dimensionality is the *sine qua non* of the characters' comic potential: it is the very fact that they have small range of obvious characteristics that provides the basis for the weekly plots around which the comedy is constructed.

Taffeta is, thus, the experienced and (therefore) lusty widow who 'has known the quid

³²³ See note to IV iii 28.

³²⁴ See note to IV iii 13-4.

of things.³²⁵ She has some status as a rich citizen's widow and with that a degree of independence which allows her to have her own narrative voice. She perhaps shows an unusual decisiveness in the way she deals with Face's intrusion into her house in III iv after Sir Oliver – supposedly a knight – and Tutchim – a justice of the peace – turn out to be completely incapable of doing anything about it; despite all that, however, she is in the end little more than a masculine construction of devious femininity: the sexually compliant and predatory woman who embodies and corroborates – some might say collaborates with – Tutchim's views concerning widows and sex,³²⁶ sexually manipulates and gulls Boutcher in order to rid herself of 'that fleshly Captain Face'³²⁷ using a deliberate and careful deception that appears to promise marriage but actually promises only sex³²⁸ (which in the end she denies anyway) and, above all, accepts – and hence validates – William's violent enforcement of marriage.³²⁹

³²⁵ *Ram Alley*, V i 113. It was a commonplace of early modern sexual psychology that married women, having experienced sex, became then obsessive in their pursuit of it. As McLaren puts it in *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century* (Methuen, 1984), p.29: 'according to much of the popular literature all women were lascivious and amorous,' adding the timely corrective, though, that 'it must be recalled that in examining such texts we are gaining insights into what were often mere male fantasies about female sexuality.'

³²⁶ See *Ram Alley*, III iv 1-5 and notes thereto.

³²⁷ *Ram Alley*, II iii 105.

³²⁸ *Ram Alley*, III iv 8.

³²⁹ Although I enjoyed Hanson's celebratory approach to Taffeta in her essay 'There's Meat and Money Too: Rich Widows and Allegories of Wealth in Jacobean City Comedy,' I cannot see the widow as a female character who 'seems to be on permanent holiday from early modern gender ideology' (p.209): first, I cannot get beyond the brutal sexual politics of the wooing scene which concludes with her symbolic submission to the superior rights of sexually-aroused masculinity through that phrase 'well-drawn blade' (which is, significantly, given to her, not William); second, that scene is a web of early modern ideological attitudes to widows, none of which demonstrates any recognition of them as entitled to independence; third, the representations of Taffeta and her polar opposite, Constantia, make it abundantly clear that the diegetic world of this play is one constructed by a man; fourth, though her discussion of Taffeta's name makes interesting points, I feel Hanson does not take sufficient account of the wider connotative range of that name (for which see note to *Actorum nomina*, 21) which take us far further towards the 'unacceptable' end of the early modern moral spectrum than into an area where she could be said to occupy a truly ambivalent position. I am more inclined towards the view expressed by Jennifer Panek (*Op. Cit.*, p.329) who comments on this episode that 'in the exchange of sex for money at the heart of a marriage between an impecunious young man and a rich, lustful widow, the man thus retained the upper hand.' Hanson is on far more

Adriana, her servant, matches her for ribaldry and plays the conventional wanton waiting maid with an eye for the sexual main chance, and Sir Oliver her suitor is the stock 'senex' figure, though enlivened occasionally by his tendency to talk like a thesaurus.

Frances, the *meretrix* of the play's subtitle, is also something of a generic character in the 'honest whore' mould, but there is something of a hard edge to her. Initially she puts herself into the shade by the way she appears to allow herself to be controlled by William, presenting herself in I i as the honest country girl, led astray by her seducer:

You know, sir,
I did enjoy a quiet country life,
Spotless and free, till you corrupted me
And brought me to the court ...
I knew no ivory teeth, no caps of hair,
No mercury water, fucus, or perfumes
To help a lady's breath, until your aunt
Learnt me the common trick.³³⁰

But this is all very much for Boutcher's sake – and she rather gives the game away with the reference to the 'aunt' (her bawd) and the sexually loaded 'common trick.' We also have to remember that, as a prostitute, it was part of her job to disguise under appropriately conventional 'romantic' language the reality of the commercial transaction of sex with her clients, and much of what Frances says in this scene can be read in that light, such a reading being in line with the fact that elsewhere, and when she has no audience to impress, she admits that she has seen the inside of the Counter prison on more than one occasion and has used her body there to trade for food with the keeper, Master Gripe, who: 'Has often stood to me | And been my friend, and let me go a-trust | For victual.'³³¹ Later in that scene she uses the same ruse, offering sex to the sergeant to persuade him to drop Mistress Sellsmock's claim (for which he says he has arrested her). According to Beard she admits to him that 'she was a punk, a

convincing ground for me when discussing the way landless younger gentry see marriage with a rich widow as the way to reinstate themselves both financially and socially.

³³⁰ *Ram Alley*, I i 64-73.

³³¹ *Ram Alley*, IV ii 35-7.

rampant whore, | Which in her time had been the cause of parting | Some fourteen bawds,³³² and at the end of the play William taunts Throat with the suggestion that she might have taken matters into her own hands and double-crossed him, being ‘An arrant whore, | Which you have married, and she is run | Away with all your jewels.’³³³

If that last detail suggests she has some spirit and a capacity to operate on her own account, nonetheless Frances is highly constrained by the disempowering context of the seventeenth century sex trade, representative of a false exchange value in a sexual economy, and she remains a person whose scope for action is determined by others, a pawn in their game, and a mere cipher for the person they believe they are really playing for.

Throat, perhaps, has more to offer to an actor, his crazed energy and total lack of self-knowledge leading him to continually undercut himself with misquoted Latin and overextended equivoques, as he does in IV iv when he bursts into Lady Somerfield’s house to claim his marital property rights³³⁴ in a scene which Gibbons (as has been noted) admired as an example of successful situation comedy.

Justice Tutchim, the bumbling and ignorant representative of local law, is also rescued from the banal by two characteristics. First, he acts as a vehicle for the comic treatment of taboo subjects; in his case, when drunk in IV i, he reveals an incestuous desire for his sister, Lady Somerfield, which he pursues when he sees her in IV iv.³³⁵

³³² *Ram Alley*, V iii 240-3.

³³³ *Ram Alley*, V iii 233-5.

³³⁴ See for example, the note to IV iv 83-93.

³³⁵ Barry is not unique dealing with this taboo on the stage, but he is unusual in making it a subject for humour; incest is usually a tragic matter, as in Ford’s *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* and Webster’s *The Duchess of Malfi*; Middleton has it as a motif in three plays: it is, in the strict sense of the term, comic in *No Wit/Help Like a Woman’s* in that the incestuous relationship in that play is resolved happily, but it is hardly represented as funny, whilst in *Women Beware Women* it has the inevitable tragic consequences, the incestuous Hippolito admitting as he dies the ‘fearful lust in our near bloods, | For which I am punished dreadfully’ (5.1.193-4); in *Hengist, King of Kent* (3.1.84-7), Hersus’ meditation on the way sin will relentlessly ‘pluck on sin’ (*Richard III*, IV ii 64) is darkly obsessive: ‘Man’s scattered lust brings forth most strange events, | An ’twere but strictly thought on. How many brothers | Wantonly got, through ignorance of their births, | May match with their own sisters?’ In *A Game at Chess* the Fat Bishop and the Black Knight treat the matter with levity (4.2.93-104) but the object there is to point up their moral degeneracy rather than to make light of the topic. Barry’s treatment of this taboo subject, however, is in tune with his treatment of same sex behaviour – see p.110 and footnote 240.

This tendency marks him out as possibly the most psychotically sexually driven individual in a *dramatis personae* generally more fixated on their sexual needs than almost any in early modern city comedy. Second, he is given speeches in which the comedy is so obtuse as to defy any other explanation than that this bizarre humour is in itself an aspect of his character – an aspect which an actor should be able to exploit to the full. Compared, however, to his more famous fictional fellow Justice of the Peace, Tutchim is the less subtle characterisation: full of aggressive and ignorant self-assurance, he lacks the capacity that Shallow has to induce sympathy for his sad humanity.

The other character through whom Barry makes comedy out of marginal sexual practices is, of course, the cross-dressed Constantia who, in her ‘true’ state is the pure, constant and uncritical female presence (the male-fantasy opposite, that is, of the lustful and inconstant Taffeta)³³⁶ whose ‘untrue’ state in her temporarily dissembling disguise enables her to surreptitiously enter, observe and engage with the male world by performing (perhaps ironically in the further capacity of moral commentator³³⁷) the generic comic role of sexually precocious pageboy – a situation which gives her privilege but arguably not power since she can do no more than observe Boutcher’s behaviour, and her return to femininity to claim him at the denouement is enabled by chance, not by any ability to manipulate events.

That said, it could be argued that for Constantia, as Jean Howard says of Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*, her cross-dressing is ‘not aimed at letting her occupy a man’s place indefinitely ... but at making her own place in a patriarchy more bearable,’³³⁸ the result being that she ends up ‘confusing the gender system and perfecting rather than dismantling it by making a space for mutuality within relations of dominance’³³⁹ – those ‘relations of dominance’ being interestingly echoed and so maintained in her disguised role as servant to Boutcher’s master, but giving her an element of control over her life that the other female characters lack.

Perhaps more to the point, though, from the comic point of view, is that from the

³³⁶ The antithesis is reinforced, of course, by their forenames – ‘Constantia’ and ‘Changeable.’

³³⁷ Though the disguised moralist is conventionally a revenge tragedy figure – Malevole in *The Malcontent*, or Vindice in *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, for example – Constantia’s speech on panderism at I ii 120-6 has something of that generic motif.

³³⁸ Howard, J. E., ‘Crossdressing, The Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England,’ *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 4 (1988), p.433.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.434.

moment she appears on the stage, 'Constantia' the actor draws our attention to the fact that 'she' is a boy already cross-dressed as a girl by pointing out (possibly literally) to the audience 'her' male genitalia:

Lord, how my feminine blood stirs at the sight
Of these same breeches. Methinks this cod-piece
Should betray me.³⁴⁰

From this point on the audience must surely be aware of the homoerotic potential in this role – a potential that Barry exploits substantially; as Thomson says, speaking of cross-dressed actors on the early modern stage in general: 'the ambivalence of the concealed genitalia may have released the racing thoughts and neighborly whispers of the audience. In any event, the cross-dressed boy is insistently provocative, an actor implicitly interrogating his character and sometimes breaking out into open contradiction of it.'³⁴¹

After her initial expression of uneasiness Constantia throws herself into the pageboy role, seeming to revel in her new-found freedom from feminine social mores by telling Boutcher, in the next scene, a ribald story about a citizen's wife and baboons,³⁴² and later in the same scene extends her performance of the male by flirting with the widow's maid, Adriana. But Bly's suggestion that from this point Constantia 'disappears into her page's clothing'³⁴³ and that, 'from one angle, Barry has momentarily lost control of his plot. He has forgotten that Boutcher's page is actually a disguised woman,'³⁴⁴ seems to me to misunderstand the way Barry is playing with this triple-gendered character: that he has not inadvertently subsumed the 'woman' in the 'page' is made perfectly clear in Constantia's response to Adriana's, 'Blurt, Master Gunner, your linstock's too short!'³⁴⁵ – 'Foot! How did she know that!'³⁴⁶ Bly's view on that response, that it 'only barely concedes to the logic of a

³⁴⁰ *Ram Alley*, I i 7-9.

³⁴¹ Thomson, P., 'Rogues and Rhetoricians: Acting Styles in Early English Drama,' in Cox, J. D. and Kastan, D. S. (eds), *A New History of Early English Drama* (Columbia University Press, 1997), p.333.

³⁴² See *Ram Alley*, I ii 42-72.

³⁴³ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.56.

³⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.78.

³⁴⁵ *Ram Alley*, I ii 110.

³⁴⁶ *Ram Alley*, I ii 111.

disguised heroine,³⁴⁷ short-changes Barry, as without recognition of the gender of the speaker's underlying role there can be no recognition of the homoerotic charge in the reply.

Bly's failure to recognise Barry's consistency on this point does, however, raise the question of how far we can talk with any authority, in relation to a writer's character construction, about the meta-performance by a character of another character. In the case of Constantia, which requires the *actor* to perform a role acted by the character being performed, can we say that *Constantia* 'performs' the role of male page that she takes on – that she has been created as an autonomous and clever young woman taking on that performative activity in order to hide her real gender, and that this is all part of the construction of the character by the author? Or is it merely that the characteristics of the conventional pageboy on the early modern stage – youthful cheekiness, wit, precocious masculinity, etc. – are being unthinkingly written in by the author and superimposed on a now subsumed character because these conventions are required by this element of his play?³⁴⁸ The former reading is obviously more attractive to someone who wishes to argue for Barry as a competent playwright,³⁴⁹ and to the actor as it provides more on which to build the character which she or he must bring to the stage. It would also, we might note, help the author realise the promise made in his prologue to show:

Things never done with that true life
That thoughts and wit shall stand at strife
Whether the things now shown be true
Or whether we ourselves now do
The things we but present.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.78.

³⁴⁸ Cf. Nan in Sharpham's *The Fleer*: like Constantia, having disguised herself as a boy in order to secretly follow and observe the object of her affections, she also adeptly assumes the generic behaviours of the witty and sexually knowing pageboy; for her enactment of the role see 3.2 of *The Fleer*, ed. Munro, L. (Nick Hern Books Limited, 2006) and for her and her sister's description of what 'playing the boy' involves see 4.2.184-95.

³⁴⁹ And also to the academic, one might observe, as it provides more opportunity to perform 'academicism.'

³⁵⁰ *Ram Alley*, Prologue, 9-13.

The writing of Constantia does, however, have one weakness which perhaps reveals Barry's inexperience as a stage writer: there are a number of scenes from which she is given no entrance in Q1 but where, even though she does not speak, she might be expected to be present as Boutcher's page. Two such absences occur in the first two scenes of act II: at the end of II i Boutcher meets William after the latter's meeting with his brother and father, and in II ii he accompanies William when he takes Frances to Throat's chambers in Ram Alley. Those absences seem the more odd as Q1 gives Constantia an entrance in I iii (the scene before II i) even though she does not actually speak there, and from I i to II iii Boutcher completes an unbroken journey from William's lodging (I i) via Taffeta's house (I ii) to Throat's chamber (I iii), thence to the rendezvous with William and Thomas, from which Constantia is missing (II i), back to Throat's chambers (II ii) and then back to Taffeta's house (II iii) at which point Constantia has rejoined him.

She disappears again for that whole section of the action in which William effects his gulling of Throat, being absent from Boutcher's side in II iv (in which Frances is left with Throat to lure him into William's net), III ii (when she is seized by Throat), III iii (in which William, Boutcher, Thomas and Beard pursue her), and III v (when William finally relinquishes her to the lawyer), re-entering with Boutcher at IV ii 112 for the humiliation of Captain Face, at which point she is possibly rather oddly instructed by Boutcher to immediately leave again.³⁵¹

Whilst all this could be explained as poor revision on Barry's part, or even simple oversight (given that he does list her as entering in I iii even though she does not speak in that scene) the persistence of her absence for such a substantial part of the play does rather suggest that Barry has been thinking of Constantia not as a character in the drama but merely as an element in a specific plotline, this failure of creative realisation resulting in a technical flaw.

* * *

The dialogue, and the metrically very irregular but fluid verse which carries it, is possibly the main strength of *Ram Alley* and it has attracted the admiration of several

³⁵¹ See note to IV ii 113.

of his critics, as has been noted already in the section on Barry's critical reception.³⁵² This verse does have one weakness worth pausing to mention – again possibly the result of haste or poor revision – which is a tendency to repeat words within a few lines of one another, sometimes with the same meaning but sometimes with a completely different meaning; in these latter cases it is as though the sound has lodged in Barry's mind and presents itself again when it finds a new semantic guise.³⁵³

At times, though, that same quirk of repetition gives the dialogue a colloquial raciness, catching the quality of real speech or utterance and conveying convincingly the psychological interplay between characters. So, in William's violent wooing of Taffeta, the repetition of the word 'stir,' the phatic exclamatory words such as 'go to,' 'why so,' 'now,' and the broken, breathless syntax combine to create a verbal mimesis of the physical struggle between the two of them:

'Peace! Stir not. By heaven, I'll cut your throat
If you but stir. Speak not – stand still – go to.
I'll teach coy widows a new way to woo.
Come, you shall kiss. Why so – I'll stab, by heaven,
If you but stir! Now hear – first kiss again –
Why so, stir not. Now come I to the point.'³⁵⁴

And when his father threatens not to countenance his marriage to the supposed Constantia Somerfield, the initial repetition and the awkward syntax at the end mimics effectively the inarticulacy and the incoherence of William's (albeit feigned) anger:

³⁵² Bayne is perhaps the most complimentary, referring to the play's 'vigour in its blank verse, which, in one or two places almost reaches distinction.' (*Op. Cit.*, vol. VI, chap. ix, sect. 4, p.13.)

³⁵³ For example, in IV ii 82-3, Captain Face upbraids the Drawer, 'What, shall I wait upon your greasy cook | And wait his leisure?' And at III v 89, William says, 'Do but bail me and I will save you harmless,' using the word 'harmless' in its legal sense of 'indemnify against loss,' Frances some twenty lines later, at III v 110, referring to herself as 'A silly, harmless maid,' using the word in its more common sense of 'unable to hurt anybody.'

³⁵⁴ *Ram Alley*, V i 92-98.

Father! Father!

'Zeart! Will you undo your posterity?
 Will you, sir, undo your posterity?
 I can but kill my brother then hang myself,
 And where is then your house? Make me not despair!
 'Foot! Now I have got a wench, worth by the year
 Two thousand pound and upward. To cross my hopes –
 Would e'er a clown in Christendom do't but you?³⁵⁵

Taffeta, too, in the heat of her anger at William, loses track of her syntax, and though this presents a problem for the reader – and annotator – it would work very well on stage, catching, as it does, the rhythm of language as it is actually spoken:

and what we use

About our hips to keep our coats from dabbling
 He wears about his neck – a farthingale! –
 A standing collar to keep his neat band clean.³⁵⁶

At its best this verse is a vehicle for complex imagery, such as Taffeta's multi-layered metaphor combining a sly jibe at women's sexual hypocrisy, a pun, allusions to *Genesis*, *Matthew*, fable and proverb, and, of course, graphic sexual innuendo:

But when wise maids dissemble and keep close,
 Then you poor snakes come creeping on your bellies
 And with all-oiled looks prostrate yourselves
 Before our beauty's sun, where once but warm,
 Like hateful snakes, you strike us with your stings
 And then forsake us. I know your tricks. Be gone!³⁵⁷

³⁵⁵ *Ram Alley*, II i 78-85.

³⁵⁶ *Ram Alley*, IV i 123-6.

³⁵⁷ *Ram Alley*, V i 82-7. For a fuller explication of the passage see notes to V i 82, 83, 84, 85-6, and 87.

This verbal intelligence and energy, Barry's gleeful exploitation of the English language's semantic abundance, comes out most strongly in his use of innuendo, the form of wordplay that predominates in *Ram Alley* – and indeed, the innuendo is remorseless. Puns are comparatively infrequent; this is a more flexible and slippery kind of wordplay than the simple *double entendre*. It is a kind of language which, as Bly aptly puts it, 'operates under a logic of clustering'³⁵⁸ and hence with which the auditor or reader is constantly invited to negotiate meanings, consider alternatives, probe for semantic possibilities. As Bly points out (talking of verbal gender categories) semantic boundaries are not respected in Whitefriars plays,³⁵⁹ and innuendo relies precisely on signifiers that slide around one another, meanings that glance off one another and never settle into anything as incriminating as a fixed, final idea. This is the verbal dexterity and quickness of mind that is required for a career in the law, and hence, one would imagine, is the kind of wit best suited to the Whitefriars audience. The battles of wit between Prince Hal and Falstaff in *1* and *2 Henry IV* – plays which Barry seemed to know very well – come to mind (though there the wit is perhaps more of the university than the Inns of Court).

So, a simple, innocuous looking line like William's 'Sergeants, do your kind. Hale me to the hole'³⁶⁰ expresses, certainly, the immediate brutal exigency of his situation but it also manages to get obscene innuendos into each brief sentence which propose a quite opposite possible behaviour on the part of the sergeants to that which William appears to be demanding.³⁶¹ But this is not just crude innuendo for its own sake: knowing his position is actually not at all serious and that the game is going his way, William is playing with Throat, demonstrating his masculine superiority through his wit and drawing the audience into complicity with him to confirm their pact against the corrupt lawyer.

Sex, money, power, wit and machismo

This brings us, finally, to the way in which language operates within the play's main thematic interests – sex, money, and power – and how a specific form of language, the bawdy wit, is purposefully deployed in the working out of the play's other major

³⁵⁸ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.31.

³⁵⁹ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.81.

³⁶⁰ *Ram Alley*, III v 96.

³⁶¹ See the note to III v 96 for an explication of the innuendo.

theme, its insistent machismo (that being understood here as the aggressive definition of masculinity through opposition to three other forms of sexual subjectivity: other heterosexual men, non-heterosexual men, and women).

For a play that is so obsessed by sex, it might be thought odd to assert that in *Ram Alley* sex is not an end in itself, but a means towards an end, that end being wealth. To put it another way, sex is not the commodity but that which is exchanged for a commodity: it is, as it were, the currency through which all transactions in the play are conducted, those transactions being the exchange of sexual capabilities (or potential) for wealth. Sex is what is proffered or exchanged in some way for wealth (or another benefit) and the process of sexual exchange depends on various types of linguistic exchange: in this economy sex is thus the currency (what the exchange is valued in) and language operates as the ‘specie’ (that is, the physical form of the currency) or the vehicle of the exchange or offer – a kind of promissory note, an idealised and symbolic form of a given value in the currency.³⁶²

It is important to recognise, however, that there are two ways in which an economic exchange can be corrupted: through debasement of the currency or through theft. Both types of corrupted exchange feature extensively in *Ram Alley*, and both are intimately connected to the idea of language as a form of corrupted currency; the play could therefore be said to centre not so much on the question of what constitutes a valid exchange within an economy based on sexuality – on the valorisation, that is to say, of such an exchange system (as might be the case in a Shakespearean comedy, for example) – as on how easily those exchanges can be dishonestly manipulated by people intent on using them for personal gain: it centres, that is to say, on the downside of this commodification of sexual relations.

Language is therefore by no means a simple or untainted vehicle: it is used at different times as a means of disguise or posturing, as an inducement, and as a weapon. One of its main uses is to operate as the *token* of sexual potential, a kind of coin which is

³⁶² This assimilation of sex to currency is articulated also in Sharpham’s *The Fleeer* when Florida justifies the decision made by herself and her sister to become prostitutes: ‘we are fair ... and was not beauty made to be enjoyed? Do we not exclaim on those who have abundant store of coin [sc. sexual wealth] and yet for want [i.e., through a fault, in this case greed] suffer the needy perish at their door’ (*The Fleeer*, 1.2.16-20). The large number of verbal similarities between *The Fleeer* and *Ram Alley* suggest that Barry knew that play well (it was performed in 1606 at the Blackfriars, and published in 1607); he would also have known the author, as Sharpham’s *Cupid’s Whirligig* was performed by the Children of the King’s Revels.

sometimes no more than the promise or apparent offer and which in such circumstances becomes the false or debased coinage of sexual posturing.³⁶³ When used thus, language is the means by which sexual advantages – and power – are obtained, but it becomes an unstable coinage – ‘cracked in the ring,’ as expressed in a common metaphor of the early modern drama which combines the idea of debased specie with sullied sexual ‘goods.’³⁶⁴

This sense of language as false coin is perhaps most obvious in plot B, particularly in the sexual posturing of the central female character, the wealthy widow Taffeta, who makes a promise of sex to Boutcher as payment for ridding her of Captain Face:

having agreed with Boutcher that he will ensure Face gives up his pursuit of her she then vows, ‘By sacred Vesta’s ever hallowed fire, | To take thee to my bed.’³⁶⁵ She has, though, no intention of honouring that promissory note – ‘I have set the fool in hope’³⁶⁶ she tells Adriana a few lines later – and Boutcher discovers eventually that he has effectively given her credit which she does not, on the due date, repay.

Captain Face also believes that Taffeta has made that same promissory gesture to him, but in his case the promise exists only in his imagination, he being a fantasist who imagines all rich women as translating their sexual desire for him into inordinate wealth:

’Twere brave
If some great lady through a window spied me
And straight should love me. Say she should send
Five thousand pound unto my lodging.³⁶⁷

William, on the other hand, sees a much more straightforward route to wealth through the sexual possession of Taffeta:

I’ll have her.

³⁶³ A modern equivalent would be those absurd promissory posturings adopted by contestants in television dating game-shows.

³⁶⁴ Barry uses the metaphor himself when William tries to reassure Throat that Frances is ‘current metal, not a penny the worse | For a little use – whole within the ring’ (V iii 291-2).

³⁶⁵ *Ram Alley*, II iii 100-1.

³⁶⁶ *Ram Alley*, II iii 104.

³⁶⁷ *Ram Alley*, III i 32-5. See also IV ii 89-102.

This widow I will have. Her money
 Shall pay my debts and set me up again.³⁶⁸

And he achieves this crudely expressed aim – effectively the theft of the widow's considerable wealth – through a violent sexual theft which is neither more nor less than the rape of Taffeta.

That sexual 'theft' – the last and most successful – is only one of many in the play. Indeed, plot A (the redemption of the forfeited mortgage) is predicated on fooling Throat into thinking that William has 'stolen' the rich heiress Constantia Somerfield³⁶⁹ with the aim of tricking Throat into 'stealing' her for himself, though the woman Throat in fact duly abducts is the disguised and falsely named prostitute Frances, which false money William deceitfully exchanges for his land, the original source of his wealth.

Frances is then 'stolen' from Throat by Beard, who in turn loses her to Thomas Smallshanks, an act which persuades Beard that he has missed a trick in thinking that the girl he simply intended to have sex with was in fact a far more valuable commodity.

'Constantia' is thus 'stolen' no fewer than four times: hypothetically by William in the first instance, by Throat from William, by Beard from Throat, and by Thomas from Beard, each of the final three abductors thinking that he has gained and lost genuine currency – and hence wealth – in this series of thefts.

Given this frenetic activity around the abduction of a woman – an act that was made a felony by the 1487 statute Abduction of Women (3 Hen.7.c.2) – it is hardly surprising that the word 'steal' is used in this play almost exclusively in relation to the dishonest appropriation of women by men as sexual currency, that is, in its literal legal sense, theft. The word 'steal' (and its grammatical variants 'stealing, stole, stolen') is used 25 times in the play, and only two of those instances occur in non-heterosexual contexts.³⁷⁰ But the legal sense of the word is only part of its deployment: the play's usage of the word embraces its full semantic range from the strict legal meaning of dishonestly taking someone else's property, through the more slippery activities that

³⁶⁸ *Ram Alley*, IV i 183-5.

³⁶⁹ See *Ram Alley*, I i 117.

³⁷⁰ That is, at I iv 118 in the discussion of the mock case between Constantia and Dash, and at II iii 12 and is a reference to a theft perpetrated by Throat in his earlier life. The word 'theft,' rather oddly, is used only once (at V iii 197).

are covered by the related word ‘stealth’³⁷¹ (a word which has strong connotations of acting covertly and with duplicity) to the very specific sense related to marriage (see note to ‘steal’ at I i 117); moreover each individual usage tends to comprehend that full range so that even when Throat accuses William in the final scene of being ‘guilty to the law | Of felony for stealing this lady’s heir’³⁷² one is not even sure how accurate or precise the legal application is there in the mouth of this pseudo-lawyer whose own interest in the woman in question has been expressed entirely in terms of stealth/stealing, making the word itself slightly duplicitous, slightly unstable.

Not only does this word therefore play its part in the location of women’s sexuality in this form of exchange as a kind of currency (it is the specie in the currency of female sexual potential) it also operates in that sphere of language as debased coin, as dissembling and hence unstable language which is a false promissory offer disguised as current coin.

This debased, dissembling language-as-specie operates primarily in plots A and B, though it is also present in plot C.

The central female characters in both plots A and C are not only sartorially disguised, they are also linguistically disguised. In the case of Constantia in plot C, the acting out of her male disguise requires the successful adoption of a suitable linguistic camouflage; hence the enthusiasm with which she plays the role of the precocious pageboy, but hence also the consequent sexual confusions which she gets herself into, confusions in which the apparent promises of heterosexual pleasures are transmuted, for the audience, into quite other sexual pleasures (this process of suspect translation being, perhaps, another indicator of how we should evaluate the laughter that is thereby prompted).

In plot A, Frances, as has already been noted, is disguised through her renaming as Constantia to create the ‘false coin’ William intends to pass off on Throat. Throat is thus fooled into thinking that he is marrying a wealthy heiress – a woman who, being rich and of high social status, is at the top of the pyramid of sexual desire, of maximum exchange value, and who can thus genuinely promise to Boutcher at the end of the play ‘for the worth of her virginity | I dare presume to pawn my

³⁷¹ For example, the two instances of ‘stolen’ that occur in speeches by Sir Oliver (IV i 64 and 70) apply to surreptitious sexual activity rather than more rigidly to the abduction of women, but they still carry strongly the sense of ‘theft of sexual favours.’

³⁷² *Ram Alley*, V iii 219-20.

honesty.³⁷³ In fact, though, Throat has married a penniless prostitute – a woman who, being poor and sexually available to all men for payment, is at the very bottom of the pyramid of sexual desire, of minimum exchange value and not the ‘current metal’³⁷⁴

William claims her to be, given that her promises of sexual pleasure are couched in the most debased form of linguistic currency.³⁷⁵

In another twist of the sex-as-coinage correlation, William suggests to Throat, before Frances turns up outside Taffeta’s house, that she has ‘run | Away with all your jewels,’³⁷⁶ though Sir Oliver does later try to mollify Throat by suggesting that actually both his money and his potency have been restored to him: ‘Take her, Throat. You have a better jewel now | Than ever.’³⁷⁷

William, on the other hand, by the end of the play has not only recovered his land but has consolidated his financial position through his sexual success with Taffeta, thereby averting the threat of emasculation that he saw would be the price if Throat succeeded in cheating him of his lands:

If I gull not
And go beyond my open throated lawyer
... let me
Like waiting gentlewomen be ever bound
To sit upon my heels and pick rushes.³⁷⁸

Ultimately William achieves victory, and he does so through the successful deployment of that bawdy wit as a weapon to defeat other men in the contest for sexual supremacy.

The tropical representation of the tongue as a linguistic weapon was a commonplace of the early modern period, though usually in relation to women: as the proverb had it,

³⁷³ *Ram Alley*, V iii 126-7.

³⁷⁴ *Ram Alley*, V iii 291.

³⁷⁵ As has already been noted, false language was part of the stock in trade of the prostitute, and Frances’ acting of the role of the innocent heiress ‘abused, cozened, and deceived’ (II iv 16) by ‘mad Will Smallshanks’ (IV iii 30) is thus an appropriate extension of a professional skill put to good use by William in his gulling of the lawyer.

³⁷⁶ *Ram Alley*, V iii 234-5. See the note for an explication of the innuendo.

³⁷⁷ *Ram Alley*, V iii 301-2.

³⁷⁸ *Ram Alley*, I i 131-6 (my italics). See also the note to I i 135 for the relationship of land ownership to sexual potency.

‘a woman’s weapon is her tongue.’³⁷⁹ The figure is explicit in an exchange of wit between Mariana and Meschant in Markham’s *The Dumble Knight*:

Qu[een]: Well wench, shalt be the proud womans champion.
 Ma[riana]: And ile defend them against all men, as at single
 tongue.
 Me[schant]: I had rather fight with a gyant, then you at that
 weapon.³⁸⁰

But one does not need to look far into allusions to the tongue in *Ram Alley* to see that it also has a sexual suggestiveness. Even when William applies the proverb to Taffeta – ‘Keep close your womanish weapon – hold your tongue’³⁸¹ – it appears to have a genital application. A similar innuendo is in play in relation to Throat when Beard recommends to Frances that she:

take this wise and virtuous man
 Who, should ’a lose his legs, his arms, his ears,
 His nose and all his other members,
 Yet if his tongue be left ’twill get his living.³⁸²

When, therefore, in the final showdown between William and Throat, Boutcher claims ‘That William Smallshanks shall put your Throat to silence | And overthrow him at his own weapon’³⁸³ the metaphoric ground has been well prepared for us to see this as the last round in a contest played out through the combative use of bawdy wit, and to recognise the ‘weapon’ in question as a good deal more than just the linguistic dexterity required by a lawyer to make his living.

In *Ram Alley* the weapon is innuendo which, of all types of language, is the most semantically slippery and the most unstable. It is also the most underhand, allowing the speaker to simultaneously make an accusation and step back from that accusation

³⁷⁹ Dent, R. W., *Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1495-1616* (University of California Press, 1984), W675.

³⁸⁰ Markham, *The Dumble Knight* (printed for John Bache, 1608), H1r.

³⁸¹ *Ram Alley*, V i 90; see the note to this line for an explication of the innuendo here.

³⁸² *Ram Alley*, II iv 81-4.

³⁸³ *Ram Alley*, V iii 210-1.

in disingenuous innocence. It is therefore the most appropriate language for a struggle which is aptly described by Middleton's play title *Wit at Several Weapons*³⁸⁴ and which in this play is a kind of phallic combat in which the weapon is the idealised conception of physical male sexuality embodied in highly wrought language, a language thick with metaphor, pun, innuendo and hostile comedy, and aggressively assertive of male sexual capabilities. It is street-fighting at its dirtiest.

In Barry's hands it is the dirtiest in another sense, and it is here that we see not just how *Ram Alley* is obsessed with sex but why. This is not purposeless crudity, rudeness for its own sake or to get a cheap laugh: it is the means by which the male characters define their masculinity and assert the superiority of that masculinity over others – over women, over other male characters, but above all over those that are neither male nor female: it is because of his skill with this weapon, the 'well-drawn' phallic blade of machismo bawdy wit, that William is able to bully Captain Face into leaving Taffeta alone, to win the wayward widow for himself, and to defeat the lawyer. Bawdy wit is thus language converted into masculine power. To put it another way, it is genuinely current specie representing possibly the most highly valued sexual currency in this economy – machismo (and far from being, as Bly suggests, defensive in relation to female erotic behaviour,³⁸⁵ the men in *Ram Alley* are aggressively sexually offensive: they all want to get into bed with Constantia/Frances and Taffeta and will use any means available to do so; when William learns that Boutcher's 'pageboy' is actually a 'page girl' his immediate response is, 'Would I had known so much! | I would have been bold to have lain with your page.'³⁸⁶) Throat, recognising at last that he has lost the game by being cozened into marrying a prostitute, can see for himself little more than a bankrupt (that is, sexless) marriage and hence the fate of the emasculated cuckold:

I am gulled. Ay me accursed!

Why should the harmless man be vexed with horns

³⁸⁴ This play ends with the Old Knight bringing the final battle of wits to a close with a line (5.2.358) that reinforces this idea of aggressive verbal combat and reasserts the comic – 'Down with all weapons now, 'tis music time.'

³⁸⁵ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.83, but the comment is based on a misunderstanding about Boutcher's relationship to Constantia Somerfield.

³⁸⁶ *Ram Alley*, V iii 312-3. We might note that he does not even consider 'tried to have lain ...'

When women most deserve them?³⁸⁷

In the masculine diegesis of *Ram Alley*, the successful comedic exercise of bawdy enables the witty male to lay claim to knowledge of – and, more importantly, control of – the adult world of male sexuality: by conversion of the ordinary meanings of words into covert meanings – what might be seen as another form of destabilising of the normal currency of language, but which actually is a conversion into a more highly-rated currency – it tells the auditors, first, that the speaker is a member of that masculine freemasonry, and second, where it causes the discomfiture of others through making them the object of the auditors' laughter, asserts fellowship with those who share the laughter and superiority over those who are discomfited.³⁸⁸

Whilst it obviously makes for good comedy and is based on a sound commercial understanding of the audience in the theatre, the verbal energy exhibited in *Ram Alley* has, I would argue, something more purposeful behind it than merely giving the audience 'a good laugh for its money,' something more purposeful, too, than cocking a hat at the respectable world of Jacobean London represented by the Inns of Court. The exercise of this wit through the considerable linguistic capabilities of the protagonist, William Smallshanks, demonstrates the successful heterosexual performance of the male. On that 'successful performance' hangs his ability to obtain not merely pleasure but the goods necessary to sustain life. Sex for pleasure (as opposed to sex for the purpose of reproduction) is, as William points out at the beginning of the play, more likely to waste rather than increase one's wealth:

Dost think this petticoat,
A perfumed smock, and twice a week a bath

³⁸⁷ *Ram Alley*, V iii 277-9. See the note to 279 for an explication of the innuendo.

³⁸⁸ I am reminded here of that strange rite of childhood, whereby each new fragment of knowledge about sex was accompanied by a joke which enabled the novice to participate in the adult world by enjoying the newly acquired knowledge in an act of communal laughter, an act which reinforced not just the knowledge but also its status as forbidden knowledge – something secret to be kept hidden and passed on only to a new novice, that being the next level in this hierarchy of masculine freemasonry which identified the seniority and hence superiority of the initiator. (Was the first crude joke shared by Adam and Eve, perhaps, on their learning what God had tried to keep hidden from them – that they were naked, and hence sexual beings? Alas, *Genesis* has nothing to say on the subject.)

Can be maintained with half a year's revenues?³⁸⁹

What really matters is sex that brings with it the goods of life in a financially rewarding union. That, as William, along with other city comedy 'prodigal son' protagonists,³⁹⁰ learns, is much more satisfying, and hence his (characteristically innuendo-laden) promise to Taffeta as they agree to marry:

To thee
I'll only cleave. I'll be thy merchant,
And to this wealthy fair I'll bring my ware
And here set up my standing.³⁹¹

– though the doubt might linger, of course, as to whether William is, at this point, uttering current coin.

³⁸⁹ *Ram Alley*, I i 57-9.

³⁹⁰ For example, Witgood in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, and Wellborn in Massinger's *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*.

³⁹¹ *Ram Alley*, V i 137-40. See notes to the passage for an explication of its meaning.

The Editing Process

On annotating innuendo

It is an obvious point, but one necessary to bear in mind, that the act of annotation is an active process, an intervention in the meaning of the text in which the annotator makes choices for the reader from a selection of possible meanings, and places emphases on different meanings where there are alternatives. In offering an interpretation of a word or phrase the annotator is thus doing little more than saying, ‘this is what the word or phrase means to me,’ and it is quite another question whether that is what the word or phrase might mean to another present-day auditor or reader, or what it meant – or could have meant – to any given contemporary auditor or reader, let alone whether that is what it meant to – or was intended to mean by – the author. It is another question, too, whether we can genuinely internalise contemporary meanings in seventeenth century texts given that we are the heirs, first, to a process of development in language that makes our semantic experience necessarily different, and, second, to a critical process that has overlaid succeeding cultural understandings on those texts. To take the most obvious example of the latter process, we are no longer readers of the Shakespeare determined by Petrarch, North, Holinshed, Seneca, Kyd, Marlowe etc., but of a Shakespeare who is ‘the construction of the late eighteenth century and, above all, of the editorial labors of Malone ... “our” Shakespeare is ... the contemporary of the French Revolution rather than of the Armada.’³⁹²

This need not be, however, a counsel of editorial despair. We may not be able to inhabit the semantic field of a seventeenth century reader, but we can peer over the fence, run around the edges, and perhaps even retrieve the odd lost ball. Our aim should be not to attempt definitive answers, but rather, taking all due care and diligence to consider possibilities and balance probabilities, to make judgements accordingly and cover, wherever appropriate, alternative feasible meanings and shades of meanings.

A randomly chosen example will illustrate the point. In response to Lady Somerfield’s commenting on his dress, Throat says:

³⁹² Stallybrass, P., ‘Editing as Cultural Formation: the Sexing of Shakespeare’s Sonnets,’ *Modern Language Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No.1 (1993), p.92.

Law is my living,
And on that ancient mould I wear this outside.³⁹³

The correlation of the two words ‘ancient’ and ‘mould’ would normally indicate that the latter is being used in the sense ‘the earth from which we are made’ (*OED*, n¹.4, and as in, ‘Men’s bodies are but of earthly mould’³⁹⁴), that being, according to the seventeenth century’s accepted explanation, the original – and hence ‘ancient’ – source of human flesh. Such a reading, however, makes little sense in this context as ‘that’ refers back grammatically to ‘law,’ making ‘law’ in some sense the ‘ancient mould.’ More attractive, therefore, are the other meanings of ‘mould’ – ‘the body as a support for clothes’ (n³.4.b) and ‘the pattern or model upon which something is shaped’ (*OED*, *mould*, n³. 1.a) which would make the phrase mean something like, ‘that long-standing body of knowledge,’ and hence refer to the law as the inner quality that determines Throat’s ‘outside’ – his outward physical appearance. But such an interpretation still contains some sense of the clothes-wearing body, so the idea of ‘body as earth’ has not been entirely lost and, even though it cannot make coherent sense in the sentence as a whole, remains available to be picked up by a person familiar with that sense and its place in the person’s culture. It therefore seems to me to be not just sensible but important to catch that potentiality in the note and at least alert the modern reader to this shade of meaning.³⁹⁵

Ram Alley, however, offers its annotators an additional challenge in that its humour depends largely on innuendo, a form of wordplay that introduces meanings and possibilities of meanings which will not necessarily be part of the standard, identifiable definitions of words. Innuendo renders its signifiers far more unstable than do puns, equivoques, quibbles or ambiguities, one aspect of this being that, in theatrical performance particularly, purely topical meanings can derive from the context of the utterance in the action, who is speaking to whom, intonation, and other non-verbal factors such as gesture and expression, all that making the signifieds not just far harder to pin down but actually ephemeral.

³⁹³ *Ram Alley*, IV iv 51-2.

³⁹⁴ Middleton, *The Owl’s Almanac*, 2068-9.

³⁹⁵ For further discussion of the approach taken to annotation in this edition see the next section, Editorial protocols.

A further ephemeral aspect of innuendo is that it depends for its development on a complex cultural/linguistic evolution of connotations, the stages of which are often buried under several other layers of evolution of what can be, to complicate matters, narrow or restricted registers. Certain meanings within a specific semantic field thus become, at certain times, dominant or culturally preferred, later to be displaced by other preferences.³⁹⁶ Words do indeed, as Eliot lamented, slip, slide and perish – or at least, aspects of their meanings do; meanings do not stay still, and as new ones grow up they stifle the old, making it hard for a current reader to understand how or why words that are for us entirely innocent such as ‘shape,’ ‘garden,’ ‘kindness’ or ‘use’ could not have been spoken in Jacobean London – allowing, of course, for the context – without risk of inciting bawdy laughter.³⁹⁷ It must seem to the average twenty-first century reader an absurd straining of those words’ meanings, and, by corollary, further evidence (if any were needed) of the academic propensity for over-reading literary texts, to suggest that they should be understood as being sexually suggestive. Two other complicating factors associated with this type of humour should also be noted. First, the occasional capacity of a signifier for downright contrariness needs to be borne in mind, as with the word ‘ram’ in the title of the play,³⁹⁸ and the name

³⁹⁶ That said, we might note the persistence of some of these signifiers in recent and current usage: eliding musical instruments with sexual organs (‘You wenches are like bells: | You give no music till you feel the clapper’ – *Ram Alley*, II iv 63-4) was given a boost by George Formby in the period between the two world wars in his music hall song ‘With My Little Ukelele in My Hand,’ (1933); the implication that dancing means having sex (‘Dost think I have not learnt my prick song? | What, not the court prick song – one up and another down?’ – *Ram Alley*, IV i 99-100) is inescapable in late twentieth and twenty-first century popular music; and the jewels / testicles innuendo (‘I have brought her stones | Jewels and chains, which she must use tomorrow’ – *Ram Alley*, V i 26-7) was employed to full advantage in coverage of the story about the current Prince Hal being photographed naked in a Las Vegas hotel room, as in, ‘Prince Harry put the crown jewels on display in Vegas this weekend ... getting BARE ASS NAKED during a game of strip billiards with a room full of friends in his VIP suite.’ (TMZ website, 22nd August 2012, <http://www.tnz.com/2012/08/21/prince-harry-naked-photos-nude-vegas-hotel-party>.)

³⁹⁷ For ‘shape’ see the first five lines of the play; for ‘garden’ see I i 13 and IV i 164; for an extended instance of ‘use’ and ‘kindness’ being played on for their suggestive potential see IV ii 8-16, and V iii 53 for another instance of ‘kindness’ used in the bawdy sense. The shift in the word ‘kindness’ can be traced to some extent in that it lost its connection with that meaning of ‘kind’ – ‘natural disposition, nature’ (*OED*, n.3.a) – which linked easily to the idea of ‘performing the sexual functions’ (*OED*, n.3.c) and which remained common up to circa 1600 but then slowly lost currency until it died out in the mid-nineteenth century.

³⁹⁸ See note to I i Title.

Smallshanks,³⁹⁹ or the contradictory connotations associated with the moon that Lieutenant Beard meditates on.⁴⁰⁰ Second, there is no necessity for coherence in jokes that turn on puns, equivoques or innuendos; often the very fact that the secondary meaning is gratuitous and completely irrelevant to the drift of the primary meaning is part of the joke – the sudden, unexpected and inappropriate eruption of the taboo into the normal, as happens so often in the Nurse's speeches in *Romeo and Juliet*. Her unconsciousness of the accidental improprieties is part of the character, and the fact that she is unaware of them, of course, increases the humour.

What, then, can the hapless annotator do when confronted with such wayward and hydra-headed signifiers? Standard dictionaries (the *OED* is the obvious example) are of very limited help here, and even dictionaries of slang such as Eric Partridge's *Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, and Gordon Williams' *Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature*, whilst they point to possible meanings, cannot help with how non-verbal factors may push an innuendo in a particular direction.

Under such circumstances, one might ask how the annotator can establish which of the possible meanings were available to the contemporary audience, or were made available to them through performance. How much were they part of the normal semantic field for that word or phrase in ordinary, everyday speech, and how much did they require, in order to be activated, some non-verbal linguistic prompt such as a nod, a wink, or a knowing pause? It would be hard enough to establish this if one were annotating, say, a radio script written within living memory – one might envisage trying to annotate a script of one of the Julian and Sandy sketches from the sixties' comedy programme, *Round the Horne*,⁴⁰¹ which relied heavily on the gay slang, parlare – but to establish it for a seventeenth century theatrical text is probably now impossible.

The solution adopted here has been to take risks, extending the proposed interpretations beyond what can be clearly demonstrated as likely or plausible meanings and offering what will be acknowledged as unlikely or implausible readings in order to ensure a full exploration of the semantic possibilities of any given word or phrase, as, for example, in the note to Throat's thoroughly obscure, 'We wear small

³⁹⁹ See note to *Actorum Nomina*, 1.

⁴⁰⁰ See note to IV iii 16-7.

⁴⁰¹ Broadcast on the BBC Light Programme, 1960s.

hair, yet have we tongue and wit.’⁴⁰²

Nonetheless, the possibility of ‘over-reading’ remains, and it might be objected that I have, on occasions, been too keen to read the text for sexual innuendos and *double entendres*, and that these are seen where the context is entirely innocent. In defence against such a charge, I would argue, first, that this must sometimes be an inevitable result of dealing with a text which uses a language in which words can have a multiplicity of sometimes semantically scattered meanings, many of which play with the taboo; second, that we are dealing here with a play which has sex at its core; and third, that it is better to risk over-reading rather than risk missing, so to speak, a fine isolated equivocation caught from the penetralium of comedy. After all, no one familiar with early modern theatrical comedy can be in any doubt that bawdy can be found in the most unlikely and suprising places,⁴⁰³ and Lording Barry seems to have had as finely tuned an ear as any dramatist of that period for the indecent.

That said, in case the reader should wearily exclaim, as Bly does of Barry, that in the hands of this glossographer ‘there is a fatiguing sense that any word can mutate into an obscenity,’⁴⁰⁴ I will give one example of where the bawdy option was not pursued, in hope that this will allay any suspicions that no discrimination has been exercised. Returning from St Giles church, where he has married the woman he believes to be the rich heiress Constantia Somerfield, Throat gloats: ‘The knot is knit which not the law itself, | With all his Hydra heads and strongest nerves, | Is able to disjoin.’⁴⁰⁵ For ‘nerve’ as a noun *OED* gives: ‘sinews or tendons’ (1.a), ‘those elements which constitute the main strength of something’ (2.a), and ‘strength, vigour’ (3a), all of which make sense and seem applicable here. It also gives ‘the penis’ (1.b), for which the earliest illustration given is 1662, though Williams gives the meaning as available

⁴⁰² *Ram Alley*, IV iv 92. See play text for the note.

⁴⁰³ Even play titles were not exempt, as *Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks* itself demonstrates (*pace* Celia Daileader, who states in *Eroticism on the Renaissance Stage: Transcendence, Desire and the Limits of the Visible* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.2, that this title – and others noted here – ‘do not advertise their obsession with heterosexual couples and coupling.’). The two words in *Ram Alley*’s subtitle, *Merry Tricks*, are suggestively played on in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*; *Much Ado about Nothing*, is very much concerned with that which Hamlet observed lies ‘between maids’ legs’ (*Hamlet*, III ii 118-9), whilst *As You Like It* no doubt caused the odd titter when first advertised, and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* more than likely offended many an upright member of the Worshipful Company of Grocers.

⁴⁰⁴ Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.39.

⁴⁰⁵ *Ram Alley*, III v 3-5.

by the end of the sixteenth century. Williams might therefore be seen as supporting that as a reading, but the analogy is with the law, not a person, and I doubt that even Barry imagined the law as being embellished with sexual organs, male or otherwise: even as purely gratuitous innuendo any such sense would be completely inappropriate here. The decision was therefore taken – and taken without any reluctance – to ignore meaning 1.b entirely.

Finally, it will be noted that no attempt has been made in the annotations to determine whether any given instance of wordplay is pun, innuendo, equivocation, quibble etc..

First there is the difficulty of defining terms whose semantic borders overlap so much that the more one tries to distinguish them the more they merge into one another; second, trying to apply any definitions finally arrived at would defeat the most subtle of medieval theologians. Given the way meanings slide around one another in this type of wordplay, it was felt more sensible to use terms such as ‘glance, imply, suggest, play’ to indicate the relationships between meanings rather than attempting to define or describe the linguistic or tropological functions that produce those relationships.

Editorial protocols

The layout of the text and annotations in this edition was originally set up to follow, in the main, the protocols of the Arden Shakespeare,⁴⁰⁶ setting the text and related notes on the same page with textual variants, where noted, on a separated line between the two. I would prefer now to have set text and notes on the verso and recto respectively of opposite pages with the textual variants at the very bottom of the verso page, as I believe that in a printed copy this makes for easier reading of the text and easier correlation with its associated annotation. However, the requirements for the presentation of a thesis do not permit such a layout, and, additionally, it is less easy to read such a layout on a screen unless the screen is unusually large (and hence correspondingly difficult to create such a layout if working on a computer). The Arden style of layout was therefore, with some reluctance, maintained throughout the second stage of the work.

The collation of textual variants is minimal, variants generally being noted only where they relate to an emendation in this edition or to a question of interpretation. Claude

⁴⁰⁶ The Arden Shakespeare series was, at the time this thesis was started, the recognised model for academic and scholarly editions of early modern dramatic texts.

Jones provides a full collation of variants and emendations covering all the editions of *Ram Alley* up to his own edition, and it was thought pointless to repeat that work here. Emendations adopted by Corbin and Sedge in their post-Jones edition are noted here only where they impinge on interpretation, and even then for the most part in the annotation rather than the collation line.

Spelling has been modernised in line with current Modern English practice, problematic Q1 spellings being noted occasionally in the notes where they raise a problem of interpretation. Where a Q1 spelling suggests an ambiguity or pun (for example, ‘travel’ / ‘travail,’ or ‘antic’ / ‘antique’) it seems to me sensible that, if one is going to modernise spelling, in cases such as this one has to go for the modern spelling of the dominant sense. A judgement therefore has to be made concerning the primary or uppermost of the two meanings, the appropriate modern spelling for that sense adopted and the ambiguity explicated in a note. If the Q1 spelling were to be adopted regardless of primary sense a note would still be needed to point out the additional modern spelling and explicate the possible pun, so little would be gained and the claim of the editor to be modernising compromised.

Spelling of characters’ names is treated in Q1 with the characteristic orthographic nonchalance of the period with regard to personal names (both ‘Sommerfield’ and ‘Somerfield’ appear in the *Actorum nomina* alone); this edition regularises the spelling of names and has chosen to spell them in line with modern spelling where the word making the name has a recognisable meaning (so ‘Taffata’ becomes ‘Taffeta’ and ‘Throte’ becomes ‘Throat’) or as the sound (or sounds) of the name would now most likely be spelled in English (so ‘Smale-shankes / Smalshanks’ becomes ‘Smallshanks,’ and ‘Sommerfield’ becomes ‘Somerfield’).

Punctuation in all the quartos appears to be very much that of the compositors. In Q1 the two men (or the two who shared the majority of the work) vary in their application of stops, and one is particularly free in the use of fullstops. This edition has applied punctuation according to the conventions of modern English and has taken note of Q1’s punctuation only where its punctuation is unusually difficult to render satisfactorily into a modern form or causes a problem of understanding.

Q1, with the exception of four prose passages in sig. G, is set as verse, with half or part lines given to separate speakers set continuously. Speech prefixes are set on the same line as the beginning of a speech, abbreviated, and by no means regularised.

The verse is, obviously, retained in this edition but the prose passages are also

retained, even though it is possible that they could be (and might have been intended to be) versified.⁴⁰⁷ Speech prefixes are regularised, set in full, and set above the speech: setting in full makes them more immediately recognisable, whilst placing them above the verse line avoids crowding the line, creates a greater sense of space on the page and so is more visually pleasing.⁴⁰⁸ Half and part lines are set on separate lines, but the second (or later) part of a line is set on the same line as the speaker's name to give the full line some visual continuity.

Stage directions are set both between lines and in the margins of Q1, with names being given in full or abbreviated depending on the available space; many directions are missing. This edition has consistently set directions between lines, added entrances and exits that are missing along with some stage directions where it was felt the dialogue is insufficient to indicate an action; all these additional directions are in italicised square brackets; names in directions have been silently regularised. Only those changes that alter the meaning of a Q1 direction are noted in the collation line. Concerning division of the play into acts and scenes, Q1 marks only act divisions as was common for plays written for indoor theatres, but it also notes the first scene of each act, almost as though it is expecting other scene divisions to follow. This edition has opted to be more decisive and to pursue the implication of the act headings of Q1 by dividing the acts into scenes all the way through. I feel that marking scene divisions is also justified in that, where the action is not continuous, bringing this to their attention does readers more of a service than a disservice.

* * *

As to the annotation of the text, as this progressed I felt more and more strongly that I wanted to aim for what might be called 'fully critical' annotation – that is to say, annotation that goes beyond mere elucidation of the more difficult meanings. With that in mind it was decided at the outset to illustrate whenever possible other usages of the glossed words and phrases in the contemporary drama, the aim being not to suggest indebtedness or borrowing (though that might sometimes be inferred)

⁴⁰⁷ See The Text, The printer's copy, for further discussion of these prose passages.

⁴⁰⁸ This edition follows Q1 with regard to the speech prefix for Constantia Somerfield, naming her as /Constantia/ (it is /Con./ or /Co./ in Q1) even though she is acting the role of /Page/ for most of the play and is thus named in some Q1 stage directions.

but to show how a word or phrase, or the particular usage of that word or phrase, fits into the wider context of contemporary vocabulary and usage.

It seemed to me, though, that by trying through annotation to explain to a modern reader how a seventeenth century person might have understood what is being said – how that earlier reader might have constructed meanings from the words used – and hence how the text is a seventeenth century verbal artefact, then there are other aspects of its artifice that the editor should be trying to help the reader understand. This particular text is also a theatrical artefact so the editor should be trying to help the reader to understand, for example, the relationship between text, stage, and staged place. In the case of *Ram Alley* this seems to me particularly important as the play invites us to imagine that what is represented on stage is happening in a variety of specified places in London very close to the theatre where it was first performed. For that reason it was decided to include a note at the beginning of each scene providing wherever possible an explanation of the scene's location.

But one can take that a step further. It is not just speaking people moving through particular locations: they are people whose speaking and moving reveals particular motives and feelings. It was decided, therefore, that the notes should address not just the topographical coherence of the action but also the coherence (or otherwise) of the characters' behaviour, their motivations and, where relevant, the relationship between the geography of the action and those motivations and behaviours.

Slowly the scope of the annotations was being enlarged. Next it became clear that as language, character and action are elements which combine to carry or explicate the themes of the play, so the notes should be expanded further to show how those elements cohere at decisive thematic moments in the text. The usual practice would be to cover those aspects of the text, and the ways in which they construct possible meanings, in the introduction and hence in physically detached discussions. By addressing them alongside the text one avoids the tendency of introductions to require a kind of re-assemblage of the text and its meanings separately from its reading, and I felt that there was a strong argument for trying to restore the immediacy of that process.

It has to be conceded, of course, that there are dangers in this approach: of unduly imposing one's own interpretation on readers, of overburdening them with annotation to the detriment of their sense of the flow of the text, even of getting dangerously close to creating a kind of absurdist Shandean 'total annotation.' But there is

something else that I believe favours it: this is an approach that not only openly acknowledges but that accepts, and indeed embraces, the undeniable fact that an editor is engaged in not just shaping the text we see on the page – the spelling, punctuation, lineation, etc. – but is also determining our understanding of the text, the way we interact with the possible meaning of the text.⁴⁰⁹ By choosing to be open about this I believe one creates a more balanced relationship between editor and reader, since the more obvious the editor's role in these matters is made, the easier it is for the reader to perceive it and, if preferred, reject it.

For the truth of the matter is (if, indeed, there is any truth in these matters) that the only person who can make sense of a text for a particular individual reader is that individual reader. Everything that has been said in this introduction up to this point is, in the end, no more than my explanation of the text to myself; if there is to be any hope of helping an individual reader to understand this text it must be through the provision of options in the glossing of the language, covering as much as can reasonably be covered, and then handing over the process of understanding to the reader. The rest, alas, is mere self-performance, a way of putting it, as Eliot would have it, that is not really very satisfactory (a periphrastic study, one might add, in a worn-out academic fashion).

And that said, there is, for the editor, a final advantage in this somewhat contradictory strategy of both coming out in the open and, at the same time, retreating into the background: thus declaring the editorial role so openly allows one to enjoy without guilt the relationship that develops between oneself and the text. This relationship is not at all proprietorial (as might be expected) but more akin to friendship, based as it is on a growing understanding of the text's strengths and weaknesses and the kind of knowledge (spurious, of course, but nonetheless powerful) that comes through one's intimate engagement with it over a long period of time. It is perhaps a relationship similar to that which actors develop with a character they are playing and, if admitted and acknowledged, then perhaps it also has permission to express itself, at times, with the ludic jocularly appropriate to friendship. As Lukas Erne puts it: 'we think of editions in analogy to performance ... There are theatrical performances, and there are textual performances.'⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰⁹ See Erne, L., *Shakespeare's Modern Collaborators* (Continuum, 2008), p.3, and Stallybrass, *Op. Cit.*.

⁴¹⁰ Erne, L., *Idem.*, p.8.

Abbreviations used in annotations to the text

Editions of *Ram Alley* (in chronological order)

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Q1 | Lo. Barrey, <i>Ram-Alley: or Merrie Trickes</i> , 1 st edition (printed by G. Eld for Robert Wilson, 1611) |
| Q2 | Lo. Barrey, <i>Ram-Alley: or Merrie Trickes</i> , 2 nd edition (printed by G. Eld for Robert Wilson, 1611) |
| Q3 | Lo. Barrey, <i>Ram-Alley or Merry Trickes</i> , 3 rd edition (printed by John Norton for Robert Wilson, 1636) |
| Reed | Lodowick Barry, <i>Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks</i> , in Reed, I. (ed.), <i>A Select Collection of Old Plays</i> , 2 nd edition, Vol.V (printed by J. Nichols for J. Dodsley, 1780) |
| Scott | Lodowick Barry, <i>Ram-Alley, or, Merry Tricks</i> , in Scott, W. (ed.), <i>The Ancient British Drama</i> , Vol.II (printed for William Miller by James Ballantyne and Co., 1810) |
| Collier | Lodowick Barry, <i>Ram Alley, or Merry Tricks</i> , in Collier, J. P. (ed.), <i>A Select Collection of Old Plays, a New Edition with Additional Notes and Corrections</i> , Vol.V (Septimus Prowett, 1825) |
| Hazlitt | Lodowick Barry, <i>Ram-Alley or Merry Tricks</i> , in Hazlitt, W. C. (ed.), <i>A Select Collection of Old English Plays Originally Published by Robert Dodsley in the Year 1744</i> , 4 th Edition, Vol. X (Reeves and Turner, 1875) |
| Jones | Lording Barry, <i>Ram-Alley or Merrie-Trickes</i> , ed. Jones, C. E. (University of Louvain, 1951) |
| Corbin and Sedge | Lording Barry, <i>Ram Alley</i> , ed. Corbin P. and Sedge D. (University of Nottingham, 1981) |

Six copies of Q1 of *Ram Alley* were traced and collated for this edition; they are referred to by the following abbreviations:

E – National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh

F – Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington

G – Glasgow University Library

L – Liverpool University Library

O – Bodleian Library, Oxford

Y – Yale University Library, New Haven.

Other works

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| Abbott | Abbott, E. A., <i>A Shakespearian Grammar</i> , 2 nd edition (Macmillan, 1894) |
| Colman | Colman, E. A. M., <i>The Dramatic Use of Bawdy in Shakespeare</i> (Longman, 1974) |
| Dent | Dent, R. W., <i>Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1495-1616</i> (University of California Press, 1984) |
| Harben | Harben, H. A., <i>A Dictionary of London</i> (Herbert Jenkins, 1918) |
| Kokeritz | Kokeritz, H., <i>Shakespeare's Pronunciation</i> (Yale University Press, 1953) |
| Onions | Onions, C. T., <i>A Shakespeare Glossary</i> , 2 nd edition (Oxford University Press, 1958/1980) |
| OED | <i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 1 st edition (Oxford University Press, 1971) for notes compiled 1978–1982, and 2 nd edition, digital version (Oxford University Press, 1989) for notes compiled 2012 and later |
| Partridge.1 | Partridge, E., <i>A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English</i> (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1949) |
| Partridge.2 | Partridge, E., <i>Shakespeare's Bawdy</i> (Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) |
| Sugden | Sugden, E. H., <i>A Topographical Dictionary to the Works of Shakespeare and his Fellow Dramatists</i> (University of Manchester Press, 1925) |
| Tilley | Tilley, M. P., <i>A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries</i> (University of Michigan Press, 1950/1966) |
| Williams | Williams, G., <i>Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespearean and Stuart Literature</i> , 3 volumes (The Athlone Press, 1994) |

Wright Wright, J., *The English Dialect Dictionary*, 6 volumes (Frowde, 1898).

Illustrations and examples contained in quotations from these works are referenced as they are in the work quoted.

All quotations from the works of Shakespeare are (unless otherwise specified) from Evans, G. B. (ed.), *The Riverside Shakespeare*, (Houghton Mifflin, 1974).

Abbreviations of the titles of Shakespeare's plays are as used by C. T. Onions in *A Shakespeare Glossary*, 2nd edition (Oxford University Press, 1958/1980).

All quotations from the works of Middleton are (unless otherwise specified) from Taylor G., Lavagnino J. *et. al.* (eds.), *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Books, articles and literary texts quoted from or discussed in the annotations are generally referenced there by author and title only, full bibliographic details being given in the Bibliography on page 381.

RAM-ALLEY:

Or

Merrie-Trickes.

A COMEDY

Diuers times here-to-fore acted

by

the Children

of

the Kings Reuels.

Written by *Lo: Barrey.*

AT LONDON

Printed by *G. Eld*, for *Robert Wilson*,
and are to be sold at his shop in Holborne,
at the new gate of Grayes Inne.

1611

The Prologue.

Home bred mirth our muse doth sing –
 The satire's tooth and waspish sting,
 Which most do hurt when least suspected,
 By this play are not affected;
 5 But if conceit, with quick-turned scenes
 Observing all those ancient streams
 Which from the Horse-foot fount do flow
 (As time, place, person), and to show
 Things never done with that true life
 10 That thoughts and wit shall stand at strife

 2. satire's] *Satyres* Q1.

- 1 *Home-bred mirth*] i.e., homely and unpolished entertainment in contrast to the 'waspish' satire which might be seen as the stylistic preserve of the city wit and hence urbane and sophisticated (*OED*, *home-bred*, a.2; *mirth*, n.3); 'home' also suggests 'local, of this area' (*OED*, n¹.5); cf. Jonson, in the Prologue to *The Alchemist*: 'Our scene is London, 'cause we would make knowne, | No countries mirth is better then our owne' (5-6). We should note, though, that Barry adopts here one of the conventions of the prologue, which was to disingenuously claim that nobody could be offended by what will follow on the stage: not only does he satirise the law through the characters of Throat and Tutchim, he also (see 21-31 and note below) creates precisely the sort of play that puritans – and, it ought to be said, the religious lobby in general – objected to.
- 1 *sing*] here 'speak in verse' not in song.
- 5 *conceit*] 'fanciful and ingenious imagination' (*OED*, 7.b). We have to wait until line 17 for the verb to which this noun is attached – 'may win your favours.'
- 5 *quick-turned scenes*] i.e., (a) theatrical scenes presented in quick succession (adv. + verb); (b) episodes or situations that are shaped and crafted in a lively manner (parasynthetic adj.: *OED*, *quick*, adj.12 + *turn*, v.5.b), with the sense also that the scenes are taken from life (*OED*, adj.1).
- 6 *ancient streams*] here the unities (referred to in 8) seen as theatrical conventions that emanate from the home of the muses.
- 7 *Horse-foot fount*] i.e., Hippocrene (Greek, 'fountain of the horse'), the fountain on Mount Helicon, created when the winged horse Pegasus struck the earth on the mountain with his hoof. The fountain was sacred to the muses and was thought to inspire poets who drank from it.
- 8 *time, place, person*] Aristotle's three unities were generally agreed to be time, place and action (not person): a single, unified action should be played out in one place over a continuous period of time lasting no more than one day. The unity of person therefore seems to be an anomaly. However, Jonson, in the Prologue to *Volpone*, also claims that 'The lawes of time, place, persons he obserueth,' (31) and David Cook, in his introduction to that play, seems to assume that by 'person' Jonson means 'action' in that 'each character has his or her own miniature action' (*Volpone*, ed. Cook, D., p.20). It may be that Barry got the phrase from *Volpone* (acted from 1605/6) as there are other similarities between the prologues to the two plays (see notes to 1, 8-9, 16 and 25). Jones argues that *Ram Alley* does observe unity of time and place and, to a limited extent, person (which he accepts without question as one of the unities and which he explains, rather unconvincingly, in terms of what he thought Barry would have understood by it); given, though, that (a) there are three distinct plots, (b) the location is geographically restricted but varied and not always clear, and (c) the action runs from around noon of one day to the early morning of the next (with presumably some time for people to sleep – or at least, in the case of William and Taffeta, go to bed – between the end of the first day and the beginning of the next), *Ram Alley* could at the very best be said to observe only the unity of time.
- 8-9 *show ... true life*] present fictional acts so realistically; cf. Jonson's claim in *Every Man in His Humour*, Prologue 21, to present: 'But deedes, and language, such as men do vse.'
- 10 *That*] sc. 'so that.'
- 10 *thoughts*] 'imagination'; 'thought' as opposed to 'knowledge' (*OED*, *thought*, n¹.4.c); sc. 'what we think we see.'
- 10 *wit*] 'reason' (*OED*, n.2.a).

- Whether the things now shown be true
 Or whether we ourselves now do
 The things we but present – if these
 Free from the loathsome stage disease
 15 (So over-worn, so tired and stale,
 Not satirising but to rail)
 May win your favours and inherit
 But calm acceptance for his merit,
 'A vows by paper, pen and ink
 20 And by the learnèd sisters' drink
 To spend his time, his lamps, his oil,

16. Satirizing] *Satyring* Q1.

- 12 we] i.e., the actors.
 13 present] 'represent, enact' (*OED*, v.7.a).
 14 stage disease] possibly with a glance at venereal disease as 'stage' could mean 'sexual bout' (Williams), and hence 'disease caught through sexual activity.'
 15 tired and stale] (a) 'hackneyed and out of date' (*OED*, *tired*, ppl.a¹.2; *stale*, a¹.3.a); (b) 'sexually clapped-out' (Williams, entry for *stale*, and there is a hint of such a meaning in the definition 'of a person, past marriageable age' in *OED*, *stale*, adj¹.4.a); as a noun 'stale' could mean 'a prostitute' (*OED*, n³.4) but if such a meaning is in play here – linking perhaps with the idea of 'disease' – the noun would have to be used parasynthetically to suggest something along the lines of 'like a clapped out prostitute.'
 16 rail] 'abuse, inveigh against' (*OED*, *rail*⁴, 1.a). Jonson also rebuts the criticism in *Volpone*, Prologue 10, that 'all he writes, is rayling,' and claims in *The Alchemist*, Prologue 11-2, that 'this pen | Did neuer aim to griue, but better men.'
 17 inherit] 'obtain' (*OED*, 3).
 18 acceptance] 'favourable consideration, approval' (*OED*, 2b).
 19 'A] here and throughout the play 'he'. The 'he' referred to is the author, though the Prologue has not yet actually mentioned him.
 20 the learnèd sisters' drink] the learned sisters are the muses (as they have a profound knowledge and understanding of all the arts) and their drink would be the water of the Hippocrene fountain which, given its reputed ability to inspire verse, would be a suitably hallowed substance for a poet to swear by.
 21-31 To ... villain] there would appear to be an extended series of bawdy innuendos in this passage which provides, by contradicting and undercutting the primary sense of the passage, a foretaste for the audience of what they can expect of the humour in this play. On the surface the playwright promises that, if this play goes down well, he will work tirelessly, burning the midnight oil to produce new works of wit and originality which are, moreover, so morally unimpeachable that even those puritan polemicists opposed to the theatre (on the grounds that the sinful behaviour and lewd talk represented on the stage prompts imitation by susceptible members of the audience) will be able to come and watch it. However, the secondary meanings suggest that something altogether different is on offer and something probably not so much to the taste of the puritans the author claims to be appeasing. To start with, lurking under the word 'spend' is a suggestion of the sense 'ejaculate, have an orgasm' (a sense available at this period according to Williams but given by *OED* from 1662 at the earliest – v¹.15.c); although this word is immediately (and perfectly sensibly) attached to 'time,' the rest of the line would give the audience pause for thought and possibly therefore back-reflection, since 'lamps' and 'oil' could mean 'vaginas' and 'semen' respectively (Williams; cf. also Middleton, *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 2.2.269-70: 'This lamp of love, while any oil is left, can never be extinct'), whilst the brain was believed to be the source of semen (on the grounds that it was the source of spirit, and semen was a physical manifestation of spirit – cf. Shakespeare's Sonnet 129.1-2: 'Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame | Is lust in action') and the 'exhaustive working' (*OED*, *toil*, v¹.5) of that brain comes from over-enthusiastic indulgence in coition with the 'hours' or 'whores' of the night (for the pun 'hour/whore' see Crystal, *Pronouncing Shakespeare: The Globe Experiment*, p.41); having thus set out how he intends to research his next work, the author then turns his

- And never cease his brain to toil
 Till, from the silent hours of night
 He doth produce for your delight
 25 Conceits so new, so harmless free,
 That puritans themselves may see
 A play, yet not in public preach
 That players such lewd doctrine teach
 That their pure joints do quake and tremble
 30 When they do see a man resemble
 The picture of a villain – this,
 As he a friend to muses is,
 To you, by me, 'a gives his word
 Is all his play doth now afford.

FINIS

A2

-
- innuendo upon those puritanical objectors to the theatre by suggesting that their 'joints' – or 'penises' (Williams) – are also responding, albeit probably guiltily, to the pleasures of sexual stimulation as 'quake' and 'tremble' are both indicative of physical agitation and sexual excitement' (Williams, in his entry for *quagmire* references a quibble on 'Quaker/quaking ... the sect and the sexual motion', though from a 1659 text). Whilst it might be felt that such a complex thread of obscure wordplay needing extensive explanation could hardly be grasped on just one hearing, it would not take much more than a pause and a knowing look from the actor at the words 'lamps' and 'oil' to alert the audience to the fact that innuendo was here in play and to reinforce these secondary meanings. The promise to write more plays if this one is received well echoes the preface to Sharpham's *The Fleer* (1607), in which the 'printer' – possibly Sharpham himself adopting a comic persona – says, 'Use these comical discourses favourably and you shall have some from the author hereafter more worthy your favours and affections' (To the Reader and Hearer, 18-20).
- 25 *Conceits*] 'ingenious and witty expressions' (*OED*, n.8) – the products of the imagination rather than, as in 5 above, the imagination itself. For the 'newness' of these conceits, cf. Jonson, 'Nor hailes he in a gull, old ends reciting, | To stop gaps in his loose writing,' and 'Nor made he his play for iests, stolne from each table, | But makes iests, to fit his fable' (*Volpone*, Prologue, 23-4 and 27-8).
- 25 *harmless free*] possibly tautological, as both 'harmless' and 'free' could mean 'innocent, free from guilt' (*OED*, *harmless*, adj.3, and *free*, adj.7); however, the more obvious meaning of 'harmless' here is 'causing no harm' (*OED*, adj.4) and 'free,' whilst it could still mean 'innocent,' could also mean 'honourable' or 'open, frank' (*OED*, adj.4.a, 23 and 25.a), a sense which drifts towards 'over-free, forward' (*OED*, adj.23) and hence 'licentious' (*OED*, adj.25.b); though that last sense is exemplified by *OED* only from 1852 the word clearly has that semantic capacity in *Ram Alley* (see, for example, I i 66, I ii 169, and III i 24 and notes thereto) and such a use here would make the phrase 'harmless free' a neat oxymoron to parallel the paradoxical suggestiveness of lines 21-31. *OED* records no use of 'harmless' as an adverb and, though it is possible that this is a nonce use of the word with that grammatical function, it seems safer to treat both words as adjectives – 'conceits so harmless (sc. and) free' – rather than adverb and adjective – 'conceits so harmless (sc. harmlessly) free.'
- 28 *lewd*] mainly 'lascivious' (*OED*, a.7), tying in with the general tenor of the preceding passage, but also more generally 'wicked, unprincipled' (*OED*, a.5).
- 34 *afford*] 'provide' (*OED*, v.7).

Actorum nomina.

- Sir Oliver Smallshanks.
 Thomas Smallshanks [his elder son].
 William Smallshanks [his younger son].
 Justice Tutchim.
 5 Boutcher.
 Lieutenant Beard.
 Throat [a Lawyer].
 Dash [his scribe and servant].
 Captain Face.
 10 Three Gentlemen.
 A Drawer.
 Constable and Officers.
 [Sergeants.]
 [Citizens.]
 15 [Servants.]
 [Fiddlers.]

Women

- Lady Somerfield.
 Constantia Somerfield [her daughter].
 20 Frances [a prostitute].
 Taffeta [a rich widow].
 Adriana [her waiting woman].
 Chambermaid [to Taffeta].

A2v

1. Sir Oliver Smallshanks] *Sir Oliver Smale-shankes* Q1. 2. Thomas Smallshanks] *Thomas Smale-shankes* Q1. 3. William Smallshanks] *William Smalshankes* Q1. 4. Tutchim] *Tutchin* Q1.
 20. Frances] *Francis* Q1. 21. Taffeta] *Taffata* Q1.

Actorum nomina] literally ‘the names of the actors’ (Latin) but more strictly, ‘*Dramatis personae*’ – ‘the characters in the drama.’ Its placing after the Prologue is unusual.

- 1 *Smallshanks*] the name carries a range of connotations; it may be indicative of high rank, as having slender legs seems to have been associated with the upper classes (Jones quotes *Poetaster*, II i: ‘a man borne upon little legs is always a gentleman born,’ and see also Middleton’s *The Nice Valour*, 4.1.210-11: ‘I’ll never trust long chins and little legs again – | I’ll know ’em sure for gentlemen hereafter’); it was also associated with being lecherous (Williams has references – though from much later than *Ram Alley* – to ‘spindle-shank’d beaus’ and ‘a spindle shank’d Narcissus’ engaged in various forms of lewd behaviour, whilst a more contemporary reference to leanness as indicating lechery would be *2H4*, III ii 313-4, where Falstaff describes Justice Shallow as, ‘the very genius of famine, yet lecherous as a monkey’). There may also be a connection with dancing (an activity which requires nimble legs and which also, of course, has strong sexual connotations) as at II ii 58 William Smallshanks instructs Throat to tell the woman he pretends he is going to marry that ‘the Smallshanks have been dancers.’ However, in opposition to that range of connotations is the suggestion in Middleton, *Wit at Several Weapons*, 3.1.285-7, that thin legs are indicative of a lack of sexual vigour: ‘You shall have farmers’ widows wed thin gentlemen | ... but put ‘em to no stress, | What work can they do with small trapstick legs.’ It may well be that these varying and contradictory ideas are intended to be

- distributed according to the character: the connotations of high rank would attach to the family as whole, given that they are all gentlemen; the hint of sexual incompetence would fit Sir Oliver (who is represented as a foolish old man with sexual ambitions beyond his capabilities), whilst the suggestions of nimbleness and youth would attach to his younger son William.
- 4 *Tutchim*] the name plays on 'touch him' in which 'touch' means 'charge or accuse' (*OED*, v.19.a). Justice Tutchim himself makes the pun in III i 62-4: 'Let me alone to touch'im ... had this been spoke within my liberties, had died for it.' (Very close would also be *touch*, 16.c – 'to arrest' but the earliest example *OED* gives for that sense is 1791.) This edition has opted for the spelling /Tutchim/ rather than /Tutchin/ (as it appears here in the *Actorum nomina* and in some stage directions of Q1) as the former spelling appears more often than the latter, and it also preserves the pun.
 - 5 *Boutcher*] the spelling of this name varies in the text between /Boutcher/ and /Boucher/, suggesting that the pronunciation of either version was the same; a 'boucher' was 'a treasurer or cashier' (*OED*, obs.) and in I i Boutcher stumps up forty shillings to underwrite William's cozening of Throat, whilst as a dealer in flesh the butcher was 'a common subject of vocational bawdry' (Williams); though the former sense has more application to the character the /t/ has been retained in this edition as (a) Q1 shows a slight preference for that spelling (there is no compositorial distinction) and (b) /Boucher/ hints at a French rather than an English name.
 - 6 *Beard*] the beard was traditionally a sign of masculinity, and 'to beard' was to 'oppose with ... effrontery ... set at defiance' (*OED*, v.3); the word thus provides a suitable name for a character whose main characteristic is bombastic macho posturing, but it was also commonly used to refer to a woman's pubic hair (see entry for *beard* in Williams) and this may well undercut the character's assertion of masculinity. *OED* also gives under beard n.1.e the phrase 'to make a man's beard' meaning 'to outwit or trick him' and given that Lieutenant Beard is tricked – or at least, believes himself to have been tricked – that sense, too, may come into play here.
 - 7 *Throat*] as a lawyer Throat makes his living from his voice (which is situated in the throat) and from speaking meretriciously, as in the proverb 'to lie in one's throat' (Tilley, T268), but he also has a voracious appetite for money which he satisfies by devouring the wealth of others – cf. the figurative sense given in *OED*: 'the devouring capacity of any destructive agency' (*throat*, n.4); as William Smallshanks says, the little land his father gave him 'Throat the lawyer swallowed at one gob.' (I i 32-3).
 - 8 *Dash*] (a) 'to rush impetuously' (*OED*, v¹.13.a), which is appropriate to someone who seems always to be in a hurry; (b) the name is also appropriate to someone whose job is mainly to draw up legal deeds since, with reference to writing, 'dash' can mean (i) 'a hasty stroke of the pen' (*OED*, n¹.6), (ii) 'a stroke or flourish forming part of a letter' (*OED*, n¹.7.b), (iii) 'a punctuation mark' (*OED*, n¹.7.c), (iv) 'to put down on paper hurriedly' (*OED*, v¹.8), (v) 'to mark with a dash or underline' (*OED*, v¹.10), or (vi) 'to erase something already written' (*OED*, v¹.9.a and b). Both senses (a) and (b) are punned on in the play: Throat asks if Dash has finished drawing up a document: 'have you dashed it out / According to your name?' (I iii 21-2) and Beard exhorts him: 'Dash, fellow, Dash. / With all the speed thou hast run for our master' (IV ii 17-8).
 - 9 *Face*] the predominant sense here is 'to confront with assurance or impudence' (*OED*, v.2.a) rather than to disguise (as in the character of the same name in Jonson's *The Alchemist*). This would be the sense also of 'Puffe', the other name under which this character appears in Q1 – i.e., 'one who brags or behaves insolently' (*OED*, n.8.a). Intriguingly, in 2H4, Justice Silence, during an exchange with Pistol (on whom much of this character seems to be based) jokingly describes him as 'goodman Puff of Barson' (V iii 89-90). (For further discussion of this name and its variant in Q1 see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.)
 - 19 *Constantia*] from Latin 'constans' – 'firm, unchangeable, constant' – that quality being her primary characteristic.
 - 20 *Frances*] the name is derived from 'Frank' which, as an adjective, could mean, of a woman, 'liberal, generous' and hence, 'free with her favours' (*OED*, frank a², 2.b); for this reason it was a common name for a prostitute in plays of the early modern period; concerning her status, she has clearly been in her past what would have been called a 'common punk' – a prostitute who was available to anyone who could pay her (see, e.g., IV ii 31-54); however, when the play opens she is William Smallshanks' 'private punk' – a prostitute kept and supported by one man for his particular sexual pleasure (one rung up in the hierarchy of the profession); see Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 2.1.318-37, where this distinction is made in a conversation between a bawd and a client.
 - 21 *Taffeta*] a glossy and expensive silk material and hence an appropriate name for a mercer's widow, as mercers dealt in the more expensive cloths; we learn at I ii 102 that her first name is

‘Changeable,’ making another connection with this cloth as there was a ‘changeable taffeta’ (cf. *Tw.N.*, II iv 73-4: ‘the melancholy god protect thee, and the tailor make thy doublet of changeable taffata’) and she does indeed behave in a ‘changeable’ or inconstant manner; that name, with its suggestion more of allegory and the morality play than of mimetic city comedy, links her to the iconographic representations of Fortune, who was represented on a wheel to indicate her inconstant nature, but such a link may also suggest a more positive aspect to Taffeta in that she is the means by which William Smallshanks becomes ‘fortunate’ and thereby recovers his social position. More dominant, though, is the cloth element in her name: like all luxury items, cloths made of silk (taffeta, satin and velvet) attracted associations with sensuality and hence lasciviousness; Colman notes that taffeta is ‘typical of the gaudy dress of a “hot wench.”’ Middleton, in *Father Hubbard’s Tales, or The Ant and the Nightingale*, 583, describes harlots as ‘taffeta punks,’ and in *The Black Book*, 229-30, he refers to ‘That smooth glittering devil satin, and that old reveller velvet;’ in his *Your Five Gallants* there is a character called Mistress Tiffany, ‘tiffany’ being a kind of transparent silk and thus a name carrying very similar ideas to that of Taffeta here; at IV ii 43-4 of this play, Frances, the prostitute, is pursued by her previous bawd for money owed for the loan of ‘a red taffeta gown | Bound with a silver lace,’ and Antifront in Sharpham’s *The Fleer*, 2.1.33-4, speaks of prostitutes who ‘scorn to have a suburban bawd lend ’em a taffaty gown.’ See also *2H4*, I ii 9-10, where Hal compares the sun to ‘a fair hot wench in flame-colour’d taffata;’ we might finally note that Williams, in his entry for *dildo*, quotes Nashe’s description of them as ‘Attired in white veluet or in silk (*Choise of Valentines*, c.1593, III. 413)’ whilst also rather intriguingly referencing a dildo covered in taffeta mentioned in ‘The Westminster Whore,’ (Rawlinson MS. Poet. B 35. leaf 36) written 1610-20 – a little later than *Ram Alley*, but close enough to allow, perhaps, some speculation as to whether this was an established and generally known styling for those implements at the time this play was written.

RAM ALLEY

Act I, Scene i.

Enter CONSTANTIA, sola, with a letter in her hand.

CONSTANTIA

In this disguise (ere scarce my mourning robes

Act I ...i] Actus I. Scæna I, Q1.

Title] Ram Alley (now Hare Place) was a narrow courtyard or alleyway on the southern side of Fleet Street in the Temple complex, probably running down the side of Serjeants' Inn (see maps pp.379-80). Harben tells us that 'Ram Alley was a place of sanctuary, and having become in consequence a resort of bad characters, was in the 17th century a constant source of annoyance to the inhabitants of the Temple precincts' into which it led. Sugden says it was 'inhabited chiefly by cooks, bawds, tobacco-sellers, and ale-house keepers.' Middleton's sketch of it in *Plato's Cap*, 74-80, characterises it as a noisy, chaotic place: 'The revolution of this present year 1604 takes his beginning at what time the sun enters into the first minute of Aries [the sign of the Ram], when many a scold shall be found in Ram Alley, whose tongues will never lin jangling [stop talking] until the sun enter into another sign, as the Miter or rather some boozing tap-house, where they must all drink themselves friends again till they are able to speak no more than a drowned rat.' Both the title and the subtitle, *Merry Tricks* (given on the title page but not here), are semantically complex, having a range of double and contradictory meanings: 'ram' suggests both sexual potency (reflected in the frenetic sexual activity of the plots) as well as, inevitably, the horns of the cuckold (that meaning looking forward to the fate of Throat, the lawyer whose chambers are in the alley). The same ambiguity is played upon in *Oth.*, I i 88-9, when Iago describes the Moor as 'an old black ram;' at that point Othello is the sexually potent 'animal' tugging Brabantio's 'white ewe,' but the phrase also ironically anticipates the later Othello who believes himself to be the horned cuckold. Cf. also Touchstone's equivocation on the word (*AYL.*, III ii 78-82) where he calls it a sin 'to bring the ewes and the rams together, and to offer to get your living by the copulation of cattle; to be a bawd to a bell-wether, and to betray a she-lamb of a twelve-month to a crooked-pated old cuckoldy ram.' 'Alley', in the post-Freudian era, cannot help but appear to us suggestive of the vagina, but it clearly did in this period too. Dromio of Syracuse describes a sergeant (one of whose duties was to prevent prostitution) as 'one that countermands | The passages of alleys, creeks, and narrow lands' (*Err.*, IV ii 37-8). In Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 6.183-4, a husband comes home 'from his rubbers in a false alley,' where 'rubbers' (a set of games) are 'acts of coition' and the 'false alley' (or secret alleyway) is an unfaithful woman synecdochically expressed by her sexual organs. The subtitle, 'Merry Tricks' is first a pun on 'meretrix,' Latin for 'prostitute' ('this quibble,' notes Williams, 'is widespread') and hence is a reference to Frances, the prostitute who plays a leading role in one of the plots (and herself a 'ram alley' given the tendency of the period just noted to reduce women to their sexual organs or function). But there is also a quibble on 'marry' (see Kokeritz, p.80) which would be perfectly fitting as all the various plots involve marriage. The word 'merry' was tinged with a sense of sexual freedom, though only lightly – cf. the title, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, and the denial in *H8*, Prologue 14, that the play is 'a merry, bawdy play,' whilst the word 'tricks' (which, as Williams notes, could refer to the sexual act itself as well as a range of sexually related activities) is played upon throughout this comedy with bawdy suggestiveness.

Act ... i/ Q1 in effect marks just act divisions as it only ever notes the first scene. The placing of the stage directions in Q1 (see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy) suggests that Barry had some sense of scene division as he was writing, and the divisions marked in this edition aim to reflect that sense.

Location] Hosier Lane, which ran westwards out of Smithfield into Cow Lane, outside and to the north west of the city walls; it was close to the eastern end of Holborn Road (see 12 below). Though no indication of place is given in this scene, Constantia is just about to meet William Smallshanks and Frances, the prostitute he maintains, and at the very end of the play William refers to Frances as 'the wench I kept in Hosier Lane' (V iii 237) .

1s.d. *sola*] 'alone' (Latin).

1-2 (*ere ... note*)] i.e., before people hardly had a chance to notice that I was in mourning dress.

- Could have a general note) I have forsook
 My shape, my mother, and those rich demesnes
 Of which I am sole heir, and now resolve
 5 In this disguise of page to follow him
 Whose love first caused me to assume this shape.
 Lord, how my feminine blood stirs at the sight
 Of these same breeches. Methinks this codpiece
 Should betray me – well, I will try the worst.
 10 Hither they say he usually doth come
 Whom I so much affect. What makes he here
 In the skirts of Holborn, so near the field,

-
- 3 *my shape ... demesnes*] Constantia's primary meaning is that she has abandoned her female state (by disguising herself), her mother and her property (by running away); 'shape', though, could mean the sex organs (*OED*, n¹.16), 'mother' could be 'a female bawd' (Williams), whilst 'demesnes' could have had much the same meaning as 'shape,' as in Mercutio's, 'fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh, | And the demesnes that there adjacent lie' (*Rom.*, II i 19-20), and in Capulet's more elaborated application of the term: 'A gentleman of noble parentage, | Of fair demesnes, youthful and nobly lien'd, | Stuff'd, as they say, with honorable parts, | Proportion'd as one's thought would wish a man' (*Rom.*, III v 179-82); given the overall tenor of this speech those meanings might be lurking in the background, but, taken together, they make up no coherent secondary sense.
- 6 *shape*] again, 'disguise' (*OED*, n¹.7) following the word 'assume,' meaning 'simulate or feign' (*OED*, v.8), but the other meaning comes more obviously into play here, perhaps as she looks down towards – or even touches – the codpiece; such a bit of stage business would also create potential for comic ambiguity about the gender of the organs referred to.
- 7-8 *feminine ... breeches*] the phrase 'my feminine blood stirs' expresses equally the effects of embarrassment (blushing) and a state of sexual excitement (the blood being supposedly the seat of passion and sexual appetite); primarily Constantia is worried that blushes of embarrassment will give her away (and as cross-dressing attracted the opprobrium of contemporary moralists such a reaction might be expected from a well brought up young woman of her class) but we might also understand that it is her excitement at and fascination with these male clothes (especially the codpiece – but see note on that below) which will 'betray' her.
- 8 *breeches*] full trousers that reached only to the knee (*OED*, n.1.c), with a glance at 'breaches = vaginas' Williams). Cf. III iv 108 and note.
- 8 *codpiece*] that part of the male attire which covered (often in such a way as to accentuate and draw attention to) the genitals; it had, however, gone out of fashion by 1600 (see I ii 7-10, where the widow Taffeta regrets its passing) so either Constantia mentions it looking down into her breeches and the word metonymically reinforces the idea of her change of gender, or, because she is going to play the generic, sexually precocious pageboy in a comedy, she is dressed with some concession to a stage convention rather than according to current fashion; Williams notes that the metonymic force of the word could hover ambiguously between suggesting the male and the female genitalia.
- 9 *betray me*] 'give me away,' but also 'lead me astray' (*OED*, v.6 and 4.a).
- 11 *affect*] 'have an affection for' (*OED*, v¹.2.a).
- 11 *what ... here*] i.e., what is he doing here, what causes him to be here?
- 12 *skirts*] 'outskirts' (*OED*, n.7.b), though probably with an innuendo 'amongst the skirts', meaning amongst women (*OED*, n.1.b) as Constantia assumes, in the next line, that Boutcher has come to meet a prostitute.
- 12 *Holborn*] a district to the west of the city and just outside the city limits; the western end ran out into open country. See Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play.
- 12 *the field*] most likely Smithfield, the cattle market, which Hosier Lane ran off (see note to *Location* above) and which is shown on maps of the period as an open space; the term could also refer to those areas outside the city walls which were known as 'fields' (Moorfields, Spitalfieldsetc.), or even more generally just to 'the countryside.'

And at a garden house? 'A has some punk
Upon my life – no more, here he comes.

Enter BOUTCHER.

- 15 God save you, sir – your name, unless I err,
Is Master Thomas Boutcher.
BOUTCHER 'Tis, sweet boy.
CONSTANTIA.
I have a letter for you.

CON[STANTIA] *delivers the lett[er].*

BOUTCHER From whom is't?
CONSTANTIA
The inside, sir, will tell you. [*Aside.*] I shall see
What love he bears me now.

He reads it.

- 20 BOUTCHER Th'art welcome, boy.
How does the fair Constantia Somerfield,
My noble mistress?
CONSTANTIA I left her in health.
BOUTCHER
She gives thee here good words, and for her sake
Thou shalt not want a master. Be mine for ever.
CONSTANTIA
I thank you, sir.

He knocks.

-
- 13 *garden house*] i.e., a brothel (Partridge.1); brothels were often situated in gardens, but so too were gardens (i.e., 'female pudenda' – Partridge.1) situated in them. Cf. the description of Primero's brothel in Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*, 1.1.121-2: 'violet air, curious garden, quaint walks, fantastical arbors.' For 'garden' as meaning 'vagina' see IV i 163-4 and note; cf. also *Blurt, Master Constable*, III iii 92-5: 'you shall never give over labouring till out of his [your husband's] purse you have digged *a garden*; and that garden must stand a pretty distance from the chitty; for by repairing thither, much good fruit may be grafted.' However, Constantia is surely wrong in her belief that this is a brothel, as when Boutcher knocks it is William, not a servant or bawd, who answers that knock.
- 13 *punk*] 'prostitute' (*OED*, n¹); a prostitute was 'called ... among the gentle, their usual associates, a punk' (*Merry Conceited Jests of George Peele* (1607), quoted in Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans*, p.54).
- 16 *Master*] a form of polite address to a man which places the person thus addressed as a gentleman or independent business man. Old Gobbo illustrates the use of the term when he rejects the title for his son: 'No master, sir, but a poor man's son' (*Mer. V.*, II ii 51).
- 21 *mistress*] a courtly term for 'beloved' (*OED*, n.10.a); not, here, 'a kept woman.'
- 22 *gives ... words*] 'speaks highly of you.'
- 23 *want*] 'lack' (*OED*, 1.a).
- 23 *Be mine for ever*] Boutcher's rather grandiloquent commitment as an employer would be taken by Constantia, of course, in the more romantic sense that this phrase usually carries.

[*Aside.*] Now shall I see the punk.

Enter WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS.

- WILLIAM
 25 Who knocks so fast? I thought 'twas you. What news?
 BOUTCHER
 You know my business well. I sing one song.
 WILLIAM
 'Foot! What would you have me do? My land is gone,
 My credit of less trust than courtiers' words
 To men of judgement, and for my debts
 30 I might deserve a knighthood. What's to be done?
 The knight my father will not once vouchsafe B1
 To call me son. That little land 'a gave
 Throat the lawyer swallowed at one gob
 For less than half the worth, and for the city
 35 There be so many rascals and tall yeomen
 Would hang upon me for their maintenance
 Should I but peep or step within the gates

-
- 25 *so fast*] probably 'strongly, vigorously' (*OED*, adv.1.d) rather than 'rapidly' (*OED*, adv.6.a) though *OED* gives 1570 as the last recorded date for the former sense.
 26 *sing one song*] proverbial – 'harp on the same theme' (Tilley, H638, where this line is given as an example).
 27 *'Foot!*] a mild oath (abbreviation of 'God's foot').
 27 *my ... gone*] Will Smallshanks has borrowed money from the lawyer Throat, giving a mortgage on his land as security for the loan; as the loan was not repaid by the required time, the land (worth much more than the loan, of course) had to be forfeited.
 28 *credit*] generally 'reputation as a trustworthy person' (*OED*, n.2.a), but more specifically 'financial trustworthiness' (*OED*, n.9.a and b); the constant indebtedness and untrustworthiness of courtiers was proverbial (cf. IV i 53).
 29-30 *for ... knighthood*] James I & VI required landowners of a certain substance to accept knighthoods; since many of these men were in debt, it presumably began to seem as though being in debt was a necessary qualification for knighthood.
 31 *once*] either merely emphatic or 'under any circumstances' (*OED*, adv.2.a).
 31 *vouchsafe*] 'condescend, deign' (*OED*, v.6).
 33 *lawyer*] Throat is not a properly trained lawyer and seems to operate mainly in the play as a moneylender, which is how he gains control of William Smallshanks' land. For similar characters compare Lurdo in Day's *Law Tricks*, and Hoard in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*.
 33 *at one gob*] 'in one mouthful' (*OED*, n¹.3.b); a 'gob' could be a mouthful of food, especially of raw, coarse or fat meat (*OED*, n¹.3.a), but it could also be 'a large sum of money' (*OED*, n¹.2).
 34 *the city*] that part of London within the walls and under the direct control of the Mayor and Corporation.
 35 *rascals*] 'people of low birth' (*OED*, n.2) or 'knaves' (*OED*, n.3); a stronger word then than now.
 35 *tall yeomen*] a yeoman could be a respectable landed person below the rank of gentleman (*OED*, 4.a), a superior servant in a noble household (*OED*, 1.a), or a foot soldier below gentleman and above common footman (*OED*, 5.a); the word 'tall' (indicative of strength and courage as well as height, and possibly also virility – see II i 99 and note) suggests that the third type – though presently unemployed – might be meant here.
 36 *maintenance*] 'livelihood, subsistence' (*OED*, 7.a).
 37 *peep*] probably 'look, peer,' but possibly 'emerge slightly from.'
 37 *gates*] i.e., the gates of the city of London, which was still enclosed by walls at that time.

- That I am forced, only to ease my charge,
 To live here in the suburbs, or in the town
 40 To walk *in tenebris*. I tell you sir,
 Your best retired life is an honest punk
 In a thatched house with garlic – tell not me –
 My punk's my punk, and noble lechery
 Sticks by a man when all his friends forsake him.
 BOUTCHER
 45 The pox it will! Art thou so senseless grown,
 So much endeared to thy bestial lust,
 That thy original worth should lie extinct
 And buried in thy shame? Far be such thoughts
 From spirits free and noble. Begin to live.
 50 Know thyself, and whence thou art derived.
 I know that competent state thy father gave
 Cannot be yet consumed.
 WILLIAM 'Tis gone, by Heaven:

-
- 38 *only ... charge*] i.e., merely to lighten my expenses. The tenor of William's complaint is that, pestered by people (such as Lieutenant Beard, who appears later) seeking employment, he is forced to take pains to avoid them.
- 39 *suburbs*] the suburbs were the built up areas outside the city walls; they had a reputation as places of loose living – see Sir Oliver's remark at II i 67.
- 40 *in tenebris*] 'in obscurity' (Latin).
- 41 *honest*] in this case, 'open, frank', (*OED*, adj.3.d), but as the word was often used of women meaning 'chaste' (*OED*, adj.3.b) an element of irony is probably intended – cf. 'noble lechery', 1.43 below.
- 42 *thatched ... garlic*] primarily, the retired country life epitomised, but there may be an elaborate bawdy innuendo: Partridge.1 gives 'thatched house' as 'female pudend' from late 18th century, but his date here may be too conservative as the Fool in *Lr.*, III ii 27-8, uses 'house' as a verb – 'The codpiece that will house | Before the head has any, | The head and he shall louse' – where 'house' obviously has a bawdy meaning; and if 'house' as verb means 'to copulate,' the noun could mean 'the place where one houses oneself.' As to 'garlic', there was a dance of that name, connected by Taylor the Water Poet with whoring – 'the ligge of Garlick, or the Punk's Delight' (quoted by *OED*, *garlic*, n.2) – though even without Taylor's association we know that dancing was then (and is now, as any popular song about dancing will demonstrate) used allusively to mean sexual intercourse; see also the conversation between William and Sir Oliver at V ii 22-34. William's 'best retired life', then, may simply be 'a good shag.'
- 42 *tell not me*] an exclamation of impatience.
- 44 *sticks*] as a transitive verb, 'stick' could mean 'to copulate with' (Colman); though the verb is intransitive there could be an innuendo along those lines here.
- 47 *original*] 'innate' (*OED*, adj.1.a).
- 47-8 *extinct ... shame*] 'shame' could mean 'private parts' (Williams), hence (a) 'buried in his punk's shame' (in post-coital rest – hence 'extinct'), or (b) 'with his interests relegated solely to his own shame' (i.e., obsessed with sex); such a suggestion would not be merely gratuitous: the point Boutcher is making is that William will degrade his good breeding ('original worth') by this obsessive attachment to the satisfaction of his animal lusts. Cf. Shakespeare's Sonnet 129, 1-2: 'Th'expense of spirit in a waste of shame | Is lust in action.'
- 49 *live*] probably in the emphatic sense, 'live a life that is worthy of the name,' (*OED*, v¹.8.a) but possibly also, 'escape spiritual death' (*OED*, v¹.9.b).
- 50 *Know thyself*] aphoristic – traditionally one of the maxims of the Seven Sages of Greece (see Dent, K175).
- 51 *competent state*] i.e., an adequate estate, providing sufficient means to live on (*OED*, *state*, n.1.e).
- 52 *consumed*] 'used up,' with undertones of ruinous wastefulness (*OED*, v¹.3.a).

Not a denier is left.

BOUTCHER 'Tis impossible!

WILLIAM

Impossible! 'Zeart! I have had two suckers

55 Able to spend the wealthy Croesus' store.

Enter FRANCES.

BOUTCHER

What are they?

WILLIAM Why, a lawyer and a whore.

See, here comes one. Dost think this petticoat,

A perfumed smock, and twice a week a bath

Can be maintained with half a year's revenues?

60 No, by Heaven! We annual younger brothers

Must go to't by wholesale. By wholesale, man,

-
- 53 *denier*] a French coin (one twelfth of a sou) that typified a very small sum of money (cf. 'mite'). It was worth approximately one tenth of an English penny at that time (*OED*, n³.1).
- 54 'Zeart!'] a mild oath - corruption of 'God's heart'.
- 54 *suckers*] 'parasites' (*OED*, n.3).
- 55 *spend ... store*] primarily a complaint that his two parasites could 'squander' (*OED*, *spend*, v¹.10.a) the 'accumulated possessions or wealth' (*OED*, *store*, n.5.a) of Croesus, King of Lydia 560-46 BCE, whose fabled wealth was proverbial; however, 'spend' could mean 'ejaculate' (Williams, and *OED*, v¹.15.c – though the earliest example is 1662) and 'store' could be 'semen' – i.e., that which is stored in the testicles (Williams) – and hence a secondary meaning would be that the second 'sucker' (see next line) is sexually exhausting him.
- 57-8 *petticoat ... smock*] petticoats were full and often highly decorated outer skirts, and not, as now, something worn under an outer skirt or dress; smocks were women's undergarments that covered the whole body; clothes were perfumed to make them smell fresh and hence hygienic; the smock, along with the equivalent male garment, the shirt, carried strong sexual connotations (as do knickers and brassieres now); to be dressed only in one's shirt or smock was regarded as more or less equivalent to being naked; when they are referred to in *Ram Alley* the sexual innuendo is almost invariably present, as is also the case with linen, the material of which they were made (see for smocks, IV i 86 and IV ii 41, for shirts, V ii 36, and for linen, III ii 25, and notes to those lines). See also the scene in Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 3.248, in which there is a series of innuendo-laden references to shirts and smocks in the dialogue between a seamstress and others, culminating in: 'Thou private pandress between shirt and smock,' and Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 2.1.72-3, where Antifront, while acting as a bawd to his daughters, describes himself as a 'Gentleman o'th' Smock.'
- 58 *twice ... bath*] given the difficulty of heating and moving large quantities of water in the 17th century, this would have been considered unusual, and certainly would have been expensive. For another comment on the expense of keeping a personal prostitute cf. Middleton, *The Witch*, 2.1.21, where Gasparo defines Antonio's ex-courtesan as 'Your little four-nobles-a-week,' which is to say that she cost twice as much to keep for a week as a craftsman earned in that time.
- 60 *annual*] probably, 'in receipt of an allowance which is paid yearly' (*OED*, adj.1.a); according to Stone (*The Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558-1641*, p.591) younger brothers were often 'dispatched into the world with little more than a modest annuity or life interest in a small estate to keep them afloat,' and this, presumably, is the state of affairs to which William refers.
- 61 *go to't*] 'get to work, go about to work,' with a bawdy innuendo, 'get to work sexually,' as in King Lear's, 'The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly | Does lecher in my sight. To't, luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers' (*Lr.*, IV vi 112-7).
- 61 *wholesale*] 'in large quantities, in gross' (*OED*, 1, used adverbially) but mainly with a pun on 'hole' – vagina – and hence, 'acting as pander to a whore.' Cf. Fitsgrave's mistranslation in Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 5.1.103, of 'Occultos vendit honores [he sells secret honours – Latin]' as, 'One that sells maidenheads by wholesale;' also, in *Michaelmas Term*, 4.2.13-5: 'Is

- These creatures are maintained – her very face
 Has cost a hundred pound.
 FRANCES Sir, thank yourself.
 CONSTANTIA [*Aside.*]
 They keep this whore betwixt them.
 FRANCES You know, sir,
 65 I did enjoy a quiet country life,
 Spotless and free, till you corrupted me
 And brought me to the court. I never knew
 What sleeking, glazing, or what pressing meant B1v
 Till you preferred me to your aunt, the Lady.
 70 I knew no ivory teeth, no caps of hair,
 No mercury water, fucus, or perfumes
 To help a lady's breath, until your aunt

-
- not whole-sale the chiefest merchandise? Do you think some merchants could keep their wives so brave but for their whole-sale?’
- 62 *creatures*] primarily an expression of mild contempt (*OED*, n.3.c) but perhaps also ‘instruments, puppets.’ (*OED*, n.5).
- 63 *a hundred pound*] an enormous sum of money, and clearly an exaggeration; ten shillings – or half of one pound – would have been a good weekly wage for a craftsman. For a fuller note on the value of a pound at this time see note to II iv 94.
- 64 *keep this whore*] ‘keep’ meaning ‘maintain’ has developed a specialised sense in this context, as in the phrase ‘a kept woman’ (*OED*, v.19 shading into 20); cf. 84 of this scene and note.
- 65 *country life*] i.e., the rural as typifying the unsophisticated, morally pure life, but given Hamlet’s famous pun one treats the word ‘country’ with suspicion in almost any context in 17th century drama, and in the light of that innuendo, the ‘country life’ would indeed be quiet for an innocent girl.
- 66 *free*] (a) ‘not in bondage’ (*OED*, adj.1.a), as now, being kept as a prostitute, but also (b) ‘sexually unrestrained or available’ (Colman and Williams), a sense which develops the primary meaning of this word but adroitly undermines that of the previous line.
- 67 *court*] typifying the sophisticated and corrupt environment, opposed to the country.
- 68 *sleeking*] ‘making skin or hair look smooth and glossy’ (*OED*, v.2.a). Cf. Marston, *The Malcontent*, II iv 27-9: ‘Do you know Doctor Plaster-face? ... he is the most exquisite in ... sleeking of skins.’ Also Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 5.1.19-21: ‘your bean-flour bags to sleek you and make you soft, smooth, and delicate for lascivious entertainment.’
- 68 *glazing*] again, ‘making (the skin) smooth or glossy’ (*OED*, v¹.5), as in Jonson’s *Cynthia’s Revels*, III iv 55: ‘There stands a Neophyte glazing of his face.’ See also *The Family of Love*, 395-6: ‘more lively and fresh than an old gentleman’s glazed face in a new periwig.’
- 68 *pressing*] (a) ‘making clothes look smooth by ironing’ (*OED*, v¹.4.a); (b) ‘being pressed down in the sexual act’ (Partridge.2); cf. Marston, *The Malcontent*, IV ii 80-5: ‘She was a cold creature ever ... she had almost brought bed-pressing out of fashion.’ ‘Pressing,’ or *peine forte et dure*, was also a type of capital punishment executed on those who refused to plead (*OED*, v¹.1.b) and it is just possible that there is a glance at that meaning here; the legal and sexual meanings are brought together explicitly in *Meas.*, V i 522-3: ‘Marrying a punk, my Lord, is pressing to death.’
- 69 *preferred*] ‘recommended, introduced for employment’ (*OED*, v.1.a).
- 69 *aunt*] ‘a procuress or bawd’ (Colman and Williams).
- 70 *ivory ... hair*] i.e., false teeth and wigs, needed to repair the ravages of venereal disease.
- 71 *mercury water*] ‘a cosmetic wash for the skin’ (*OED*, *mercury*, 11), but mercury was also an ingredient in some treatments for venereal disease.
- 71 *fucus*] another cosmetic (*OED*, 1), possibly with a pun on ‘fuck us;’ such a pun would be weak, both in terms of grammar and humour, but, given the pun on ‘pressing’ three lines earlier, should be considered; Middleton, in *A Fair Quarrel*, puns constantly on the word, and uses it to mean ‘prostitute’ (e.g., 4.4.69: *Whore*: No indeed, sir, we are both fucusses’) but that seems to be a nonce – not to mention nonsense – usage in that play and some ten years later than *Ram Alley*.
- 72 *help*] ‘remedy, amend’ (*OED*, v.10.a).

Learnt me the common trick.
WILLIAM The common trick,
Say you? A pox upon such common tricks!
75 They will undo us all.
BOUTCHER And knowing this,
Art thou so wilful blind still to persist
In ruin and defame?
WILLIAM What should I do?
I've passed my word to keep this gentlewoman
Till I can place her to her own content,
80 And what is a gentleman but his word?
BOUTCHER
Why, let her go to service.
WILLIAM To service?
Why, so she does. She is my laundress,
And, by this light, no puny Inn-a-Court
But keeps a laundress at his command
85 To do him service, and shall not I, ha?
FRANCES
Sir, you are his friend. I love him, too.
Propound a course which may advantage him
And you shall find such real worth in me

- 73 *Learnt*] ‘taught’ (*OED*, v.4; still common in some regional uses of English).
73 *the common trick*] i.e., the usual means women employ to beautify themselves; possibly also,
‘common habits or fashions of dress;’ however, the word ‘trick’ is played upon suggestively
throughout the play (see note on I i Title) and as she plays that trick ‘in common’ – i.e., with
anyone – we should also understand ‘how to work as a prostitute.’
75 *undo*] (a) ‘ruin,’ possibly through sexual seduction (*OED*, v.8.b and d); (b) ‘undress’ (*OED*, v.3.b
– though the earliest illustration is 1633). Both sorts of undoing are attendant upon ‘the common
trick,’ the one preceding, the other following.
77 *defame*] ‘dishonour, disgrace’ (*OED*, n.1).
78 *passed my word*] ‘promised’ (*OED*, *pass*, v.48.a).
79 *place*] (a) ‘find employment for;’ (b) ‘arrange a marriage for’ (both covered by *OED*, v.2.b);
Boutcher takes up the former sense, though William’s plans clearly involve the latter.
80 *what ... word*] proverbial (Tilley, G76); for William’s apparent acceptance of this debt of honour
to Frances cf. Middleton, *Hengist, King of Kent*, 88-9: ‘tis a gallant’s credit | To marry his whore
bravely.’ See also line 93 of this scene.
81 *service*] i.e., domestic service, but quibbling on ‘the idea of copular service or mounting’
(Colman). Middleton, in *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 4.1.210, uses the term ‘night-service’ meaning
‘sexual favours.’ Cf. also the use of the word ‘serve’ in Middleton’s *Hengist, King of Kent*,
2.4.65, where Simon the Tanner remarks: ‘My master’s dead and I serve my mistress.’
82 *laundress*] ‘a caretaker of chambers in one of the Inns of Court’ (*OED*, n.2), but they had a
reputation for providing the kind of service referred to in the preceding note; cf. Middleton,
Anything for a Quiet Life, 2.1.32-3, where the lawyer Knavesbe confesses to his wife, ‘I sinned
twice with my laundress.’ See also III ii 25 and note.
83 *by this light*] a mild oath, and William’s particular catchphrase; the ‘light’ is presumably the sun.
83 *puny Inn-a-Court*] i.e., a junior member of an Inn of Court (*OED*, n.2), but the word ‘puny’ on its
own could be used to refer specifically to a junior member of an Inn of Court so this phrase is
tautological, unless it is perhaps an elision of the phonetically awkward ‘puny in an Inn of Court.’
84 *keeps*] (a) ‘retains, employs’ (*OED*, v.20); (b) as in 64 above (see note).
87 *Propound*] ‘suggest, propose’ (*OED*, v.4).
87 *advantage him*] ‘prove beneficial to him, put him in a better position’ (*OED*, v.4).
88 *real*] there is possibly a quibble on ‘real,’ a type of coin (*OED*, n¹.1), thereby opposing ‘real
worth’ to ‘penurious state’ in 90 below.

- 90 That rather than I'll live his hindrance
I will assume the most penurious state
The city yields to give me means of life.
WILLIAM
Why, there's it – you hear her what she says?
Would not he be damned that should forsake her?
Says she not well? Can you propound a course
95 To get my forfeit land from yonder rogue,
Parcel lawyer, parcel devil, all knave,
Throat, Throat?
BOUTCHER Not I.
WILLIAM Why so, I thought as much.
You are like our citizens to men in need
Which cry 'tis pity a proper gentleman
100 Should want money, yet not an usuring slave
Will lend him a denier to help his wants.
Will you lend me forty shillings?
BOUTCHER I will.
WILLIAM
Why, Godamercy, there's some goodness in thee.
You'll not repent.
BOUTCHER I will not.
WILLIAM With that money
105 I will redeem my forfeit land, and wed
My cockatrice to a man of worship –

B2

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- 89 *live his hindrance*] i.e., continue being a hindrance to him.
90 *assume*] here, 'take on, accept' (*OED*, v.4).
91 *yields*] 'affords, offers up' (*OED*, v.13.a).
92 *there's it*] 'there it is, there you are.'
92 *you ... says?*] an acceptable 17th century pleonasm; modern English would phrase it either, 'you hear what she says,' or, 'you hear her' (see Abbott, 414).
94 *Says ... well?*] i.e., does she not speak sensibly?
96 *Parcel*] 'part' (*OED*, B.1.c).
97 *Why so?*] 'that's it, just as I thought' (*OED*, *why*, 7.d).
98 *citizens*] here, as for Dr Johnson, 'a man of trade, not a gentleman.' William's comment here betrays the uneasily dependent financial relationship between the gentry and the citizenry.
99 *proper*] (a) 'respectable, of good character' (*OED*, adj.8.b); (b) 'genuine, true' (*OED*, adj.6.a).
100 *usuring slave*] the accusation that citizens indulged in moneylending was common, and the usuring citizen was a stock figure of the drama. 'Slave' is here simply a term of contempt.
101 *wants*] (a) 'circumstances of hardship, suffering' (*OED*, n.3.b), or perhaps (b) 'requirements' (*OED*, n.5.a).
102 *forty shillings*] a shilling was a coin or unit of money equivalent to twelve old pence or a twentieth of a pound – five new pence in present day terms; according to Dekker (quoted by Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience*, p.62) 'bare forty shillings' – or two pounds – was the *annual* wage for many serving men in 1609, whilst ten shillings would have been a good weekly wage for a craftsman.
103 *Godamercy*] an exclamation of gratitude (*OED*, int.1): 'God have mercy,' or perhaps, 'God a-mercie' cod-French (?) for 'God be thanked.'
105 *redeem*] 'recover by payment of the amount due, buy back' (*OED*, v.1 or 2.a), but here used somewhat meretriciously since William intends to use this forty shillings to regain his land by trickery rather than by payment.
106 *cockatrice*] 'prostitute' (*OED*, 3).
106 *man of worship*] 'a man of repute or high standing' (*OED*, n.4.a), but as William has Throat in

- To a man of worship, by this light.
 BOUTCHER But how?
 WILLIAM
 Thus: in Ram Alley lies a fellow, by name
 Throat – one that professeth law but indeed
 110 Has neither law nor conscience; a fellow
 That never saw the bar but when his life
 Was called in question for a cozenage.
 The rogue is rich. To him go you, tell him
 That rich Sir John Somerfield –
 CONSTANTIA [*Aside.*] How's that?
 WILLIAM
 115 Is lately dead, and that my hopes stand fair
-
- mind when he says this the repetition of the phrase in 107 might suggest some irony; there might also, if the /w/ were light or only partially sounded and the /or/ slightly hardened to sound like the conjunction, be a pun on 'whoreship' which again would be reinforced by the repetition.
- 108-12 *Thus ... cozenage*] this, and the following introductory character sketch, would make more sense at this point if Throat had not yet been described either for Boutcher's or the audience's benefit; both, however, know from lines 32-4 and 95-7 above not only of Throat's existence, but also that he is a lawyer, has William's lands, and that William considers him to be a rogue.
- 108 *lies*] 'lives, dwells' (*OED*, v¹.5.a) perhaps with suggestions of 'utters falsehoods' (*OED*, v².1) or 'is concealed' (*OED*, v¹.4.a).
- 108 | 110 *fellow* | *fellow*] the first probably somewhat dismissive – 'a man of no real worth' – as in the modern 'bloke' (*OED*, n.10.b) and the second, if not merely the careless repetition Barry seemed prone to (see Introduction, The Play, Reconsidering *Ram Alley*), possibly suggesting 'a senior member of an Inn of Court' (*OED*, n.8.b) but that, if intended, would be ironic, as Throat, we later learn, was never even a student at an Inn of Court (see II iii 7-12).
- 109 *professeth*] 'makes [law] his profession or business' (*OED*, v.5); cf. Middleton, *The Witch*, 5.3.119-20: 'a hired strumpet, a professor | Of lust and impudence.' But there is also here a sense of pretence – 'claims to be skilled in [law]' (*OED*, v.3.a).
- 109 | 10 *law* | *law*] first, the law as a body of legal knowledge (*OED*, n¹.3.b or 7.b) which Throat merely claims to understand; second, legal knowledge as against the controlling influence of 'natural' law ('conscience') on his behaviour (*OED*, n¹.9.c) – i.e., Throat pays no regard to either the demands of the external law or to the promptings of the internal one. The phrase 'neither law nor conscience' occurs also in *The Family of Love*, II iii 422-4: '*Periwinkle*: I wonder why many men gird so at the law. *Shrimp*: I'll tell thee, because they themselves have neither law nor conscience.' And similarly, in Middleton's *An/The Old Law*, 1.1.101-2: 'Oh sir, | You understand a conscience, but not law.' Dent gives the phrase, 'to have neither law nor conscience,' as proverbial (L110.11), referencing Beaumont and Fletcher, *Wit Without Money*, V ii 74: 'They know no law, nor conscience,' and Jonson, *Eastward Ho* (III iii 54): 'We shall haue no more Law then Conscience, and not too much of either.'
- 111-2 *never ... cozenage*] possibly a quibble on 'bar' meaning (a) the barrier that separated benchers and other senior lawyers from students at an Inn of Court and to which the students were 'called' when they qualified (*OED*, n¹.24) and (b) the barrier between judge and court at which the accused stood when on trial (*OED*, n¹.22.a). If 'bar' means simply 'court' (by metonymy based on sense (b) above) then the meaning would be, more simply, that Throat had never seen a court from a lawyer's point of view, only from the prisoner's.
- 111 *but*] 'except' (*OED*, C.8.b).
- 111-2 *when ... question*] i.e., when he was tried for a crime which carried a death sentence.
- 112 *cozenage*] 'a fraud' (*OED*, [n]¹.b).
- 114 *How's that?*] 'what's that?' Constantia is simply pricking up her ears audibly, perhaps to remind the audience of her presence when this plot concerning her is hatched.
- 115 *stand fair*] 'are favourably situated, have a good chance of success' (*OED*, *stand*, v.15.e), with probably a glance at the common sense of 'stand' – 'to have an erection.'

- To get his only daughter. If I speed
 And have but means to steal away the wench,
 Tell him I reckon him my chiefest friend
 To entertain us till our nuptial rites
 120 May be accomplished, and could you but procure
 My elder brother meet me on the way
 And but associate me unto his house
 'Twere hit, i'faith – I'd give my cunning Throat
 An honest slit for all his tricks in law.
 BOUTCHER
 125 Why, this shall be performed. Take – there's my store.
 To friends all things are common.

-
- 116 *get*] 'obtain in marriage' (*OED*, v.17.c).
 116 *speed*] 'prosper' (*OED*, v.1.a).
 117 *but*] 'merely, simply' (*OED*, C.6).
 117 *means*] 'resources' (including, possibly, the plan or stratagem which employs the resources).
 117 *steal*] this is the first use in the play of this key word which means here primarily 'take by stratagem, eluding observation' (*OED*, v¹.3.b), with a glance at the sense 'effect a clandestine marriage' (*OED*, v¹.5.d), and also, crucially, the sense, 'dishonestly take property belonging to another' (*OED*, *steal*, v¹.1.b); that last is the dominant sense in the pseudo-legal debate at V iii 185-221 about whether William's acquisition of 'Constantia' was a criminal act (see also IV iv 104) but it lurks uneasily beneath the way the word is employed throughout the play, reinforcing the notion not just that women are little more than a commodity but that their sexual capability is actually a kind of currency transferable between men whether through honest or dishonest transactions (see Introduction, The Play, Sex, money, power, wit and machismo).
 117 *wench*] at its simplest, 'a young woman,' (*OED*, n.1.a) but it was strongly attached to notions of sexuality (*OED*, n.2) and is usually used in that sense throughout this play with meanings ranging from, 'a woman considered as an object of sexual attention,' to the much stronger 'a woman considered as a whore;' however, it could also indicate familiarity (as between two lovers, or parent and daughter) or condescension to a woman of inferior rank (as to a servant).
 118 *reckon*] 'consider' (*OED*, v.6.a). perhaps with suggestion of 'value' (*OED*, v.5.b).
 119 *entertain*] 'provide lodging and food for' (*OED*, v.13).
 119 *nuptial rites*] (a) the religious ceremonies pertaining to marriage and (b) sexual consummation; the latter was considered to be, from a legal point of view, more important as physical consummation made the marriage binding in law whatever other ceremonies had or had not been performed.
 120 *procure*] 'prevail upon or induce to' (*OED*, v.6).
 121 *My ... way*] this part of William's instructions refers to his going to Throat's chambers with Frances, which happens in II i, after Boutcher has been to see the lawyer in I iii following the instruction given in 113 above; Boutcher then continues (or retraces his steps) to the rendezvous with the brother after his visit to Throat.
 122 *but associate*] 'just accompany' (*OED*, *associate*, v.5.a).
 122 *his*] i.e., Throat's.
 123 *'Twere hit*] i.e., all would be as I wished it.
 123 *i'faith*] a mild oath, abbreviation of 'in faith.'
 123-4 *I'd ... slit*] i.e., I'll put paid to him, playing, of course, on 'slit his throat;' but given that William intends to fool Throat into marrying Frances, a prostitute, there may also be a glance at 'slit = vulva' (*OED*, n.1.d).
 124 *honest*] (a) 'genuine, proper' (*OED*, adj.4.a); (b) perhaps also, with some play on the meaning, 'open, frank' (*OED*, adj.3.d); and if we read 'slit' as 'vulva' – or even, by synecdoche, as Frances herself – sense (a) would still apply, but there would be some ironic play on the senses 'respectable, decent' (*OED*, adj.2.b) and 'chaste' (*OED*, adj.3.b).
 124 *tricks in law*] i.e., fraudulent and crafty manipulations of the law; cf. the play title *Law Tricks* (by John Day).
 125 *store*] cf. 55 above, but here referring simply to the money in Boutcher's possession at the time.
 126-7 *To ... common*] Boutcher quotes the proverb – 'among friends all things are common' (Dent,

129 *lay upon*] ‘were at stake, liable to be lost in the event of failure’ (*OED*, *lie*, v¹.12.g).
131 *Let ... rest*] ‘leave the rest to me’ (*OED*, *let*, v¹.18.b).
131 *gull*] (a) ‘deceive, cheat’ (*OED*, v³.1); (b) ‘swallow, devour’ (*OED*, v¹.1) in which sense it would be related to ‘open throated’ in the next line – i.e., William intends to swallow the swallower; cf. Middleton, *A Game at Chess*, 4.2.18-19: ‘If I had got sev’n thousand pounds by offices, | And gulled down that, the bore [i.e., diameter of my throat] would have been bigger.’
132 *go beyond*] ‘out-flank, out-do in cunning’ (*OED*, *beyond*, prep.3.d).
132 *open throated*] i.e., voracious.
133 *book cases*] these were the legal cases that were recorded in the ‘Case Books’ of the authorities and which became ‘precedents’ (i.e., cases used to support and justify subsequent judgements).
133-4 *tricesimo ... octavo*] ‘thirty-ninth and forty-eighth’ (Latin); laws and leading cases are dated by the year of the sovereign’s reign in which they were made or took place, hence ‘the tenth of Elizabeth’ means a law passed in the tenth year of Elizabeth I’s reign.
135 *waiting gentlewomen*] this is the first indication that the duping of the lawyer is a kind of phallic combat: the choice of a female servant for this proposed punitive metamorphosis suggests that William would regard himself as symbolically emasculated if he fails to outwit Throat; cf. the suggestion made by Kahn in her note to 5.50 of Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl* that Laxton’s sexual impotence is paralleled by the social impotence caused by his lack of land – that is, he ‘lacks stones’ in both the sense of ‘land (that made up of stones)’ and ‘testicles.’ Cf. also Middleton’s *Women Beware Women*, 3.2.114-5: ‘he’s a great ward, wealthy, but simple. | His parts [i.e., genitals] consist in acres.’
135 *bound*] (a) ‘compelled by the conditions of my service’ (*OED*, ppl.a².7a and c); possibly (b) ‘constipated’ (*OED*, ppl.a².3); the position of the word in the line could allow an emphasis that would reinforce this common, if somewhat irrelevant, quibble; in *A Mad World My Masters* Middleton plays constantly upon the word.

To sit upon my heels and pick rushes.
 Will you about this gear?
 BOUTCHER With my best speed.
 WILLIAM
 Then fare you well – you'll meet me?
 BOUTCHER Without fail.

Exit BOUTCHER and [CONSTANTIA].

WILLIAM
 Adieu! Now you pernicious cockatrice,
 140 You see how I must skelder for your good.
 I'll bring you where you shall have means to cheat
 If you have grace enough to apprehend it,
 FRANCES
 Believe me, love, howe'er some stricter wits B2v
 Condemn all women which are prone to love

138s.d. CONSTANTIA.] *Page. Q1.*

- 136 *To ... rushes*] i.e., 'perform the lowest kind of menial tasks;' the floors of houses were scattered with rushes at this period; the permanent loss of his land would also render William socially emasculated.
- 137 *about*] 'set about, get to work on' (*OED*, adv.10 / prep.6).
- 137 *gear*] (a) 'business' (*OED*, n.10.c); (b) 'sexual organs' (*OED* gives this meaning from 1675 only, but Williams provides convincing evidence that it was available from very late 16th century); though William Smallshanks' objective at this point is money, not sex, the quibble would not be entirely gratuitous – much of the action does concern 'gear' in the latter sense.
- 139 *pernicious*] probably the less strong sense, 'wicked' (*OED*, adj.b) rather than 'fatal, ruinous' (*OED*, adj.a), and possibly affectionately ironic here.
- 140 *skelder*] when used intransitively, as here, 'beg' (*OED*, v.1), but used transitively it could mean, 'obtain by deceit,' (*OED*, v.2) and if William is referring forward to his plans for Throat, it could mean that here, despite being used intransitively; Abbott quotes many examples of intransitive verbs being used, grammatically, as transitives (291) and it seems reasonable to extend that grammatical flexibility of 17th century English to semantic flexibility. If it does mean 'beg' it presumably harks back to William's request for a loan from Boutcher, and we might therefore take this rather extreme description of that event as indicating embarrassment at having to ask a friend for a loan (indeed, the abruptness of the request at 102 could be acted to suggest an underlying uncertainty).
- 141 *bring*] 'lead, take' possibly in a more abstract sense – 'explain, show or instruct' – than the more physical sense, 'escort, accompany' (i.e., *OED*, v.9 rather than v.2).
- 142 *grace*] 'the virtue or impulse which gives a person the strength to do something' (*OED*, n.11.e / 13.b), usually considered divine in origin and religious in character but here in a secular sense.
- 143 *stricter*] 'sterner, more critical, morally precise' (*OED*, adj.15.a); cf. Angelo, the 'strict deputy' of *Measure for Measure*.
- 143 *wits*] probably young men who had (or sought) reputations as lively and clever conversationalists (*OED*, n.10) and who set (or aspired to set) the fashions in dress, behaviour, and thought in London society; they would have considered such a subject as the one Frances mentions here as well within their competence. However, the word could also mean 'learned men' (*OED*, n.9) and, indeed, it could mean that here, as the sentiment concerning women which Frances complains about was stock morality and theology.
- 144 *Condemn*] 'censure, express disapproval of' (*OED*, v.1a).
- 144 *prone to love*] (a) 'disposed towards or having a natural tendency to fall in love' (*OED*, *prone*, adj.6.a); (b) 'eager to fall in love' – which would imply sexually forward or brazen (*OED*, *prone*, adj.7); (c) possibly 'lie down to love,' though *OED* allows only 'to lie down on the belly' (*prone*,

- 145 And think that if their favour fall on any
 By consequence they must be naught with many,
 And hold a false position that a woman
 False to herself can trusty be to no man,
 Yet know I say, howe'er my life hath lost
 150 The fame which my virginity aspired,
 I will be true to thee; my deed shall move
 To win from all men pity if not love.
 WILLIAM
 Tut, I know thee a good rascal. Let's in,
 And on with all your neat and finest rags,
 155 On with your cloak and safeguard, you arrant drab.
 You must cheat without all conscience, filch for thee and me.
 Do thou but act what I shall well contrive,
 We'll teach my lawyer a new way to thrive.

Exeunt.

-
- adj. 1) for this period, which would perhaps make the word less appropriate to a woman; cf. *Lucr.*, 684, where the word is clearly used in a sexual context but with a more obvious application to the conventional male position: 'O that prone lust should stain so pure a bed.' See also note to 'fall', 145 below.
- 145 *favour*] (a) 'liking, affection' (*OED*, n.1.a); (b) 'sexual benevolence' (Williams); perhaps also (c) 'private parts, genitals,' for which cf. *Ham.*, II ii 232-4: '*Hamlet*: Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours? *Guildestern*: Faith, her privates we. *Hamlet*: In the secret parts of Fortune? O, most true, she is a strumpet.' Also *The Family of Love*, 1678-9, where Mistress Glister says to a gallant with whom she wants to have sex, 'You shall wear my favour out o' the same piece.'
- 145 *fall*] 'settle or alight' (*OED*, v.30), but with a strong suggestion of 'fall down in order to make love', a very common innuendo as in *Rom.*, I iii 41-3: 'Dost thou fall upon thy face? | Thou wilt fall backward when thou hast more wit, | Wilt thou not, Jule?' The word also has connotations of moral decline (*OED*, v.7.b) and of yielding to sexual temptation (*OED*, v.22.a).
- 146 *be naught with*] generally, 'be sexually immoral with' (Williams) but here probably more specifically, 'fornicate with' (Colman).
- 147 *hold ... position*] i.e., argue or adhere to a proposition that is untrue or invalid.
- 148 *False to herself*] i.e., unfaithful to her duty to her own chastity.
- 149 *know I say*] i.e., understand that my opinion of the matter is as follows.
- 150 *fame ... aspired*] i.e., the good reputation I sought to achieve by remaining a virgin.
- 153 *rascal*] a term of endearment here.
- 154 *rags*] given as a plural in *OED* for this period only as 'damaged or tattered clothes,' and not simply as 'clothes,' which appears to be the meaning here, and as now in such phrases as 'glad rags' and 'the rag trade.'
- 155 *safeguard*] 'an outer skirt worn to protect the dress when travelling' (*OED*, n.8).
- 155 *arrant*] 'notorious, downright' (*OED*, adj.3).
- 155 *drab*] 'prostitute,' (*OED*, n¹.2) with a possible pun on the kind of cloth called 'drab' (*OED*, n².A) following 'rags' in 154 and 'cloak and safeguard' in this line.
- 156 *all*] 'any whatever.' (*OED*, adj.4).
- 156 *filch*] 'pilfer, steal things of little value,' or, possibly, with less criminal implication, 'obtain surreptitiously.' (*OED*, v.1).
- 157 *contrive*] (a) 'devise or plot' (*OED*, v¹.2); (b) 'bring to pass' (*OED*, v¹.6).
- 158 *thrive*] 'prosper, increase his wealth' (*OED*, v.2.a), used either ironically (since they intend to decrease Throat's wealth) or meaning that they will teach Throat by example by showing him a new trick.

[Act I, Scene ii.]

Enter MISTRESS TAFFETA and ADRIANA, her maid, above.

TAFFETA

Come, loved Adriana, here let us sit
And mark who passes. Now, for a wager,
What coloured beard comes next by the window?

ADRIANA

A black man's, I think.

TAFFETA I think not so.

- 5 I think a red, for that is most in fashion.
Lord, how scarce is the world of proper men
And gallants! Sure we never more shall see
A good leg worn in a long silk stocking
With a long codpiece. Of all fashions
10 That carried it, i'faith! What's he goes by?

4 A black man's] a black mans Q1; a black, madam, Hazlitt.

Location] on the balcony (representing the first floor of Taffeta's house, as indicated by 'the window' in 3) and in the street below. This street is not identified in the play, but presumably lies somewhere between Hosier Lane (the location of the previous scene and which Boutcher has just left) and Ram Alley (for which Boutcher is heading when Taffeta waylays him). (For the location of Taffeta's house see Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play.)

2 mark] 'note, observe' (*OED*, v.13).

2 for a wager] (a) 'for a bet' (*OED*, n².2.a); cf. the modern 'I'll bet you anything;' (b) possibly 'for a prize' to be won by whoever gets the right answer (*OED*, n².2.b).

3 comes] 'passes' (*OED*, v.59.a).

4 black man's] i.e., a man with black hair or of dark complexion, proverbially attractive to women: 'a black man is a pearl in a fair woman's eye' (Dent, M79). Hazlitt's emendation to 'black, madam,' is unnecessary.

5 most in fashion] beards and hair were sometimes dyed; red was favoured, perhaps, because it suggested courage; cf. III iv 99 below, 'Fetch me a red-bearded sergeant.' *OED* quotes Fletcher, *Love's Cure*: 'Thou art a proper man, if thy beard were a little redder.' However, red beards were also thought to indicate lecherousness (see Tilley, B143, and quotation 1586: 'thou shalte knowe a lewde fellowe by his bearde, eyther redde or yellowe') as well as craftiness (Tilley, M395, 'the red-bearded are crafty'); cf. also *The Family of Love* (1686-7): 'There's no complexion more attractive in this time for women than gold and red beards: such men are all liver,' where 'liver' probably indicates both sexual vigour and physical courage.

6 proper] here, 'real, fine looking, handsome' (*OED*, adj.9) and Bly (*Op. Cit.*, p.39) notes that the word can suggest adequate penis size and sexual prowess in a man; the sense 'respectable, of good character' (as at I i 99) is not, probably, at the front of Taffeta's mind at this moment.

7 gallants] (a) 'a man of fashion and pleasure' (*OED*, B.n.1.a); (b) 'a lover, a paramour' (*OED*, B.n.3); the term was usually used of young men who dressed and behaved ostentatiously as opposed to the 'wit' who had intellectual pretensions; however, whilst the gallant might be distinguished from the wit by his fine clothes and extravagant way of life rather than his conversational abilities, most young men would aspire to a reputation as both gallants and wits (cf. I i 143).

8 worn in] a grammatically unusual usage as is it is the part of the body (the leg) that is 'worn' here, not the article of clothing; we should understand, 'dressed in, displayed in.'

10 carried it] 'carried off the prize, was best of all' (*OED*, v.15.b); the past tense is significant as the codpiece was well out of fashion by 1600 (see I i 8 and note).

Enter A CITIZEN.

ADRIANA

A snivelling citizen. He is carrying ware
Unto some lady's chamber.

Exit [CITIZEN].

But who's this?

Enter T[HOMAS] SMALLSHANKS reading a letter.

TAFFETA

I know him not. 'A looks just like a fool.

ADRIANA

He's very brave – 'a may be a courtier.

15 What's that 'a reads?

TAFFETA Ah, how light 'a treads
For dirt'ing his silk stockings.

[Exit THOMAS SMALLSHANKS.]

I'll tell thee what.

-
- 11 *snivelling*] (a) 'runny-nosed' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.a) and hence, 'in ill health, sickly;' (b) 'sounding through the nose' (*OED*, ppl.a.2), either glancing at the nasal twang popularly supposed to have been characteristic of the voices of puritans (with whom citizens tended to be identified) or with reference to the effects of syphilis (see Colman, 'speak i' th' nose'). Whatever the precise import of the word, it seems to be derisive here, and coming from the mouth of Adriana, whose mistress is the widow of a citizen, might give us pause: either Barry's own attitudes are creeping in, or (and more likely) this scorn may be intended to express the desire for upward social movement that so obviously exists in the widow's camp.
- 11 *ware*] (a) 'articles of merchandise' (*OED*, n³.1.a); (b) 'the genitals' (*OED*, n³.4.c). The bawdy meaning could be reinforced (even brought out for a modern audience) by the strategic placing of the citizen's burden, which would result in a stance suggestive of weakness in the thighs – a supposed effect of sexual excess or venereal disease. For 'ware = genitals' cf. *The Family of Love*, where Mistress Glisters threatens, 'as sure as I have ware, I'll traffic with the next merchant venturer' (1644-5); and Webster, *The White Devil*, IV ii 156-7: 'Will any mercer take another's ware | When once 'tis tous'd and sullied.' See also V i 138-9 below.
- 12 *chamber*] 'private bedroom' (*OED*, n.1.a), possibly with an innuendo based on the sense 'a small cannon' or 'the part of a cannon in which the charge is placed' (*OED*, n.10.b and c), i.e., the private parts of the lady, to whom the citizen is carrying his own private parts; see Colman, note to 'charged chambers', which refers to *2H4*, II iv 51-52: 'to venture upon the charg'd chambers bravely.'
- 12s.d. *Enter ... letter*] it would seem reasonable to assume that the letter Thomas Smallshanks is reading contains instructions to meet William at a rendezvous between William's lodgings in Hosier Lane and Ram Alley, and hence is from Boutcher (see I i 120-2), but 34 of this scene suggests that Boutcher communicated these instructions via Constantia in an oral message. It may well be, therefore, that the letter is simply a device to give Thomas a reason for passing slowly across the stage.
- 14 *brave*] (a) 'finely dressed' (*OED*, adj.2), or (b) 'a fine figure' (*OED*, adj.3.a).
- 15 *light*] i.e., lightly.
- 16 *For dirt'ing*] 'for fear of soiling' (*OED*, v.)

- A witty woman may with ease distinguish
 All men by their noses, as thus: your nose
 Tuscan is lovely, large, and broad,
 20 Much like a goose. Your valiant, generous nose, B3
 A crooked, smooth, and a great puffing nose.
 Your scholar's nose is very fresh and raw
 For want of fire in winter, and quickly smells
 His chops of mutton in his dish of porridge.
 25 Your puritan nose is very sharp and long,
 And much like your widow's, and with ease can smell

-
- 17 *witty*] here, 'wise, discerning' (*OED*, adj.1.b).
 18 *noses*] we understand, of course, 'sexual organs'. However, being liable to disfigurement as a result of venereal disease, the actual nose could be an indicator of a man's sexual habits. Cf. Tilley, N227: 'One may know by his nose what pottage (porridge) he loves.'
 19 *Tuscan*] (a) the earliest order of pillars in Greek architecture, stout and plain, and hence, 'your most basic sort of nose/penis'; (b) possibly also of a native of Tuscany in Italy, in which case the nose's 'supposed relationship with genital dimension' (Williams) and the Italian male's reputed predilection for sex will come into play.
 20 *goose*] here probably not the bird but the tailor's smoothing iron, so called because the handle resembled the neck of a goose (*OED*, n.5.a) and hence, also, a penis. The clue to this rather obscure simile may lie in a 17th century phrase given by Partridge.1, '*hot and heavy like a tailor's goose*, applied to a Passionate Coxcomb.' Cf. also the elaborate joke in *Mac.*, II iii 13-5: 'Here's an English tailor come hither for stealing out of a French hose. Come in, tailor, here you may roast your goose.'
 20-1 *Your ... nose*] i.e., your generous nose is a crooked ... etc..
 21 *puffing*] (a) 'haughty, swaggering,' here, with sexual arrogance (*OED*, ppl.a.2); (b) 'breathing hard,' here, with sexual excitement (*OED*, ppl.a.1); (c) 'swelling up,' here, becoming sexually erect (*OED*, ppl.a.3).
 22 *fresh*] (a) 'inexperienced' (*OED*, adj.3); (b) 'healthy looking' (*OED*, adj.9.b); (c) 'full of vigour, eager, of good appetite' (*OED*, adj.10.a). Though Partridge.2 allows the sense 'sexually forward,' *OED* does not give this before mid-19th century, and Williams has no entry for the word at all.
 22 *raw*] (a) 'tender, painful' (*OED*, adj.6.b); (b) 'inexperienced,' here, sexually (*OED*, adj.5.a).
 23 *fire*] perhaps also, 'sexual ardour' (Partridge.2), or, 'sexual stimulation.'
 24 *mutton*] usually slang for 'a prostitute' (Williams) but here 'penis', as in *Doctor Faustus*, where the female Lechery declares at vi 166-7 that she 'loves an inch of raw mutton better than an ell of fried stockfish.' The word 'chops' – 'slices of meat' – might reinforce this meaning, as might 'dish of porridge' (see next note); but both 'mutton' and 'porridge' could refer loosely to the woman the scholar seeks; cf. *LLL.*, I i 302-3: 'I had rather pray a month with mutton and porridge' (i.e., 'I'd rather a month of lechery [sc. than spend a month in prison]').
 24 *dish of porridge*] (a) 'bowl of pottage, soup or sauce' (*OED*, n.1.a); (b) 'vagina in a sexually excited state.' The latter would make good sense if we take this phrase and 'chops of mutton' as two separate items. However, the innuendo may not be as direct as that: cf. the use of 'pottage' in the quotation in note to 18 above, and the following passages from Middleton's *The Widow*, 1.1.18-9: 'if gluttony be the meat, lechery is the porridge: they're both boiled together;' and *Your Five Gallants*, 1.1.125-7: 'Ah, the goodly virginities that have been cut up in my house, and the goodly patrimonies that have lain like sops in the gravy.' On the other hand, there is something in the phrasing of this whole line that seems to invite a detailed realisation of the image.
 25 *nose*] as with Laurence Sterne, one suspects that when Barry mentions a nose he means more than the organ by which we smell (cf. II i 36 and note) and that moreover, being 'sharp and long,' this organ is capable of piercing to a great depth.
 25 *sharp*] (a) 'pointed' (*OED*, adj.1.b); (b) 'hungry, of eager appetite' (*OED*, adj.4.f); (c) 'ardent,' here in a sexual sense (*OED*, adj.4.b).

An edifying capon some five streets off.

Enter BOUTCHER and CONSTANTIA.

ADRIANA

Oh Mistress, a very proper gentleman!

TAFFETA

And trust me, so it is. I never saw

- 30 A man that sooner would captive my thoughts,
Since I writ widow, than this gentleman.
Would 'a would look up.

ADRIANA I'll laugh so loud

That he may hear me.

TAFFETA That's not so good.

BOUTCHER

And spake you with Master Smallshanks?

CONSTANTIA I did.

BOUTCHER

- 35 Will 'a meet his brother?

CONSTANTIA 'A said 'a would,

And I believed him. I tell you, master,

I have done that for many of these gallants

That no man in this town would do but I.

BOUTCHER

What is that, boy?

CONSTANTIA Why, trust them on their words.

- 40 But will you hear the news which now supplies
The city with discourse?

27 *edifying capon*] literally, 'a cooked castrated cockerel which induces moral or spiritual improvement;' though a 'capon' was usually 'a eunuch' (and given as thus by Williams) it could also be 'a woman regarded as a source of sexual satisfaction' (as in 137 of this scene); the word 'edifying' was a stock in trade of puritan rhetoric which was frequently used ironically against them, especially to suggest, as here, that what they found most 'edifying' was the satisfaction of their physical rather than their spiritual desires, it being a common belief that puritans (both male and female) were, beneath their guise of spiritual purity, actually preoccupied by their physical desires. Cf. Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, II vi 39-42, where Dame Purecraft asks Zeal-of-the-Land Busy 'to edifie and raise vs vp in a scruple; my daughter Win-the-fight is visited with a naturall disease of women; call'd A longing to eate a pigge.'

30 *captive*] 'captive, enthrall' (*OED*, v.1.b).

31 *writ widow*] i.e., described or designated myself a widow when writing or signing my name, but more loosely, 'became a widow.'

34 *Master Smallshanks*] i.e., Thomas Smallshanks. This suggests (a) that the message from Boutcher to Thomas was delivered orally by Constantia (see 12s.d. above) and (b) that Thomas has had time to set out and get ahead of Boutcher, thus placing William's rendezvous with his father in II i somewhere between Taffeta's house and Ram Alley.

37-8 *I have ... but I*] the structure here of a leading phrase, question, and an answer that deflates expectations makes one wonder whether there is more homoerotic suggestion in play here, as the implication of the leading phrase could be that what the 'page' has done is what the girl under the male attire might have done – i.e., provided them with sex; Boutcher can take it only as spoken by a boy, and the actor might indicate his surprise in the way the question is asked, but the audience, of course, can take it both ways.

39 *words*] 'words of honour, promises' (*OED*, n.8).

- BOUTCHER What is it, wag?
 CONSTANTIA
 This, sir. They say some of our city dames
 Were much desirous to see the baboons
 Do their newest tricks, went, saw them, came home,
 45 Went to bed, slept. Next morning, one of them,
 Being to shift a smock, sends down her maid
 To warm her one. Meanwhile she gins to think
 On the baboons' tricks, and naked in her bed
 Begins to practise some. At last she strove
 50 To get her right leg over her head – thus –
 And by her activity she got it
 Cross her shoulder, but not with all her power
 Could she reduce it. At last, much struggling,
 Tumbles quite from the bed upon the floor.
 55 The maid by this returned with the warm smock,
 And seeing her mistress thrown on the ground,
 Trussed up like a football, exclaims, calls help, B3v
 Runs down amazed, swears that her mistress' neck
 Is broke. Up comes her husband and neighbours,
 60 And finding her thus trussed some flatly said

-
- 41 wag] 'wit, joker' (*OED*, n².2), or, 'young chap' (*OED*, n².1).
 42 city dames] 'wives of citizens' (*OED*, *city*, n.8.a).
 43-4 baboons ... tricks] baboons were displayed in London publicly from at least 1603 (Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, III, p.215) and privately from at least 1485 (see Baker, 'The third university 1450-1550: law school or finishing school?' p.12); the phrase 'newest tricks' therefore suggests that by now such displays had become quite common. For other references to displays of animals for entertainment, see 71 below, and IV ii 122ff. Apes generally were associated with lechery (cf. *Oth.*, III iii. 403: 'as hot as monkeys') and hence the word 'tricks,' which suggests here 'sexual antics;' the same correlation occurs at II iii 94-5, and in *Blurt, Master Constable*, III iii 154-7: 'be ... apes in your bed: upon which leaving you tumbling, pardon me that thus abruptly and openly I take you all up.'
 46 Being to] 'intending to' (*OED*, v.16.a).
 46 shift a smock] 'change an undergarment' (*OED*, v.9.b); given the general undertone of sexual innuendo in Constantia's story one might suspect that the sexual connotations of 'smock' are being brought into play here, for which see I i 57-8 and note.
 47 gins] 'begins' (*OED*, v¹.1).
 48 On] 'of, about' (*OED*, prep.22.b).
 49 practise] (a) 'perform, execute' (*OED*, v.1); (b) 'attempt, endeavour to accomplish' (*OED*, v.8.c).
 50 thus] Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.56, suggests that the actor might here have 'dexterously performed a special tumbling trick on the floor of the Whitefriars.'
 53 reduce] 'draw or pull back again' (*OED*, v.7.a).
 53 much struggling] either simply parenthetical, 'struggling a great deal', or an ellipsis, 'with much struggling'; the latter would be typical of the whole speech which seems to aim for an effect of rapidity through compression.
 55 by this] 'by this time.' (*OED*, *by*, prep.21.b).
 57 Trussed ... football] footballs were not as regular in shape then as now, being made of an inflated pig's bladder sewn up in a leather casing which came, we are told by Francis Willughby in his *Book of Games* (circa 1660), from the skin of a bull's scrotum.
 60 flatly] 'plainly, bluntly' (*OED*, adv.3.a).

- She was bewitched, others she was possessed.
 A third said, for her pride the Devil had set
 Her face where her rump should stand. But at last
 Her valiant husband steps me boldly to her,
 65 Helps her – she ashamed, her husband amazed,
 The neighbours laughing. As none forbear,
 She tells them of the fatal accident,
 To which one answers that if her husband
 Would leave his trade and carry his wife about
 70 To do this trick in public, she'd get more gold
 Than all the baboons, calves with two tails,
 Or motions whatsoever.
 BOUTCHER You are a wag.
 TAFFETA
 He will be gone if we neglect to stay him.
 ADRIANA
 Shall I cough or sneeze?
 TAFFETA No. I ha't – stand aside.
 75 Aye me, my handkercher! Adriana! Fabia!
 ADRIANA Mistress?
 TAFFETA
 Run, run, I have let my handkercher fall!

[Exit ADRIANA above.]

Gentlemen, shall I entreat a courtesy?
 BOUTCHER
 Within my power your beauty shall command.
 What courtesy is't?

61 bewitched] bewitch Q1.

61 *bewitched*] Q1 has 'bewitch'; the participial ending /ed/ or /'d/ was sometimes omitted (see Abbott, 342) but no other examples of such omission have been found in Q1 and this instance has therefore been treated as an error.
 61 *possessed*] i.e., by the devil or an evil demon.
 62 *pride*] also, 'sexual desire,' especially in women (*OED*, n¹.11).
 64 *me*] the ethical dative (Abbott, 220), an intensive which signifies 'mark me, let me tell you.'
 67 *fatal*] a hyperbole: (a) 'disastrous, dreadful' (*OED*, adj.7); (b) 'decreed by fate' (*OED*, adj.1).
 69 *carry*] 'transport, take.'
 70 *get*] 'earn, gain' (*OED*, v.2.a).
 71 *baboons ... tails*] See note to 43 above; freaks of the type described here were another popular kind of show (as, indeed, they still are to some extent); cf. Jonson's 'strange Calfe, with fiue legs' (*The Alchemist*, V i 7-8) which grew up to become in *Bartholomew Fair*, V iv 84-6, 'the Bull with the fiue legges, and two pizzles; (hee was a Calfe at Uxbridge Fayre two yeeres agoe).' This calf's 'tails' equate, of course, to the bull's 'pizzles' (and perhaps its extra leg).
 72 *motions*] usually 'puppet shows' (*OED*, n.13.a) but here, and at IV ii 146, the word seems to be used to refer to freak shows of the type just described by Constantia.
 74 *ha't*] i.e., have it.
 75 *handkercher*] 'handkerchief' (*OED*, n) – the common form of the word in this period.
 75 *Fabia*] possibly a ghost character – see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.
 78 *shall*] here has the force of 'is bound to, is certain to' (*OED*, v.6.b).

80 TAFFETA To stoop and take up
My handkercher.
BOUTCHER Your desire is performed.
TAFFETA
Sir, most hearty thanks. Please you come in.
Your welcome shall transcend your expectation.
BOUTCHER
I accept your courtesy.

[Exit TAFFETA above.]

Ha! What's this?
Assailed by fear and hope in a moment?
85 Boutcher, this womanish passion fits not men
Who know the worth of freedom. Shall smiles and eyes,
With their lascivious glances, conquer him
Hath still been lord of his affections?
Shall simpering niceness, load-stones but to fools,
90 Attract a knowing spirit? It shall – it does.
Not Phoebus rising from Aurora's lap
Spreads his bright rays with more majestic grace
Than came the glances from her quickening eye –
And what of this?
CONSTANTIA By my troth, I know not.
BOUTCHER
95 I will not enter. Continued flames burn strong.
I am yet free and reason keeps her seat
Above all fond affections. Yet is she fair.

B4

Enter ADRIANA [below].

86 *freedom*] i.e., freedom from attachments to others; but cf. Boucher's speech to William at I i 45-9

88 *Hath*] i.e., who hath (omission of the relative was permissible – see Abbott, 244).

89 *simpering*] 'smiling in a feeble and affected manner.' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).

89 niceness] (a) 'coyness' (*OED*, 4); (b) 'wantonness' (*OED*, 1).

89 *load-stones*] naturally magnetic stones and hence 'something which attracts.'

90 *knowing*] 'enlightened, awakened to realities' (*OED*, ppl.a.2.a).

91-2 *Not ... Spreads*] i.e., does not spread or send out.

91 *Phoebus ... rays*] Phoebus Apollo, the god of the sun, is here conceived of as the lover of Aurora, the dawn; after making love to her Phoebus gets up – i.e., the sun rises.

91 *lap*] (a) 'the front part of the body from waist to knees' (*OED*, n¹.5.a); (b) 'the vagina' (*OED*, n¹.2.b; Colman).

92 *rays*] (a) 'beams of light' (*OED*, n¹.1.a); (b) 'glances of the eye' (*OED*, n¹.3.a).

93 *quicken[ing]* 'life-giving' (*OED*, *quick*, ppl.a of *v*¹. sense 2.a).

94 *By my troth*] ‘on my word’ (*OED*, *troth*, n.1.b).

95 *burn*] part of the stock vocabulary of love and indicating passion, but also commonly associated with venereal disease (which produces burning sensations in the urethra).

96 *keeps her seat*] i.e., retains her place against all opposition, has not fallen; the metaphor derives either from mounted combat or from the throne as a symbol of rule (reason frequently being represented as the ruler of the other mental faculties).

97 *fond*] 'infatuated, foolish, silly' (*OED*, adj.2).

- ADRIANA
 Sir, I bring you thanks for this great courtesy,
 And if you please to enter I dare presume
 100 My mistress will afford you gracious welcome.
 BOUTCHER
 How do men call your mistress?
 CONSTANTIA [*Aside.*] The man's in love.
 ADRIANA
 Her name, sir, is Mistress Changeable, late wife
 To Master Taffeta, mercer, deceased.
 BOUTCHER
 I have heard she is both rich and beautiful.
 ADRIANA
 105 In th'eyes of such as love her. Judge yourself –
 Please you but prick forward and enter.

[*Exit BOUTCHER into the house.*]

CONSTANTIA
 Now will I fall aboard the waiting maid.
 ADRIANA
 Fall aboard of me! Do'st take me for a ship?
 CONSTANTIA
 Ay, and will shoot you betwixt wind and water.

-
- 100 *afford*] 'grant, give' (*OED*, v.5).
 102 *Changeable*] a) 'inconstant' (*OED*, adj.1); (b) (of cloth) showing different colours under different aspects' (*OED*, adj.3.a); see note to *Actorum nomina*, 21.
 102 *late*] 'lately, recently,' or, 'who was recently' (*OED*, adj.5.b); the grammatical status of the word is not entirely clear.
 103 *mercier*] 'a dealer in fabrics' (*OED*), especially of the more costly kinds; see note to *Actorum nomina*. 21.
 106 *prick forward*] as a verb, 'advance' – literally, 'urge your horse on' (*OED*, v.11.a) – but with an obvious glance at the nominal use 'prick = penis' (an innuendo continued with 'enter').
 107 *fall aboard*] (a) 'to strike the side of, or fall foul of another ship' (*OED*, *aboard*, adv.2.d) hence 'to attack, attempt to take possession of;' (b) 'mount sexually' (Williams, though in his examples the phrase is often 'lay aboard'); in this case the intended act is less aggressively sexual – 'play at seducing, flirt with' would be more appropriate here; given, though, that this 'page' is, in the diegesis, a cross-dressed girl, the line and the exchange it sparks off inevitably have a homoerotic charge, as does the later exchange Constantia has with Adriana (see II iii 91ff.) and, even more suggestively, the one she has with Dash (see I iii 111 and note). For other uses of the 'fall aboard' metaphor see John Day, *Law Tricks*, 375-8, where, though, the focus is primarily on the combat of wit and only secondarily on the sexual sparring: '*Em[ilia]*: Is your wits shipping any better mand? | *Pol[ymetes]*: Yes, will you board it? | *Em[ilia]*: No, I dare not venter: | *Pol[ymetes]*: Make but a shot in iest and you may enter.' Cf. also V iii 143 and 319, and notes.
 108 *Do'st ... ship?*] 'ship' could mean 'woman' and 'vagina' (Williams) so the answer to Adriana's question is clearly 'yes.'
 109 *shoot ... water*] lit. to score a direct hit low on the side of a ship, thereby causing a leak; but 'between wind and water' also means 'between where you urinate and break wind' (this is an earlier usage than the earliest given by Partridge.1) whilst 'shoot' could mean, depending on the context, 'have sex with, or achieve orgasm (and hence, in the man's case, ejaculate);' the secondary sense of the whole line is thus, 'yes, and have sexual intercourse with you.' For the phrase 'twixt wind and water,' see Tilley, W436. For 'shoot' cf. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 2.1.115-7: 'you know a bow's [vagina's] quickly ready, though a gun [penis] be long a-charging,

- ADRIANA
 110 Blurt, Master Gunner, your linstock's too short!
 CONSTANTIA
 'Foot! How did she know that! Do'st hear, sweet heart –
 Should not the page be doing with the maid
 While the master is busy with the mistress?
 Please you prick forwards – thou art a wench
 115 Likely to go the way of all flesh shortly.
 ADRIANA
 Whose witty knave art thou?
 CONSTANTIA. At your service.
 ADRIANA
 At mine? Faith, I should breech thee!

and will shoot [achieve orgasm] five times to his once;' also Webster, *The White Devil*, IV ii 179-81: 'A quiet woman | Is a still water under a great bridge. | A man may shoot [have sex with] her safely;' and Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, F2r: 'Wag[es]: A peece, why a peece? didst thou euer shoot in her? | Slac[ke]: Why I, no: she recoiles too much in the discharging for me to meddle with.'

- 110 *Blurt*] a contemptuous exclamation – 'come off it!' (*OED*, n.1); 'Blurt, Master Constable!' was a proverbial expression (Tilley, M739); for the substitution of 'Gunner' here, see next note.
 110 *Master Gunner*] the Master Gunner had charge of a battery of ordnance on land or, as here (to carry on the banter on the naval theme started by Constantia's 'Now will I fall aboard the waiting maid') at sea (*OED*, *gunner*, n.1.c); however, a 'gunner' could also be 'an amorous person, one who sets his sights at a woman' (*OED*, *gunner*, n.1.d) – or, one suspects in this case, more directly 'one who uses his gun,' as although the earliest such figurative use given by *OED* is 1657, the gun (and indeed weaponry in general) as a metaphor for the penis already had by 1611 a long history; cf. Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 3.3.95-6, where Antifront, listing a prostitute's clients, notes: 'Master Match the gunner of Tower Hill comes often;' (see also note to 109 and next).
 110 *linstock's*] the 'linstock' was an implement about three feet long, spiked at one end and forked at the other, the forked end holding a lighted match to provide a gun battery with the means of lighting individual cannons (*OED*) as in *H5*, 3 Pro, 32-3: 'the nimble gunner | With linstock now the devilish cannon touches.' Here of course, 'linstock = penis' and Adriana, with unwitting accuracy, casts aspersions on the size of the 'page's' penis. Cf. *Blurt, Master Constable*, II ii 288-90: 'O Cupid, grant that my blushing prove not a linstock, and give fire too suddenly to the Roaring Meg of my desires!'
 112 *doing with*] (a) 'occupied with' (*OED*, *do*, v.34.b); (b) meddling with' (*OED*, *do*, v.40.a); (c) 'copulating with' (*OED*, *vbl.n.1.b*).
 113 *busy with*] as 'doing with' in preceding note (*OED*, *adj.1.a*; 5; 1.e).
 114 *prick forwards*] see note to 106 above; Constantia is working hard to maintain her male disguise, which she fears Adriana might have rumbled.
 115 *to ... flesh*] (a) 'to die' (*OED*, *way*, 7.c); (b) 'to give in to temptation' (usually sexual temptation); the phrase was proverbial – see Tilley, W166, 'to go the way of all flesh;' cf. Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 2.1.435-6, where the play on meanings is made explicit: 'Come, come, I'll put you in the way of all flesh: I'll send you to Gravesend.' Also Dekker and Webster, *Westward Ho*, II ii 204-5, with a different play on meanings: 'I saw him euen now going the way of all flesh (thats to say) towards the kitchin.' 'Go' possibly quibbles on 'prick forwards' in the sense 'move.'
 116 *knave*] (a) 'boy' (*OED*, n.1); (b) 'servant' (*OED*, n.2); (c) 'rogue,' but here jocular (*OED*, n.3).
 116 *At your service*] i.e., 'your servant,' but with a glance at the sense of 'service' in I i 81, above; cf. *Blurt, Master Constable*, II ii 108-10, where the courtesan replies to the pageboy's 'At your service,' with 'My service? alas, alas, thou canst do me small service!' (It is interesting that this second echo of a line from *Blurt, Master Constable* makes the same joke as the one at 110.)
 117 *breech*] on the one hand Adriana is belittling Constantia (whose 'actual' femininity presumably makes her look very young and boyish) suggesting that she should (a) 'give her bottom a good smacking' (*OED*, *breech*, v.2), as she has done for many bigger ('taller') men than her, and (b) 'put her into breeches' (*OED*, v.1) as boys were at around the age of five (they wore petticoats

CONSTANTIA

How? Breech me!

ADRIANA

Ay, breech thee. I have breeched a taller man
Than you in my time. Come in, and welcome.

[Exit ADRIANA into the house.]

CONSTANTIA

- 120 Well, I see now a rich, well-practised bawd
May purse more fees in a summer's progress
Than a well-traded lawyer in a whole term.
Panderism! Why, 'tis grown a liberal science
Or a new sect, and the good professors
125 Will, like the Brownist, frequent gravel pits shortly

118. breeched] breech Q1.

up till then); but she also indicates that she sees her as sexually attractive by a quibble on 'breach = vagina,' the connective sense then being something like, 'let you wear [have sex with] me,' or, for the audience, knowing the page to actually be a woman, opening up the possibility that Adriana might enter her 'breach.'

118 *taller*] of greater height (again a jibe at Constantia's stature) but also having a larger 'instock.'

120-6 *Well ... already*] though the diatribe against panderism may seem off the point, the connection between seduction and the procuring of women for prostitution was a moralistic commonplace.

121 *purse*] (a) 'pocket up, put in a purse' (*OED*, v.1); (b) with a glance at the nominal 'purse = vagina' (Williams); cf. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 1.2.241-2: 'I'll be kind to women; that which I gather i'th'day, I'll put into their purses at night.'

121 *fees*] 'payments made for a service' (*OED*, n².7.b), usually a lawyer's, but also particularly a bawd's; Colman gives 'seductress's gratification;' cf. also 'smock fees,' IV i 86 and note.

121 *progress*] 'an official tour or circuit made by judges' (*OED*, n.2.a); like the modern business convention or conference, it was (at least in the popular imagination) an ideal opportunity for bawds and prostitutes to ply their trades; cf. Webster, *The White Devil*, V i 208: 'Like the geese [i.e., whores] in the progress.'

122 *well-traded*] 'having a good trade, frequently employed, much resorted to' (*OED*, adj.).

122 *term*] 'a period during which the law courts were in session in London' (*OED*, n.5).

123 *Panderism*] 'pimping, acting as a bawd' (*OED*).

123 *liberal science*] (a) the 'liberal sciences' were those considered suitable for gentlemen to study or take an interest in (*OED*, *liberal*, adj.1); 'science' meant knowledge in general and was not distinguished, as now, from the arts and humanities so could refer to music, logic, rhetoric and grammar as well as mathematics and astronomy; (b) with a pun on 'liberal' meaning 'licentious, unrestrained by morality' (*OED*, *liberal*, adj.3.a).

124 *professors*] (a) 'people who declare their belief in a religion or teaching' (*OED*, n.3.b); (b) 'people who make a living out of a skill' (*OED*, n.5.a).

125 *Brownist*] a follower of Robert Browne (1550?-1633?), the first puritan nonconformist to openly break with the Church of England. Why Brownists are specified here is not clear; it may be that they were simply an easily identifiable and topically controversial group of Puritans, who, in general, and mainly because of their opposition to plays, were a frequent butt of jokes on the stage, the commonest accusation being that they were hypocrites (cf. I ii 25 and note); on the other hand, it required only a slight adjustment of popular prejudice to convert dissidence in religious matters (the focus of the bulk of polemical diatribes against the Brownists) into dissidence in other matters, such as sexual behaviour, and the Brownists may well have suffered from that tendency: in his entry on the Family of Love, Williams observes (but without quoting any specific instance) that they 'met with allegations of sexual scandal;' this may have derived from such hazy accusations as those made by Thomas Rogers (in *The faith, doctrine, and religion, professed and protected in the Realme of England*, p.47), that 'Glover, the Brownist said that the intemperate affections of the mind, issuing from Concupiscence, are but veniall

For they use woods and obscure holes already.

[Exit CONSTANTIA into the house.]

Enter TAFFETA and BOUTCHER [above].

[TAFFETA]

Not marry a widow?

BOUTCHER No.

TAFFETA And why?

Belike you think it base and servant-like.

To feed upon reversion. You hold us widows

-
- sinnes,' and William Crashawe (in *The Sermon Preached at the Crosse, Feb. xiii, 1607*, p.29) that it was 'objected to them that they haue left our church, not out of conscience, but out of carnal discontents, and upon fleshly reasons.'
- 125 *gravel pits*] whilst nonconformists, of necessity, held their meetings in out-of-the-way places, the connection between Brownists and gravel pits is obscure though there were several in the London area near Southwark (where there was a Brownist conventicle in the late 16th century) and around Norwich (where Robert Browne started his life as a dissident puritan preacher). The point of the joke possibly lies in the fact that 'gravel' was a disease of the urinary tract characterised by aggregations of fine crystals (*OED*, n.4) whilst 'pits = vaginas.' For the latter, cf. Middleton, *The Hengist, King of Kent*, 2.4.65-7 where Simon the Tanner says: 'My master's dead and I serve my mistress ... she's now a widow, and I am the foreman of her tanpit;' and *Proverbs*, 23.27: 'for an whore is a deepe grave, and a straunge woman is a narowe pit' (*Bishops' Bible*). See also 126 and note below.
- 126 *use*] (a) 'employ' (*OED*, v.7); (b) 'resort frequently to, haunt' (*OED*, v.17.a); (c) 'employ for sexual satisfaction, have intercourse with' (*OED*, v.10.b); the last sense, now obsolete, was common in this period.
- 126 *obscure holes*] (a) 'dark or remote caves or hiding places' (*OED*, *obscure*, adj.1.a and 5; *hole*, n.1.a and 2.a) which, like gravel pits and woods, might have been used for nonconformist meetings; (b) 'vaginas' (*OED*, *hole*, 8). There may be a glance in 'Brownist' at 'brown, a gloomy colour' as in 'to be in a brown study.'
- 126s.d. *Exit CONSTANTIA*] Jones (p.96) suggests a scene break here, presumably as the stage is cleared on Constantia's departure and the two characters who enter left the stage separately earlier; however, the location has not changed and the action is continuous, the two characters simply returning to develop that action further; this edition has therefore preferred to keep I ii running; Jones suggests further that Taffeta and Boutcher 'are above at beginning of scene' and that seems sensible as Boutcher exited into the house at Adriana's invitation at 106 and when he leaves at 178 will thus exit from the upper stage to reappear below in the street, where he can be observed by Taffeta and Adriana from above and in the house.
- 126s.p. *TAFFETA*] the practice of putting the first character to speak at the head of the list of entrants was common, but the omission of the speech prefix here is probably an oversight as Barry does it nowhere else.
- 128 *Belike*] 'perhaps' (*OED*, adv.).
- 129 *feed*] assimilation of the alimentary and sexual appetites was commonplace; cf. II iii 58-60, and IV ii 87. There is a constant play on the trope throughout, for example, Middleton's *Women Beware Women*.
- 129 *reversion*] (a) 'the remains of a meal' (*OED*, n.4.a); (b) in legal terminology, 'the right to possess something after the original owner has finished with it, or has died' (*OED*, n.2.a), that 'something' here being the widow of a man now dead; cf. Middleton, *An/The Old Law*, 2.2.69: 'I come to beg the reversion of thy wife.' The word had strong suggestions of 'second best' and hence of inadequacy, as in Marston, *The Malcontent*, V v 28-31: 'he hath all things in reversion: he has his mistress in reversion, his clothes in reversion, his wit in reversion, and, indeed, is a suitor to me for my dog in reversion.' Cf. also IV ii 28 and note.
- 129 *hold*] 'regard, consider' (*OED*, v.12.d).

- 130 But as a pie thrust to the lower end
 That hath had many fingers in't before
 And is reserved for gross and hungry stomachs.
 BOUTCHER
 You much mistake me.
 TAFFETA Come, in faith, you do –
 And let me tell you, that's but ceremony,
 135 For though the pie be broken up before
 Yet says the proverb, the deeper is the sweeter,
 And though a capon's wings and legs be carved
 The flesh left with the rump, I hope, is sweet.
 I tell you, sir, I have been wooed and sued to
 140 By worthy knights of fair demesnes – nay more,
 They have been out of debt – yet till this hour

B4v

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- 130 *thrust ... end*] i.e., (a) has gone all the way down the table, and so has had many people serving themselves out of it; (b) is sexually experienced (the 'lower end' being the penis). For a similar analogy, cf. Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 1.1.129-31: 'For, as in one pie twenty may dip their sippets, so upon one woman forty may consume their patrimonies.'
- 131 *fingers*] i.e., of (a) the diners; (b) her sexual partners (in which case 'finger' can be taken literally, or metaphorically as 'penis'); 'to have a finger in the pie' was proverbial (see Tilley, F228, who also gives the following quotation, though the date being 1666, it is perhaps too late for this period: 'to have contributed to the Getting of such or such a Child; which the English commonly express by, Having had a Finger in the Pye').
- 132 *reserved*] (a) 'kept back, held over for another's use' (*OED*, v¹.3.a); (b) 'served again (i.e., reserved) at a later time' (*OED*, v²).
- 132 *gross*] (a) 'coarse' (*OED*, adj.15.b); (b) 'over-fed' (*OED*, adj.2.b); (c) 'thick, massive' (*OED*, adj.1.a).
- 132 *stomachs*] (a) 'appetites' (*OED*, n.5.a); (b) 'inclinations, desires' (*OED*, n.5.b); (c) perhaps also specifically 'sexual appetites' (*OED*, n.1.g); the word 'stomach' was earlier used as equivalent to 'liver,' the supposed seat of sexual lusts, but the usage may have faded by this period.
- 134 *ceremony*] possibly, 'an idle formality' (*OED*, n.1.b), or something akin to 'superstition,' a meaning that could be linked to the sense 'omens, portents' (*OED*, n.5), as in *Caes.*, II ii 13-4, 'I never stood on ceremonies, | Yet now they fright me') or to the Protestant distaste for Catholic ceremonies, to which the epithet 'superstitious' was almost invariably attached; whatever the meaning, the usage is unusual.
- 135 *broken up before*] i.e., already started upon, the crust broken into, and enjoyed by somebody else; the word 'broken' carried senses such as 'rupture' (*OED*, ppl.a.2) and 'ploughed up' (*OED*, ppl.a.17.a) which could be continued into 'sexually violated' (*OED*, ppl.a.10.a), and although Taffeta is not thinking of non-consensual intercourse here, the sexual connotations are clearly present.
- 136 *deeper ... sweeter*] proverbial – see Tilley, D188. Cf. also, Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, II iv 41-2: 'And then, I sent her another, and my poesy was: | The deeper the sweeter, I'll be iudg'd by St. Peter.' Cf. also Cooke, *Greene's Tu Quoque*, D2r: 'And againe the Prouerb sayes, The deeper the sweeter' (though there is, rather oddly, no apparent sexual innuendo in that usage). Variations on the joke are still popular in, for example, seaside picture postcards (as, girl to boy whilst paddling in the sea, 'Oh, George, the further in you go, the nicer it feels!').
- 137 *capon's ... carved*] for 'capon' see note to 27 of this scene; 'carved' means here 'enjoyed sexually' (Williams).
- 138 *flesh ... sweet*] proverbial: 'the nearer the bone, the sweeter the flesh' (Tilley, B520); the 'rump' is 'the edible part of an animal or bird from which the tail springs,' and, of a person, 'the buttocks' (*OED*, n.1.a and 2); 'the flesh left with the rump' is thus the pudendum.
- 139 *sued to*] 'courted' (*OED*, v.23).
- 140 *demesnes*] (a) 'domains, estates' (*OED*, n.5.b); or more specifically (b) 'the land attached to a mansion and set aside for pleasure' (*OED*, n.3.c).
- 141 *They ... debt*] see I i 29-30 and note.

- I neither could endure to be in love
 Or be beloved. But proffered ware is cheap.
 What's lawful, that's loathed, and things denied
 145 Are with more stronger appetite pursued.
 I am too yielding.
 BOUTCHER You mistake my thoughts.
 But know, thou wonder of this continent,
 By one more skilled in unknown fate than was
 The blind Achaian prophet, it was foretold
 150 A widow should endanger both my life,
 My soul, my lands, and reputation.
 This checks my thoughts, and cools th'essential fire
 Of sacred love more ardent in my breast
 Than speech can utter.
 TAFFETA A trivial, idle jest.
 155 'Tis for a man of your repute and note
 To credit fortune tellers – a petty rogue,

146. too] to Q1. 152. thoughts] thoughts Q1. 152. th'essential] th'essentiall Q1. 156. tellers – a] tellers, a Q1.

- 142-3 *neither ... Or*] not necessarily an error as this construction was quite common in 16th and 17th century English; the placing of 'neither' before the verb was also acceptable.
 143 *proffered ... cheap*] proverbial: 'proffered ware stinks' (Tilley, S252); as in 11 above, there is a bawdy quibble – 'ware = merchandise = genitals.'
 145 *more stronger*] pleonastic comparatives were commonly used at this period to give emphasis.
 146 *too*] Q1 has 'to,' which could mean 'I am inclined to be yielding;' however, the orthographical distinction between 'to' and 'too' would not be rigorously observed at this period and it is likely that both senses are being played upon.
 147 *continent*] (a) 'the earth as a whole' (*OED*, n.3.b); (b) 'any continuous tract of land' (*OED*, n.3.a).
 148 *unknown*] the word here has the force of 'hidden' rather than merely 'not yet known.'
 149 *The ... prophet*] i.e., Tiresias, the prophet of Thebes. Since Thebes was not in Achaia, the epithet 'Achaian' could mean here simply 'Grecian.'
 150 *both*] sometimes used, as here, with reference to more than two objects. Cf. *Ven.*, 747, 'Both favor, savor, hue, and qualities.' And *IH6*, V v 107: 'But I will rule both her, the King, and realm.'
 152-3 *This ... love*] cf. Middleton, *The Widow*, 3.2.60ff., where Francisco is put off his courting by 'supernatural' omens.
 152 *checks*] (a) 'stops short, restrains' (*OED*, v¹.3 and 13); (b) 'rebukes' (*OED*, v¹.11).
 152 *th'essential fire*] i.e., the fire or passion that constitutes the essence of love, or which is indispensable to it.
 154 *idle*] 'empty, frivolous, groundless' (*OED*, adj.2.a and c).
 155-6 *'Tis ... tellers*] this construction is both elliptical and ironic; read, 'it is fit for a man ...' but understand, 'it is anything but fit for a man ...'
 155 *repute*] 'reputation, honour' (*OED*, n.4).
 155 *note*] 'distinction, fame' (*OED*, n².19.a).
 156 *tellers – a*] Q1 has a comma here; Jones suggests 'tellers. A ...' following previous editors, but this is an unnecessary and over-strong tidying up of Barry's punctuation; if read thus, 'will' in 158 is the main verb of a sentence that hangs in a rather awkward parenthetical relation to the sentences around it. Following the looser pointing of Q1, one can read this passage as indicative of Taffeta's agitation or vehemence (cf. IV i 125 and note): she switches from fortune tellers in general to Boutcher's in particular, pauses for her scornful comment, and then returns in 158 to the general. As in Constantia's speech at 42ff above, the phrasing is colloquially elliptical; we understand, 'a petty rogue ... (who) will ... (and) yet never know ...'

- That never saw five shillings in a heap,
 Will take upon him to divine men's fate
 Yet never knows himself shall die a beggar
 160 Or be hanged up for pilfering tablecloths,
 Shirts, and smocks hanged out to dry on hedges.
 'Tis merely base to trust them – or if there be
 A man in whom the Delphic god hath breathed
 His true divining fire, that can foretell
 165 The fixed decree of fate, he likewise knows
 What is within the everlasting book
 Of destiny decreed cannot by wit
 Or man's invention be dissolved or shunned.
 Then give thy love free scope, embrace and kiss,
 170 And to the distaff sisters leave th'event.
 BOUTCHER
 How powerful are their words whom we affect. Bb1
 Small force shall need to win the strongest fort
 If to his state the captain be perfidious.

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- 157 *five shillings*] 25 pence in modern money, and about half a week's wages for an artisan worker at this period, so not an entirely insubstantial sum of money to someone in that class, but, as Taffeta implies, a fairly paltry sum to a well-off citizen. See note to I i 102.
- 159 *himself*] another colloquial compression; read 'that he himself,' or, 'yet does not himself know (that he) shall die ...'; alternatively, 'himself' is simply replacing 'he' – a permissible construction at this period.
- 160 *hanged up*] 'hung' (*OED*, v.29.c).
- 160-1 *pilfering ... hedges*] washed clothes and linen were draped over hedges and bushes to dry; wandering rogues occasionally stole it, Autolycus in *The Winter's Tale* being the obvious literary example of such a rogue.
- 162 *merely*] 'absolutely' (*OED*, adv².1).
- 163 *the Delphic god*] Apollo, whose oracle was situated at Delphi.
- 163-4 *breathed ... fire*] i.e., inspired, possibly with reference to the belief that the priestess at Delphi breathed in the smoke that issued from a fissure in order to attain a trance-like prophetic state.
- 164 *true*] qualifying 'divining,' not 'fire.'
- 166-70 *What ... th'event*] Taffeta employs the logic of a predestinarian; her argument is similar to that of certain extreme antinomian protestant sects (in particular, the later Ranters) who declared that since individuals can do nothing to change the destiny predetermined for them by God the only appropriate guide to action is personal inclination or desire.
- 167 *wit*] 'wisdom, prudence' (*OED*, n.6.a).
- 168 *invention*] (a) 'mental powers' (*OED*, n.4); (b) 'the action of finding something out' (*OED*, n.1).
- 169 *free*] with a suggestion of 'sexually unrestrained,' as elsewhere (see I i 66 and III i 24, and notes thereto).
- 170 *distaff sisters*] the three Fates of Greek myth, who wove a tapestry representing the future, and in which each thread represented the life of a single person. The distaff was the tool on which the thread was wound (*OED*, n.1); it was also commonly used as a symbol of female authority or dominion (*OED*, n.3.b).
- 170 *event*] 'fated outcome or conclusion.' (*OED*, n.3.a and 4).
- 171 *affect*] see note to I i 11.
- 172 *need*] 'be needed' (*OED*, v².3).
- 173 *state*] (a) 'status, position as commander' (*OED*, n.15.a); possibly (b) 'nation or country' (*OED*, n.29.a).
- 173 *captain*] 'commander' (*OED*, n.2).

175 I must entreat you license my depart
 For some few hours.
 TAFFETA Choose what you will of time –
 There lies your way.

[TAFFETA *makes to leave.*]

BOUTCHER I will entreat her. Stay!
 TAFFETA
 Did you call, sir?
 BOUTCHER No.
 TAFFETA Then fare you well.
 BOUTCHER
 Who gins to love needs not a second hell.

[Exit BOUTCHER *above.*]

Enter ADRIANA [above].

TAFFETA
 Adriana, makes 'a no stay?
 ADRIANA Mistress?
 TAFFETA
 180 I prithee, see if he have left the house.
 Peep close – see, but be not seen. Is 'a gone?

[Enter BOUTCHER *below with CONSTANTIA; he pauses.*]

176. her. Stay!] her, stay. Q1.

174 *entreat you license*] elliptical – sc. entreat you to license, beg you to permit.

174 *depart*] 'departure' (*OED*, n.1.a).

175 *Choose ... time*] i.e., take as long as you like, or perhaps more generally, do as you like.

176 *There ... way*] 'please go away' (*OED*, way, 4.c).

176 *Stay*] 'wait a moment;' alternatively, if punctuated 'I will entreat her stay' it would mean 'to stay', but the punctuation of Q1 ('I ... her, stay.') suggests a pause between the two words 'her' and 'stay' whilst Taffeta's response definitely suggests that he has called out to her; see also note to 182, below.

178 *Who ... hell*] i.e., love is the first hell, and quite a sufficient one.

179 *makes 'a no stay?*] 'does he not halt or pause?' (*OED*, stay, n³.3); but Adriana's questioning response suggests that the word 'stay' carries an innuendo, which it could do if understood in some such sense as 'support for a climbing plant' (*OED*, n².2.a) or 'a bar for propping open a window' (*OED*, n².5.b) – i.e., something stiff and upright and hence in the same semantic field as 'stake' or 'prop,' both of which could mean 'an erect penis' (Williams); understood thus, Taffeta's question becomes, 'does he show any signs of sexual excitement?'

180 *I prithee*] 'I beg you' – abbr. of 'I pray thee' (*OED*, int.phr.).

180 *have*] present subjunctive, after 'if'.

181 *close*] 'secretly, covertly' (*OED*, adv.2).

182 *has*] ellipsis of 'he' or abbr. of 'he has' (sometimes indicated in Q1 by 'h'as' or 'ha's').

182 *stand*] (a) 'halt' (*OED*, n¹.2.a); (b) 'erection' (Williams; *OED* gives this meaning – n¹.5.d – but from 1867 at the earliest) and hence Adriana's reply to Taffeta's next line (see following note).

This would reinforce any bawdy suggestion in the 'stay' in 179, and hence, again, Adriana's highlighting of the word with her, 'Mistress?' Playing upon a verb in a nominal sense would not be unusual.

ADRIANA

No, has made a stand.

TAFFETA I prithee keep close.

ADRIANA

Nay, keep you close, y'ad best!

TAFFETA What does he now?

[BOUTCHER moves as though to exit and turns back.]

ADRIANA

Now 'a retires.

BOUTCHER Oh, you much partial gods!

185 Why gave you men affections and not a power

To govern them? What I by fate should shun

I most affect – a widow! A widow!

TAFFETA

Blows the wind there?

ADRIANA Ah ha! He's in, i' faith!

You've drawn him now within your purlieus, mistress.

BOUTCHER

190 Tut, I will not love. My rational

And better parts shall conquer blind affections.

Let passion children or weak women sway:

My love shall to my judgement still obey.

[Exit BOUTCHER and CONSTANTIA.]

-
- 182|3 *keep close* | *keep ... close*] Taffeta reinforces her instruction at 181 – 'stay concealed' – but Adriana develops the word 'close' in the following line to suggest that it is Taffeta who should, as she appears to be feeling sexually excited, either 'get physically close, intimate' (see Colman, 'close, vb.') or, through a quite opposite sense of the word, 'keep your legs together – calm down' (see Williams' entry for *close*).
- 184 *retires*] 'returns' (*OED*, v.4); this usage became obsolete soon after the writing of *Ram Alley*, but it was available then, so there is no need to emend, as Collier suggests, or resort to explanations about the 'tiring house', as Jones does.
- 184 *partial*] 'biased, unfair' (*OED*, adj.1.a).
- 186 *by*] (a) 'according to' (*OED*, prep.23.a); (b) 'by reason of, on account of' (*OED*, prep.36.a).
- 188 *Blows ... there?*] i.e., is that the way things are going? Cf. Tilley, W419: 'Is the wind in that door (corner).'
- 188 *in*] i.e., (a) in love; (b) in Taffeta's trap (cf. 203, below).
- 189 *drawn*] (a) 'enticed, allured' (*OED*, v. 26.a); (b) 'tracked by scent' (*OED*, v.74.a) – a possible sense in the light of 'purlieus' (see next note).
- 189 *within your purlieus*] i.e., under your influence, where you can get at him; 'purlieus' were the outskirts of an area such as a forest or town (*OED*, n.1, 3 and 4) or a place which a person habitually frequented (*OED*, n.2); the phrase, 'to hunt in the purlieus' meant 'to pursue illicit love' (*OED* n.2.b, quoting Beaumont and Fletcher, *Philaster*, IV I: 'He Hunts too much in the Purlues, would he would leave off Poaching.') Knavesby, in Middleton's *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 2.1.40, when inquiring into his wife's fidelity, asks, 'which is best feed, in the forest or in the purlieus?'
- 191 *blind*] (a) 'heedless' (*OED*, adj.3.a); (b) 'false, deceitful' (*OED*, adj.5); probably also with reference to the 'blind boy,' Cupid.
- 192 *sway*] (a) 'influence' (*OED*, v.6.b and 12); (b) 'rule, command' (*OED*, v.9).

- TAFFETA
 What does he now?
 ADRIANA He's gone.
 TAFFETA Gone, Adriana?
 ADRIANA
 195 'A went his way and never looked behind him.
 TAFFETA
 Sure he's taken.
 ADRIANA A little singed or so.
 Each thing must have beginning. Men must prepare
 Before they can come on and show their loves
 In pleasing sort. The man will do in time,
 200 For love, good mistress, is much like to wax:
 The more 'tis rubbed it sticks the faster too,
 Or like a bird in bird-lime, or a pitfall,
 The more 'a labours, still the deeper in.
 TAFFETA
 Come, thou must help me now. I have a trick

-
- 193 *to ... obey*] i.e., my love shall still obey, or be obedient to, my judgement; this construction was quite permissible.
- 196 *taken*] (a) 'caught' (*OED*, passive sense of v.2); (b) 'affected by a liking' (sc. 'for me') (*OED*, v.7.c; 10.b); (c) 'kindled, set on fire' (*OED*, v.7.f), and hence 'singed' in Adriana's reply.
- 197 *Each ... beginning*] proverbial; see Tilley, B257, 'Everything has a beginning.'
- 198 *come on*] 'advance' (*OED*, v.66.a), often implying hostile intent, but here with bawdy suggestion, 'make sexual advances'. Cf. *Ham.*, IV v 60, 'Young men will do't if they come to't, | By Cock, they are to blame.'
- 198 *loves*] the plural possibly gives emphasis to a more concrete sense of 'love' – i.e., 'penises' – but those members may also be alluded to by a pun on 'loves/loaves,' a 'loaf' being 'a mass or lump' (*OED*, n¹.4) and being clearly associated with genitalia, both male and female (Williams, entry for *cut*); the next phrase would reinforce this sense.
- 199 *In ... sort*] i.e., in a way that gives pleasure.
- 199 *do*] (a) 'answer the purpose, be sufficient' (*OED*, v.20); (b) 'bestir himself' (*OED*, v.15); (c) 'have sex (sc. with you)' (Williams).
- 200-1 *wax ... faster*] rubbing wax makes it warmer, and softer, and hence stickier; the bawdy suggestion is obvious: as things are rubbed, so they get warmer (in the case of males, also 'waxing' in the sense of growing bigger) and so stick together. For 'sticks' in the sense 'fornicates with' see I i 44 and note.
- 201 *faster*] the word has a wide semantic field, most of which has possibilities for bawdy innuendo: (a) 'more firmly' (*OED*, adv.2.a); (b) 'so as to fit more closely or tightly' (*OED*, adv.3); (c) of proximity, 'nearer' (*OED*, adv.4.a); possibly (d) of an action, 'more vigorously' (*OED*, adv.1.d).
- 202 *bird-lime*] a sticky substance spread on twigs to which birds adhere when they alight on the twig, from which they can then be easily taken (*OED*, n.1.a).
- 202 *pitfall*] here, a trap for birds in which a suspended door falls over the opening of a hollow or cavity; more usually, a hole in the ground hidden by earth into which animals or men fall and are trapped (*OED*, n.1 and 2).
- 203 *still*] 'further, even more than before' (*OED*, adv.4.c).
- 203 *the deeper in*] i.e., the more entangled he gets, with the suggestion of more effective sexual penetration; the phrase was proverbial (see Tilley, B380, 'The more the bird caught in lime strives the faster he sticks'); cf. also 136, and note.
- 204 *trick*] (a) 'a roguish prank' (*OED*, n.2.a); (b) in view of Taffeta's later behaviour with regard to Boutcher, 'a crafty stratagem designed to deceive or cheat' (*OED*, n.1.); (c) with a glance at the sexual connotations of the word (as in the play's subtitle), possibly reinforced by its rhyming with 'nick' in 205.

205 To second this beginning, and in the nick
 To strike it dead. I'faith, women must woo
 When men forget what nature leads them to.

[*Exeunt.*]

206. *woo*] woe, Q1

205 *second*] 'follow up, support' (*OED*, v¹.4).

205 *nick*] (a) 'the point aimed at' (*OED*, n¹.7.b); (b) 'vagina' (Williams; Colman).

206 *strike it dead*] 'hit it perfectly, settle the matter for good' (*OED*, *strike*, v.70?), with a glance at the idea of being 'dead' as being in a post-orgasmic state (*OED*, *die*, v¹.7.d).

206 *woo*] with pun on 'woe' (spelt thus in Q1) and hence suggesting, 'women must lament when ... '

207 *nature*] also, 'the female pudendum' (*OED*, n.8).

[Act I, Scene iii.]

*Enter THROAT the lawyer from his study, books and
bags of money on a table, a chair and cushion.*

THROAT

Chaste Phoebe *splende* – there's that left yet,

Next to my book. *Claro micante auro* –

Bb1v

Ay, that's the soul of law: that's it, that's it

For which the buckram bag must trudge all weathers,

1. Phoebe *splende* –] *Phoebe, splende*; Q1. 2. book.] *booke*, Q1.

Location] Throat's chambers in Ram Alley.

s.d. *chair and cushion*] chairs were often indicative of authority or special dignity; the cushion adds a note of luxury.

1-10 *Chaste ... upward*] these lines provide a satirical encomium of the law which was no doubt enjoyed by the lawyers and Inns of Court students who made up, probably, the greater part of the Whitefriars audience; they echo the opening line of Jonson's *Volpone*: 'Good morning to the day; and next, my gold!' – and are also reminiscent of the opening speech to Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* in which Faustus considers and rejects in turn all the great areas of renaissance study, including, of course, law, which he scathingly dismisses as 'too servile and illiberal for me' and befitting only a 'mercenary drudge' (*Doctor Faustus*, I i 36 and 34).

1-3 *Chaste ... law*] the connective thread in these lines is tenuous to say the least; there are four possible ways of reading them. (1) If we read 'Next to' as meaning 'next in order of importance' and take 'my book' as implying that Throat sees his book as the *sine qua non* of his wealth, the speech comes across as a Volponian hymn to money: 'Ah, beautiful silver [money], there's always that – given my book, of course.' Throat then develops the theme, substituting gold for silver, but still generally referring to money: 'Gold! Yes, that's the soul of law.' (2) 'Next ... book' could be delivered as a momentary reconsideration checked by '*Claro micante auro*'; i.e., 'Money, there's that left yet – after my book, of course – just as long as there is gold, though.' (3) We could read '*Claro micante auro*' in parenthesis and see the whole as a disingenuous argument that mere knowledge (the book) is the soul of law – given, of course, the presence of gold – though 'the soul of law' does not easily refer back to 'my book.' (4) Finally, we could simply see '*Claro micante auro*' as metaphorically redefining the book, and 'Ay, that's the soul of law' as an entirely new statement and development of the theme. All previous editors have punctuated to suggest (4), or perhaps (2); this edition punctuates to suggest (1) as giving the smoothest development of sense whilst making clear that 'the soul of law' is gold (or, more generally, money, the 'silver ... gold' progression being a simple rhetorical intensifying device); this reading is supported by the existence of the proverbs 'Gold expounds the law and the gloss,' and 'Money is the best lawyer' (Tilley, G281 and M1065). The argument is affected by how precisely we are expected to read '*Claro micante auro*' (for which see note to 2, below), and it seems sensible to work on the basis that we could be expected to take in only the most simple or obvious sense. However, all that said, the argument probably boils down to a matter of punctuation rather than major differences in sense, that being, if not clear, at least graspable in outline.

1 *Phoebe*] Artemis, or Diana, the chaste goddess of the moon here representing silver (the metal associated with that planet) and hence money (specifically, perhaps, the money on the table).

1 *splende*] 'shine' (Latin, imperative).

2 *Next to*] (a) 'next in order of importance to' (*OED*, quasi.adv.12.c, 15.b); (b) 'next turning to consider' (*OED*, adv.2.a).

2 *Claro ... auro*] Latin for (a) 'bright shining gold,' or possibly (b) 'as long as bright gold is shining.'

4 *buckram bag*] a lawyer's bag, made of coarse linen stiffened with gum or paste (*OED*, n.2), and here loosely personified, or perhaps referring by metonymy to the lawyer himself.

4 *trudge ... weathers*] i.e., travel laboriously through all weathers (*OED*, trudge, v.1).

- 5 Though scarcely filled with one poor replication.
 How happy are we that we joy the law
 So freely as we do – not bought and sold,
 But clearly given, without all base extorting,
 Taking but bare ten angels for a fee
 10 Or upward. To this renowned estate
 Have I by indirect and cunning means
 Inwoven myself, and now can scratch it out,
 Thrust at a bar, and cry, ‘My lord!’ as loud
 As e’er a listed gown-man of them all.
 15 I never plead before the honoured bench
 But bench right-worshipful of peaceful Justices
 And country gentlemen, and yet I’ve found
 Good gettings, by the mass, besides odd cheats,

-
- 5 *scarcely*] if qualifying ‘filled’ the sense would be ‘inadequately, meanly’ (*OED*, adv.1); if qualifying ‘one’ it would be ‘barely one’ (*OED*, adv.2).
 5 *replication*] in law, ‘a plaintiff’s reply to the plea or answer of the defendant’ (*OED*, n.3.b).
 6 *joy*] ‘use with enjoyment, derive benefit (sc. profit) from’ (*OED*, v.4.a).
 7 *freely*] (a) ‘without hindrance or restraint’ (*OED*, adv.3); (b) ‘without payment’ (*OED*, adv.7.a).
 8 *clearly*] (a) ‘unreservedly, entirely’ (*OED*, adv.8); (b) ‘with clarity of expression’ (*OED*, adv.4).
 There might be a shift at ‘given’ from Throat’s consideration of his own ‘free enjoyment’ of the law to that of his clients’ ‘free enjoyment’ of his services as a lawyer.
 8 *all*] ‘any whatsoever’ (*OED*, adj.4).
 8 *extorting*] (a) ‘gaining money by intimidation or abuse of powers’ (*OED*, v.1.a); (c) possibly, ‘wresting a law from its true meaning’ (*OED*, v.2 and 3.b). There is also a possible implication of ‘overcharging.’
 9 *bare*] strictly an adverb qualifying ‘ten’ (see Abbott, 1 and 2) and meaning ‘at most, no more than’ (*OED*, adv.2) but some adjectival sense is retained, meaning ‘mere’ (*OED*, adj.11).
 9 *angels*] gold coins worth ten shillings of contemporary money (fifty pence in today’s currency) making ten worth £5; one might feel that the law is quite ‘clearly given’ considering that one angel represented approximately one week’s wages for an artisan worker at this period (see also note to I i 102).
 10 *estate*] (a) ‘status, rank’ (*OED*, n.3.a); (b) ‘good fortune, condition of prosperity’ (*OED*, n.2.a).
 12 *scratch it out*] (a) probably ‘fight it out’ (*OED*, v.1.d), looking forward to ‘thrust at’ in the next line; (b) Wright gives, ‘to do something in a hurried, scrambling way,’ but without a date; (c) perhaps also with reference to the sound of his voice when pleading (*OED*, v.9.a, but if so, some 100 years earlier than the first illustration of this meaning).
 13 *Thrust at*] (a) ‘force a way to’ (*OED*, v.3.a); (b) ‘push against’ (*OED*, v.1.b).
 13 *bar*] see note to I i 111-2, sense (b).
 14 *as e’er*] either ‘as ever did,’ or ‘as ever could;’ in either case, ‘ever’ is an emphatic (*OED*, adv.8.c).
 14 *listed*] ‘registered’ (*OED*, v⁴.1.a).
 14 *gown-man*] i.e., a member of the legal profession (in which gowns were worn to indicate membership of and rank within the profession).
 15 *honoured*] i.e., presided over by a judge who would be referred to as ‘your honour’. See note to 16 below.
 15 *bench*] i.e., either the judges (or magistrates) presiding over a court of law, or the court itself.
 16 *worshipful*] i.e., presided over by a magistrate who would be referred to as ‘your worship’.
 16 *peaceful Justices*] i.e., Justices of the Peace, or local magistrates. Besides quibbling on their title, the epithet ‘peaceful’ reminds us ironically of the more usual epithet ‘learned’ as Justices were more renowned for their tendency to sleep through cases rather than display great legal knowledge; cf. Justice Tutchim’s remark, ‘Now could I sit in my chair at home and nod | A drunkard to the stocks’ (IV i 10-1).
 17 *country gentlemen*] these men often acted as Justices of the Peace in their communities.
 18 *cheats*] (a) ‘escheats’ – forfeited properties, as, e.g., William Smallshanks’ lands (*OED*, n¹.1); (b)

20 Will Smallshanks' lands, and many garboils more.
Dash!

[Enter DASH]

DASH Sir!
THROAT Is that rejoinder done?
DASH Done, sir.
THROAT
Have you drawn't at length, have you dashed it out
According to your name?
DASH Some seven score sheets.
THROAT
Is the demurrer drawn 'twixt Snipe and Woodcock?
And what do you say to Peacock's pitiful bill?
DASH
25 I have drawn his answer negative to all.

23 Snipe] *Snip* Q1.

- 'frauds or deceptions' (*OED*, n¹.4.b); (c) 'something stolen' (*OED*, n¹.2 and 3, the latter being thieves' cant).
- 19 *garboils*] 'confusions, tumults' (*OED*, n), here in the sense of legal wrangles, rather than physical brawls.
- 20 *rejoinder*] 'the defendant's answer to the plaintiff's replication' (*OED*, n.1) and hence the fourth stage in common pleadings (for 'replication' see 5 above, and note).
- 21 *drawn't*] (a) 'written it out in the proper form' (*OED*, v.63.a); (b) 'extended it, made it as long as possible; (*OED*, v.55); (c) possibly, by further extension of that sense, 'extracted everything you could from it, exhausted it' (*OED*, v.49).
- 21 *dashed it out*] given the name 'Dash' (see note to *Actorum Nomina*, 8) and Throat's 'according to your name,' 'dashed out' here presumably means 'written with haste' (*OED*, v¹.8 – from, however, 1726 at the earliest) or 'used a pen with impetuosity' (*OED*, v¹.13.b – though from 1680 at the earliest); meanings associated with 'throwing down with violence' would make sense in this context only with reference to the act of writing, which *OED* (v¹.2.a) does not mention specifically for that sense (though if it did, the meaning would surely be equivalent to 'write with haste'). 'Dash out' meaning 'erase, strike through' (*OED*, v¹.9.a and b) and given as available at this time, is clearly inapplicable.
- 22 *seven score*] i.e., 'seven times twenty,' the rejoinder therefore runs to 140 sheets, but as a sheet was normally folded to make two leaves, and thus four pages (all of which were usually written on), the whole thing was 560 pages long.
- 23 *demurrer*] 'a pleading which delays an action by temporarily conceding the adversary's case whilst at the same time denying that the party is entitled to any relief' (*OED*, n¹.1).
- 23 *Snipe*] Q1 has 'Snip,' a common name for a tailor; but in view of the other names in Throat's ornithic client list – Woodcock, Peacock and Goose – that is probably a misprint; compositor X, who set this page, is slightly prone to missing out letters. Like 'Woodcock' and 'Goose' the term 'Snipe' was commonly used to denote a fool, and the first of these three suggests a man in a permanently priapic state (see note to IV ii 29).
- 24 *Peacock's*] this bird typified sexual pride (Williams) and, like 'woodcock' allows an obvious innuendo on the second syllable.
- 24 *bill*] (a) 'a written statement of a case or plea' (*OED*, n³.4.a); (b) 'the beak of a bird' (*OED*, n².1.a), quibbling on the names of the litigants.
- 24-8 *And ... false*] this passage is, presumably, intentionally obscure; the 'his' and the 'a' probably refer to Peacock, and the plaintiff is probably none of the people named; beyond that it is probably foolish to enquire.
- 25 *negative to all*] 'denying everything' (*OED*, *negative*, adj.1 or 2.a).

THROAT

Negative to all! The plaintiff says
That William Goose was son to Thomas Goose,
And will 'a swear the general bill is false?

DASH

'A will.

THROAT Then he forswears his father. 'Tis well.
30 Some of our clients will go prig to hell
Before ourselves. Has 'a paid all his fees?

DASH

'A left them all with me.

THROAT Then truss my points.
And how think'st thou of law?

DASH Most reverently.

35 Law is the world's great light, a second sun
To this terrestrial globe by which all things
Have life and being, and without which
Confusion and disorder soon would seize
The general state of men. Wars, outrages,
The ulcerous deeds of peace it curbs and cures.

40 It is the kingdom's eye by which she sees
The acts and thoughts of men.

THROAT The kingdom's eye!

I tell thee, fool, it is the kingdom's nose

Bb2

By which she smells out all these rich transgressors,

-
- 27 *Goose*] see note to 23 above; 'goose' was also slang for a prostitute. It is mildly interesting that the forenames of the two Gooses – William and Thomas – are also the names of the two Smallshanks brothers, but no more should be made of this, probably, than to note that it might be another indication, along with the other confusions over names, that the final copy was not revised very carefully. (See Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.)
- 28 *general bill*] (?) 'the bill as a whole' – i.e., 'one that deals with the main features of the case, neglecting minor details' (*OED*, *general*, adj.8.a).
- 29 *forswears*] (a) 'denies or repudiates strongly on oath' (*OED*, v.2); possibly (b) 'defrauds by perjury' (*OED*, v.3.c).
- 30 *prig*] (a) 'ride' (*OED*, v².1); (b) 'to *Prig*, signifies in the *Canting language* to steal' (Dekker, *The Bel-man of London*, p.96).
- 32 *truss*] 'tie, fasten' (*OED*, v.5.b).
- 32 *points*] 'laces which held the hose to the doublet' (*OED*, n¹.B.4).
- 34-41 *Law ... men*] F.G. Fleay, in his *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642*, states that this passage is 'a capital paraphrase from Hooker' (vol.1, pp.31-2) but unfortunately does not give a precise reference to the passage he is thinking of, or even which book; there are similar, but not precisely parallel passages in Middleton, *The Phoenix*, where law is an 'angel sent among us' (4.200) and 'the very masterpiece of heaven,' (12.195) and, perhaps more interestingly (as this was another Whitefriars play) in Day's *Law Tricks*, 168-72, where law is likened to 'a golden chaine, | That links the body of a common-wealth, | Into a firme and formall Vnion | [and] | Curbs in the raines of an vnruely land.' It is probable that this type of panegyric is common, and the imagery part of the stock of available tropes for the subject; thus *A commentarie of M. Doctor Martin Luther vpon the Epistle of S. Paul to the Galathians* (1575/1588) has, 'the most excellent thing in the world (the law I say) which as a bright shining sunne is ioyned to the dimme and obscure light of mans reason, to lighten and to direct it' (p.94). The passage is presumably intended for the ironic enjoyment of the Inns of Court men in the audience.
- 39 *ulcerous*] i.e., festering, poisonous.
- 43 *transgressors*] 'law breakers' (*OED*, n).

45 Nor is't of flesh but merely made of wax,
 And 'tis within the power of us lawyers
 To wrest this nose of wax which way we please.
 Or it may be, as thou sayest, an eye indeed,
 But if it be 'tis sure a woman's eye
 That's ever rolling.

Knock within.

DASH One knocks.
 THROAT Go see who 'tis –
 50 Stay! My chair and gown, and then go see who knocks.

[Exit DASH.]

Thus must I seem a lawyer, which am indeed
 But merely dregs and off-scum of the law.

Enter BOUTCHER, DASH and CONSTANTIA.

Ay, tricesimo primo Alberti Magni,
 'Tis very clear.
 BOUTCHER God save you, sir.
 THROAT
 55 The place is very pregnant – Master Boutcher!
 Most hearty welcome, sir.
 BOUTCHER You study hard.
 THROAT
 No, I have a cushion.

-
- 44 *merely*] (a) 'entirely' (*OED*, adv².2); (b) 'actually, as a matter of fact' (*OED*, adv².2.a).
 46 *wrest*] (a) 'distort, pervert for one's own ends' (*OED*, v.6.a); (b) specifically of laws, 'to pervert or misinterpret' (*OED*, v.6.b).
 47 *nose of wax*] proverbial: 'the law is made a nose of wax' (Tilley, L104); see also Mukherji, S., *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama*, p.236, who notes that 'the waxen nose was ... a familiar figure in scholastic thought,' and quotes Greene's *James the Fourth*, 'where a lawyer ... rues "a wrestling power that makes a nose of wax/Of grounded law."'
 49 *rolling*] rolling of the eyes was considered to be an indication of amorousness or wantonness.
 52 *off-scum*] i.e., 'something worthless' (lit. that 'which is skimmed off, the scum' – *OED*).
 53 *tricesimo ... Magni*] 'the thirty-first of Albertus the Great' (Latin) – see I i 133 note, above; Throat apparently thinks that Albertus Magnus was a king of England; he was, in fact, a Medieval scholastic philosopher with a reputation as a magician who was, as Mulholland observes in his note to 2.96 of Middleton's *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*, 'commonly cited by pretenders to knowledge.'
 54 *clear*] 'obvious' (*OED*, adj.9.a); there was a specifically legal sense which could be intended here (9.b) but *OED* does not example that until 1664; however, see V iii 244 and note.
 55 *place*] 'a passage in a book bearing upon a particular subject' (*OED*, n¹.7.b).
 55 *pregnant*] (a) of words, 'weighty, full of meaning, implying more than is obvious' (*OED*, adj².4); (b) of an argument, 'convincing, compelling' (*OED*, adj¹).
 56-7 *BOUTCHER ... cushion*] Q2, and many subsequent editions, omit this joke – some may think wisely.

- BOUTCHER You ply this gear.
 You are no truant in the law, I see.
 THROAT
 Faith, some hundred books in folio I have
 60 Turned over to better my own knowledge,
 But that is nothing for a student
 BOUTCHER
 Or a stationer – they turn them over, too,
 But not as you do, gentle Master Throat.
 And what – the law speaks profit, does it not?
 THROAT
 65 Faith, some bad angels haunt us now and then.
 But what brought you hither?
 BOUTCHER Why, these small legs.
 THROAT
 You are conceited, sir.
 BOUTCHER I am in law.
 But let that go, and tell me how you do.
 How does Will Smallshanks and his lovely bride?
 THROAT
 70 In troth you make me blush. I should have asked

64. what –] what? Q1.

- 57 *ply*] (a) ‘work busily at’ (*OED*, v².1); (b) ‘bend the sense of’ (*OED*, v¹.1.b) – a sense that would follow on from ‘wrest’ in 46 above, though Boutcher was not present when that was said; (c) ‘handle a tool or weapon vigorously’ (*OED*, v².1.3.a).
 57 *gear*] ‘business, matter’ (*OED*, n.10.c); but if sense (c) of ‘ply’ is taken along with the other common sense of ‘gear’ – i.e., ‘sexual organ’ (Williams, and see also I i 137 and IV iv 38, and notes thereto) – Boutcher could be slyly suggesting that he has surprised Throat engaged in a more private activity than studying, and also give another and less respectable edge to his line, ‘you study hard’ (56).
 60 *Turned over*] (a) ‘read, by turning over the pages’ (*OED*, v.78.b); (b) ‘sold’ (*OED*, v.78.i), the sense picked up by Boutcher in 62.
 63 *gentle*] used as a term of polite address to a person of distinction (*OED*, adj.1.b and 3.b) but perhaps here with an ironic glance at the sense ‘mild, kind’ (*OED*, adj.8). Boutcher’s retraction of his suggestion that Throat merely sold the books he claims to have read followed by this courtesy might indicate that Throat takes the joke rather badly.
 64 *And what*] phatic – merely a sign or warning that a question is to follow.
 64 *speaks*] (a) in a fig. sense, ‘utters, gives forth’ (*OED*, v.22.a); (b) possibly, also in fig. sense, ‘announces, proclaims’ (*OED*, v.26.c).
 65 *bad angels*] (a) ‘debased or false coins’ (*OED*, *bad*, adj.1.b; for ‘angels’ see 9 and note above); (b) ‘evil spirits’ – either the criminals that lawyers deal with, or personal attendant angels which, in opposition to ‘good angels,’ counsel evil; cf. Sharpham, *The Fleer*, where Spark dreams that in hell ‘great lawyers ... take council of too many good angels to come there’ (5.4.51-3), but newly qualified lawyers ‘seldom converse with a good angel’ (5.4.57-8).
 66 *brought*] (a) ‘drew, attracted’ (the cause) (*OED*, v.1.c); (b) ‘carried’ (the means) (*OED*, v.1.a).
 66 *these ... legs*] this same joke occurs in Shakespeare’s *Richard III* (1597), and in the early Tudor interlude *Youth* (circa 1515) – further evidence that the old jokes are by no means necessarily the best.
 67 *conceited*] ‘witty, clever, full of quick replies’ (*OED*, ppl.a.1.c).
 67 *I ... law*] i.e., ‘I am talking to a lawyer, and so must resort to quibbling.’ There is possibly an allusion to the proverb, ‘fools and conceited men make lawyers rich’ (Tilley, F527).
 68 *let ... go*] ‘forget that’ (*OED*, *let*, v¹.24.c).
 70 *In troth*] ‘in truth, truly’ (*OED*, n.4.b).

- His health of you, but 'tis not yet too late.
 BOUTCHER
 Nay, good Sir Throat, forbear your quilllets now.
 THROAT
 By heaven, I deal most plain. I saw him not
 Since last I took his mortgage.
 BOUTCHER Sir, be not nice
 75 (Yet I must needs herein commend your love)
 To let me see him, for know I know him wed
 And that 'a stole away Somerfield's heir.
 Therefore suspect me not. I am his friend.
 THROAT
 How? Wed to rich Somerfield's only heir?
 80 Is old Somerfield dead?
 BOUTCHER Do you make it strange?
 THROAT
 By heaven, I know it not.
 BOUTCHER Then am I grieved Bb2v
 I spake so much. But that I know you love him
 I should entreat your secrecy, sir. Fare you well.
 THROAT
 85 Nay, good sir, stay. If aught you can disclose
 Of Master Smallshanks' good, let me partake,
 And make me glad in knowing his good hap.
 BOUTCHER
 You much endear him, sir, and from your love
 I dare presume you make yourself a fortune
 If his fair hopes proceed.
 THROAT Say on, good sir.

81. know it not] know it nor Q1. 82/3.] I ii 132-6 repeated here in Q1 (except Liverpool copy, which lacks interpolated half-sheet Bb).

- 72 *Sir*] Hazlitt suggests 'this form of address was borrowed from the university' (as in *OED*, n.5), but it is as likely to be used 'fancifully ... as a mock title' (*OED*, 3.a); cf. III i 47 and IV ii 5.
 72 *quilllets*] 'equivocations, verbal evasions or subtleties' (*OED*, n²).
 73 *plain*] 'candidly' (*OED*, B.adv.2).
 74 *Since last*] i.e., since that last time when.
 74 *nice*] 'coy about the matter' (*OED*, adj.5.a); (b) possibly, 'unnecessarily scrupulous [in keeping his secret]' (*OED*, adj.7.d).
 75 *must needs*] 'must of necessity' (*OED*, adv.1.c).
 77 *heir*] the modern English 'heiress' did not come into general use until the mid-seventeenth century (*OED*, 1.a).
 80 *make it strange*] 'pretend not to understand, affect surprise' (*OED*, *strange*, 13.a).
 82 *But that*] 'except that, were it not that' (*OED*, conj.8.a).
 84 *ought*] 'anything whatever' (*OED*, A.n).
 85 *partake*] 'be informed of, share (sc. the news)' (*OED*, v.4.a).
 86 *hap*] 'chance, fortune' (*OED*, n¹,1).
 87 *endear*] (a) 'hold dear, love' (*OED*, v.4); (b) 'bind by obligations of gratitude' (*OED*, v.6.b); sense (a) is the more obvious and likely, but it was unusual, and this usage would be some eleven years earlier than the first recorded example in *OED*. Cf. also II iii 80, below.
 89 *fair*] 'giving promise of success' (*OED*, a.14.a); perhaps also 'reputable' (*OED*, a.3.a).
 89 *proceed*] 'make progress, prosper' (*OED*, v.3.e).

- BOUTCHER
 90 You will be secret.
 THROAT Or be my tongue torn out.
 BOUTCHER
 Measure for a lawyer. But to the point:
 Has stole Somerfield's heir; hither 'a brings her
 As to a man on whom 'a may rely
 His life and fortunes. You hath 'a named
 95 Already for the steward of his lands,
 To keep his courts and to collect his rent,
 To let out leases and to raise his fines.
 Nothing that may or love or profit bring
 But you are named the man.
 THROAT I am his slave
 100 And bound unto his noble courtesy
 Even with my life. I ever said 'a would thrive
 And I protest I kept his forfeit mortgage
 To let him know what 'tis to live in want.
 BOUTCHER
 I think no less. One word more in private.

[BOUTCHER and THROAT retire.]

- CONSTANTIA
 105 Good Master Dash, shall I put you now a case?
 DASH
 Speak on, good Master Page.
 CONSTANTIA Then thus it is:
 Suppose I am a page, he is my master;
 My master goes to bed and cannot tell

-
- 90 *secret*] 'discreet' (*OED*, a.2.a).
 91 *Measure*] (a) 'that which is fitting, commensurate' (*OED*, n.10); (b) 'punishment' (*OED*, n.15), as in the title, *Measure for Measure*.
 92 *Has*] See I ii 182 and note.
 92 *stole*] again the sense is primarily 'taken away by stealth' (*OED*, v¹.3.b) with the intention of effecting a clandestine marriage; see I i 117 and note.
 94 *named*] 'designated, appointed' (*OED*, v¹.4.a).
 95 *steward ... lands*] i.e., Steward of the Manor, the official who transacted financial and legal business for a landowner; his duties are described by Boutcher in the next two lines.
 96 *keep*] 'conduct, preside over' (*OED*, v.34).
 96 *courts*] i.e., the Manor Courts, from which local justice was dispensed.
 97 *fines*] sums paid by tenants to landlords for the grant of a lease (also called 'premiums').
 98 *or ... or*] 'either ... or;' the order here is unusual – sc. 'there is nothing that may bring either love or profit ...'
 99 *slave*] i.e., devoted servant (hyperbole).
 100 *bound*] 'in bondage or servitude' (*OED*, *bond*, B.adj.1), again hyperbolic, picking up on 'slave.'
 102 *protest*] 'declare solemnly, asservate' (*OED*, v.1.b); cf. II ii 51 and note.
 105 *put ... case*] 'place before you for consideration a hypothetical legal question,' (*OED*, *case*, n¹.12) in which sense this episode possibly parodies one of the main teaching methodologies of the Inns of Court, the 'disputations,' in which set cases were debated in hall by the utter barristers after a 'reading' on law by a senior member of the Inn; but given the direction which the humour takes a few lines later in this conversation, we might also suspect a pun on 'case = vagina,' (Williams)

- What money's in his hose; I ere next day
 110 Have filched out some. What action lies for this?
 DASH
 An action, boy, called firking the posteriors.
 With us your action seldom comes in question,
 For that 'tis known that most of your gallants
 Are seldom so well stored that they forget
 115 What money's in their hose, but if they have C1
 There is no other help than swear the page
 And put him to his oath.

with 'put' having the sexual implications covered by the meaning 'introduce animals to one another for breeding purposes' (*OED*, v¹.10.f) and hence 'allusive of pandering' (Williams); Dash, of course, would be as unaware of these second meanings as he is of the meanings latent in his response to Constantia's 'case.'

- 109 *hose*] here, 'breeches' (*OED*, n.2); 'hose' were not necessarily just the stockings.
 110 *filched out*] 'stolen' (*OED*, v.1).
 110|111|112 *action* | *action* | *action*] Constantia uses the word in the sense 'legal process or procedure' (*OED*, n.8), but Dash picks it up more in the sense 'a thing done, a deed' (*OED*, n.3.a) thereby giving it a push in a suggestive direction that then attaches explicitly to the rest of the line; the third use may be the result of Barry's tendency to careless repetition, or it could be seen as a final reinforcement of the quibble.
 110 *lies for*] 'is admissible, could be sustained in court' (*OED*, v¹.13).
 111 *firking*] 'beating, whipping' (*OED*, v.4.a); cf. *H5*, 'I'll fer him, and firk him, and ferret him' (IV iv 28-9) and *The Family of Love* (656): 'My noble gallants, I'll so firk you.' Colman suggests for 'firk' a pun on 'fuck' which is probable here, allowing an innuendo suggesting buggery – and, since Dash believes he is talking to a boy, homosexual buggery (in which respect we might note that Williams in his entry for 'bum' quotes from Ward's *Reformers* (though much later – 1700) the line, 'as Inamour'd ... as an Old Frizel-Pated S – t, the Bum-Firker, is of the Sodomite Stationer'). Smith, in *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England*, p.49, notes that in the 17th century, 'out of the dozens of commentaries and court reports that a student [of law] might study, only one makes any mention of homosexuality ... For a law student or practicing (*sic*) attorney the implication is clear: sodomy is not the kind of case one can expect often, or ever, to encounter.' Interestingly, though, that very fact gives added point to Dash's next line, 112, that 'with us your action seldom comes in question,' and that remark could have resonated for the audience of *Ram Alley* precisely because such a case had unusually 'come in question' in 1607-8 (the likely date for the writing of the play) when 'a certain H. Stafford ... was indicted, attainted, and executed by the Court of King's Bench ... for having anal intercourse with a sixteen-year-old boy' (*Op. Cit.* p.51), the offending act having occurred in 'the parish of St Andrew in High Holborn' (*Ibid.*), an area well within the play's topographical range. The fact, of course, that Constantia is not the boy Dash assumes her to be could have undercut the suggestion of taboo practice and indeed augmented the joke for the audience (though there again, they could also have had in mind that the 'boy' is actually a boy pretending to be a girl pretending to be a boy). However, see 'firk's law' and note to 117 below.
 111 *posteriors*] 'buttocks' (*OED*, n.2.a); the first exemplification of this meaning in *OED* is dated 1619, but Colman suggests that the sense is punningly present in *LLL.*, V i 89 (and so some twenty years earlier than this) in the phrase, 'the posteriors of this day.'
 112 *comes in question*] 'reaches the stage of judicial examination or trial' (*OED*, *question*, n.2.c).
 114 *stored*] 'stocked, supplied' (*OED*, ppl.a.2).
 115 *have*] sc. 'have forgotten.'
 116 *help*] 'remedy' (*OED*, n.5.a); cf. I i 72 and note.
 116 *swear*] 'oblige to take an oath to tell the truth' (*OED*, v.10.a).
 117 *put*] with some such emphasis as 'force, compel' (*OED*, v.28.a), or perhaps, 'commit to the hazard of' (*OED*, v.21.a).

CONSTANTIA Then firk's law!
 Dost think that he has conscience to steal
 Has not a conscience likewise to deny?
 120 Then hang him up, i' faith.

[BOUTCHER and THROAT return.]

BOUTCHER I must meet him.
 THROAT
 Commend me to them. Come when they will,
 My doors stand open and all within is theirs,
 And though Ram Alley stinks with cooks and ale
 Yet say there's many a worthy lawyer's chamber

117. firk's law!] fecks-law. Q1. 123. Ram Alley] Ramme Q1.

117 *firk's law*] Q1 has here 'fecks-law,' of which not much can be made; 'fecks', 'facks', and 'fegs' were all corruptions of the word 'faith' (*OED*, *fegs*), but that gives little sense in this context. However, if 'fecks' could be rendered 'fegs', perhaps it could be equally easily confused phonetically with 'figs', and in *The Bel-Man of London* Dekker talks of 'figging law', a cant term for cutting purses or picking pockets (*OED* does give 'feck' as meaning 'steal' but only as early as 1809); the appropriateness of meaning is persuasive, but there is no more support than that for such a gloss. Some emendation therefore seems necessary. Hazlitt's 'firk o' law' is attractive, but 'firk's law' is surely sufficient; the usual spelling of 'firk' and its variants is with an 'i,' but 'firked' is spelt with an 'e' on this same page (C1v –II i 14) and 'ferks' could easily be misread as 'fecks' ('r' and 'c' are very similar in secretary hand). Unfortunately the compositor analysis is of no help here: C1v was set by Y, who also spells the word with an 'i' on E4v, H1v and H4; the word's other appearances are on I2v, set by X, and C1, which is uncertain, and in both those cases it is spelt with an 'i'. Barry uses the word verbally and nominally with three meanings: (a) 'beat' (literally in 111 above, and figuratively in III v 32 and IV iv 141, where Throat threatens Tutchim, 'Justice, the law shall firk you'); (b) 'carry off' (II i 14: 'firked y' away a wench;' and V iii 161: 'has firked away the wench'); and (c) 'a cheat, trick' (V ii 12: 'women have tricks, firks, and farthingales'), the most interesting instance of which is in III v 54: 'Sir, leave this firk of law,' meaning 'legal trick or cheat' (the passage that, presumably, Hazlitt was thinking of). Reading, then, 'firk's law', Constantia's reply to Dash seems to quibble on meanings (a) and (c) picking up Dash's use of (a) in 'firling the posteriors,' giving us: (i) 'whip's law' (i.e., 'well, then, you who think a good whipping is the best that can be done...'); and (ii) 'thief's law' ('that's a good law for thieves, then – for the reasons which follow').

118 *he has*] ellipsis of 'who' or 'that.' Reed's emendation to 'he that has' is not necessary as this form was colloquially acceptable (cf. I ii 88 and note).

119 *conscience*] this could mean here, or be quibbling upon, 'sense, understanding' (*OED*, n.3) as in *Tim.*, II ii 175-6: 'Why dost thou weep? Canst thou the conscience lack | To think I shall lack friends?'

121 *commend me*] 'remember me kindly' (*OED*, v.5).

123 *Ram ... ale*] according to Sugden, Ram Alley was renowned for its cooks' shops and ale-houses (especially the Mitre Inn which had a useful back entrance into the alley and the safety of sanctuary); concerning its cooks, Sugden references Jonson, *The Staple of News*, in which Lickfinger, a cook, is called 'mine old host of Ram Alley;' see also note to I i Title, and III v 51-2.

124-5 *many ... Alley*] Ram Alley ran down alongside the Serjeants' Inn in Fleet Street, one of the two lodging places and chambers of the Serjeants at Law, highly respectable lawyers who no doubt found Ram Alley a perpetual source of aggravation (see Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play, and maps on pp.379 and 380).

- 125 Butts upon Ram Alley. I have still an open throat;
 If aught I have which may procure his good,
 Bid him command – ay, though it be my blood.

Ex[eunt].

125 *Butts*] ‘abuts, adjoins’ (*OED*, v².3.a).

125 *still*] (a) ‘as before’ (*OED*, adv.4.a); (b) ‘always’ (*OED*, adv.3.a).

125 *open throat*] this is slightly odd; if we take Throat as speaking at face value the phrase could mean, ‘I always speak openly or frankly,’ or ‘I am always ready to speak generously,’ with ‘throat’ meaning ‘voice’ (*OED*, n.3.b), and such a declaration could go along with an authorially ironic, ‘I remain ever greedy,’ with ‘throat’ being the entrance to the stomach. However, the text may be corrupt here, possibly through Barry’s recalling I i 132, ‘go beyond my open throated lawyer,’ and then accidentally putting the same phrase into Throat’s mouth, or through compositorial error (the page has at least two other errors – in 117 and 123 of this scene and possibly another in II i 13). ‘House’ would make sense following on from ‘My doors stand open,’ but there is no justification other than sense for such an emendation. One final possibility is that this remark should be treated as an aside (asides are not marked in Q1).

126 *If aught*] ellipsis of ‘there is’ – ‘if there is aught.’

126 *procure*] ‘bring about by taking pains’ (*OED*, v.4.a).

Act II, Scene i.

Enter [SIR] OLIVER SMALLSHANKS [and] THOMAS SMALLSHANKS.

SIR OLIVER

Is this the place you were appointed to meet him?

THOMAS

So Boutcher sent me word.

SIR OLIVER I find it true

That wine, good news, and a young wholesome wench

Cheer up an old man's blood. I tell thee, boy,

5 I am right hearty glad to hear thy brother

Hath got so great an heir. Now were myself

So well bestowed I should rejoice, i' faith!

THOMAS

I hope you shall do well.

SIR OLIVER No doubt, no doubt.

Ah, sirrah, has 'a borne the wench away?

10 My son, i' faith, my very son, i' faith!

When I was young and had an able back,

And wore the bristle on my upper lip

In good decorum, I had as good conveyance,

Act II ...i] Actus Secundi. Scena Prima. Q1. 12-13. wore the bristle on my upper lip | In good decorum,] wore the brissell on my vpper lipe, | In good *Decorum* Q1

Location] probably somewhere between Hosier Lane and Ram Alley as William asked that his brother meet him 'on the way' and then carry on with him to 'his [Throat's] house' (I i 120-2), which they do at 156 of this scene; St Andrew's church or Fleet Street Conduit are possible places (see Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play).

3-4 *wine ... blood*] possibly proverbial; cf. Dent, 'good wine makes good blood' (W461).

7 *bestowed*] 'placed or settled in marriage' (*OED*, v.4).

9 *borne /away*] 'carried away' with a sense of doing so victoriously – 'carried away as a winner' (*OED*, v¹.3.a).

11 *had an able back*] the back was seen as the source of physical strength in general and sexual vigour in particular.

12-13 *wore ... conveyance*] were the punctuation of Q1 to be adopted here, Sir Oliver would be adding to 11 the additional detail that in his youth he wore a moustache, and then, separately, saying something like: 'in line with the dictates of good breeding (decorum) I was skilful in managing affairs of an underhand nature (had good conveyance)' (*OED*, *conveyance*, 11.b). Though the phrasing is awkward, such a reading could be justified on the grounds that the wordy self-importance is in character. However, there are good reasons for changing Q1's punctuation here: first, the idea of decorousness is much more appropriate to the wearing of a moustache and moving the comma from the end of 12 to the middle of 13 gives better sense – i.e., 'when I wore a moustache in line with the fashions of the time, I was a capable of carrying off an affair (sc. of this nature)'; second, the word 'decorum' is associated with decorative facial hair (and the concept of high rank) in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 4.4.13-5 – 'other worshipful gentlemen ... to ride along with us in their goodly decorum beards' – and whether the usage here is a specific verbal borrowing or simply the reflection of a general verbal correlation of the period, that is persuasive; finally, the punctuation of Q1 is not by any means clear or consistent and this page, C1v, was set by Y, the compositor whose punctuation seems generally less secure. Whatever punctuation is adopted, there is also a glance at the more usual sense of 'conveyance' – carrying away' – following on from 'borne the wench away.'

- And could have ferred and firked y'away a wench
 15 As soon as e'er a man alive. Tut, boy,
 I had my winks, my becks, treads on the toe,
 Wrings by the fingers, smiles, and other quirks,
 No courtier like me – your courtiers all are fools
 To that which I could do. I could have done it, boy,
 20 Even to a hair, and that some ladies know.
 THOMAS
 Sir, I am glad this match may reconcile
 Your love unto my brother.
 SIR OLIVER 'Tis more than so. C1v
 I'll seem offended still, though I am glad
 Has got rich Somerfield's heir.

*Enter [to the side] WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS, FRANCES
 [masked and] BEARD, booted.*

WILLIAM

Come, wench of gold –

14. ferred] ferd Q1.

- 14 *ferred and firked y'away a wench*] i.e., 'stolen you away a young woman.' The two words 'ferred' and 'firked' seem, in this context, primarily to mean the same thing – 'carried off' – with secondarily a probable pun, 'firk/fuck' (see note to I iii 111); the secondary meaning would thus allow for some differentiation in meaning between the two words. 'Firked' certainly could mean 'carried off' (*OED*, v.1) but 'ferred' seems to be a nonce usage which could possibly derive from the Latin 'ferre' – 'to bear or carry' (as in 'transfer'). *OED* offers for 'fer' only 'app. meaningless' quoting this line and the line from *H5* (IV iv 28-31) which Jones also notes, pointing out that 'fer' and 'firk' also occur together in that context. However, whereas they seem to be chosen there (as they are in *Ram Alley*) for comic alliterative effect, they do not mean in *H5* what they mean here and though Barry seems to know *H5* (as elements of the braggart Pistol clearly appear in both Lieutenant Beard and Captain Face) I think *OED* is mistaken if it is suggesting that Barry is echoing the *meaning* of the Shakespeare lines here – he might have had vestigial memory of the correlation, but the words are not used in the same senses. Pistol uses 'firk' in the sense 'to beat,' (as in I iii 111), probably also with the pun on 'fuck,' whilst 'fer' plays on the name of his French captive, Monsieur le Fer (French for 'iron'): Pistol is presumably suggesting that he might give Monsieur a taste of his iron (sword) with a Corporal Jones-like implication that the Monsieur 'won't like it up 'im.'
- 16-7 *winks ... smiles*] all conventional ways of making amorous overtures to another person (Williams); 'becks' were mute but significant gestures of the head or the hand (*OED*, n².1) and 'wrings' squeezings or pressings of the fingers (*OED*, n².1), with a possible pun on 'rings'.
- 17 *quirks*] 'tricks.'
- 18 *courtier / courtiers*] playing on 'courtier' as 'one who courts, a lover' (*OED*, *courtier*¹, 2), and 'courtiers,' in the more usual sense, 'those who frequent the court.'
- 19 *To*] sc. 'compared to.'
- 20 *even ... hair*] 'absolutely to a nicety, exactly as needed' (*OED*, n.8.a), possibly with allusion to the proverb, 'to hit (fit, know) it to a hair' (Dent, H26) and probably, given the continuation of the line, with allusion to pubic hair suggesting, 'even to the point of having sex.' Cf. Day, *Humour Out of Breath*, H1r: 'Pa[ge]: Yes faith my Lord, my Lady has had my attendaunce to a hayre. | Flo[rimell]: You lie boy. | Pa[ge]: If not mine, some bodies els: there's one has done –.'
- 21 *reconcile*] possibly 'reunite you with, recover,' but this is an unusual usage and may be a tautology as were Sir Oliver to be reconciled with William – i.e., 'my brother' – he would necessarily recover his paternal love for his son.
- 24 *Has*] ellipsis of the pronoun – 'he has.'
- 24-5 *wench ... get me gold*] William presents Frances as a woman with whom he can get – in the sense

- 25 For thou shalt get me gold, besides odd ends
 Of silver – we'll purchase house and land
 By thy bare gettings, wench, by thy bare gettings.
 How says Lieutenant Beard – does she not look
 Like a wench newly stole from a window?
 BEARD
- 30 Exceeding well she carries it, by Jove,
 And if she can forbear her rampant tricks
 And but hold close a while, 'twill take, by Mars.
 FRANCES
- How now, you slave! My rampant tricks, you rogue!
 Nay, fear not me. My only fear is still
- 35 Thy filthy face betrays us, for all men know
 Thy nose stands compass like a bow
 Which is three quarters drawn, thy head,
 Which is with greasy hair o'er-spread
 And being uncurled and black as coal

31. tricks] tricke Q1

- of 'beget' – gold rather than children.
 25 *ends*] 'bits, fragments' (*OED*, n.5.a).
 27 *bare gettings*] 'gettings' were earnings, and 'bare' could mean 'naked' or 'simple, without addition' (*OED*, a.11), so: (a) 'what you earn when naked' – i.e., when working as prostitute; (b) 'no more than what you gain from this trick.' Cf. Day, *Law Tricks*, 1189-90: 'Thou art diuorc'd and hast no other helpe, | But thy bare comings in.'
 29 *stole from a window*] egress by means of a window was the time-honoured way for a woman to leave the parental home for an illicit marriage; cf. 62 and 76 below, and for the centrality of the word 'steal' in the play see also I i 117, IV iv 103, and V iii 185-221 (and notes thereto), and Introduction, The Play, Sex, money, power, wit and machismo.
 31 *rampant*] 'unchecked, unrestrained' (*OED*, n.2.b) and 'lustful' (*OED*, n.3); the word was linked to 'a ramp' – 'a bold and ill-behaved woman' (*OED*, v¹) – and was commonly used of prostitutes who were seen as bold, ill-behaved, and exhibiting unrestrained lust.
 32 *hold close*] (a) 'maintain the secret and so keep up the deception' (*OED*, *hold*, v.15.a, and *close* adv.2); (b) 'keep her legs together' – i.e., manage to avoid having sex.
 32 *take*] 'succeed' (*OED*, v.11).
 32 *by Mars*] Mars was the god of war, and hence an appropriate god for a lieutenant to swear by.
 35-42 *Thy ... whore.*] Frances, for no obvious reason, breaks into octosyllabic couplets (from 36 on) for this invective; cf. IV i 103-13 where William inveighs against his father in rhyme.
 35 *filthy*] probably in the sense of 'revoltingly ugly' rather than 'unwashed,' and hence, as Frances goes on to elaborate, so recognisable that he will give them away. However, the use of the term by William to Boucher at IV ii 184 suggests that it could be used in a jocular manner between friends, much as the modern 'ugly mug' might be used, and so could indicate that the tone of this exchange is not as aggressive as it may appear.
 36 *stands*] (a) 'is set or fixed' (*OED*, 18) but with a strong sense of 'confronting the world;' (b) probably with a bawdy innuendo, the nose being frequently a metonym for the penis, and 'stand' meaning 'erect' (*OED*, 6.c), but see note to 37, below.
 36 *compass*] 'curved' (*OED*, B.adj.). The word had various specific uses in archery and hence, perhaps, the simile that Frances employs.
 36 *bow*] also 'penis' (Williams).
 37 *three quarters drawn*] following on from the phallic suggestion of 'thy nose stands,' Corbin and Sedge suggest a bawdy implication here derived from the idea of drawing a sword (an act which was, indeed, fraught with innuendo – see 99 below, III iii 10-1, IV iv 119-24 and notes thereto) but that would mean a radical shift in the vehicle underlying the metaphor in play here (from drawing a bow to drawing a sword) which would be clumsy on the part of the writer and confusing for the audience – assuming, that is, that they would pick up the shift.

- 40 Doth show some scullion in a hole
 Begot thee on a gipsy, or
 Thy mother was some collier's whore.
 My rampant tricks, you rogue! Thou'lt be descried
 Before our plot be ended.
 WILLIAM What should descry him,
 45 Unless it be his nose? And as for that,
 Thou mayst protest 'a was thy father's butler
 And for thy love is likewise run away.
 Nay, sweet Lieutenant, now forbear to puff,
 And let the bristles of thy beard grow downward,
 50 Reverence my punk and panderise a little –
 There's many of thy rank that do profess it
 Yet hold it no disparagement.
 BEARD I shall do
 What fits an honest man.
 WILLIAM Why, that's enough –
 'Foot! My father and the goose my brother!
 55 Back you two.
 BEARD Back?
 WILLIAM Retire, sweet Lieutenant,
 And come not on till I shall wave you on.

[FRANCES and BEARD stand aside.]

SIR OLIVER

Is not that he?

THOMAS 'Tis he.

SIR OLIVER But where's the wench?

-
- 40 *scullion*] the lowest and most menial of kitchen servants.
 40 *hole*] (a) 'a mean and dingy habitation' (*OED*, n.2.c); (b) 'vagina.'
 41 *gipsy*] possibly meant literally as gipsies were conventionally seen as having a dark complexion, but possibly, since this is the female of the unfortunate pair that gave birth to Beard, 'a woman of loose morals' (*OED*, n.2.b); but almost undoubtedly, alas, also used as a term of contempt.
 42 *collier's whore*] a collier could be a person who dug for or mined coal, a person who carried or sold coal, or a maker or dealer in charcoal. As dealing with coal and charcoal was particularly dirty, colliers developed by metaphoric transference a reputation for being morally 'soiled' as well.
 43 *descried*] 'discovered,' perhaps with a sense of 'betrayed' (*OED*, v1.2.a and 2.c).
 48 *puff*] 'make angry or contemptuous noises' (*OED*, v.2 and 5.a).
 50 *reverence*] 'treat with respect, show respect for' (*OED*, v.1a and b).
 50 *panderise a little*] possibly, 'go at least this far in acting the part of a pander' as, strictly speaking, they are not offering Frances for sale, the idea being to make people think she is Constantia Somerfield and hence a legitimate marriage partner.
 51-2 *There's ... disparagement*] William may be taunting Beard by reminding him that pimping and working in brothels was a common career shift for ex-soldiers at that time; alternatively, he may be simply suggesting that Beard acknowledge Frances' profession and get on with her for the sake of their plot.
 51 *rank*] here probably social rather than military rank; *OED* suggests the latter sense would not have been available at this time.
 51 *profess*] 'openly acknowledge' (*OED*, v.2), perhaps also 'make it their business' (v.5).
 52 *disparagement*] 'dishonour, indignity' (*OED*, 2).

- WILLIAM [*Aside.*]
It shall be so – I'll cheat him, that's flat. C2
SIR OLIVER
You are well met. Know ye me, good sir?
60 Belike you think I have no eyes, no ears,
No nose to smell and wind out all your tricks.
You've stole Sir Somerfield's heir – nay, we can find
Your wildest paths, your turnings and returns,
Your traces, squats, the musets, forms, and holes
65 You young men use, if once our sagest wits
Be set a-hunting. Are you now crept forth?
Have you hid your head within a suburb hole
All this while, and are you now crept forth?
WILLIAM
'Tis a stark lie!
SIR OLIVER How?
WILLIAM Who told you so did lie.
70 'Foot! A gentleman cannot leave the city

64. musets] insets Q1 (E, F, G, L, O); mussers Q1 (Y).

- 58 *him*] i.e., his father. William seems to have been debating with himself whether to dupe his father as well as Throat, and he here resolves to do so.
61 *wind out*] if pronounced with a short /i/, this would mean 'get wind of, sniff out' which is the most likely sense given 'no nose to smell' (*OED*, v².1.c, which is illustrated by this line); if with a long /i/ it would mean 'draw out and reveal' (*OED*, v¹.11.d); with the latter pronunciation, the word also has suggestions of turning and twisting rapidly when running (*OED*, v¹.4) which would reflect Sir Oliver's description of William's behaviour in the following lines.
62 *stole*] see note to 29 above, and cf. 'stolen away' at 76 below.
63 *wildest*] (a) 'most unruly;' (b) 'most licentious, sexually loose' (*OED*, 7.b).
63 *turnings and returns*] descriptive of the way a hare runs; cf. Shakespeare, *Ven.*, 703-4: 'Then shalt thou see the dew-bedabbled wretch [the hare] | Turn and return, indenting with the way.'
64 *traces*] 'tracks or paths followed by an animal' (*OED*, n¹.5a), or 'the indications that it has followed a particular route' (*OED*, n¹.6.a).
64 *squats ... holes*] all names for the lair or hiding place of a hare which was, says Williams, 'a symbol of "immoderate lust"' (*squat*: *OED*, n¹.5b; *form*: *OED*, n¹.21.a; *hole*: *OED*, 1.b). 'Hole,' of course, could also mean 'vagina' and hence, by synecdoche, 'sexual partners.' (For a discussion of the variant in this line see Introduction, The Text, Press variants.)
65 *sagest wits*] another of Sir Oliver's odd verbal mismatches: the 'wits' (here the intellectual powers) are not in themselves wise – 'sage' – though they may be, through their activity, the cause of wisdom.
67 *head*] meant literally, but also (a) the prepuce, and (b), given the hunting vehicle running through the speech, possibly the antlers or horns of a deer (*OED*, n¹.6) with the further obvious phallic suggestions.
67 *suburb hole*] as in the primary sense of 'hole' in 40 of this scene – i.e., 'a dingy dwelling in the suburbs' – but the suburbs of London were seen as places of particular licentiousness (see I i 39 and note above) and so the 'suburb,' by synecdoche, represents 'a prostitute' and the sense of 'hole' as in 64 then comes more strongly into play as the place where William might have 'hid his head,' that 'head' being 'the glans of the penis' (Williams); however, there is possibly another more literal sense, of 'hid his head,' i.e., 'performs cunnilingus,' for which see Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 1.2.32-3, where the Host jokes, "'tis a tongue with a great T, my boy, that wins a widow,' and a few lines later Witgood responds with, 'Will that man wish a rich widow that has ne'er a hole to put his head in?' (1.2.51-2).

- And keep the suburbs to take a little physic
 But straight some slave will say he hides his head.
 I hide my head within a suburb hole?
 I could have holes at court to hide my head
 75 Were I but so disposed.
 SIR OLIVER Thou varlet knave!
 Th'ast stolen away Sir John Somerfield's heir,
 But never look for countenance from me,
 Carry her whither thou wilt.
 WILLIAM Father! Father!
 'Zearth! Will you undo your posterity?
 80 Will you, sir, undo your posterity?
 I can but kill my brother then hang myself,
 And where is then your house? Make me not despair!
 'Foot! Now I have got a wench, worth by the year
 Two thousand pound and upward. To cross my hopes –
 85 Would e'er a clown in Christendom do't but you?
 THOMAS
 Good father, let him leave this thundering,
 And give him grace.
 WILLIAM Why, law! My brother knows
 Reason, and what an honest man should do.
 SIR OLIVER
 Well, where's your wife?
 WILLIAM She's coming here behind.
 SIR OLIVER
 90 I'll give her somewhat, though I love not thee.
 WILLIAM
 My father right! I knew you could not hold
 Out long with a woman. But give something
 Worthy your gift and her acceptance, father.

71 *keep*] 'remain or reside in for a period of time' (*OED*, v.38a).
 71 *physic*] (a) 'medicine;' (b) possibly 'sexual intercourse;' Partridge.1 quotes Massinger (but gives no source): 'She ... sends for her young doctor, | Who ministers physic to her on her back.'
 72 *straight*] 'straight away' (*OED*, C.2.a).
 72-5 *But ... disposed.*] William develops the metaphor provided by his father with remorseless innuendo.
 75 *varlet knave*] both mean 'rogue' (stronger then than now) – another of Sir Oliver's tautological verbirosities.
 77 *countenance*] 'approbation, support' (*OED*, n.8).
 79 *undo your posterity*] 'destroy your future family.' Corbin and Sedge suggest the repetition of this line is a compositor's error, but it echoes 'Father! Father!' and expresses William's exasperation effectively.
 87 *give him grace*] 'show him favour' (*OED*, n.6.a); perhaps, 'forgive him' (*OED*, n.15.a).
 87 *law*] a euphemistic homophonic shortening of 'Lord,' done to avoid accusations of blasphemy.
 90 *somewhat*] 'something worth having' (*OED*, n.4.a); the line could, of course, be spoken to suggest that what will be 'given' will be sex.
 91-2 *hold out long*] there could well be a sly innuendo that Sir Oliver could not 'keep up or maintain to the end' sexual intercourse (see *OED*, *hold*, v.41.f); cf. the joke concerning the inability of old men to 'keep it up' for long at III iv 4-5.

100 By heaven, as tall a man as e'er drew sword,
Not being counted of the damned crew.
'A was her father's butler. His name is Beard.
Off with your mask! Now shall you find me true,
And that I am a son unto a knight.
This is my father.

95 *lands*] here applied, as it often was, as a metaphor for the female body, and also more specifically
the vagina (Williams), this meaning being reinforced by the next line.

96 *come ... fingering*] (a) primarily in the sense ‘when I get my hands on them;’ the word had
connotations of dishonesty with regard to money (*OED*, v.2.b and 4.a) and even cheating (*OED*,
4.b); (b) secondarily in the sense implied by the suggestive use of ‘lands’ in the previous line and
possibly with a glance at the idea of ‘playing upon a musical instrument’ (*OED*, 5.a) suggesting
either manual sexual play (i.e., ‘she has an orgasm as a result of my stroking her’) or penetrative
sex (‘finger’ could mean ‘penis’ – see I ii 131 and note).

98 *ruffian knave*] possibly another Sir Oliver tautology, but ‘ruffian’ might describe what Beard
looks like rather than his character as the word could refer to a person’s appearance, especially
wearing the hair long (*OED*, *ruffian*, n.a.2); in Beard’s case we know that his hair is not only
‘black,’ ‘greasy’ and ‘uncurled’ but also ‘o’er-spread,’ which could suggest length (38 and 39
above). Williams notes that ‘ruffian’ could refer to a pimp or to a pimp’s protector or bully-boy.

99 *tall*] most likely ‘bold, valiant’ (*OED*, adj.3), but possibly also ‘decent’ (*OED*, adj.2.a) which
would make a more direct response to Sir Oliver’s charge that he looks disreputable; cf. the
proverb, ‘he is as good a man as ever drew sword’ (Dent, M167). Given that ‘drawing one’s
sword’ could be suggestive of ‘undoing the codpiece preparatory to sexual intercourse’ (see 37
above, III iii 10-1, IV iv 119-24 and notes thereto) the word ‘tall’ could also be suggestive of
sexual virility. (See also I i 35 and note.)

100 *Not ... crew*] ‘allowing that he isn’t a member of the damned crew;’ the ‘damned (or cursed)
crew’ possibly refers to a specific gang of thuggish young men, some of high rank, who roamed
the streets of London at night fighting and causing mayhem; it was the subject of a satire by
Samuel Rowlands in *The Letting of Humors Blood in the Heade-veine* (1600); however, the term
may also simply refer to any group of dissolute young men, as appears to be the case in
Middleton’s *The Black Book*, 509-11, where the Devil says, ‘I marched to Master Bezzle’s
ordinary, where I found a whole dozen of my damned crew sweating as much at dice as many
poor labourers do with the casting of ditches,’ and also in Dekker’s *The Whore of Babylon*, E4v:
‘All the damb’d Crew, that would for gold teare off | The deuills beard.’

102 *Off ... mask*] to Frances, who has to remove her mask in order for Sir Oliver to kiss her (105-6);
William clearly does not expect his father to recognise the girl thus revealed, but at V iii 178 (q.v.
and note) there is a hint that the Smallshanks and Somerfield families do know each other.

- SIR OLIVER I am indeed, fair maid.
 105 My style is knight. Come, let me kiss your lips.
 WILLIAM [*Aside.*]
 That kiss shall cost your chain.
 SIR OLIVER It smacks, i'faith:
 I must commend your choice.
 FRANCES Sir, I have given
 A larger venture than true modesty
 Will well allow, or your more graver wit
 110 Commend.
 WILLIAM I dare be sworn she has!
 SIR OLIVER Not so.
 The foolish knave has been accounted wild
 And so have I, but I am now come home
 And so will he.
 FRANCES I must believe it now.
 WILLIAM
 Beg his chain, wench.
 BEARD Will you cheat your father?
 WILLIAM
 115 Ay, by this light will I.
 SIR OLIVER Nay, sigh not,
 For you shall find him loving and me thankful,
 And were it not a scandal to my honour,
 To be consenting to my son's attempt
 You should unto my house. Meanwhile, take this
 120 As pledge and token of my after love.

[He gives her the chain.]

108. larger] Q1 (Y); longer Q1 (O, E, G, L, F).

105 *style*] 'title' (*OED*, n.18.a).

106 *smacks*] (a) 'to taste good' (*OED*, v¹.2.a); (b) 'to kiss noisily' (*OED*, v².2.a).

107-8 *I ... venture*] the 'venture' is 'Constantia's' risky undertaking in eloping; though obviously an element of the usual meaning is in play – 'an enterprise ... in which there is considerable risk of loss as well as chance of gain' (*OED*, n.4.a) – the word has the same sort of meaning as it does in the phrase '*to give venture*, to make the attempt' (*OED*, n.3.c); it also carried strong sexual connotations, as in the pregnant and unmarried Francisca's lament in Middleton's *The Witch*, 2.1.43-4: 'These bastards come upon poor venturing gentlewomen | Ten to one faster than your legitimate children,' and the word also had the sense 'a prostitute' (*OED*, n.8 – though the earliest illustration is from 1611); there could also be a pun on 'venter' meaning 'womb' or 'belly' (*OED*, n¹.2 and 7.a); 'larger' has here some such meaning as 'lavish, prodigal' (*OED*, a.1); the phrase can thus mean either, 'I have embarked upon a more prodigal enterprise,' or, 'in giving myself I give a more brazen whore.' (For further discussion of the variant see Introduction, The Text, Press variants.)

109 *more graver*] the double comparative was allowable, especially for emphasis, at this time – Frances is not committing a Sir Oliverism.

111 *wild*] 'licentious, sexually loose' (*OED*, 7.b) – cf. 63 above.

112 *come home*] 'back to my proper sense of things' (*OED*, a.6).

120 *pledge*] here simply 'something given as a sign of favour' (*OED*, n.3).

120 *token*] (a) 'evidence of' (*OED*, n.3.a); (b) possibly, 'a sign of something to come' (*OED*, n.5).

- How long since died your father?
 WILLIAM Some six weeks since.
 We cannot stay to talk for slaves pursue.
 I have a house shall lodge us till the priest
 May make us sure.
 SIR OLIVER Well, sirrah, love this woman,
 125 And when you are man and wife bring her to me.
 She shall be welcome.
 WILLIAM I humbly thank you, sir.
 SIR OLIVER
 I must be gone. I must a-wooing, too.
 WILLIAM.
 Jove and Priapus speed you. You'll return?
 THOMAS
 Instantly.
- Ex[eunt] SIR OLIVER and THOM[AS] SMALLSHANKS.*
- 130 WILLIAM Why, this came cleanly off.
 Give me the chain, you little cockatrice.
 Why, this was luck. 'Foot! Four hundred crowns
 Got at a clap! Hold still your own, you whore, C3
 And we shall thrive.
 BEARD 'Twas bravely fetched about.
 WILLIAM
 Ay, when will your nose and beard perform as much?
 FRANCES
 135 I am glad he is gone. 'A put me to the blush
 When 'a did ask me of rich Somerfield's death.
 WILLIAM
 And took not I my cue – was't not good?

129. *Ex[eunt]*] *Exit* Q1. 137. cue –] q: Q1.

124 *make us sure*] 'marry us' (*OED*, a.7.a).

128 *Jove and Priapus*] Jove, the father of the Olympian gods, was famous for his sexual exploits and Priapus was the Roman god of procreation; both would therefore be propitious patrons for Sir Oliver's venture.

129 *came cleanly off*] 'was accomplished completely and cleverly.'

131 *four hundred crowns*] a crown was worth five shillings, so the chain was worth £100 – a very considerable sum of money. See note to II iv 94 for the value of the pound at this time.

132 *at a clap*] (a) 'at a stroke;' (b) with a possible play on the word's association with coition – see IV i 33 and the two notes to that line.

132 *Hold ... own*] 'stick firmly to your course, stand your ground' (*OED*, 31.a); see also note to 138 below.

133 *fetched about*] 'brought about, carried off;' 'to fetch in' could mean 'to cheat' (*OED*, 15.c) so there may be a hint of that sense here – 'you cheated them well.'

134 *Ay ... much*] a possible clue to this otherwise eccentric comment might lie in the common assimilation of noses with penises and of beards with women's pubic hair, which would lead to, 'when will you and your whore achieve as much?' However, it would be asking a great deal of an audience to expect them to understand this so quickly.

137 *cue*] (a) 'the words that signal to an actor to start the next speech;' as the 'cue' was merely two or three words, and was all an actor was given of the other speeches in the play, 'taking one's cue'

- Did I not bring you off, you arrant drab,
Without a counterbuff? Look who comes here.
140 “And three merry men, and three merry men,
And three merry men be we a’!”

Enter BOUTCHER and CONSTANTIA.

- BOUTCHER
Still in this vein? I have done you service.
The lawyer’s house will give you entertainment,
Bountiful and free.
WILLIAM Oh, my second self –
145 Come, let me buss thy beard! We are all made.
Why art so melancholy? Dost want money?
Look, here’s gold, and as we pass along
I’ll tell thee how I got it. Not a word
But that she’s Somerfield’s heir. My brother
150 Swallows it with more ease than a Dutchman
Does flapdragons. ’A comes. Now to my lawyer’s.

Enter T/HOMAS/ SMALLSHANKS.

Kiss my wife, good brother – she is a wench

151. flapdragons.] slap-Dragons: Q1.

was no mean feat, requiring considerable concentration and presence of mind; (b) also, as indicated by the spelling in Q1, a pun on ‘queue,’ French for ‘a tail’ and hence ‘sexual organs’ (Williams), suggesting, ‘did I not act my part in a masculine way?’ See also III iv 9 and note.
138 *arrant*] ‘notorious, downright ... an opprobrious intensive’ (*OED*, a.3).
138 *bring you off*] ‘rescue you’ (*OED*, v.19.b), but in the light of ‘cue’ in the previous line, is there a suggestion of ‘brought you to orgasm’? (However, Williams does not register the phrase in that sense and neither Partridge.² nor Colman list it, whilst *OED* gives it only from 1916); as to the word ‘my,’ William would regard Frances’ ‘queue’ as his property, she being his acknowledged punk. If read in this way might we also then see ‘hold still your own, you whore’ as another reference to manual (in this case, self) pleasures?
138 *drab*] ‘slut, whore.’
139 *counterbuff*] ‘rebuff, check’ (*OED*, n.2).
140 “And ... we a’!”] given as a proverb by Dent with examples from Peele, *The Old Wives’ Tale* (1595), Percy, *Fairy Pastoral* (1603), and Dekker and Webster, *Westward Ho* (1607); but the lines are the refrain to several songs of the period – and they are printed as such in *The Old Wives’ Tale*, even though they are referred to in the dialogue as a proverb. Sir Toby Belch sings the line in *Tw.N.* (II iii 76-7). However, where the lines come from is less important here than the number – William and Beard are already on stage, and Boutcher’s arrival makes up the three.
142 *vein*] ‘mood, disposition’ (*OED*, n.14.c).
144 *free*] here ‘generous’ (*OED*, a.4.a) and possibly ‘readily given, given with good will,’ (20.a) rather than ‘without charge.’
145 *buss*] ‘kiss.’
145 *made*] ‘assured of riches for the rest of our lives’ (*OED*, ppl.7.a).
146 *want*] ‘lack’ (*OED*, v.4.a).
151 *flapdragons*] these were burning raisins which, floating in blazing brandy, were caught by the mouth and eaten; it was a popular game in Holland (for which reason ‘a flapdragon’ was also a contemptuous name for a Dutchman) (*OED*, n.1.c and 2).

- Was born to make us all.
 THOMAS I hope no less.
 You're welcome, sister, into these our parts,
 155 As I may say.
 FRANCES Thanks, gentle brother.
 WILLIAM
 Come now to Ram Alley. There shalt thou lie
 Till I provide a priest.
 BOUTCHER O villainy!
 I think 'a will gull his whole generation.
 I must make one. Since 'tis so well begun,
 160 I'll not forsake him till his hopes be won.

Exeunt

159. I must make one. Since 'tis so well begun,] I must make one, since 'tis so well begun, Q1.

153 *Was*] ellipsis of 'who.'

153 *make*] see *made*, 145 above, and note.

154 *these our parts*] 'our part of the country' (*OED*, n.13.a) but probably also 'parts' in the sense of 'private parts' (*OED* does not specifically give such a meaning beyond 'an organ of an animal' – n.3 – but there are plenty of entries in Williams that suggest the word could refer to the human genitalia at this time); the phrase is awkward enough without the innuendo (in what sense is this Thomas's part of the country any more than Constantia Somerfield's?) and even more so with it, but the lamely added, 'As I may say' suggests that this is designed to be a feeble attempt at humour that completely fails to come off and so show Thomas up as the goose his brother proclaims him to be.

156 *lie*] 'stay, dwell' (*OED*, v¹.5.a).

158 *gull*] (a) 'cheat, deceive' (*OED*, v¹.1); (b) perhaps also, 'devour voraciously' (*OED*, v².1).

158 *generation*] this could refer to everyone born at the same time as him but that would limit the term to William's brother, and Boutcher clearly means more than that; the word could mean any set of people such as 'family, race, class etc.' (*OED*, n.6), or even more generally, 'species,' and that would seem to be the most likely meaning here.

159 *make one*] 'join in and be part of the conspiracy.' The punctuation of Q1 leaves the adverbial clause 'since 'tis so well begun' floating ambiguously between two main clauses; this edition has opted to attach it to the second one on the grounds that (a) the rhyme tends to tie them together, and (b) the sense flows better thus, making the couplet easier for an actor to deliver.

[Act II, Scene ii.]

Enter THROAT, and TWO CITIZENS.

THROAT

Then you're friends?

BOTH We are, so please your worship.

THROAT

'Tis well – I am glad. Keep your money, for law

Is like a butler's box: while you two strive,

That picks up all your money. You are friends?

BOTH

5 We are, so please you, both perfect friends.

THROAT Why so,

Now to the next tap-house, there drink down this,

And by the operation of the third pot

C3v

Quarrel again, and come to me for law.

Fare you well.

BOTH The gods conserve your wisdom.

E[xeunt] CI/TIZENS/.

THROAT

10 Why so, these are tricks of the long fifteens:

Location] Throat's chambers in Ram Alley.

3 *butler's box*] a box into which players put a portion of their winnings at Christmas time to make a Christmas box for the butler (*OED*, *butler*, n.3); *OED* quotes H. Smith, *Sermons* (1593): 'The law is like a butler's box, play still on till all come to the candlestick.'

6 *tap-house*] 'an inn,' (or a room in an inn set aside for drinking).

7 *operation*] 'effect, influence' (*OED*, 3).

10 *long fifteens*] obscure; *OED* suggests '*slang*, ? some class of lawyers' (*long*, a¹.18) quoting this line as its only example of the usage, and presumably taking 'long' in the figurative sense of 'having great reach' (*OED*, a¹.1.c) and hence 'clever, able to outreach;' however, if it was legal argot or a term in common slang one would expect it to turn up elsewhere and hence be referenced in the *OED* entry. Attempts by other editors of *Ram Alley* to explain it are as follows: Corbin and Sedge, following Jones, suggest 'the Court of Session which (formerly) consisted of fifteen judges;' however, (a) the Court of Session was a Scottish court, and (b) if that were a common term for the court, again, one would expect it to turn up elsewhere; Jones refers us to Middleton's *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 2.2, where the word 'fifteens' is bandied about in a tailor's shop, but that is another false trail as the word there simply means the cost per yard in shillings of a particular cloth; (we might note that Middleton also uses the word as a noun in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 1.1.212-13, when Cunningame dismisses the young fifteen-year-old niece in favour of her aged guardianess: 'Away, fifteen! | Here's fifty-one exceeds thee,' but it is most unlikely that the usage here is a reference to age); finally, Hazlitt's suggestion that this is a reference to the tax called 'a fifteen' and hence implies extortion seems well wide of the mark. A search for this edition turned up the word in *A iustification or cleering of the Prince of Orendge agaynst the false sclanders, wherewith his ilwillers goe about to charge him wrongfully*, translated from the French by Arthur Goldyng (1575), pp.78-9, where an official is enjoined to 'summon him ... to appeere personally within iii fifteenes then next insewing;' the word there means 'a fortnight,' as is made clear by the later 'and ... if hee come not at the first, second, or third and last fifteene dayes: Iustice shall proceede agaynst him in his absence,' and is presumably a literal rendering of the French for a fortnight, 'quinzaine;' *OED* gives no definition of 'fifteen' in that sense, but we have here at least an instance of the word's use in relation to a period of time and in a legal

- To give counsel and to take fees on both sides,
 To make 'em friends and then to laugh at them.
 Why, this thrives well. This is a common trick:
 When men have spent a deal of money in law,
 15 Then lawyers make them friends. I have a trick
 To go beyond all these: if Smallshanks come
 And bring rich Somerfield's heir – I say no more,
 But 'tis within this sconce to go beyond them.

Enter DASH.

- DASH
 Here are gentlemen in haste would speak with you.
 THROAT
 20 What are they?
 DASH I cannot know them, sir,
 They are so wrapped in cloaks.
 THROAT Have they a woman?

context; one could surmise, therefore, that it refers here to either one of the legal terms or vacations, for which the only two candidates are Trinity term (which lasted 20 working days spanning two weekends, thus making a long fortnight which ran variously from early June to early July and was thus the hottest term) or the vacation between Easter and Trinity (which lasted 19 days sometime between early May and early June); so, if 'long' means 'a period of time that feels of longer duration than it actually was' (*OED*, a¹.10.a) that would give something like 'those long hot fortnights of the Trinity terms' or 'those long drawn out fortnights where time hangs heavy on the hands of lawyers unoccupied because they cannot get into court;' the problem with such readings however is that, again, one would expect such a phrase to turn up elsewhere – as a nonce usage it seems just a bit too obscure. One final possibility is that the word 'fifteens' derives from a misreading; the page was set by Y, who was the less experienced of the two identifiable men, and the one more prone to misreading the copy; a back-formation of the word 'fifteenes' into secretary hand produced a word that looked very like 'sithens' and had that been the original word it would have required the compositor to misread the first /s/ as an /f/, the descender of the /h/ as a descender of a second /f/ and the /t/ before the /h/ as the top part of that /f/, and the loop of the /h/ as an /e/; that would give the phrase 'long sithens' meaning 'of old, a long time ago' (*OED*, *sithens*, adv.4); the major objection to this proposal is that the phrase 'long sithens' is used, it would appear, only adverbially rather than, as here, nominally, but the dramatists of this period were famously contemptuous of grammatical categories (one only has to think of *Mac.*, II ii 59-60, 'The multitudinous seas incarnadine, | Making the green one red') and a phrase meaning 'long time ago' could easily be converted into 'the long ago times' giving for the whole line, roughly, 'these are tricks that lawyers have been playing for years;' in terms of compositorial error one might surmise that the man either simply misread the less familiar word, or stumbled over it (possibly precisely because it was grammatically odd), looked again and thought it could be 'fifteenes' (which didn't make much better sense but was at least a familiar word); in either case we would the apply the *lectio difficilior* principle; we might also note that a similar misreading seems to have occurred where the word 'insets' was set for the less familiar 'musets' (though in that case probably by compositor X).

- 11 To ... sides] cf. the character Michaelmas Term in Middleton's play of that name: 'From wronger
 and from wrongèd I have fee' (*Michaelmas Term*, 1.1.8).
 14 deal] sc. 'a good deal' (*OED*, n¹.4).
 18 sconce] 'head.'
 18 go beyond] 'get round, circumvent' (*OED*, 3.d) and hence 'outwit.'
 20 what] i.e., 'who' (*OED*, pron.A.2).
 20 cannot know them] 'I cannot / am unable to recognise them' (*OED*, *can*, v¹.4.a; *know*, v.1).

DASH

Yes, sir, but she's masked, and in her riding suit.

THROAT

Go, make haste, bring them up with reverence.

[Exit DASH.]

- 25 Oh, are they, i' faith! Has brought the wealthy heir?
These stools and cushions stand not handsomely.

Enter WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS, BOUTCHER, THOMAS SMALLSHANKS, FRANCES [masked,] BEARD [and DASH].

WILLIAM

Bless thee, Throat.

THROAT Master Smallshanks, welcome.

WILLIAM

Welcome, love. Kiss this gentlewoman, Throat.

THROAT.

Your worship shall command me.

WILLIAM Art not weary?

BOUTCHER

Can you blame her, since she has rid so hard?

THROAT

- 30 You are welcome, gentlemen. Dash!
A fire in the great chamber, quickly.

[Exit DASH.]

WILLIAM

Ay, that's well said. We are almost weary.

But Master Throat, if any come to enquire

For me, my brother, or this gentlewoman,

-
- 22 *masked*] although, during this period, women sometimes wore masks when outside to protect their faces from strong sun or inclement weather they came in for criticism from the moralists for doing so on the grounds that their real motive was obviously to avoid being recognised, and that therefore they could be up to no good.
- 22 *riding suit*] (a) a garment with a large hood which, if up, would conceal the face; for 'riding-hood' *OED* quotes Cotgrave (1611): '*Barbute*, a riding hood; a Montero, or close hood, where-with traouellers preserue their faces and heads from frost-biting;' again, it was a form of dress which attracted the attention of moralists as the women's riding suit was very similar to the equivalent male dress and could therefore look like cross-dressing; (b) with a pun on 'riding = having sex' and hence either in her smock or, possibly, naked, though it might be too early for that figurative sense of 'suit = body.'
- 23 *with reverence*] 'with due respect.'
- 24 *Has*] sc. 'has he.'
- 29 *rid*] 'ridden.' Boutcher possibly shares a sly joke with William here, adverting to Frances' role as his sexual partner by using 'rid' in the sense 'had sexual intercourse' (*OED*, v.3, and Williams); normally it is the man who 'rides' but Williams gives examples of the word being used actively of the woman, and *OED* gives also 'admit of being ridden, carry a rider' (v.6.a).
- 32 *almost*] 'for the most part' (*OED*, 1) – i.e., 'most of us.'

- We are not here, nor have you heard of us.
 THROAT
 Not a word, sir. Here you are as safe
 As in your father's house.
 THOMAS And he shall thank you.
 WILLIAM
 Th'art not merry, love. Good Master Throat,
 Bid this gentlewoman welcome. She is one
 40 Of whom you may receive some courtesy
 In time.
 THROAT She is most hearty welcome.
 Wilt please you walk into another room
 Where is both bed and fire? C4
 WILLIAM Ay, ay – that, that.
 Good brother, lead her in. Master Throat and I
 45 Will follow instantly.

Ex[eunt THOMAS, FRANCES, BOUTCHER and BEARD].

- Now, Master Throat,
 It rests within your power to pleasure me.
 Know that this same is Sir John Somerfield's heir.
 Now if she chance to question what I am,
 Say, "son unto a lord." I pray thee tell her
 50 I have a world of land, and stand in hope
 To be created baron, for I protest
 I was constrained to swear it forty times
 And yet she'll scarce believe me.

-
- 40 *courtesy*] 'generosity, benevolence' (*OED*, n.2); the obvious generosity would be, as suggested earlier to Throat by Boutcher, the stewardship of her lands (I iv 94-5) which Throat there acknowledges would be an act of 'noble courtesy' (I iv 100); 'courtesy could also mean (a) 'sexual favour' (Williams), and (b) 'a tenure by which a husband, after his wife's death, holds ... property which she has inherited' (*OED*, n.4.a); it is possible, therefore, that William could here be dropping a hint to Throat that he might find other ways than that suggested by Boutcher to benefit from alliance with 'Constantia' – though meaning (b) is obscure and less likely to be in play than (a); in either case, the actor, by holding off for a second and then emphasising the next half-line, could reinforce the suggestion that Throat has more to gain than might meet his eye.
- 41 *hearty*] surely adverbial here – 'heartily' – though *OED* lists 'hearty' as an adverb only as from 1753 (sense B).
- 43 *Where ... that.*] Throat offers the bed, presumably assuming that William will want to sleep with 'Constantia', but William is either momentarily distracted by his preceding line of thought or forgets that he himself has no such intentions, his plan being to set up Throat to marry her.
- 46 *pleasure*] 'please, gratify' but with a very strong connotative leaning towards 'give sexual pleasure' (*OED*, v.1.a); such a meaning might seem inappropriate in the context, unless there is here another opening for homoerotic comic playfulness.
- 50 *I ... hope*] (a) 'I possess a vast amount (*OED*, *world*, n.7.f and 19) of land and live secure (*OED*, *stand*, v.9.b) in expectation;' (b) taking the possession of land to equate to sexual potency (see I i 135 and note) and 'stand' in the sense of 'sexually excited' we could read this as a declaration by William of his ability to provide his bride-to-be with adequate marital pleasures.
- 51 *protest*] 'declare' (*OED*, v.1.b); the word had several law usages so may have legal connotations.

- THROAT *Pauca sapienti.*
 Let me alone to set you out in length
 55 And breadth.
 WILLIAM I prithee do't effectually.
 Shalt have a quarter share, by this good light,
 In all she has. I prithee forget not
 To tell her the Smallshanks have been dancers,
 Tilters, and very ancient courtiers,
 60 And in request at court since Sir John Shorthose
 With his long silk stockings was beheaded.
 Wilt thou do this?
 THROAT Refer it to my care.
 WILLIAM
 Excellent. I'll but shift my boots, and then
 Go seek a priest. This night I will be sure.
 65 If we be sure it cannot be undone,
 Can it Master Throat?
 THROAT Oh sir, not possible –
 You have many precedents and book cases for't.
 Be you but sure and then let me alone.
Vivat rex, currat lex, and I'll defend you.
 WILLIAM
 70 Nay then, hang care. Come, let's in.

-
- 53 *Pauca sapienti*] 'a few (sc. words) to the wise (sc. are enough)' (Latin); the same phrase occurs in *The Family of Love* (1898-90): 'yours, Master Doctor, stands upon the negative; and yours, Master Purge, upon the affirmative; *pauca sapienti*, I ha't, I ha't.' Middleton appears to refer to the maxim without quoting it in *The Black Book*, 654-5: 'a true thief cannot but be wise, because he is a man of so very few words.'
- 54 *set you out*] 'display you to advantage' (*OED*, *set*, v¹.149.n).
- 54-5 *in ... breadth*] 'in full' but also with a suggestion of priapic extension (Williams).
- 55 *effectually*] 'effectively,' perhaps even 'explicitly' (*OED*, 1 and 3).
- 56 *Shalt*] ellipsis of 'thou.'
- 58-9 *dancers ... courtiers*] William is asking to be presented to 'Constantia' as aristocratic and sexually skilled: dancing and tilting were courtly accomplishments, but dancing has stood metaphorically for having sex from Chaucer to the present day; tilting, likewise, was an obvious metaphor for the same, involving as it did a long, rigid lance and a close, violent engagement; courtiers were renowned for their licentious behaviour.
- 60-1 *And ... beheaded*] this part of William's request is less obvious, and may simply be a silly joke about a man called 'short hose' (i.e., a kind of stocking that reached only part-way up the leg) wearing long stockings; part of the joke is clearly about his own name, 'Smallshanks' meaning 'short legs' and hence only in need of short hose, and there may be some bawdy play on the 'short / long' theme but if so it is rather incoherent and hardly sounds complimentary to Sir John (unless the shortness of his 'hose' was caused by post-coital detumescence of his 'long stocking' but that is rather far-fetched and unlikely to be picked up in performance). As to the manner of his demise, there will have been some cachet in having an ancestor who was beheaded as that was the form of capital punishment reserved for the upper classes.
- 62 *refer it*] 'submit or hand it over for my execution' (*OED*, v.6.a); the word seems to have had particular legal connotations.
- 63 *shift*] 'change' especially clothes (*OED*, v.8.a and 9).
- 64 (*et passim*) *sure*] see II i 124 and note, above.
- 67 *book cases*] 'a case that is in the records (books)' and hence another name for 'precedent.'
- 69 *Vivat rex, currat lex*] 'may the king live; may the law run' (Latin).
- 70 *hang care*] proverbial (Dent, C85).

Exit W[ILLIAM] S[MALLSHANKS].

THROAT

Ah ha!

Have you stole her? *Fallere fallentem non est fraus.*

It shall go hard, but I shall strip you, boy.

You stole the wench, but I must her enjoy.

Exit [THROAT].

71|73 *stole* | *stole*] see note to II i 29.

71 *Fallere fallentem non est fraus.*] ‘to deceive a deceiver is no deception’ (Latin).

72 *It ... you*] (a) ‘this will hurt you, but I shall outsmart and get the better of you’ (*OED*, *hard*, 2.c; *strip*, v².2); (b) ‘my penis (‘it’) will get an erection and I will dispossess you [of the girl]’ (*OED*, *strip*, v¹.2a); this latter sense looks forward to ‘enjoy’ in the next line.

73 *enjoy*] ‘have sexual intercourse with, take pleasure in’ (*OED*, v.4.b and 3.a; Partridge.2; Colman).

[Act II, Scene iii.]

Enter MISTRESS TAFFETA, [and] ADRIANA, below.

- TAFFETA
Come, Adriana, tell me what thou think'st.
I am tickled with conceit of marriage,
And whom think'st thou (for me) the fittest husband?
What say'st thou to young Boutcher?
ADRIANA A pretty fellow
5 But that his back is weak.
TAFFETA What dost thou say
To Throat the lawyer?
ADRIANA I like that well C4v
Were the rogue a lawyer, but he is none.
He never was of any Inn of Court
But Inn of Chancery, where 'a was known
10 But only for a swaggering whiffler
To keep out rogues and prentices. I saw him

-
- Location] the street outside Taffeta's house; the s.d. of Q1 specifies 'below' and hence not on the balcony, and on the arrival of Boutcher and Constantia at 25 Adriana tells Taffeta to 'stand aside,' implying that they are not in a booth-like interior structure at the back of the stage representing an inner room, but outside the main door.
- 2 *tickled with conceit*] 'pleasantly excited by the idea' (*OED*, *tickled*, v.2; *conceit*, n.1); but 'tickle' had very strong suggestions of amorous excitement, whilst 'conceit' could also be 'conception of offspring' (*OED*, 10), though that would be at most a glance here, rather than a full play on the second meaning.
- 4 *pretty*] not necessarily 'good-looking,' but more generally 'pleasing, nice' and possibly 'clever' (*OED*, 3 and 2.a).
- 4 *fellow*] the term was often used in a condescending way, possibly even with a touch of denigration.
- 5 *his ... weak*] 'he lacks sexual vigour;' cf. II i 11 and note, above.
- 5-6 *What ... lawyer?*] Taffeta is involved in a quite separate plot from that involving Throat, and they are never on stage together until the very end of the play; this inclusion of the lawyer in her social circle is thus interesting in terms of the dramatist's realisation of his diegesis.
- 6 *I like*] ellipsis of 'would.'
- 8 *Inn of Court*] one of the four legal societies (or the buildings that housed them) that had the right to admit people to practise as lawyers (*OED*, *court*, 5.c).
- 9 *Inn of Chancery*] a residence and place of study for students of law and attorneys (*OED*, *court*, 5.b), not the law court of the same name; the Inns of Chancery were attached to the Inns of Court which housed the legal societies; the gist of Adriana's point is that the nearest Throat ever came to being a lawyer was to act as a porter in a student hall of residence.
- 10 *whiffler*] strictly, a person employed to clear the way for a public procession, and so, if that is the primary meaning here, a kind of bouncer; it could also mean 'a braggart' (*OED*, *whiffler*¹.1.b), or 'a smoker of tobacco' (*OED*, *whiffler*², 1), an activity associated at this period with swaggering behaviour (as in the accusation against Marlowe that he once said, 'all they that love not tobacco and boys were fools'), *OED*'s earliest illustration of that meaning is from Middleton's *A Fair Quarrel* (1617) where it is applied to a tobacconist; there is also a strong sense of contempt behind the word here, and it could mean 'a contemptible person' (*OED*, *whiffler*², 2) but *OED*'s first given usage in that sense is much later (1659).
- 11 *prentices*] not the law students (who were entitled to be in the building) but the citizens' apprentices, who were (as is the case with youth at all times) seen as a threat to public order and the safety of all decent, right-thinking folk.

- When 'a was stocked for stealing the cook's fees.
 A lawyer I could like, for 'tis a thing
 Used by your citizens' wives – your husbands dead,
 15 To get French hoods you straight must lawyers wed.
 TAFFETA
 What say'st thou, then, to nimble Sir Oliver Smallshanks?
 ADRIANA
 Faith, he must hit the hair! A fellow fit
 To make a pretty cuckold. Take an old man –
 'Tis now the newest fashion. Better be
 20 An old man's darling than a young man's warling.
 Take me the old brisk knight. The fool is rich
 And will be strong enough to father children,
 Though not to get them.
 TAFFETA 'Tis true, he is the man.
 Yet I will bear some dozen more in hand

-
- 12 *stocked*] 'put in the stocks.'
 12 *cook's*] i.e., the cook of the Inn of Chancery.
 13 *a thing*] 'something;' but also, as both Colman and Partridge.² note, the genitals, male or female; in this case, presumably it is the lawyers' things that Adriana has in mind. See next note.
 14 *Used*] 'customarily done' (*OED*, *use*, 20), but 'use' could also mean – and in this period did so more often than not – 'have sexual intercourse with' (*OED*, 10.b) and hence what is done with those 'things' referred to in the previous line.
 15 *French hoods*] a complex (and hence presumably expensive) woman's head-dress of the period, but specifically one worn when being punished for loose behaviour (*OED*); if one understands the latter, one assumes Adriana has a low opinion of lawyers as sexual partners as she suggests that marrying one is likely to result in her looking elsewhere for sexual satisfaction and hence suffering the consequences. There is, though, another possible development of this line: Partridge.¹, quoting an anonymous play of 1560, notes that 'hood' could refer to the vagina, whilst anything French was considered suspect in relation to sexual health, so to 'get a French hood' could suggest 'get a dose of the clap,' in which case the joke would be that, far from being sexually inadequate, lawyers were sexually promiscuous and hence liable to pick up venereal diseases which they would then pass on to their wives.
 16 *nimble*] this could refer to quickness and agility of the body or the mind (*OED*, a.3 and 4.b) but also had strong suggestions of agility in sexual activity (Williams, and see also his entry for *Dance*, where he quotes Fletcher and Massinger, *Custom of the Country*, II i: 'A turn o'th' Toe, with a lofty trick or two, To argue nimbleness, and a strong back, Will go far with a Madam'); given the subject of her question, one would assume that Taffeta is applying the word – in all its possible senses – with some irony. See also II iv 49-50 and note.
 17 *hit the hair*] 'hit the spot' or 'hit the clout' (i.e., the centre of a target); the expression was proverbial: 'to hit it to a hair' (Dent, H26); here, the 'hair' in question would be the pubic hair and 'hit' has the force of 'achieve sexual penetration' (Colman); the expression 'to a hair' occurs in two other places in the play, on both occasions with an innuendo suggesting that the hair in question is pubic hair (see II i 20 and IV i 101 and notes thereto).
 18 *pretty*] here 'fine, proper' (*OED*, 3.b).
 19-20 *Better ... warling*] proverbial (Dent, M444-5); a 'warling' was 'an unloved or disliked person' (*OED*).
 21 *brisk*] 'smart, well-dressed, spruce' (*OED*, a.3), with possibly a sense of 'foppish' (cf. *OED*, n.a).
 22-3 *strong ... them*] 'strong' has suggestions of sexual vigour, but Adriana undercuts what seems to start off as a compliment by saying that whilst Sir Oliver has sufficient physical vigour to still be able to look after children he lacks the sexual vigour to actually beget them (and so Taffeta will be free to find someone else to perform that function for her).
 24 *in hand*] (a) 'in expectation, in suspense' (*OED*, *hand*, n. 29.e); (b) possibly 'at my disposal, under my authority' (*OED*, *hand*, n. 29.d), and probably (c) with suggestion of providing manual pleasures (see entry for *hand* in Williams).

34 *unfold*] ‘disclose’ (*OED*, v¹.3) but also, following on from the previous sentence, with the common suggestion of ‘unfolding’ or opening the legs and hence ‘laying open to view, displaying’ her sex; the innuendo is reinforced by the word’s placing at the end of the line.

BOUTCHER

It is, fair creature.

ADRIANA And why did you fall off
When you perceived my mistress was so coming?
D'you think she is still the same?

BOUTCHER I do.

ADRIANA Why so,

I took you for a novice, and I must think
40 You know not yet the inwards of a woman.
Do you not know that women are like fish,
Which must be struck when they are prone to bite
Or all your labour's lost? But, sir, walk here,
And I'll inform my mistress your desires.

D1

[Exit ADRIANA.]

37. coming?] cunning, Q1

- 36 *fall off*] 'draw off, become less interested' (*OED*, *fall*, v.92.e and f); 'fall' also had a range of sexual connotations from 'fall in love' to 'fall into bed with' and hence, by extension, 'have sex with;' one might, given the adverb 'off,' reject any such additional meaning here were it not for (a) Adriana's propensity for maximum bawdy innuendo, (b) the word 'coming' in the following line, and hence (c) the possibility of including the 'off' to mean, as it were, 'fall *out of* bed/sex with,' and possibly even 'lose an erection' (cf. *Ant.*, IV xv 65: 'the soldier's pole is fall'n'). See also next note.
- 37 *coming*] 'sexually forward, eager' (Williams); Colman does not allow that the common modern meaning 'having an orgasm' was available at this time, but Partridge.2 argues convincingly that it was, and Williams provides some evidence to support that (though he also warns, in his entry for *come*, against 'over-zealous ... pursuit of this meaning in early texts'); if, however, we allow that such a meaning could be in play here, this and Adriana's previous line could suggest, 'why did you get off her/lose your erection when you saw she was about to have an orgasm?' See also II i 96 and note.
- 40 *know ... inwards*] 'inwards' means (a) 'inner nature' (*OED*, *inward*, n.2.b); (b) 'the internal organs,' (*OED*, *inward*, n.1.b) specifically, of course, the sexual organs, in which case 'know not' takes on the meaning 'have not had sexual intercourse with,' (*OED*, *know*, v.7) the general suggestion of the line being that Boutcher is not merely a novice but a virgin.
- 41 *fish*] 'a girl or a woman viewed sexually; especially a prostitute' (Partridge.2).
- 42 *struck*] a fish was said to be 'struck' when the angler had caused the hook to lodge in the fish's mouth by jerking the line (*OED*, v.33.f); a woman could be said to be 'struck' when her affection had been caught (*OED*, v.66.e) or, more crudely, when a 'weapon' or 'tool' had been thrust into her (*OED*, v.36.b fig.). Partridge.2 gives 'copulate with' for 'strike' and, along with Colman, gives examples where the word has strong sadistic suggestion, but most words of this type have that semantic tendency – and what passes for normative sex in this play is sometimes sadistic.
- 42 *prone*] 'inclined to, likely to' (*OED*, a.6.a), this being the sense applicable to the fish in the simile, but in relation to the woman there may be a stronger sense – 'eager for' (*OED*, a.7) – as well as, of course, 'lying in a horizontal position' (in this case, on the back) (*OED*, a.2.a).
- 42 *bite*] 'to snap at the bait' (*OED*, v.6.a), in this case, both of the fish and the woman.
- 43 *all ... lost*] given as proverbial by Dent (L9 – 'to lose your labour') and possibly with a glance at the Shakespeare title, *Love's Labour's Lost*.
- 44 *your*] sc. 'of your.'
- 44 *desires*] as Partridge.2 notes, the word had a considerable semantic range, from 'wishes' (*OED*, n.4) to 'lust' (*OED*, n.2) and any or all of those meanings could be applicable here.

45 | 46 *love* | *have*] as with ‘desires’ these words had – as they do now – a semantic continuum from
the sexually innocent to the sexually explicit.

47 *business*] primarily the usual meaning, ‘affair or matter requiring attention’ (*OED*, 15); there may
well be a hint at ‘sexual intercourse’ (Partridge.2 and *OED*, 19.a) but the earliest example in *OED*
is from 1630.

48 *untowardly*] ‘clumsily’ (*OED*, adv.1).

49 *which*] ‘who’ – the rather impersonal usage was allowable (*OED*, pron.9).

49 *inward*] ‘intimate with’ (*OED*, a.3) and possibly ‘secret’ (*OED*, a.4), both of which strongly
connect with the innuendo here, ‘gain access to her inward (or sexual) parts’ – i.e., ‘be sexually
intimate with her.’ There may be a quibble picking up on the word ‘inwards’ used by Adriana in
40 above but, given Barry’s tendency to repeat words in a short space of time, the repetition is
more likely to be clumsiness on the author’s part.

50 *make ... maid*] ‘use the maid as a means of gaining access’ (*OED*, way, n¹.25.a) but the ‘way’ is
also the sexual passageway (cf. the use of ‘alley’ in the play’s title) so ‘must first seduce the
maid;’ the word ‘first’ is pleonastic in the first of these senses, but is essential to the meaning of
the second.

51 *know ... affections*] ‘know’ in the usual sense of the word, but given the general tenor of the
speech, probably also with a glance at ‘have sex with’ as in 40 above; ‘affections’ could be
‘amorous feelings for another’ (*OED*, 6.a) but could be stronger – ‘passion, lust for’ (*OED*, 3) –
which combined with the sexual sense of ‘know’ would suggest ‘experience her passion through
having sex with her.’

52 *feel*] ‘sound out’ (*OED*, v.4); the additional meaning one might expect here – ‘caress the genital
parts’ (*OED*, v.1.e) – is exemplified by *OED* only from 20th century; however, Williams has entries
which suggest that the word was used with such a meaning from at least mid-17th century;
Colman glosses it as ‘coitally,’ quoting *Rom.*, I i 27-9 (which Partridge.2 also references) where
that meaning is clear, and it could be the meaning here.

56 *Like ... other*] the ‘passage’ imagery of 50 above is continued with the words ‘porches,’ ‘doors’
and ‘entrance,’ the last being also the act of penetrating the passageway.

58 *to*] ‘added to, accompanying’ (*OED*, prep.15, 15.b).

58 *brawn*] any cooked meat, but it could also refer to human flesh, particularly the rounded muscular
parts such as the buttocks (*OED*, 2, 1, and 1.b).

- 60 To be dipping in the other. I tell you, master,
 'Tis not a few men's tales which they prefer
 Unto their mistress in compass of a year.
 Be ruled by me: untruss yourself to her,
 Out with all your love-sick thoughts to her,
 65 Kiss her, and give her an angel to buy pins,
 And this shall sooner win her mistress' love
 Than all your protestations, sighs and tears.

Enter TAFFETA [and] ADRIANA.

- Here they come. To her boldly, master.
 Do, but dally not – that's the widow's phrase.
 BOUTCHER
 70 Most worthy fair, such is the power of love
 That now I come t'accept your proffered grace,
 And with submissive thoughts t'entreat a pardon
 For my so gross neglect.
 TAFFETA There's no offence.
 My mind is changed.
 ADRIANA I told you as much before.

-
- 60 *dipping*] Williams gives for 'dip,' 'vaginal entry,' quoting this passage; for a similarly lubricious image which involves meat dipped in a sauce see I ii 24 and notes thereto.
 61 *tales*] 'stories' (*OED*, n.4) but with a pun on 'tails' – 'penises' (Partridge.2 and Colman).
 61 *prefer*] 'recommend, present to for acceptance' (*OED*, 4).
 62 *in compass of*] 'in the space of' or 'throughout the circuit of' (*OED*, n¹.7).
 63 *untruss*] (a) 'unburden' (*OED*, v.1); (b) 'undo your dress' (specifically, here, the hose or codpiece) (*OED*, v.3.c; Partridge.2; Colman); and also, perhaps, in a development of those two senses (c) 'expose' (*OED*, 5.a).
 65 *angel ... pins*] an 'angel' was a gold coin which had the archangel Michael slaying the dragon on the reverse side; it was worth around ten shillings (or 50 pence - a considerable sum then) and would have bought a good many pins – though we might note that Williams glosses 'pin money' as 'money received by a married woman for prostituting her person,' and Colman glosses 'pin' as 'erect penis.'
 68 *boldly*] 'confidently,' but the word could suggest impudence or shamelessness (*OED*, adv.3 and 2).
 69 *Do .. phrase*] to 'dally' was to 'flirt with or trifle with someone' (*OED*, v.2.b, 3) as well as to 'waste time, loiter or delay' (*OED*, v.4); Constantia's description of 'do, but dally not' as 'a phrase' suggests a proverb and though not a direct match, perhaps Tilley M18 lies behind the line: 'he that woos a maid must feign, lie, and flatter; but he that woos a widow must down with his breeches and at her' – advice that William Smallshanks will later put into effect to Boutcher's discomfiture. 'Widow' is used generally here and not with specific reference to Taffeta, though she does, of course, embody the principle Constantia has just articulated.
 70 *fair*] here a noun – 'fair one' (*OED*, *fair*, n².2).
 71 *proffered*] 'offered for acceptance' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).
 71 *grace*] favour, bestowed as a gift and not as of right (*OED*, 6.a); the word has connotations of formality, in line with the rest of Boutcher's speech which is couched in the inflated rhetoric of courtly romantic love. Corbin and Sedge quite rightly point out that this is in contrast to the down-to-earth advice on wooing being given by Constantia and the by-play with Adriana.
 73 *so*] acting as an intensive – 'such' (*OED*, adv.14.c).

- CONSTANTIA
 75 With a hey-pass, with a repass!
 BOUTCHER Dearest of women,
 The constant virtue of your nobler mind
 Speaks in your looks, nor can you entertain
 Both love and hate at one.
 TAFFETA 'Tis all in vain.
 ADRIANA
 You strive against the stream.
 CONSTANTIA Fee the waiting maid, master.
 BOUTCHER
 80 Stand thou propitious – endear me to thy love.

BOUTCHER gives ADRIANA his purse secretly.

D1v

ADRIANA
 Dear mistress, turn to this gentleman. I protest,
 I have some feeling of his constant love.

80. thy Q1] my Q2, Q3.

- 75 *With ... repass*] 'a conjuror's exclamation, professing to order something to go from one place to another' (*OED*, *pass*, v.6 and *hey*, int.3.c), the 'something' being, in this case, Taffeta's mind.
 76 constant] 'firm, unchanging' (*OED*, adj.1.a) rather than 'always there' (*OED*, adj.4.d).
 76 nobler] i.e., 'more noble than virtuous, 'noble' meaning 'having admirable qualities' (*OED*, adj.4.a and 7.a) rather than 'of high rank or birth' (*OED*, adj.2.a).
 77 *Speaks*] 'expresses itself' (*OED*, 30.a).
 77 *entertain*] this would most obviously seem to mean 'hold mutually in the mind,' but *OED* gives no example of this meaning after 1578 (*OED*, v.1); it may be, more simply, 'hold in mind' (*OED*, v.14.c).
 79 *strive ... stream*] proverbial – 'it is hard (folly, in vain) to strive against the stream' (Dent, S927).
 79 *Fee*] (a) 'bribe' (*OED*, v¹.3.b); (b) 'hire' (*OED*, v¹.3.a); however, the word was also commonly used of the payment made to a prostitute (Williams gives 'coital entitlement') and some such suggestion is surely in play here; cf. I ii 121 and note above, and IV i 82-6 and note below.
 80 *Stand thou propitious*] 'adopt a favourable position (sc. on my behalf)' (*OED*, *stand*, v.15).
 80 *endear ... love*] the meaning of this is not obvious, and seems tautological; it is tempting to accept Q2's emendation on the grounds that Boutcher's object is to get Taffeta to look favourably on him but that would be to misunderstand his strategy: following Constantia's advice, he is simultaneously trying to seduce the waiting maid, hence he says to Adriana something like, 'do this to encourage me to like you;' another possibility, since he is giving her money, is that he is playing loosely upon the sense of 'endear' (*OED*, 1 and 2) 'to enhance the price or value of something,' and hence suggests, 'enhance my value to you in the matter of love.' Part of the problem is that, although talking to the waiting maid, Boutcher seems still to be in courtly mode, and so is still using that somewhat inflated discourse.
 81 *turn*] 'direct your desires towards' (*OED*, v.26), but as the word has a strong sense of changing direction, there is also a suggestion that she change her mind.
 81 *protest*] 'declare, solemnly affirm' (*OED*, v.1); Adriana is taking Boutcher's lead in terms of the courtly romantic language as this and the other words in her speech have strong connotations of formal discourses such as those of the law and religion (see note on 'protest' at II ii 51); in her case, however, the lofty tone is somewhat undermined by her bawdy innuendo (see next note).
 82 *I ... love*.] 'feeling' could refer to 'emotional appreciation or sense' (*OED*, vbl.n.6 and 7.a) as well as physical sensation – 'knowledge of an object through having felt its effects' (*OED*, 3); 'constant' means as in 76 above, 'firm, unchanging,' but here it is the firmness that is most in play (i.e., the firmness of the erect penis), and it is what Adriana is 'feeling' in the latter sense of

that word; the position of her hand as she reaches for Moutcher's purse 'secretly' would make the innuendo perfectly clear. The awkward repetition of the word 'constant' within six lines could be made a virtue by the actor's actually drawing attention to it, stressing 'his' – I have some feeling of *his* constant love' – and thus also emphasising the innuendo.

84 *front*] 'effrontery, impudence' (*OED*, n.4).

85 *enjoy*] here the main sense is 'take pleasure in' (*OED*, v.3.a), but the meaning 'have sexual intercourse with' (*OED*, v.4.b) is also clearly present; cf. II ii 73 and note.

86 *Well ... maid.*] most likely, given that Adriana's intervention has clearly failed, this means 'farewell' – i.e., that's as much as the waiting maid can do, so goodbye to her' – the reversal of the normal 'fare well' being possible at this period (see *OED*, *fare*, v¹.9, 1582 quotation); however, it could mean something like, 'good luck to the waiting maid if she can keep going,' but that would suggest that Constantia has not yet given up hope of Adriana's being able to influence Taffeta, and as (a) that would not be in her interests and (b) the line is probably an aside rather than addressed to Boutcher (Boutcher does not respond, replying directly to Taffeta's speech) that seems an unlikely meaning in this context; Jones seems to assume the line is to Boutcher as he suggests, 'perhaps the true meaning is: fee;' however, any such emendation (beyond correcting the obvious foul case long /s/) is unnecessary.

87 *My ... me*] i.e., the prophecy that he refers to in I ii 149-51.

87 *fond*] 'silly, foolishly credulous' (*OED*, a.2).

89 *prize*] 'value, esteem' (*OED*, v¹.1).

92 *pretty*] here the main meaning is 'clever, witty' (*OED*, 2.a) though 'good looking' is probably also part of the meaning.

93 *Shalt*] ellipsis of 'thou.'

93 *posset ... eryngoes*] a 'posset' was a drink made with curdled milk, alcohol of some sort and spices; 'eryngoes' were candied roots of the sea-holly ('candied eryngoes,' though tautological, was a common way of referring to this sweet); both were thought to be aphrodisiac.

94 *a life*] 'dearly' ('as life?') (*OED*, adv.¹).

- 95 To play with such baboons as thou.
 CONSTANTIA Indeed!
 Dost think the widow will have my master?
 ADRIANA
 I'll tell thee then – wo't come?
 CONSTANTIA I will.
 ADRIANA Remember.

[BOUTCHER and TAFFETA return.]

- TAFFETA
 Will you perform so much?
 BOUTCHER Or lose my blood.
 TAFFETA
 Make him subscribe it and then I vow,
 100 By sacred Vesta's ever hallowed fire,
 To take thee to my bed.
 BOUTCHER Till when, farewell.
 TAFFETA
 He's worthy love whose virtues most excel.
 ADRIANA *[Aside to CONSTANTIA.]*
 Remember.

Exe[unt BOUTCHER and CONSTANTIA].

- What, is't a match betwixt you, mistress?
- TAFFETA
 I have set the fool in hope. Has undertook
 105 To rid me of that fleshly Captain Face
 Which swears in taverns and all ordinaries

103s.d.] Q1 *after 101.*

- 95 *baboons*] i.e., 'little monkeys,' but with the usual association of anything simian with sex – cf. Constantia's story about the citizen's wife and the baboons, I ii 42-72 above, and note to 43-4 of that scene.
- 95 *Indeed!*] the exclamation can simply express surprise at Adriana's forwardness, but Constantia speaks, of course, knowing that she is female; we are (allowing for the shift in gender) back in the same arena of humour as we were with 'firting the posteriors' (see I iii 111, and note) and perhaps more explicitly than we were in I ii 107ff..
- 97 *wo't*] 'wilt thou.'
- 99 *subscribe*] 'yield to, submit to my will,' and possibly 'confess his error' (*OED*, 8, 8.b and 8.c) rather than 'put a signature to' (*OED*, 6); the 'it,' as we learn when Boutcher has gone, is Face's agreement to stop harassing Taffeta, or to acknowledge that he is doing so.
- 100 *Vesta*] the goddess of the household fire; she was herself a virgin and her temple in Rome was kept by six 'vestal virgins;' one might think her, therefore, not the most appropriate patroness for Taffeta to invoke, but given that Taffeta reneges on this promise (see Boutcher's fulminations at V iii 65-72 and 103-7) that might be deliberate.
- 102 *worthy love*] ellipsis – 'worthy of love.'
- 104 *set*] 'put, caused him to be in the state of' (the word seems to be used in a slightly unusual way; *OED*, general senses IV or IX seem to fit best).
- 105 *fleshly*] 'lascivious' – or, more prosaically, 'sexually obsessed' (*OED*, a.1.a).
- 106 *ordinaries*] public houses which provided food, drink and sometimes gambling (*OED*, n.14.b).

I am his lawful wife. He shall allay
 The fury of the Captain, and I, secure,
 Will laugh at the disgrace they both endure.

Ex[eunt TAFFETA and ADRIANA].

107 *allay*] ‘quell, assuage’ (*OED*, v¹.11).

108 *secure*] ‘free from anxiety, safe’ (*OED*, adj.1.a and 3.a).

[Act II, Scene iv.]

Enter THROAT and FRANCES.

THROAT

Open your case and I shall soon resolve you.

FRANCES

But will you do it truly?

THROAT

As I am honest.

FRANCES

This gentleman whom I so much affect

I scarcely yet do know, so blind is love

5 In things which most concerns it. As you're honest,
Tell me his birth, his state, and farthest hopes.

THROAT

He is my friend and I will speak him truly.

He is, by birth, son to a foolish knight;

D2

His present state, I think, will be the prison,

10 And farthest hope to be bailed out again
By sale of all your land.

FRANCES

Oh me accursed!

Has 'a no credit, lands and manors?

THROAT

That land he has lies in a fair churchyard,

And for his manners, they are so rude and vile

Location] Throat's chambers in Ram Alley.

1 *Open*] (a) a legal term meaning specifically, 'speak first in a case, a privilege belonging to the affirmative side' (*OED*, v.14), but more generally meaning 'state, expound;' (b) 'make (yourself) sexually available' (see next note).

1 *case*] (a) legal case; (b) 'vagina;' cf. *The Family of Love*, 1661-3: 'If ye be honest gentlemen, counsel me in my revenge, teach me what to do, make my case your own.' Juliet's Nurse (*Rom.*, III iii 84-5) develops the bawdy innuendo inherent in the word with vigour, addressing Romeo as he lies weeping on the ground: 'O, he is even in my mistress' case, | Just in her case ... | ... Stand up, stand up, stand, and you be a man.'

1 *resolve you*] 'free you from any doubt or perplexity' (*OED*, v.15.a); but it could also mean 'examine' (*OED*, v.2.b), 'to soften a swelling' (*OED*, v.3.a), 'render lax in feeling' (*OED*, v.4.b), or 'untie, loosen' (*OED*, v.10), any or all of which could underlie a development of the innuendo set up at the beginning of the line.

3 *affect*] 'have an affection for' (*OED*, v¹.2.a).

5 *concerns*] formation of the third person plural with an /s/ was allowable in 17th century English (see Abbott, 333); cf. also 100 of this scene and V i 1 and 21.

6 *state*] 'current condition, position in life,' perhaps 'property, private means' (*OED*, n.1.b, 15.a and 36); Throat takes up the first of these senses in his reply (9 below).

6 *farthest hopes*] 'the greatest extent of his future expectations' (*OED*, a.3.b).

7 *speak him*] 'describe him' (*OED*, v.30.c).

9 *present*] not in the sense of 'current,' but 'immediate' (*OED*, a.9.a), and hence the future tense that follows.

12 *credit*] 'good name, reputation,' and particularly 'reputation for solvency' (*OED*, n.5.b and 9.b); probably not, in this context, 'money lent or placed at a person's disposal and on which that person can draw' (*OED*, n.10.a), as Frances is interested in – or pretending to be interested in – William's actual financial worth.

13 *That ... churchyard*] i.e., 'the only land he owns is the patch he will be buried in.'

14 *manners*] punning on 'manors,' two lines earlier.

- 15 That scarce an honest man will keep him company.
 FRANCES
 I am abused, cozened, and deceived.
 THROAT
 Why, that's his occupation. He will cheat
 In a cloak lined with velvet. 'A will prate
 Faster than five barbers and a tailor,
 20 Lie faster than ten city occupiers
 Or cunning tradesmen, goes a-trust
 In every tavern where has spent a faggot,
 Swears love to every whore, squires bawds,
 And takes up houses for them as their husband.
 25 'A is a man I love, and have done much
 To bring him to preferment.
 FRANCES Is there no trust,
 No honesty in men?
 THROAT Faith, some there is,
 And 'tis all in the hands of us lawyers
 And women, and those women which have it
 30 Keep their honesty so close that not one

-
- 16 *abused*] 'imposed upon, deceived' (*OED*, ppl.a.3).
 16 *cozened*] 'cheated' (*OED*, v.1).
 18 *cloak ... velvet*] i.e., an expensive item of clothing which would be worn to fool a dupe into thinking the wearer is rich; velvet had, according to Williams, an extensive range of connections with sex and sexual behaviour, especially sexually transmitted diseases, and given the next two lines one might wonder if some such allusion is intended here, but if so it is obscure.
 18 *prate*] 'talk to little purpose' with some implication also of doing so boastfully (*OED*, v.1).
 19 *five ... tailor*] both professions were noted for their garrulity; there is a possible pun on 'tail' – 'pudend/penis' (Colman) – and hence, 'one who exercises those parts.' (See also note to 49-50 of this scene.)
 20 *city occupiers*] a citizen who 'employs money or goods in trading' (*OED*, n.2.b), but also one who 'occupies' in the sense of 'copulates' (Partridge.2, and Colman).
 21 *cunning*] 'crafty, sly' (*OED*, a.5.a); a search of Williams reveals a high correlation of this word with illicit sexual activity which may derive from its closeness to 'cony' ('rabbit' but also slang for 'a prostitute' or, by reductive synecdoche, 'the vagina'); 'cony / cunny' were possibly homophonic as the word, used in the sense 'rabbit' in *3H6*, I iv 62, is spelled 'cunnie' in Q1 of that play and 'connie' in the F); all this suggests an innuendo analogous to those on 'velvet' and 'tailor' in the preceding lines.
 21 *a-trust*] 'takes up credit without any security' (*OED*, n.1.b), but possibly with a pun on 'untrussed', 'with the hose or codpiece undone' (*OED*, v.3.c; Partridge.2; Colman).
 22 *spent a faggot*] 'spent' is (a) 'wastefully used up' (*OED*, spend, v¹.10.a) or perhaps more simply, 'paid for' (*OED*, spend, v¹.1.b) or (b) 'worn out, exhausted' (*OED*, pa.ppl.3.a) and particularly through sexual activity; a 'faggot' was (a) 'a bundle of sticks used as fuel' (*OED*, n.1) or, (b) 'a contemptuous term for a woman' (*OED*, n.6.a); we have thus two possible meanings: (a) 'wasted a bundle of sticks on the fire,' or (b) 'exhausted a woman (sc. through sex).'
 23 *squires*] 'acts as an escort for' (*OED*, v.1).
 24 *takes up ... husband*] 'takes possession of, occupies' (*OED*, v.93.d) as a cover for them.'
 30 *honesty*] Frances initially means 'honest or honourable behaviour' (*OED*, 3.d); Throat takes it up as meaning also a woman's reputation for chastity or honour (*OED*, 3.b) and with a metonymic glance at what was, for women, the location of honour, the genitals (*OED*, *honour*, 3.b, and Colman).
 30 *close*] 'closed up' (*OED*, adj.1.a) – the opposite of 'open' at 1 above – and 'secret, private, secluded' (*OED*, 4.a and b); possibly with some sense of 'intimate, confidential' (*OED*, 17);

- Amongst a hundred is perceived to have it.
 FRANCES
 Good sir, may I not by law forsake him
 And wed another, though my word be passed
 To be his wife?
 THROAT Oh, questionless you may.
 35 You have many precedents and book cases for't.
 Nay, though you were married by a book case
 Of *millesimo sexcentesimo etc.*,
 You may forsake your husband and wed another
 Provided that some fault be in the husband,
 40 As none of them are clear.
 FRANCES I am resolved.
 I will not wed him, though I beg my bread.
 THROAT.
 All that I have is yours, and were I worthy
 To be your husband ...
 FRANCES I thank you, sir.
 I will rather wed a most perfidious Red-shank,
 45 A noted Jew, or some mechanic slave
 Than let him joy my sheets.
 THROAT 'A comes, 'a comes. D2v

*Enter W[ILLIAM] SMAL[LHANKS,] BOUTCHER,
 T[HOMAS] SMAL[LSHANKS and] BEARD.*

WILLIAM
 Now my virago, 'tis done. All's cock-sure.

43. husband ...] husband. Q1.

Throat's dig at women can thus operate on two levels: (a) to be genuinely honest is self-defeating as keeping their honesty a secret means that nobody can see they are honest; (b) the resultant perception is actually the reality as they are not honest at all and are all indulging in sex in secret.
 33 *my word be passed*] 'I have promised' (*OED*, *word*, 8).
 35 *precedents*] law cases used to support subsequent judgements; (for 'book cases' see I i 133, note).
 36 *millesimo sexcentesimo etc.*] '(the year) sixteen hundred and something' (Latin); Throat is merely throwing a bit of Latin about to impress Frances and ends up nonsensically suggesting that any book case of this undefined year would justify her in 'forsaking her husband.'
 40 *as*] 'as is the case that, it being the case that' (*OED*, *adv.B.IV.18.a*).
 40 *are*] the insistence that 'none' is singular would appear to be a modern grammatical pedanticism.
 40 *clear*] 'free from guilt' (*OED*, 15.a).
 44 *Red-shank*] i.e., an inhabitant of Ireland or the Scottish Highlands, thought of then as wild and barbarous people (*OED*, 1); Frances is, of course, punning on William's surname, Smallshanks.
 45 *Jew*] used here offensively with reference to the common idea that Jews were 'grasping or extortionate' people (*OED*, 2.a); Marlowe's Barabas and Shakespeare's Shylock are the best known representations of Jews at this period and both demonstrate to the full the prejudicial attitudes of their time.
 45 *mechanic slave*] 'a low class and servile person tied to some form of poorly paid manual labour' ('slave,' a combination of *OED* 1.b, 2.a, and 3; 'mechanic,' *OED*, 2 and 3).
 46 *joy ... sheets*] 'experience joy in my bed (i.e., between my sheets)' (*OED*, *joy*, 1).
 47 *virago*] affectionate, as in 'bold, heroic,' (*OED*, 2) or abusive, as in 'impudent, brazen' (*OED*, 3).
 47 *cock-sure*] 'absolutely secure' (*OED*, *adj.1* and 2b) but with an obvious bawdy innuendo (though

- I have a priest will mumble up a marriage
 Without bell, book or candle – a nimble slave,
 50 An honest Welshman that was a tailor,
 But now is made a curate.
 BEARD Nay, you're fitted.
 BOUTCHER
 Now, Master Throat.
 THOMAS Where's your spirit, sister?

-
- OED* gives 'cock = penis' (n¹.20) as from 1618 at the earliest).
- 48 *mumble up*] there is, here, certainly the sense, 'to mutter indistinctly' (*OED*, v.1 and 2) and hence, 'the priest will mumble his way through the marriage service and that will do the job;' but there is also a strong suggestion of, as it were, *making* a marriage – that is of sense 5.b, 'to tumble together;' see the example given for this meaning: 'merciers never tie up anything they sell, and if they allow paper, they only rudely mumble up the commodities in it;' if one accepts that as part of the meaning one might therefore understand: 'the priest will mumble his way through the marriage service and by doing so tumble a marriage together;' however, the illustrative quotation in *OED* for meaning 5.b (and there is only that one) is from 1673.
- 49 *Without ... candle*] i.e., without the usual accessories of a religious ceremony, particularly the ritual of excommunication; they are perhaps seen as 'popish' and comically superstitious (as they are in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, scene ix, where Faustus steals the Pope's food, boxes him on the ear and then is cursed 'with bell, book and candle' by a group of friars for his temerity) making this another indication that the priest William has found is a none too scrupulous puritan.
- 49-50 *nimble ... tailor*] this is the second occurrence in the text of the word 'nimble' which appears six times altogether (II iii 16 – 'nimble Sir Oliver Smallshanks;' III i 15 – 'a nimble-spirited knave;' IV i 76 – 'a nimble vicar;' IV ii 39 – 'nimble Dash;' Epilogue 6 – 'nimble brains') and in at least two, if not three, there is some sexual innuendo. Whether such an innuendo is intended here is hard to say; there may be an implication that the priest knows the game, so to speak, from personal experience since he is said to have once been a tailor – an occupation with a reputation for lasciviousness (as well as garrulity – see 19 of this scene and note) on the grounds that, as Colman says (and a search of the word in Williams confirms), it was thought that 'they enjoyed exceptional opportunities for sexual intercourse with the ladies they measured;' Colman also notes, though, that they had, somewhat contradictorily, a reputation for lack of masculinity and timorousness. In this case it may simply be that, given his abrupt and radical career shift, the Welsh priest's nimbleness is a purely intellectual quality.
- 50 *honest Welshman*] there may be an offensive ironic jibe here based on the received idea that all Welshmen were thieves, making this one a noteworthy exception; cf. Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, D1v: 'many of your Country men [i.e., Welshmen] haue prooued good theeues.'
- 51 *is ... curate*] at this time 'curate' would mean a parish priest or parson, not an under-priest; the line is perhaps a hit at the perceived puritan tendency to elevate to the priesthood anyone who 'feels the call of God' regardless of education or training.
- 51 *fitted*] (a) 'supplied with what is necessary' (*OED*, v¹.11.a); (b) 'ready for sex,' concerning which Colman references *Cym.*, IV i 3-6: 'Why should his mistress, who was made by him that made the tailor, not be fit too? the rather (saving reverence of the word) for 'tis said a woman's fitness comes by fits,' which suggests that the latter sense may have some connection with the idea of fitting clothes – i.e., 'you are fitted up with something of the right size.' The line is presumably directed at Frances rather than William (who obviously knows that the arrangement has been made) and her lack of reaction would make sense of Boutcher's otherwise utterly irrelevant remark to Throat (which would mean something like, 'now then, what's been going on here?'). Boutcher continues to question Throat with his next line, 54, perhaps to distract Throat and enable William to draw Frances aside.
- 52 *spirit*] the obvious sense here – 'vivacity, cheerfulness' (*OED*, n.14.a and 17.c) – is not exemplified in *OED* before 1700, though it seems a simple extension of senses 7.a/8.b, 'the frame of mind with which something is done,' and 13.a, 'vigour of mind.'

- WILLIAM
 What, all amort? What's the matter? Do you hear?
 BOUTCHER
 What's the reason of this melancholy?
 THROAT
 55 By heaven, I know not.
 WILLIAM [*Aside to FRANCES.*] Has the gudgeon bit?
 FRANCES
 He has been nibbling.
 WILLIAM Hold him to it, wench.
 And it will hit, by heaven! [*Aloud.*] Why art so sad?
 'Foot, wench! We will be married tonight.
 We'll sup at the Mitre, and from thence
 60 My brother and we three will to the Savoy,
 Which done, I tell thee, girl, we'll hand o'er head
 Go to't pell-mell for a maidenhead.

57. it will] it 'twill Q1. 59. the Mitre] th'Mytre Q1.

- 53 *amort*] lit. 'without spirit (i.e., dead),' but used figuratively – 'dejected, lifeless' (*OED*, pred.a.a); cf. Middleton's adjuration to leathersellers in *The Owl's Almanac*, 1966-7: 'You that clothe your shops with cattle's coats, be not all a mort as dumb as your hides.'
- 56 *gudgeon*] 'a credulous, gullible person' (*OED*, n¹.2.a), the analogy being based on the reputation for the fish of that name being easy to catch due to its greed.
- 56 *nibbling*] Williams gives 'copulating' but his citations suggest the word could also refer to fore-play, if not simply heavy flirtation; it was used of both sexes.
- 56 *hold ... it*] 'keep him in that state' (*OED*, v.7.b), i.e., sexually excited, but also, following on from 'nibbling' and looking forward to 'it will hit' (next line) with a suggestion of 'draw him to you sexually,' or, more graphically, 'hold his sex against yours.'
- 57 *it ... hit*] 'it (i.e., the plan) will succeed' (*OED*, v.13) but also, 'achieve coitus with' (Colman).
- 59 *the Mitre*] the Mitre in Fleet Street had an exit into Ram Alley and so, given that this scene takes place in Throat's chambers, that inn would have been a convenient location for the wedding supper; later in this scene (105-6) Throat makes it his rendezvous with Dash. (See Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play.)
- 60 *the Savoy*] the Savoy lay between the Strand (which ran from the western end of Fleet Street towards Westminster) and the Thames; at this time it was a hospital for the poor and needy with a chapel available to the local population which 'was constantly used for the celebration of irregular marriages of the Fleet Street type [i.e., irregular and clandestine marriages performed often by unlicensed clergymen]' (Sugden, entry for *Savoy Palace*); it was also one of the Liberties of London in which people could not be arrested for debt, which might explain William's – not to mention Barry's – familiarity with the place and hence why it springs to his mind for the marriage service; cf. Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 2.1.41-3: 'oftentimes 'tas been so cunningly carried | That I have had two [prostitutes] stol'n away at once | And married at Savoy.'
- 61 *hand o'er head*] 'without further thought' (*OED*, advb.phr.1).
- 62 *go to't*] 'get down to the business of having sex,' the phrase 'to't' was common – cf. *Ham.*, 'Young men will do't, if they come to't | By Cock, they are to blame' (IV v 60-1) and *Lr.*, 'Behold yond simp'ring dame ... | The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't | With a more riotous appetite' (IV vi 118-23); see also the quotation from *Lr.* in next note, and cf. I i 61 of this play, where the phrase is used less directly.
- 62 *pell-mell*] 'headlong, promiscuously, in disorder' (*OED*, adv.3); though 'promiscuously' appears not to have developed the sense of 'sexually free,' the phrase 'pell-mell' seems to have had some such associations in this period – cf. *Lr.*, 'Let copulation thrive ... | To't, luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers' (IV vi 114-17).

65 Come, you're lusty! You wenches are like bells:
You give no music till you feel the clapper.
Come, Throat, a torch. We must be gone.

Ex[eunt WILLIAM, BOUTCHER and THOMAS].

FRANCES
BEARD
Mistress?
FRANCES We are undone.
BEARD Now Jove forfend!
FRANCES
This fellow has no land, and, which is worse,
He has no credit.
BEARD How? Are we outstripped,
Blown up by wit of man? Let us be gone
70 Home again, home again – our market now is done.

-
- 63 *lusty*] the word had a wide range of associations which included, as well as the obvious 'sexually desirous' (*OED*, a.4), 'cheerful, lively' (*OED*, a.1), 'pleasing in appearance' (*OED*, a.2), and 'healthy' (*OED*, a.5).
- 63-4 *You wenches ... clapper*] Williams notes in his entry for *bell* that bell-ringing was a frequent metaphor for copulation in which the bell represented, by analogy with its shape, the vagina, and the clapper the penis; the 'clapper' is the 'tongue' of the bell which hangs inside it and strikes the metal to make it sound – i.e., 'give music' – which is to say, give audible evidence of enjoying sex; there was an extended network of bawdy innuendo around the idea of music-making.
- 66 *forfend*] 'forbid' or 'prevent' sc. 'it' (*OED*, v.1 and 2); Beard's response may be an affected alarm playing to the frequent meaning of 'undone' – 'sexually compromised and hence ruined.'
- 68 *outstripped*] lit. 'been left behind,' hence, 'defeated' (*OED*, v¹).
- 69 *blown up*] 'betrayed' (*OED*, *blow*, v¹.27.a); but the term could suggest pregnancy, connected as it was with military mining ('I will delve one yard below their mines, | And blow them the moon,' *Ham.*, III iv 208-9) which all too often figuratively stood for male sexual conquest (the 'mining' being the act of penetration) and if Beard is interpreting 'undone' as suggested above (note to 66) that meaning may come into play here. There was also another sense of 'blown up' derived from a practice of dishonest butchers which involved artificially swelling meat (flesh) using instruments called 'pricks' – a practice which was the subject of considerable amusement it would appear; this meaning may fit better with the sense of 'wit' (see next note). On the other hand, this utterance, along with the rest of Beard's speeches in this scene, may perhaps be more safely interpreted as mere bombast.
- 69 *wit*] 'wit of man' meaning 'human understanding' (*OED*, *wit*, 2.a) was a common phrase (cf. 'I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was,' *MND.*, IV i 205-6) but it may be that here the word 'wit' more specifically means 'an ingenious plan' (*OED*, 6.c).
- 70 *Home ... done*] 'Home Again, Market is Done' was the title of a piece of music for lute which is found in Margaret Board's manuscript *Lute Book*, and as that book was compiled *circa* 1620 it is more than likely that the piece was in circulation some time before it was gathered into this collection. Opie, I. and Opie, P. (*The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes*, p.299) note that the lute music may have been written for a rhyme which begins, 'To market, to market, to buy a penny bun. Home again, home again, market is done,' which first appears in *Songs for the Nursery* (1805), but which, they note, may be referred to much earlier in John Florio's *A Worlde of Wordes* in 1611: 'Also as we used to say Home againe home againe, market is done.' There was also a proverb, 'when the corn is sold, the market is done' (Dent, M675.12). A search of Williams suggests that the word 'market' had a strong indexical correlation with the trade in sex, so the phrase may be an indication that Beard is failing to maintain the deceit by slipping back into a reference to 'Constantia Somerfield's' real identity.

FRANCES
That were too great a scandal.
THROAT Most true.
Better to wed another than to return
With scandal and defame. Wed me a man
Whose wealth may reconcile your mother's love
75 And make the action lawful.
BEARD But where's the man?
I like your counsel, could you show the man.
THROAT
Myself am he, might I but dare aspire
Unto so high a fortune.
BEARD Mistress, take the man.
80 Shall we be baffled with fair promises,
Or shall we trudge, like beggars, back again?
No, take this wise and virtuous man
Who, should 'a lose his legs, his arms, his ears,
His nose and all his other members, D3
Yet if his tongue be left 'twill get his living.
85 Take me this man.
THROAT Thanks, gentle Master Beard.
FRANCES
'Tis impossible. This night he means to wed me.
THROAT
If not by law, we will with power prevent it,
So you but give consent.
FRANCES Let's hear the means.
THROAT
90 I'll muster up my friends, and thus I cast it:
Whilst they are busy, you and I will hence
Directly to a chapel, where a priest

73 *defame*] ‘disgrace, dishonour’ (*OED*, n.1).
74 *reconcile*] see note to II i 21 above.
75 *lawful*] this could mean either ‘according to or permitted by law’ (*OED*, 1.a) or ‘justifiable’ in a more general sense (*OED*, 1.b); since ‘Constantia’s’ ‘action’ (whether that refers to her getting married or running away) is not ‘unlawful,’ Throat could be using the word in the latter sense and hence strictly correctly, but also intending her to take it in the former sense in order, as it were, to ‘put the frighteners on her.’
79 *baffled*] ‘gulled, hoodwinked’ (*OED*, v.4), rather than ‘frustrated in our plans’ (*OED*, v.8.a); Beard is presenting three options: (1) carry on, marry William and be gulled; (2) leave now and go back home with nothing; (3) marry Throat.
83 *members*] the word could refer to any limb or organ of the body, but we are clearly meant to call to mind first and foremost the ‘privy member.’
89 *muster up*] ‘assemble, gather together,’ (*OED*, v¹.8); the word had strong military connotations and so foreshadows Throat’s declaration of martial intent at 96-8 below.
89 *cast*] ‘devise, plan, contrive’ (*OED*, n.45); Throat’s plan is, however, singularly lacking in detail and hardly inventive; whether he is simply playing for time or this is the full extent of his plan, this is a further indication of his fundamental stupidity.
90 *busy*] i.e., fighting one another.

- Shall knit the nuptial knot ere they pursue us.
 BEARD
 O rare invention! I'll act my part.
 'A owes me thirteen pound – I say no more,
 95 But there be catchpoles. Speak, is't a match?
 FRANCES
 I give my liking.
 THROAT Dash!
- [Enter DASH.]
- DASH Sir.
 THROAT Get your sword,
 And me my buckler. Nay, you shall know
 We are *tam Marti quam Mercurio*.
 Bring me my cloak. You shall thither – I'll for friends.
 100 Worship and wealth the lawyer's state attends.

-
- 92 *knit*] the word had possibly a stronger sense in this period than it does now – 'to bind together, unite intimately' (*OED*, v.7.a).
 93 *rare*] 'uncommonly excellent' (*OED*, *rare*, a.6).
 93 *invention*] this could refer either to Throat's capacity for invention (*OED*, *invention*, n.4) or to the plot he has invented (*OED*, n.6); in either case it is rather wide of the mark.
 94 *thirteen pound*] this debt is acknowledged by William at III v 88 after he has been arrested at Beard's behest; we have to assume that it was part of the plan made by William and Beard earlier, the 'debt' presumably being Beard's payment for helping William. Thirteen pounds was a considerable sum of money at this time: using the figures given in the note at I i 102, it represents about half the annual earnings of a craftsman; in terms of purchasing power, and working on the bill found in Falstaff's pocket in *2H4*, II iv, it would have bought Beard, ten or so years earlier, approximately 400 litres of sack, or 120 capons; even allowing for inflation over those ten years, we can assume that he could have lived comfortably for some time on this amount.
 95 *catchpoles*] officers whose job it was to arrest people for debt.
 96 *liking*] 'approval, favourable regard' (*OED*, vbl.n¹.4, and 4.b), but also, 'sexual liking' (*OED*, vbl.n¹.2.b).
 97 *buckler*] a small round shield; Throat speaks as though the sword and the buckler were two different weapons, not a combination of weapon and shield used by the one man, so he may be betraying his ignorance of weaponry; moreover, sword and buckler was, by the beginning of the 17th century, somewhat old fashioned, having been replaced by the lighter rapier and dagger combination.
 98 *tam ... Mercurio*] '[sc. dedicated] as much to Mars as to Mercury' (Latin); this was the motto of the Elizabethan poet George Gascoigne who considered himself to be the archetype of the soldier-poet, just as Throat seems to consider himself here the archetype of the soldier-lawyer. As the god of eloquence, Mercury is as appropriate a patron for a lawyer as for a poet, but he was also, of course, the patron god of thieves and liars, this contradiction, as Margaret Healy points out in *Shakespeare, Alchemy, and the Creative Imagination*, p.147, being 'well known in the Renaissance, [and of] long heritage.' Cf. the evocation of this god by Tangle, the inveterate legal client in Middleton's *The Phoenix*, 1.1.43-4: 'now, upon my knees I praise Mercury, the god of law;' Middleton also calls him, in *The Owl's Almanac*, 1184, 'the god of cozenage.' Jonson quotes this tag in *Poetaster* (1602), IV vii 13-5: 'thou shalt libell, and I'll cudgell the rascall. Boy, prouide me a truncheon. Reuenge shall gratulate him, *tam Marti quam Mercvrio*.'
 99 *You ... thither*] this is presumably addressed, as the other instructions are, to Dash, but where he is supposed to go Throat has not yet said, the lawyer being, it would appear from the disjointed nature of this speech, in a state of frenzied sexual anticipation.
 100 *Worship ... attends*] the phrase has no obvious connection with anything else Throat has said or, particularly, to his immediate ambition of obtaining Constantia Somerfield in marriage since any

Dash, we must bear some brain. To Saint John's Street
 Go, run, fly, and afar off enquire
 If that the Lady Somerfield be there;
 If there, know what news and meet me straight
 105 At the Mitre door in Fleet Street. Away!
 "To get rich wives, men must not use delay."

[*Exeunt.*]

-
- 'worship and wealth' that might then 'attend' – i.e., 'wait upon,' (*OED*, v.7) or 'accompany' (*OED*, v.8) – him would be consequent upon his raised social status, not his profession; perhaps, though, the point is precisely that he lacks the breadth of mind to see beyond his present, rather shabby and inferior state – he will forever see himself as the cozening cod-lawyer he describes at I iii 10-9. For the plural subject/singular verb construction cf. 5 of this scene, and V i 1 and 21.
 101 *bear some brain*] 'take care, act cautiously' (*OED*, *brain*, n.4.b).
 101 *Saint John's Street*] this street, where Lady Somerfield's house is situated, ran, according to contemporary maps, from the north-west corner of Smithfield to Islington (then a village separated from London by open countryside); it was, notes Sugden, 'the main road from the City for travellers to the north,' and was a substantial walk from Ram Alley. On modern maps it runs more from the north or north-east of Smithfield.
 104 *straight*] 'immediately, without any delay' (*OED*, C.adv.2.a).
 105 *the Mitre door*] see note to 59 above.
 106 "*To ... delay.*" Cf. Dent, D196: 'Delay in love is dangerous.'

Act III, Scene i.

Enter SIR OLIVER SMALLSHANKS [*and*] JUSTICE
TUTCHIM.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

A-hunting, Sir Oliver, and dry-foot, too?

SIR OLIVER

We old men have our crotchets, our conundrums,

Our fegaries, quirks and quibbles

As well as youth. Justice Tutchim, I go

5 To hunt no buck, but prick a lusty doe.

I go, in truth, a-wooning.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Then ride with me.

Act III ...i] Actus 3. Scæna I. Q1. 3. fegaries] fegares Q1. 3. quibbles] quibbles Q1.

Location] an unidentified street; Sir Oliver has recently left his meeting with William and is on his way to Taffeta's house, probably in Fleet Street (see Introduction, The Play, The topography of the play) and Tutchim is on his way to St John's Street on the northern edge of the conurbation to see his sister, Lady Somerfield (see 6-7); if Sir Oliver had met William at St Andrew's church he could have walked down Shoe Lane and thus met Tutchim near the Fleet Street end.

1 *dry-foot*] to hunt 'dry-foot' was to use dogs to track a quarry by the scent of its feet (*OED*, adv.2); the precise point of Tutchim's rather feeble opening gambit is obscure; whatever the meaning it is presumably linked to the way Sir Oliver is dressed which, if he were going hunting, might include substantial boots to allow him to go 'dry-foot' in the more obvious sense through wet or marshy ground as well as follow the hounds on foot rather than on horseback; Tutchim's remark could thus mean something like, 'you look as though you're going hunting, but on foot instead of on horseback.' Alternatively, a use of the term in Markham's *The Dumble Knight*, F3v-4r, suggests an assimilation to sexual pursuit: Lollia's husband returns home unexpectedly for some papers and goes into the room where her lover is hidden, prompting her to say with some alarm, 'Nay if he smell nothing but papers, I care not for his dry foote hunting,' so Tutchim, guessing Sir Oliver's purpose from his clothes, and playing on the same sense of 'hunting' as Sir Oliver does in 5, might be saying, 'I see by your flamboyant attire that you are out to impress a woman.'

2-3 *crotchets ... fegaries*] a string of words all meaning much the same thing: 'whimsical fancies' (*OED*, *crochet*, n¹.9.a); 'whims' (*OED*, *conundrum*, 2); 'whims, vagaries, eccentricities' (*OED*, *fegary*, 1). For 'crotchets' cf. Middleton, *The Bloody Banquet*, 1.4.202-3: 'I have crotchets in my brain that you shall see him and enjoy him;' for the linking of 'crotchets and conundrums' cf. *Volpone* (V xi 16-7): 'I must ha' my crotchets! | And my *conundrums*!'

3 *quirks and quibbles*] 'quirk' could mean 'fads, peculiarities of behaviour' (*OED*, n¹.4.a) and hence continues the string of synonyms; however, it could also mean 'quibble' in the sense of 'over-precise argument' (*OED*, n¹.1.a) or 'a witty quip' (*OED*, n¹.2) which covers the range of meaning for 'quibble' itself, so there seems to be an odd shift of meaning at 'quirks.' It would appear that Sir Oliver gets distracted by his own verbosity at that point – or the author does.

5 *To hunt ... doe*] Sir Oliver develops another hunting/sexual pursuit metaphor, as he does in II I 60-6 above, and although he seems here to be basing the metaphor on deer hunting, it could be that, as before, the vehicle is hare coursing given that (a) 'buck' and 'doe' could be the male and female of the hare as much as of the deer (*OED*, *buck*, n¹.1.c), and (b) to 'prick' could mean 'to search for the tracks of a hare' (*OED*, v.6.b); that would certainly make for a coherent development of Tutchim's opening quip. 'Prick' could also mean 'to shoot' (usually at a target) but more to the point for Sir Oliver's suggestive purposes it could mean 'impale' or 'thrust an object into something' (*OED*, v.18), the object in question being, of course, the nominal 'prick.' For 'lusty' see II iv 63 and note above.

6 *ride*] Tutchim takes up the metaphor with a glance at the sense 'to swive a woman' (Cotgrave, quoted by Colman; *OED*, v.3 and 16) but the application in this sense is slender. Taken literally it suggests he has dismounted and left his horse behind (offstage) to talk to Sir Oliver.

- I'll bring you to my sister Somerfield.
 SIR OLIVER
 Justice, not so – by her there hangs a tale.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 That's true, indeed.
 SIR OLIVER She has a daughter.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 10 And what of that?
 SIR OLIVER I, likewise, have a son,
 A villainous boy, his father up and down.
 What should I say? These velvet-bearded boys D3v
 Will still be doing, say what we old men can.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 And what of this, Sir Oliver? Be plain.
 SIR OLIVER
 15 A nimble-spirited knave, the villain boy
 Has one trick of his sire – has got the wench,
 Stolen your rich sister's heir.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM Somerfield's heir?
 SIR OLIVER
 Has done the deed, has pierced the vessel's head,

15. nimble-spirited] nimble spirited Q1.

- 8 *tale*] with pun on 'tail,' which could refer equally to the female and male sexual organs; Tutchim's response reinforces the innuendo, just in case anyone in the audience might have missed it.
- 11 *up and down*] 'in every respect, thoroughly' (*OED*, adv.6.a); cf. Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 3.2.12-13: 'Third gossip: Only indeed it has the mother's mouth. | Second gossip: The mother's mouth up and down, up and down!'
- 12 *velvet-bearded*] i.e., short and soft, like the pile of velvet; but there could be an allusion to the young deer, whose horns were, in the growing stage, covered in a soft downy skin called 'velvet' (*OED*, *velvet*, 2.a).
- 13 *doing*] 'fornicating,' though one probably should not ignore the simpler meaning here – 'up to something' – of which a remnant still lurks in the word. Tutchim takes it up in the less innocent sense, though; see I ii 112 and note above.
- 15 *nimble-spirited*] as noted above at II iii 16 and II iv 49, the word 'nimble' is used frequently in the play and often with a suggestion of sexual agility; here the 'spiritedness' is clearly a sexual quality; cf. Jonson, *Every Man Out of his Humour*, II i 20-2: 'These be our nimble-spirited Catso's, [*sic*] that ... will run ouer a bog like your wild Irish.'
- 16 *trick*] 'characteristic quality' (*OED*, n.7) but, as in the subtitle of the play, the word also could mean 'sexual ruse or stratagem' (Partridge.2).
- 16 *got*] at its simplest, 'obtained,' but it could mean specifically 'obtained in marriage' (*OED*, v.17.c). On stage, a pregnant pause after 'wench' could hint that the line is going to continue '... with child.'
- 17 *stolen*] as with 'got' the word has a simple meaning - 'obtained by theft' – but it could have the more specific sense, 'married by stealth' (*OED*, ppl.2). Cf. II i 29 and note.
- 18 *pierced ... head*] i.e., 'taken her virginity;' 'pierced' has the obvious sexual meaning; 'head' is 'the flat end of a barrel or cask' (*OED*, II.8.k) but also 'maidenhead' (cf. *Rom.*, I i 24-6: *Gregory*: The heads of the maids? | *Sampson*: Ay, the heads of the maids, or their maidenheads, take it in what sense thou wilt.'). a 'vessel' is 'a person considered as the container of the spirit,' (*OED*, n¹.3.a) or 'the body as the receptacle of the soul' (*OED*, n¹.3.b) and hence a term generally found in theological discourse, but it was used in ordinary speech, often of women as 'the weaker vessels;' Dent gives it as proverbial – 'a woman is the weaker vessel' (W655) – and earlier in the dialogue just quoted from *Rom.*, Sampson refers to, 'women ... the weaker vessels' (*Ibid.* 15-16);

- And knows by this the vintage.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM When should this be?
 SIR OLIVER
 20 As I am by my counsel well informed,
 This very day.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM Tut! It cannot be.
 Some ten miles hence I saw the maid last night.
 SIR OLIVER
 Maids may be maids tonight, and not tomorrow.
 Women are free and sell their maidenheads
 25 As men sell cloth, by yard and handful.
 But if you chance to see your sister widow,
 Comfort her tears and say her daughter's matched
 With one that has a knocker to his father,
 An honest, noble knight.

-
- a similar association of ideas punning on 'vessels' as 'barrels' occurs in *The Family of Love* (1312-13): 'O my most precious Dryfat, may none of thy daughters prove vessels with foul bungholes;' and for the further association of 'vessel' with a sexual partner (and, interestingly for this image in *Ram Alley*, an illicit sexual partner) see *The Family of Love* again (616-17): 'Lipsalve in love with my vessel of ease? Come to me to help him to a morsel most affected by mine own palate?'
- 19 *vintage*] the 'quality' of the vessel's contents – i.e., whether she is indeed a virgin.
 20 *counsel*] 'advisor' (*OED*, n.7.b); though this could be used in a legal context it was, according to *OED*, used only as a singular collective noun to indicate a group of legal advisors up to 1709.
 24 *free*] 'sexually unrestrained' (Colman), but the word had a wide range of meanings: 'generous' (*OED*, adj.4.a), and the general senses of 'unrestricted' and 'profuse in giving' (given under *OED*, adj.II and III) will all be in play here. Cf. I i 66 and I ii 169 and notes.
 25 *yard and handful*] two linear measurements, three feet and four inches respectively, regularly used to measure cloth; this phrase was also used to describe the practice of giving customers an extra 'handful' of cloth to avoid accusations of selling less than the length asked for; however, 'yard' was, as well as the rod (or 'cloth-yard') used by clothiers to measure cloth (*OED*, n¹.7) also at this time the usual word for 'penis' (Colman and Partridge.2, and *OED*, n¹11.a) – a correlation which led to much innuendo around the occupation of clothier, not to mention the dimensions of men's sexual organs (e.g., 'Shortyard,' the name of the assistant to the woollen draper Quomodo in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*; and see also the elaborate play on the word in his pamphlet, *Plato's Cap*, 227-34: 'They shall have many gallant suitors that will carry all their lands on their backs and yet swear they have grounds, backsides, and yards, when they have no more grounds than the king's highway, no more backsides than one, and no more yard than what they have in their hose and doublets. And the tailor deceives them of one and a half too, to mend the matter, and by that shift makes the gallants forswear themselves.'). With 'handful' Sir Oliver continues the innuendo about sexual dimensions as, besides the measure of four inches, it was also 'as much as the hand can grasp or contain' (*OED*, 1.a), and another word open to innuendo – Williams, in his entry for *hand*, quotes 'Chapman, *May-Day* (1601-9) I i 48 ... "it is not Hector but Paris, not the full armful, but the sweet handful that ladies delight in."'
 28 *knocker*] Partridge.1 glosses, 'a (notable or frequent) performer of the sexual act,' giving *Ram Alley* as his only reference, and Williams, also quoting this passage, gives 'sexual athlete' (though Williams provides additional evidence for his gloss from sources contemporaneous with *Ram Alley*); *OED* gives 'a person ... who moves others to admiration' (1.c) but only from 1612, and quoting Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 2.2.24-5 (but 1613, not 1620 as given by *OED*): 'They're pretty children both, but here's a wench | Will be a knocker;' in his note to this line Woodbridge glosses Middleton's usage as '(a) a beauty; (b) notable copulator,' and it seems sensible to assume that both those senses would be in play here.

Enter CAPTAIN FACE.

- JUSTICE TUTCHIM Stand close, knight, close,
 30 And mark this captain's humour. His name is Face.
 'A dreams as 'a walks, and thinks no woman
 Sees him but is in love with him.
 CAPTAIN FACE 'Twere brave
 If some great lady through a window spied me
 And straight should love me. Say she should send
 35 Five thousand pound unto my lodging
 And crave my company. With that money
 I would make three several cloaks and line them
 With black, crimson, and tawny three-piled velvet.
 I would eat at Chare's ordinary, and dice
 40 At Antony's. Then would I keep my whore
 In beaten velvet and have two slaves to tend her.
 SIR OLIVER
 Ha ha ha!
 CAPTAIN FACE What, my case of Justices!

29s.d.] Q1 *after 31.* 29s.d. FACE] *Puffe* Q1 (*and thus throughout this scene*).

- 29s.d. FACE] Q1 has 'Puffe' as this character's name here, throughout this scene and elsewhere in the text; for a discussion of the name and its variant see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.
 29 *stand close*] 'stand aside secretly – conceal yourself' (*OED*, B.adv.2).
 30 *humour*] 'manner or mental disposition' (*OED*, n.2.c) as caused by the combination of the four fluids (or humours) which were believed to constitute the human body.
 32 *'Twere*] 'it would be.'
 32 *brave*] 'excellent, capital' (*OED*, adj.3.b).
 35 *Five thousand pound*] an enormous sum of money and pure fantasy on Face's part; roughly one quarter of this covered the costs of rebuilding the Globe theatre in 1613 after it had burnt to the ground; see also II iv 94 and note.
 37 *several*] 'different' (*OED*, A.adj.1.2).
 38 *crimson*] the dye used to create crimson-coloured clothes was very expensive.
 38 *three-piled*] i.e., velvet of the very finest quality cut at different heights to create a textured pattern.
 39 *Chare's ordinary*] an 'ordinary' was a public eating house; in the more fashionable ones eating was often followed by gambling, and as Face imagines going on to Antony's to dice we might infer that he is betraying his lack of street credibility by choosing one of the less fashionable establishments to eat in (see also next note); Sugden has no entry under *Chare's* but does list a Clare's in Clare Court, off Drury Lane, leading Corbin and Sedge to suggest that this is a misprint; it would not be hard in secretary hand to either misread /la/ as /ha/, or to so carelessly form the letters that it would be very hard to distinguish them.
 40 *Antony's*] this ordinary, also known as the Rose tavern, was in Russell Street, close to Drury Lane; 'it had an evil reputation as a gambling hell and a haunt of women of the town' (Sugden).
 41 *beaten velvet*] velvet woven with gold or silver thread which was beaten very thin in order to be wrapped around the thread; again, the association of velvet with prostitution is noteworthy.
 41 *slaves*] probably not literally, but in the sense of 'utterly submissive, under the complete command of someone' (*OED*, 2.a and b).
 41 *tend*] in the sense of 'attend on, wait upon' (*OED*, v¹.4.a) rather than 'care for' (*OED*, v¹.3.a).
 42 *case of Justices*] punning on (a) 'a box or chest containing a pair of objects' (such as pistols or rapiers) (*OED*, n¹.8.a) and (b) 'law case' (*OED*, n¹.6), but Face is overly impressed by Sir Oliver as only Tutchim is a Justice.

What, are you eavesdropping, or do you think
Your tawny coats with greasy facings here
45 Shall carry it? Sir Oliver Smallshanks,
Know my name is Face. Knight, thee have I sought
To fright thee from thy wits.
JUSTICE TUTCHIM Nay, good Sir Face,
We have too many mad men already.
CAPTAIN FACE
How! I tell thee, Justice Tutchim, not all
50 Thy bailiffs, sergeants, busy constables,
Defeasances, warrants, or thy mittimus
Shall save his throat from cutting if he presume
To woo the widow ycleped Taffeta.
She is my wife by oath, therefore take heed:
55 Let me not catch thee in the widow's house.
If I do, I'll pick thy head upon my sword

D4

46. Face. Kight, thee] *Puffe*, Knight, thee Q1. 51. Defeasances] Defesants Q1.
- 43 *eavesdropping*] the term could have, at this time, a specifically legal application (*OED*, *eavesdropper*, a).
- 44 *greasy*] ‘foul with grease,’ as at II i 38, but often used – as here, probably – simply as an abusive epithet suggestive of uncleanness (*OED*, a.1.a and b); Face uses the word again, with a similar ambiguity, at IV ii 82.
- 44 *facings*] those parts of the coat covered with a different material from the main part of the garment (often the cuffs and collar) (*OED*, vbl.n.4.a).
- 45 *carry it*] ‘bear all before you, push matters through to your advantage’ (*OED*, v.15.b and 22.b); cf. Middleton, *A Fair Quarrel*, 5.1.281: ‘All your wit and wealth must not thus carry it.’
- 47 *Sir Face*] jocular; although Q1’s punctuation of 46 allows the possibility that Face has introduced himself as a knight, there is nothing in what follows here or elsewhere in the text that supports such a reading; first, Face’s use of the word ‘Knight’ in 46 to address Sir Oliver would be entirely in line with his bombastic style of speech; second, the title ‘sir’ was used with a first name, not a surname, and ‘Face’ (or ‘Puffe’) is clearly a surname; Tutchin is, following a common convention, using the title ironically, or even contemptuously, and his misuse of it with the surname is all part of the joke.
- 49 *How!*] merely an exclamation – ‘what!’
- 50 *busy*] possibly ‘meddlesome, officious’ (*OED*, a.5) rather than simply ‘ever-active.’
- 51 *Defeasances*] documents stating a condition upon the performance of which another deed or instrument is made void (*OED*, 3).
- 51 *warrants*] documents authorising officers of the law to perform specified acts such as arresting a person, searching a building or executing a sentence (*OED*, n¹.9.a).
- 51 *mittimus*] documents ordering prison officers to receive and keep in safe custody the persons specified in the documents (*OED*, n.1), from the first word of the document, ‘we send’ (Latin).
- 53 *ycleped*] ‘called;’ the word was archaic by the 17th century and is part of the bombastic style Face employs in an attempt to make himself sound educated; Lieutenant Beard has a similar tendency, both of them being modelled on the generic type of the vainglorious and pompous military braggart, of whom Shakespeare’s Pistol is probably the finest example.
- 54 *wife by oath*] for this to be true, Taffeta would have had to swear ‘in words of the future tense’ (‘verba de futuro’) that she would marry Face; had she done this there would, indeed, have been a valid marriage contract between them and many would have accepted that they were as good as married, though the church would not have recognised them as actually married until they had made marriage vows ‘in words of the present tense’ (‘verba de praesenti’). See also III iv 73-6 and note.
- 56 *I’ll ... sword*] the meaning of the phrase is clear enough – ‘I’ll stick your head on my sword’ – but the use of the word ‘pick’ is unusual; given Face’s propensity for archaisms, it is quite likely to be an archaic variant of ‘pitch’ – ‘to fix an object on a pole, spear etc.’ (*OED*, *pitch*, v¹.1.a);

And piss in thy very phys'nomy. Beware, beware!
 Come there no more. A captain's word
 Flies not so fierce as doth his fatal sword.

Exit [CAPTAIN] FACE.

SIR OLIVER

60 How like you this? Shall we endure this thunder,
 Or go no further?

JUSTICE TUTCHIM We will on, Sir Oliver,
 We will on. Let me alone to touch 'im.

I wonder how my spirit did forbear
 To strike him on the face. Had this been spoke

65 Within my liberties, had died for it.

SIR OLIVER

I was about to draw.

Enter CAP[TAIN] FACE.

CAPTAIN FACE If you come there,
 Thy beard shall serve to stuff those balls by which
 I get me heat at tennis.

Exit [CAPTAIN] FACE.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Is he gone?

I would 'a durst a-stood to this awhile.

70 Well, I shall catch him in a narrow room
 Where neither of us can flinch. If I do,
 I'll make him dance a trenchmore to my sword.
 Come, I'll along with you to the widow.

57. phys'nomy] visnomy Q1.

however, it could derive from the idea of piercing something with a sharp object (*OED*, *pick*, v¹.1.a), or even be a verbal use of the noun 'pyke,' the weapon.

57 *phys'nomy*] i.e., 'physiognomy' – 'face' (*OED*, 3.a).

59 *Flies ... sword*] the use of alliteration is another conventional characteristic of the braggart type; again, Pistol deploys it with unnerving enthusiasm.

60 *endure*] 'undergo, but without succumbing to' (*OED*, v.3).

62 *touch 'im*] 'charge or accuse him' (*OED*, *touch*, v.19.a), with the obvious pun on his name; see note to *Actorum nomina* above.

63 *spirit*] 'courage, mettle' (*OED*, n.13.a).

65 *liberties*] the area over which Tutchim has jurisdiction as a Justice of the Peace (*OED*, n¹.7.c).

65 *had*] ellipsis of 'he.'

67 *serve*] 'provide what is needed' (*OED*, v¹.27.c).

68 *heat*] 'exercise' (a variant, perhaps, of *OED*, n.8.c).

69 *durst ... to*] 'had the courage to have stood up to us (and taken the consequences) in this matter' (*OED*, *stand*, v.76.f).

69 *awhile*] 'for a short time' (*OED*, adv.phr.).

72 *trenchmore*] a boisterous country dance.

73 *I'll ... widow*] Tutchim changes his mind about visiting his sister, Lady Somerfield (who is also, rather confusingly, a widow) and decides to accompany Sir Oliver to the widow Taffeta's house.

75 We will not be out-braved, take my word.
 We'll not be wronged while I can draw a sword.

[Exeunt].

75s.d. *[Exeunt]* Exit Q1.

74 *out-braved*] 'out-done in bravery' – 'out-faced' as one might put it (*OED*, v.2).

[Act III, Scene ii.]

Enter THROAT and [TWO] GENTLEMEN.

THROAT

Let the coach stay at Shoe Lane end. Be ready –
 Let the boot stand open, and when she's in
 Hurry towards Saint Giles in the Field
 As if the devil himself were wagonner.

5 Now for an arm of oak and heart of steel
 To bear away the wench, to get a wife,
 A gentlewoman, a maid – nay, which is more,
 An honest maid and, which is most of all,
 A rich and honest maid. Oh Jove! Jove!

D4v

10 For a man to wed such a wife as this
 Is to dwell in the very suburbs of heaven.

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Is she so exquisite?

THROAT Sir, she is rich
 And a great heir.

 s.d. [TWO/] *other* Q1.

Location] 'At the Mitre door in Fleet Street,' where Throat told Dash to meet him at II iv 105. William is about to come out of that tavern, where he has been dining with Frances, and head towards the Savoy (see II iv 60-1).

1 *Shoe Lane end*] Shoe Lane was a main route between Fleet Street and Holborn, running north-south between Fleet Street Conduit (at the southern end) and the church of St Andrew Holborn (at the northern end); it was parallel with and to the west of Fleet Ditch; the 'end' Throat refers to would most likely be the end near the Conduit as that was a short distance down Fleet Street west of the Mitre Inn, the rendezvous he set at the end of II iv and where he is now standing.

2 *boot*] a low, covered passenger compartment either in front of or behind the main body of a coach; as it was not the main compartment of the coach it was, presumably, possible to be less visible, or at least less obvious, in the boot (*OED*, n³.4.b).

3 *Saint Giles in the Field*] this church was in the countryside at the far western end of Holborn; it now sits in the triangle between St Giles High Street, the northern end of Charing Cross Road and the eastern end of Shaftesbury Avenue.

5 *arm ... steel*] the more conventional arrangement would be 'a heart of oak and arm of steel' (Dent, S839, 'heart of oak' and H309, 'as hard as steel') as expressing strength of resolution and combative puissance; by inverting the order Throat suggests he has a rather rigid right arm and a heart that is hardened to the finer feelings (Dent, H310.1, 'a heart (as hard as) steel') – both probably true but not quite the note he is presumably trying to hit.

6 *bear away*] this could mean simply 'carry off' but also, more specifically, 'carry away as the winner' (*OED*, v¹.3.a).

7 *maid*] 'young woman' (*OED*, n¹.1.a), 'unmarried woman' (*OED*, n¹.3), 'virgin' (*OED*, n¹.2.a) are all possible meanings.

8 *honest*] another word with a range of possible meanings: 'respectable' (*OED*, a.1.a), 'chaste and virtuous' (*OED*, a.3.b) and 'of open and frank disposition' (*OED*, a.3.d).

11 *suburbs of heaven*] Throat produces another verbal ineptitude: in their literal (and innocent) sense the suburbs, being outside the boundaries of heaven, would hardly suggest the epicentre of delight, but, given the reputation of the suburbs as the more licentious area of London (see I i 39 and II i 67 and notes), he could be understood as suggesting that even paradise has its disreputable purlieus.

SECOND GENTLEMAN 'Tis the more dangerous.
THROAT

- Dangerous? Lord, where be those gallant spirits?
15 The time has been when scarce an honest woman,
Much less a wench, could pass an Inn of Court
But some of the fry would have been doing
With her. I knew the day when Shreds, a tailor,
Coming once late by an Inn of Chancery
20 Was laid along and muffled in his cloak,
His wife took in, stitched up, turned out again,
And he persuaded all was but in jest.
Tut! Those brave boys are gone. These which are left
Are wary lads, live poring on their books
25 And give their linen to their laundresses.

25-6 laundresses. | By tale] laundresses, | By tayle, Q1.

- 14 *gallant spirits*] 'spirits' could refer to physical human beings – 'people considered in relation to their characters' (*OED*, n.9) – or to their minds as 'the seat of action' (*OED*, n.17.a); 'gallant' would most likely mean 'full of noble daring,' *OED* suggests that as an adjective the word did not have meanings associated with sexual or amorous behaviour until the end of the 17th century, though as a noun it could mean at this time, 'a ladies' man, a lover, in a bad sense a paramour' (*OED*, n.3), so perhaps, given the way Throat continues his admonition, that area of meaning was available and being used here to give something like, 'young men (or minds) of noble daring in matters of love.'
- 16 *wench*] the distinction between 'honest woman' and 'wench' is interesting; see I i 117 and note.
- 17 *fry*] 'youth (*OED*, n¹.4.b) – in this case the law students – seen as an undifferentiated mass of insignificant individuals.
- 17 *doing*] 'fornicating' (see I ii 112 and III i 13 and notes).
- 18 *Shreds*] a generic name for a tailor (*OED*, 3.d); 'shreds' were scraps of material, sometimes used to make up or patch cheap clothes.
- 19 *Inn of Chancery*] see II iii 9 and note..
- 20 *laid along*] 'overthrown, laid flat' (*OED*, v¹.46.a).
- 20 *muffled*] 'wrapped up' (*OED*, ppl.a.1), but for the purpose of concealing things from him, not him from other people, and hence with a suggestion of the related sense given by *OED*, 'blinded' (1.c) (though that sense is given only from 1629).
- 21 *took in*] (a) 'taken into the building' (*OED*, *take*, v.84.e); (b) possibly also 'taken prisoner' (*OED*, *take*, v.84.h).
- 21 *stitched up*] Williams gives 'copulate' for 'stitch,' quoting this line by way of illustration, and *OED* gives, for 'stitched up' 'close (an orifice [etc])' (v¹.9.b) which correlates well with Williams' definition; Throat is playing, obviously, on Shreds' occupation as a tailor, and the action of sewing (piercing cloth with a needle) inevitably suggests sexual intercourse; 'shagged' might appropriately render the contemporary understanding but 'raped' would be more consistent with a modern perception of what happened to Shreds' wife.
- 23 *brave*] 'fine, capital' (*OED*, adj.3.a), used here, as in III i 32, as a general epithet of admiration.
- 24 *wary*] (a) 'given to caution in their behaviour' (*OED*, a.1); (b) 'thrifty' (*OED*, a.4), this leading to Throat's criticism of the modern law student in the next two lines.
- 25 *give ... laundresses.*] i.e., the modern law student 'gives his linen' to his laundress in the sense that he takes it off to have sex with her; linen, because it was so closely associated with underclothing, had strong sexual connotations: in Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*, Interim 2.79-82, linen (in the form of lawn, a particularly fine type of the cloth) is used to convey surreptitiously an invitation to have sex by a lady who solicits the womaniser Tailby, via her servant, with the message: 'Mistress Tiffany commends her to your worship, and ... says she cannot furnish you of the same lawn you desire till after All-Hallowtide.' Cf. also Middleton: *Plato's Cap*, 136-8: 'Fie! Maidens should not name such a word ... that linen word is always

By tale they now can save their purses.
 I knew when every gallant had his man,
 But now a twelvepenny-weekly laundress
 Will serve the turn to half a dozen of them.

Enter DASH.

- 30 Here comes my man. What news?
 DASH As you would wish.
 The Lady Somerfield is come to town.
 Her horses yet are walking, and her men say
 Her only daughter is conveyed away

within an inch of immodesty;’ *The Revenger’s Tragedy*, 2.2.108-9: ‘He and the Duchess | By night meet in their linen;’ and *A Mad World, My Masters*, 3.3.149-51, where Follywit, talking of the effect of his female disguise, says, ‘a chin clout is of that powerful attraction, I can tell you, ’twill draw more linen to it.’ For ‘laundresses’ see I i 82 and note.

- 26-9 *by tale ... them*] this is a complicated passage and in terms of clarity not altogether satisfactory. The punctuation of Q1 makes it unclear whether ‘By tale’ is part of the previous sentence or the beginning of a new one; the comma that follows it in Q1 is very light but it clearly is a comma and that punctuation could suggest equally that the phrase is the end of the preceding sentence (commas are frequently used as full stops in Q1) or is part of the next; however, attaching it to the previous sentence, though it makes some sense there, leaves the next one with little point, and for that reason this edition has adopted a full stop after ‘laundresses’ and has omitted the comma after ‘tale.’ As to the meaning of the passage, for ‘tale,’ Jones suggests emendation to the legal term ‘taille’ (explained by Corbin and Sedge as the destination of an estate or fee which reverts to the donor on the failure of a person and his heirs); but this seems irrelevant to and over-complex for the context; also, Corbin and Sedge possibly find this attractive as they interpret Throat’s lament as implying that modern law students ‘make use of their servants only for laundering;’ however, the point is surely that they use their laundresses in the traditional way (i.e., for sexual services) but on the cheap, by sharing them. A simpler interpretation is to understand the word ‘tale’ as ‘a reckoning or account’ (as in ‘tally’ – to reckon ‘by tale’ was to do so ‘by individual items rather than by weight or measure’ – *OED*, n.6.a and b) whilst the pun (on ‘tail’ meaning ‘pudend’) introduces the idea of saving money (‘their purses’) on their purchase of sex by sharing a woman between them (the woman being seen, of course, as merely reduced to her sexual organ) and paying off the reckoning weekly; furthermore, ‘purse,’ too, could mean ‘vagina’ (Partridge.1 and Williams) so they could, by keeping a reckoning, ‘save’ in the sense of ‘use sparingly or economically’ (*OED*, v.19) the sexual facilities available to them as well as their financial resources; finally, ‘save’ could be a form of the word ‘salve’ and ‘purse’ could also be ‘the scrotum’ which could give, ‘soothe or assuage’ (*OED*, *salve*, v¹.2.c) their sexual urges.’ However one interprets this line, the phrase ‘serve the turn’ – i.e., (a) ‘satisfy their needs;’ (b) ‘satisfy them sexually’ (see II iii 34 and note) – supports the interpretation of the passage as a series of sexual innuendos rather than as a play purely on legal terminology. Throat’s remark in 27, however, ‘I knew when every gallant had his man,’ suggests that nostalgia has led him somewhat irrelevantly (though the fault could be Barry’s rather than the character’s) to recall law students as being not only more sexually vigorous but also financially better off in times past, the word ‘man’ (unless we are in the realm of homoerotic suggestion again) presumably meaning ‘man-servant’ (*OED*, *man*, 10.a); Finkelpearl (*John Marston of the Middle Temple*, p.5), quoting Fortescue, comments on the high cost of maintaining a student at an Inn of Court, noting that ‘if he have a servant to wait on him (as for the most part they have) the expence is proportionably more,’ and though Fortescue is talking about the 15th century it is likely that the practice of keeping a servant continued into the 1600s and that the costs remained just as high.
- 32 *yet*] ‘still’ (*OED*, *adv*.2.a) – i.e., Lady Somerfield has just arrived and her servants are still ‘walking’ the horses to cool them down, or (though this is the less likely meaning) she has come to London but has not yet actually arrived at her house as the horses are still in motion.
- 33 *conveyed away*] ‘carried away,’ with suggestion of mystery and, perhaps, force (*OED*, v.6 and 3).

35 No man knows how. Now to it, master.
 You and your servant Dash are made for ever
 If you but stick to it now.
 THROAT Gentlemen,
 Now show yourselves at full, and not a man
 But shares a fortune with me if I speed.

*Enter WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS, BOUTCHER, THOMAS
 SMALLSHANKS, FRANCES [masked,] and BEAR[D] with a
 torch.*

FIRST GENTLEMAN
 Tut! Fear not us. Be sure you run away
 40 And we'll perform the quarrel.
 THROAT Stand close – they come.
 WILLIAM
 Art sure he will be here?
 FRANCES Most sure.
 WILLIAM Beard.
 BEARD Sir!
 WILLIAM
 Bear up the torch, and keep your way apace
 Directly to the Savoy.
 THOMAS Have you a licence?
 Look to that, brother, before you marry
 45 For fear the parson lose his benefice.

E1

34. master] mast Q1.

- 36 *stick to it*] 'remain firm in your resolve' (*OED*, *stick*, v¹.7 and 26.e), but given Throat's overall objective there could be a hint at 'stick to' meaning 'to fornicate with' (Colman).
 37 *show ... full*] 'exert your strength / display your readiness to fight to the greatest extent of your capabilities' (*OED*, *show*, v.21.a and b; *full*, quasi-n.B.1.a).
 38 *speed*] 'prosper, attain my desire' (*OED*, v.1.a); the word also had a specific legal usage, 'to expedite a plea,' (8.b.) which could just be in play here.
 40 *perform*] probably more than just 'enact' – 'execute, complete' (*OED*, v.1.a, 5 and 6.a).
 40 *stand close*] 'stand aside secretly – conceal yourself' (see III i 29 and note).
 42-3 *keep ... directly*] 'continue following the way, swiftly and by the quickest route' (*OED*, *keep*, v.32; *apace*, adv.1.a; *directly*, adv.1.a).
 43 the Savoy] see II iv 60 and note.
 43-5 *Have ... benefice*] following publication in 1604 of *The Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical* of James I, priests were not allowed, by Canon LXII, to celebrate a marriage 'except the Bannes of Matrimonie haue bene first published three seuerall Sundayes or Holy dayes in the time of Diuine Seruice in the Parish Churches and Chappels where the said parties dwell' or 'without a ... Licence granted by some of the persons in these our Constitutions expressed' (i.e., an archbishop or bishop); any priest who contravened this regulation could suffer 'suspension *per triennium ipso facto* [for three years by the fact itself (Latin)]' – that is could 'lose his benefice' or 'ecclesiastical living' (*OED*, 6) for three years without any further hearing or evidence being required; however, this attempt to tighten up on the practice of performing clandestine marriages apparently had little effect amongst the more disreputable clergy who operated in such areas as the Savoy and Fleet (see Probert, R., *Marriage Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment*, chap. 5).

- WILLIAM
Tut! Our curate craves no licence. 'A swears
His living came to him by a miracle.
BOUTCHER
How by miracle?
WILLIAM Why, 'a paid nothing for't.
'A swears that few be free from simony
50 But only Welshmen, and those 'a says, too,
Are but mountain priests.
BOUTCHER But hang him, fool – he lies.
What's his reason?
WILLIAM His reason is this:
That all their livings are so rude and bare
That not a man will venture his damnation
55 By giving money for them. 'A does protest
There is but two pair of hose and shoes
In all his parish.
FIRST GENTLEMAN Hold up your light, sir.
BEARD
Shall I be taught how to advance my torch?
WILLIAM
What's the matter, Lieutenant?
SECOND GENTLEMAN Your lieutenant's an ass!
BEARD
60 How? An ass! Die men like dogs!
WILLIAM Hold, gentlemen!
BEARD
An ass! An ass!

[Exeunt THROAT, FRANCES and DASH.]

-
- 46 *craves*] the word seems to be used with more force than the usual meaning: 'desires, asks for' (*OED*, v.2); however, the sense, 'demands, asks with authority,' which seems to fit better here, was, according to *OED*, out of use in England by the 14th century.
- 46-57 *Our ... parish*] this conversation is a combination of pseudo-theological banter on the subject of miracles, anti-Welsh sentiment (cf. II iv 50 and note), and standard religious satire on the prevalence of simony – i.e., the practice of buying benefices through bribery – in the church. The priest has no fear of losing his benefice as he feels himself to be beyond the control of the authorities, having obtained his living through special divine intervention rather than through the 'worldly' process of simony; such malpractice he claims is unnecessary in the case of remote Welsh parishes as they are so barbarous, wild (*OED*, *rude*, adj.3.b, and 10) and abjectly poor (*OED*, *bare*, adj.9) that they cannot provide a priest with sufficient income to make it worth his risking the eternal damnation that could follow (simony being regarded by the church as a serious sin). For 'curate' see note to II iv 51.
- 50 *But only*] the 'but' is effectively redundant.
- 55 *protest*] 'solemnly declare, insist' (*OED*, v.1.b).
- 56 *hose and shoes*] i.e., the most basic articles of clothing.
- 58 *advance*] 'lift up' (*OED*, v.9).
- 60 *Die ... dogs!*] imperative rather than interrogative – 'let men die like dogs.' The phrase is spoken in *2H4* (II iv 174) by Pistol, suggesting that the character of Beard, like that of Face, could to some extent be modelled on Shakespeare's braggart captain.

THOMAS Hold, brother! Hold, Lieutenant!
 Put up, as you are men. Your wife is gone!
 WILLIAM
 Gone?
 BEARD Gone?
 WILLIAM How? Which way? This is some plot!
 THOMAS
 Down toward Fleet Bridge.
 ALL Follow, follow, follow!

Ex[eunt all but the GENTLEMEN.]

65 FIRST GENTLEMAN
 So, h'as the wench. Let us pursue aloof
 And see the event. This will prove good mirth,
 When things unshaped shall have a perfect birth.

Ex[eunt the GENTLEMEN.]

67s.d. *Ex[eunt the GENTLEMEN.] Exit. Q1.*

- 62 *Put up*] 'put away' sc. your weapons.
 64 *toward Fleet Bridge*] that is, in the direction of Shoe Lane, the southern end of which joined Fleet Street just west of this bridge; Fleet Bridge, one of the four bridges across the Fleet Ditch, was at the eastern termination of Fleet Street where it joined the western end of Fleet (or Ludgate) Hill.
 65 *aloof*] 'at a distance' (*OED*, adv.4).
 66 *event*] 'outcome' (*OED*, n.3.a).
 67 *unshaped*] 'as yet unformed or incomplete;' the word was often associated, as here, with the idea of gestation.

[Act III, Scene iii.]

*Enter W[ILLIAM] SMALLSHANKS, BOUTCHER,
THOM[AS] SMAL[LSHANKS] and BEARD, their swords
drawn.*

WILLIAM

'Tis a thing impossible they should be gone
Thus far and we not see them.

THOMAS Upon my life,
They went in by the Greyhound, and so struck
Into Bridewell.

BOUTCHER What should she make there?

THOMAS

5 Take water at the dock.

BEARD Water at dock!

A fico for her dock! You'll not be ruled.

You'll still be obstinate. I'll pawn my fate

1. impossible] impossible Q1.

Location] The eastern end of Fleet Street - see next note.

2-8 *Thus ... home.*] presumably William's group has got as far as Fleet Bridge in their pursuit of 'Constantia' and her abductors, thereby overshooting Shoe Lane where Throat had arranged for the coach which would carry her, hidden, up to St Giles in Holborn, that stratagem explaining why she has disappeared so quickly and completely. William, of course, does not want to catch her so Throat's cunning use of the coach has turned out very well for him. Thomas suggests the abductors slipped in the Greyhound tavern on the south side of Fleet Street near Fleet Bridge and St Bride's church (also on the south side of Fleet Street) then down Bride Lane or alongside Fleet Ditch to Bridewell (at this stage in its history a prison) and hence to the Thames where they could take a boat from the stairs at Bridewell Dock. Beard, however, surmises (rightly as it happens) that they turned left into Shoe Lane before Fleet Bridge; this would have been one way of getting to St John's Street, where the real Constantia's London house was situated (turn right at the top of Shoe Lane, over Holborn Bridge, bear left up Cow Lane, across Smithfield to Charterhouse Lane and then more or less due north up St John's Street); Beard's suggestion reveals that at this point he is still keeping up the pretence that Frances is Constantia Somerfield, presumably for the benefit of Thomas who is the only one of the party not privy to the deception.

3 *struck*] 'turned off' (*OED*, v.2).

4 *What ... there?*] 'what would she do there' (*OED*, v¹.58.a).

5 *take ... dock.*] i.e., take a boat at Bridewell Dock, the stairs down to the Thames between Bridewell and the mouth of Fleet Ditch; Sugden quotes *Westward Ho*, II iii 107-8: 'then you may whip forth ... and take boate at Bridewell Dock most priuately;' however, 'water' could mean 'semen' and 'dock' could mean 'vagina' so the line could be understood – as it clearly is by Beard, whose repetition of the phrase reinforces the innuendo – to mean 'engage in sexual intercourse;' the joke occurs also in Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 4.3.21-2, when Touchwood Junior, with reference to his bride-to-be, instructs a boatman: 'There comes a maid with all speed to take water, | Row her lustily to Barn Elms after me.'

6 *fico*] either 'a fig' (Italian) – i.e., 'something of no value' – or the insultingly obscene gesture known as 'the fico,' in which either the hand was raised with the thumb placed between the index and middle fingers, or the thumb, with the fingers curled into a fist, was put in the mouth and bitten towards the object of the insult (see *Rom.*, I i 42-3: 'I will bite my thumb at them, which is a disgrace to them if they bear it'); in either case the meaning is imprecise but emphatic – a crude dismissal of either an idea or person – and here its close correlation with the ambiguous 'dock' makes for a particularly vulgar suggestion.

She took along Shoe Lane and so went home.

WILLIAM

Home?

10 BEARD Ay, home – how could she choose but go
Seeing so many naked tools at once
Drawn in the street?

THOMAS What scurvy luck was this.

WILLIAM

Come, we will find her or we'll fire the suburbs.
Put up your tools. Let's first along Shoe Lane,
Then straight up Holborn. If we find her not,
15 We'll thence direct to Throat's. If she be lost E1v
I am undone and all your hopes are crossed.

Ex[eunt].

16s.d. *Ex[eunt]*] *Exit* Q1

8 *took*] 'made her way, went' (*OED*, v.63).

10 *naked tools*] (a) 'unsheathed swords' (*OED*, n.1.b); (b) 'exposed penises' which are also probably, given the stiffness of the sword and the attitude in which it was held, erect (*OED*, n.2.b and Williams); cf. also II i 37 and 99, IV iv 119-24 and notes thereto.

12 *fire*] 'set fire to' (*OED*, v¹.2.a).

14 *straight up Holborn*] if William is following Beard's suggestion that 'Constantia' has gone home then, by going 'straight up Holborn,' he is taking the diametrically opposite direction; however, this would make sense as he would have no intention of leading his brother to the real Constantia's house.

16 *crossed*] 'thwarted' (*OED*, a.3.a).

[Act III, Scene iv.]

Enter SIR OLIVER SMALLSHANKS, JUSTICE TUTCHIM,
MISTRESS TAFFETA [*and*] ADRIANA.

SIR OLIVER

Widow, I must be short.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Sir Oliver,

Will you shame yourself, ha? You must be short!

Why, what a word was that to tell a widow?

SIR OLIVER

I meant, I must be brief.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Why, say so then.

5 Yet that's almost as ill. Go to, speak on.

SIR OLIVER

Widow, I must be brief. What old men do

They must do quickly.

TAFFETA Then, good sir, do it.

Widows are seldom slow to put men to it.

SIR OLIVER

And old men know their cues. My love, you know,

10 Has been protested long, and now I come

To make my latest tender. An old grown oak

Can keep you from the rain, and stands as fair

Location] a room in Taffeta's house.

1|2 *short* | *short!*] Sir Oliver means, 'concise, to the point' (*OED*, adj.9a and b), presumably as he wants to get the wooing business done with as quickly as possible; Tutchim takes up the word in the sense 'having small longitudinal extent' (*OED*, adj.1.a), applying it to Sir Oliver's sexual dimensions and pretending that the knight intended that to be his meaning.

3 *what ... widow*] as widows were sexually experienced women it was assumed that they were, *ipso facto*, sexually voracious, and hence Tutchim's affected alarm at Sir Oliver's betraying his shortcomings; cf. Middleton, *Wit at Several Weapons*, 2.2.89-92: 'It is the married woman ... | And not the maid, that longs; the appetite | Follows the first taste; when we have relished | We wish cloying.'

5 *Yet ... ill*] as Tutchim observes, Sir Oliver extracts his foot from one hole only to put it in another, as he now appears to be admitting to being unable to maintain sexual intercourse for very long, compounding this blunder with his elaboration of the need to be brief: 'What old men do | They must do quickly;' cf. II i 91-2 and note.

8 *Widows ... it.*] Taffeta corroborates – some might say collaborates with – Tutchim's views concerning widows and sex; 'put ... to it' could mean simply, 'to urge someone to do something' (*OED*, v¹.28.c) but the phrase was charged with sexual suggestion; male animals were 'put to' females for breeding purposes (*OED*, v¹.10.f and 53.b) and Shakespeare uses the term, as Partridge² and Colman note, to mean 'subject to or engage in sexual intercourse.'

9 *cues*] 'prompts or signs when to act or speak' (*OED*, n².2.a), with a pun on 'queue,' French for 'a tail,' and hence (Williams) 'sexual organs;' in this latter sense the 'queue' could be male or female, and it is unclear whether Sir Oliver is referring to his own or to Taffeta's here – though that, of course, could be part of the joke. (See also II i 137 and note.)

11 *tender*] generally 'an offer of anything for acceptance' (*OED*, n².2) but the word had a specific legal application – 'a formal offer made by one party to another' (*OED*, n².1.a) – which could be in play here, following on from the word 'protested' which also had, as has been noted (II ii 51 above) strong associations with legal terminology.

12 *stands*] with the suggestion that old men are as capable of achieving an erection as 'the best of them.'

- And portly as the best.
 TAFFETA Yet search him well
 And we shall find no pith or hearty timber
 15 To underlay a building.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM I would that oak
 Had been a fir. Forward, good Sir Oliver.
 Your oak is naught – stick not too much to that.
 SIR OLIVER
 If you can like, you shall be ladyfied,
 Live at the court, and soon be got with child.
 20 What, do you think we old men can do nothing?
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 This was somewhat like.
 SIR OLIVER You shall have jewels,

16. a fir.] a fire: Q1.

- 13 *portly*] (a) of the tree, ‘stately’ in the sense of ‘dignified’ (*OED*, adv.1); (b) of his erection, ‘stately’ in the sense of ‘fine, grand’ (*OED*, adv.3.c) and also, ‘large, bulky, stout’ (*OED*, adv.1.b).
- 13 *search*] ‘test, reveal the nature of’ (?) (*OED*, v.5.b) or possibly in the medical sense, ‘to probe into’ (*OED*, v.8).
- 14 *pith*] (a) of a tree, ‘the central or inner core’ (*OED*, n.1); (b) figuratively, of a person, ‘physical strength, mettle, backbone’ (*OED*, n.5.a); there is a glance also at the idea of sexual vigour here.
- 14 *hearty*] (a) specifically of timber, ‘having good heart wood’ and hence ‘strong’ (*OED*, adj.1.1); (b) figuratively, of a person, ‘courageous’ (*OED*, adj.1.a); Taffeta’s development of the metaphor started by Sir Oliver relies upon the fact that old oak trees are prone to going hollow; events later in the scene show that she is prescient in questioning whether the figurative meanings of ‘pith’ and ‘hearty’ are applicable to Sir Oliver, who does turn out to be a somewhat hollow oak.
- 15 *underlay*] ‘place underneath to support’ (*OED*, v.1.a); taking the word along with ‘building’ in the sense of ‘the action of erecting or putting something up’ (*OED*, vbl.n.1.a), there is a suggestion of ‘support an erection,’ and putting this along with line 14, Taffeta seems to be suggesting here that Sir Oliver is perhaps too old and feeble to ‘get it up.’
- 16 *a fir*] another obscure joke from Tutchim; Q1 has ‘a fire’ here, which was a possible spelling for ‘fir’ in the 16th century, so could presumably still be the case in the early 17th century; such a spelling could indicate a pronunciation that allowed a pun on ‘a-fire;’ Tutchim may thus be suggesting that this oak should have been ‘a fir/a-fire’ – i.e., somewhat more passionate in its protestations. Alternatively, if there is no pun, it may simply be the tree that he is referring to, playing upon (a) its common usage in building and (b) its rather phallic upright habit, giving, ‘you could have built something more substantial here if you were to come across as more sexually vigorous.’
- 17 *naught*] ‘good for nothing, of no use,’ (*OED*, adj.1); the word also meant ‘immoral’ (*OED*, adj.2), and ‘to be naught with’ was ‘to have sex with,’ whilst the noun, ‘a cipher, nothing’ (*OED*, n.3.b and c), could refer to the vagina (cf. Hamlet’s quip, III ii 118-9, that ‘nothing’ is ‘a fair thought to lie between maids’ legs’); as a direct quibble, none of those meanings would create a sensible secondary sense, but there may be, given what follows, an allusive nod in the direction of that semantic range (see next note).
- 17 *stick ... that*] ‘don’t dwell overmuch on that point’ (*OED*, *stick*, v¹.6c and 26.d); but ‘stick’ meaning ‘fornicate with’ is played upon frequently throughout *Ram Alley* (there are five other occurrences) with varying degrees of strictness in the applicability of that meaning; here, in such close proximity to ‘naught’ one has to suspect, as with that word, at least an allusion is intended; however, as with ‘naught’ and ‘fir’ it is as though Tutchim is (as so often) aiming for a joke but not quite hitting the bullseye.
- 18 *If ... like*] ‘if you may possibly like’ (*OED*, *can*, v¹.5); an unusual usage, which may indicate an attempt at irony on the part of Sir Oliver.
- 21 *jewels*] in the usual sense (and offered as a financial incentive to encourage Taffeta’s agreement)

- A baboon, parrot, and an Iceland dog,
 And I myself to bear you company.
 Your jointure is five hundred pound by year,
 25 Besides your plate, your chains and household stuff,
 When envious fate shall change this mortal life.
 TAFFETA
 But shall I not be over-cloyed with love?
 Will you not be too busy? Shall I keep
 My chamber by the month, if I be pleased
 30 To take physic, to send for visitants,

24. jointure] Ioynter Q1.

- but also 'testicles' (*OED*, n.11.a) (and hence an attempt by Sir Oliver to offer a sexual incentive as well). Cf. V i 27 and note.
- 22 *A baboon ... dog*] high status 'accessory' pets of the early 17th century; cf. Middleton, *The Puritan Widow*, 4.2.51-2, where Sir Andrew Tipstaff woos Frances by promising: 'you shall have your monkey, your parrot, your musk-cat, and your piss, piss, piss [lapdog].' For baboons as fashionable curiosities see Constantia's story at I ii 43-72, and for their association with sexual behaviour, see the note to 43-4 in that passage and II iii 95, where Adriana suggests that Constantia (as the Page) would make a nice plaything for her bed; baboons make two other appearances in the play, in IV ii 124 and at V iii 39 where they are represented again as curiosities gawped at by sophisticated Londoners and, in the former case, as creatures that can be taught to imitate human beings, which is very likely how they were often displayed; the references in *Ram Alley* might suggest that these creatures were more usually kept professionally for show rather than as pets, though the passage just quoted from Middleton is further evidence that individuals did keep them. Parrots began appearing in England as pets of the rich in the early 16th century, possibly from the new world of South America, and they were probably still seen at this period as high status exotica; the shaggy-haired, sharp-eared, white Iceland dog was, according to *OED*, a favoured lapdog, a domestic station substantiated by Pistol when he berates Nym by suggesting they are the sort of dog no man would have dealings with: 'Pish for thee, Iceland dog! thou prick-ear'd cur of Iceland!' (*H5*, II i 42-3).
- 24 *jointure*] estate held jointly by husband and wife, or solely by the wife, during the husband's lifetime and settled on the wife to provide for her in the event of the husband's death; Sir Oliver's proposal of £500 a year is a generous one; for the value of money at this period see note to II iv 94 above.
- 25 *chains*] chains made of precious metals were used not only for ornament and status display, but also as a way of storing wealth; cf. II i 114ff. where William cheats his father into giving Frances a valuable chain.
- 26 *envious*] probably 'full of ill-will, malicious' (*OED*, a.2) rather than the usual meaning.
- 26 *change*] used transitively, 'transmute' (*OED*, v.6.a); *OED* gives the phrase 'to change one's life' as meaning 'to die,' noting it as obsolete and rare.
- 27 *over-cloyed*] 'overloaded to the point of disgust' (*OED*, v¹.7 and 8); but the word 'cloy' had then a range of meanings (now lost) around the idea of driving a spike, tusk or nail into something and specifically could mean to render a gun useless by driving a plug into the touch-hole (*OED*, v¹.4); the sexual parallels are obvious and could possibly be in play here.
- 28 *busy*] as at I ii 113 – 'sexually active.'
- 28-30 *keep ... physic*] Taffeta's condition, that she be allowed to 'keep' – i.e., 'stay in' (*OED*, v.33) – her room during her periods and, if she wishes, take medicine ('physic') to relieve the pain would seem perfectly reasonable to a modern readership, but in the male-determined diegesis of this text – reflecting the homocentric world view of its contemporary audience – this request is clearly a mere cover for receiving under her husband's nose other men (possibly her physician, as Mistress Purge does Dr Glister in *The Family of Love*) with whom she can 'take physic', i.e., 'have sex,' (for 'physic = fornication' see Williams); cf. also Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 5.2.166-76, where the 'reformed' prostitute, Jane, swears to her husband: 'Henceforth forever I defy ... | ... Taking false physic.'

- To have my maid read *Amadis de Gaul*
 Or *Donzel del Phoebo* to me? Shall I have
 A caroche of the last edition,
 The coachman's seat a good way from the coach, E2
 35 That if some other ladies and myself
 Chance to talk bawdy, he may not overhear us?
 SIR OLIVER
 All this and more.
 TAFFETA Shall we have two chambers?
 And will you not presume unto my bed
 Till I shall call you by my waiting maid?
 SIR OLIVER
 40 Not I, by heaven!
 TAFFETA And when I send her,
 Will you not entice her to your lust,
 Nor tumble her before you come to me?
 ADRIANA
 Nay, let him do his worst. Make your match sure
 And fear not me. I never yet did fear
 45 Anything my master could do to me.

Knock [within].

TAFFETA
 What noise is that? Go see, Adriana,
 And bring me word.

-
- 31-2 *Amadis ... Phoebo*] respectively the title and the main character of two popular romances originally written in Spanish; *Amadis de Gaul* was translated into English in the last decade of the 16th century, and *The Mirror of Knighthood* (in which *Donzel del Phoebo* is the hero) at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries. That romances were popular with literate women of Taffeta's class is evidenced by Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* in which a citizen's wife in the audience demands that their apprentice Rafe be given a part in the play in which he will 'kill a lion with a pestle' (Induction, 42), leading the actors to give him a copy of the romance *Palmerin d'Oliva* from which to read (I, 214-26), presumably with the aim of pacifying the citizen's wife.
- 33 *caroche ... edition*] 'a stately and luxurious coach of the latest type or fashion' (*OED*, *caroche*, and *edition*, n.2.b).
- 35-6 *if ... us*] again, the contemporary audience would have been utterly cynical of this as the reason for ensuring that the coachman was seated out of earshot of the occupants of the coach; coaches were notorious as places where sexual liaisons – and their consequent activities – could be carried on; cf. Middleton, (i) *A Mad World, My Masters*, 3.3.52-3, 'Marry, sir, she comes, most commonly, coached,' and (ii) *The Owl's Almanac*, 361-2, 'Since close coaches were made running bawdy-houses.' If the idea of secretly having sexual intercourse in a coach strikes the modern mind as implausible we should bear in mind the fact that these vehicles jolted the passengers about considerably and were very noisy, running as they did with metal rimmed wheels and primitive suspension systems on rough roads.
- 38 *presume*] 'take for granted (sc. your right to come)' (*OED*, v.4); or perhaps simply with ellipsis of 'to come.'
- 42 *tumble*] 'have sex with' (*OED*, v.9.a).
- 43-5 *Nay ... to me.*] Adriana's answer is a textbook equivocation: 'let him do anything with me – you just get married ('make your match sure') and don't bother about me, as I'll never be worried by whatever he does (i.e., he can have sex with me as much as he wants).' For the sexual use of female servants by male employers, see II iii 45-90.

[Exit ADRIANA]

I am so haunted
 With a swaggering captain that swears, God bless us,
 Like a very termagant. A rascal knave
 50 That says he will kill all men which seek to wed me.

Enter ADRIANA.

ADRIANA
 Oh mistress! Captain Face, half-drunk, is now
 Coming upstairs.
 SIR OLIVER Oh God! Have you no room
 Beyond this chamber. Has sworn to kill me,
 And piss in my very phys'nomy.
 TAFFETA
 55 What, are you afraid, Sir Oliver?
 SIR OLIVER Not afraid,
 But of all men I love not to meddle with a drunkard.
 Have you any room backwards?
 TAFFETA None, sir.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 Is there ne'er a trunk or cupboard for him?

50. seek] seeks Q1. 51. Face] Puffe Q1 (*and throughout this scene except in 87 and 121s.d.*).
 54. phys'nomy] visnomy Q1.

48 *with*] 'by' (*OED*, 40.a – 'after a passive verb, indicating the principal agent').
 49 *termagant*] 'a violent, overbearing person, a blusterer, a bully' (*OED*, n.2.a).
 49 *rascal*] 'wretched, common' (*OED*, adj.1 and 2); as noted at I i 35, a stronger term than now.
 56 *meddle with*] a word with a wide range of meanings, many of which could apply here; at its simplest, it could mean 'mix or associate with' (*OED*, v.3 and 4) but in a stronger sense could mean 'busy oneself or interfere with' (*OED*, v.7), and, in an even stronger sense, 'fight with' (*OED*, v.6); it had also specific sexual meanings, ranging from 'engage in sexual foreplay' to (and more usually) 'have sexual intercourse with' (Williams and *OED*, v.5), and though such senses clearly cannot be intended literally here, the strong association of the word with sex along with its context in a sexually charged exchange could bring that semantic range into play, especially if there is an undercurrent of homoerotic humour running through this play (see I iii 111 and II iii 95, and Introduction, The Play, The Whitefriars audience). For a similar pun playing on the meanings 'fight with' and 'have sex with' see *Tw.N.*, III iv 251, where Sir Toby is trying to persuade the reluctant Viola to accept a duel with Sir Andrew: 'strip your sword naked; for meddle you must.' Later in the scene the equally reluctant Sir Andrew declares (280), 'Pox on't, I'll not meddle with him;' as at II iii 95 in *Ram Alley*, the fact that Viola is a girl dressed as a boy must surely provide some of the comic potential of that scene.
 57 *room backwards*] i.e., 'a room towards the back of the house,' but by innuendo also 'anus,' so Sir Oliver appears to be suggesting sodomy; in terms of sexual innuendo, 'backwards' normally correlates with 'fall,' indicating the movement of a woman into a position for intercourse, but here it suggests quite an opposite position; see note to 59 below.
 58 *trunk ... cupboard*] like 'room' these are both cavities or enclosed spaces in which objects are put, and hence are suggestive of the vagina. Another meaning of 'trunk,' even more suggestive in terms of shape, was 'the cylindrical case of an explosive rocket or mortar' (*OED*, n.11). Williams quotes instances of its use as suggestive of the vagina, and in *Wint.*, III iii 74-5, the shepherd, when he finds the exposed Perdita, considers the possibility of 'some stair-work, some trunk-

- Is there ne'er a hole backwards to hide him in?
 CAPTAIN FACE [*Within.*]
 60 I must speak with her.
 SIR OLIVER Oh God, 'a comes!
 ADRIANA
 Creep under my mistress' farthingale, knight.
 That's the best and safest place in the chamber.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 Ay, there, there – that he will never mistrust.
 ADRIANA
 Enter, knight. Keep close. Gather yourself
 65 Round like a hedgehog. Stir not, whate'er you hear,
 See, or smell, knight. God bless us, here 'a comes!

Ent[er] C[APTAIN] FACE.

- CAPTAIN FACE
 Bless thee, widow and wife.
 TAFFETA Sir, get you gone.
 Leave my house, or I will have you conjured
 With such a spell you never yet have heard of.
 70 Have you no other place to vent your froth.
 But in my house? Is this the fittest place
 Your Captainship can find to puff in – ha?

E2v

-
- work, some behind-door-work;' the trunk in question there could have been used simply for concealment of the lover, but 'trunk-work' could have the secondary meaning, 'sexual activity.'
- 59 *hole*] in a house a 'hole' would have been 'a secret room' (*OED*, n.2.a) such as, at this period, was used for hiding priests in Catholic households; in the body it could be the 'orifice of any organ' (*OED*, n.8), and here, as the 'hole' is 'backwards' the reference is again to the anus. Tutchim is rather clumsily labouring the innuendo already made by Sir Oliver.
- 61 *farthingale*] a very wide, hooped petticoat (i.e., outer skirt – see I i 57-8 and note) supported by canes or bones sewn into the cloth; they could be over a metre in diameter; the swaggering captain in Sharpham's *Cupid's Whirligig*, H4v, when trapped in Lady Troublesome's bedroom, offers to hide 'any where, sweete Lady, and it be vnder your farthingale.'
- 63 *mistrust*] 'suspect' (*OED*, v.2).
- 64 *keep close*] as at I ii 182, 'stay concealed.'
- 68 *conjured*] 'carried away (sc. by means of the magician's arts)' (*OED*, v.8); but the word occurs in sexual contexts meaning variously: (a) 'to cause an erection' (by 'raising a spirit' – cf. *Rom.*, II i 17-20: 'I conjure thee by Rosaline's bright eyes ... | By her fine foot, straight leg, and quivering thigh, | And the demesnes that there adjacent lie'); (b) 'to have sex;' (c) 'to cause detumescence by inducing a orgasm' (see entry for 'conjure' in Williams); if Taffeta is playing on some such sense, it would be ironically, and most likely the third.
- 70 *vent your froth*] to 'vent' would be, firstly, to 'let loose, pour out,' emotions or feelings (*OED*, v².4.a and b) and 'froth' could be understood as 'meaningless ranting of no value (akin to *OED*, n.2.a) or, more graphically, 'foaming saliva' (*OED*, n.1.b); but 'vent' could also be to 'discharge bodily fluids' (*OED*, v.2b), and Williams quotes instances where it is clearly semen that is being discharged, whilst he also gives 'froth = semen,' all which leaves little doubt of Taffeta's secondary meaning.
- 72 *puff*] (a) 'to swagger, behave insolently' (*OED*, v.2); (b) 'to swell up, inflate with vanity' (*OED*, v.5.a), but also, in this context, with an implication of swelling in sexual excitement. 'Puffe' was, of course, the alternative name for this character and is the variant used mostly in this scene, but whilst it may have been used here as a pun on the character's name when that name was still

CAPTAIN FACE

How! Am I not thy spouse? Did'st thou not say
 These arms should clip thy naked body fast
 75 Betwixt two linen sheets, and be sole lord
 Of all thy pewter-work? Thy word is passed,
 And know, that man is powder, dust and earth
 That shall once dare to think thee for his wife.

TAFFETA

How now, you slave! One call the constable.

CAPTAIN FACE

80 No constable with all his halberdiers
 Dare once advance his head or peep upstairs
 If I but cry, "keep down." Have I not lived
 And marchèd on the siegèd walls
 In thunder, lightning, rain and snow,
 85 And eke in shot of powdered balls,
 Whose costly marks are yet to show?

TAFFETA

Captain Face, for my last husband's sake,

undecided that provides little evidence that 'Puffe' was the final choice of name as the word is also used in relation to Lieutenant Beard (II i 48 and note) and is therefore a word equally applicable here because of its association with the braggart soldier type. (For a fuller discussion of the variant name see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy).

73-6 *Am ... passed*] Face again claims that Taffeta has agreed to marry him in words of the future tense, and is thus contractually bound; see III i 54 and note.

74 *clip*] 'embrace' (*OED*, v¹.1), often for the purpose of having sexual intercourse.

74 *fast*] 'tightly' (*OED*, adv.2.a).

76 *pewter-work*] the cheaper kind of household plate was made of pewter; as with his choice of ordinary (see III i 39 and note) Face betrays the gap between his aspirations and what might constitute real social advancement.

77 *powder*] like dust and earth, this was the material of which the physical body was composed and to which it returned when decomposed (*OED*, n.1.c). Powder, dust and earth all occur in the context of destruction at points in the Bible. For 'dust and earth,' cf. 2 *Samuel*, 22.43 in *The Geneva Bible*: 'Then did I beat them as small as the dust of the earth: I did tread them flat as the clay of the street, and did spread them abroad.' *The Bishops' Bible* version of *Deuteronomy*, 28.24 has: 'The Lorde shall turne the rayne of the land unto powder and dust; even from heavê shal they come downe upon thee, untill thou be brought to naught' (though the *Geneva Bible* has for the first line of this verse, 'The Lord shall give thee for the rain of thy land, dust and ashes').

78 *think thee*] i.e., 'think of thee.'

80 *halberdiers*] members of the civic guard who carried halberds (long-handled weapons, the head of which combined a spear and an axe).

81 *peep*] probably 'peer cautiously' (*OED*, v².1) but it could be, effectively, a repetition of 'advance his head' – 'protrude slightly into view' (*OED*, v².2).

83 *marchèd ... siegèd*] Q1 is by no means consistent in eliding an unsounded /ed/ in a past tense and the metre of the verse is extremely irregular through the play, so the decision here to mark the /ed/ of these two verbs as sounded is based on Face's general tendency to bombastic, theatrical language combined with the feeling that without them the line would be too short even for *Ram Alley*; pronounced thus the line has a certain Marlovian ring to it. 'Sieged = besieged.'

85 *eke*] 'also' – another archaism.

85 *in shot ... balls*] 'subjected to fusillades of musket or cannon balls fired by gunpowder' (*OED*, *shot*, n¹.7.a; *powdered*, 5); but a good deal of sexual innuendo revolved around guns and artillery: 'balls' needs no explanation; 'shot' was 'semen' (Williams, entry for *shoot*) and 'powdered' could be 'infected with venereal disease' (Williams); the phrase as a whole thus suggests, 'emissions of semen from testicles that are infected with the pox.'

- With whom you were familiarly acquainted,
 I am content to wink at these rude tricks.
 90 But hence, trouble me no more. If you do,
 I shall lay you fast where you shall see
 No sun or moon.
 CAPTAIN FACE Nor yet the northern pole!
 A fico for the sun and moon! Let me live in a hole,
 So these two stars may shine.
 TAFFETA Sir, get you gone,
 95 You swaggering, cheating, Turnbull Street rogue,
 Or I will hale you to the common jail
 Where lice shall eat you.
 CAPTAIN FACE Go to! I shall spurn
 And slash your petticoat.
 TAFFETA Run to the Counter!
 Fetch me a red-bearded sergeant. I'll make
 100 You, Captain, think the devil of hell is come
 To fetch you, if he once fasten on you.

-
- 89 *wink at*] 'close my eyes to, overlook' (*OED*, v¹.6.a and b).
 89 *rude*] 'unmannerly, offensive' (*OED*, adj.4.a).
 91 *lay you fast*] 'imprison you' (*OED*, v¹.25.b).
 92 *Nor ... pole!*] 'nor even the pole star!' 'The northern pole' could refer to either the star that lies in the 'tail' of the constellation Ursa Minor, or to the northern heavens generally, but given 94 the former seems more likely.
 93 *A fico*] see III iii 6 and note.
 93 *hole*] possibly 'a dingy, mean habitation' (*OED*, n.2.c) but probably here, following on from Taffeta's threat, 'a dungeon or prison cell,' (*OED*, n.2.b); but if Face appears to be embracing with enthusiasm the idea of being permanently locked up by Taffeta we should remember that 'hole' also meant 'vagina,' and that is the 'hole' he dreams of being buried in.
 94 *these ... stars*] presumably Face indicates Taffeta's eyes rather than his own, in a clumsy attempt at gallantry.
 95 *Turnbull Street*] this ran north towards Clerkenwell, parallel with and to the east of the river Fleet (which turned the mills of its earlier name, Turnmill Street) starting at Cow Cross lane, which in turn ran off the north-west corner of Smithfield. It was renowned for its brothels and taverns – 'the most disreputable street in Lond., a haunt of thieves and loose women' (Sugden).
 96 *hale*] 'haul' (*OED*, v¹.1.b).
 97 *spurn*] 'kick contemptuously' (*OED*, v¹.5).
 98 *petticoat*] this could be an external skirt; it was not, as now, something necessarily worn under the outer garment (*OED*, n.2.a); see note to I i 57-8.
 98 *Counter*] one of the two prisons attached to the city sheriffs' courts, or possibly one of the courts themselves; if Taffeta's house is situated on the route between Hosier Lane and Ram Alley, the nearest Counter would be the one at Wood Street, off Cheapside and the other side of St Paul's in the City; that was a considerable distance and it would be some time before assistance arrived, so this might be just an attempt to frighten Face.
 99 *red-bearded sergeant*] a 'sergeant' was an officer of the law responsible, amongst other duties, for the arrest of debtors or felons (not to be confused with the 'serjeants at law,' who were the highest ranking members of the legal profession based at the Serjeants' Inns, one of which was in Fleet Street alongside Ram Alley); Taffeta probably specifies a red beard because the colour red suggested courage (which would be a desirable quality in the sergeant), rather than because it was then in fashion – see I ii 5 and note.
 101 *fasten on you*] 'seizes on you, lays hold of you' (*OED*, v.13).

CAPTAIN FACE

Damn thee and thy sergeants, thou mercer's punk!
Thus will I kick thee and thy farthingales.

SIR OLIVER

Hold, Captain!

CAPTAIN FACE What, do you cast your whelps?

105 What, have I found you, sir? Have I not placed

My sakers, culverins, demi-culverins,

My cannons, demi-cannons, basilisks

Upon her breach, and do I not stand

Ready with my pike to make my entry,

110 And are you come to man her?

SIR OLIVER Good Captain, hold!

CAPTAIN FACE

Are not her bulwarks, parapets, trenches,

E3

Scarfs, counter-scarfs, fortifications,

Curtains, shadows, mines, counter-mines,

Rampires, forts, ditches, works, water-works,

115 And is not her half-moon mine, and do you bring

102 *mercier's punk*] Taffeta was the wife of a mercer – a dealer in the finer cloths such as silk and velvet – not a 'mercier's whore,' as Face gratuitously suggests.

104 *cast*] 'give birth' (*OED*, v.20.b).

104 *whelps*] 'applied deprecatingly to the offspring of a noxious creature or being, (*OED*, n¹.3.a).

106-7 *sakers ... basilisks*] all examples of 17th century artillery; Face is playing upon the common assimilation of siege warfare to sexual seduction (noted at 85 above) and, though the identification of his penis as a weapon is not fully realised until 109, this thesaurical battery of cannons is clearly allusive of his (asserted) sexual potency.

108 *breach*] (a) 'a gap in a fortification made by a battery' (*OED*, n.7.c); (b) 'female pudendum' (Colman).

108 *stand*] (a) 'wait, pause' (*OED*, v.4.a); (b) 'have an erection' (*OED*, v.6.c).

109 *Ready ... entry*] (a) armed and prepared to charge into the breach; (b) 'sexually aroused and about to penetrate.' Cf. Falstaff's use of the image to describe the less desirable consequences of such an engagement in *2H4*, II iv 49-50: 'to come off the breach with his pike bent bravely.'

110 *to man her*] (a) 'to master or take charge of her' (*OED*, v.9) with the further meaning 'to occupy' in a sexual sense, and possibly also in the sense of 'ride a horse' (*OED*, v.3b) which would also have a sexual application; (b) possibly, 'to escort her' (*OED*, v.5).

111-5 *bulwarks ... half-moon*] continuing the siege warfare theme, these are all types of fortification that could be siege earthworks, or, in the case of the mines, subterranean military activity associated with sieges; 'scarfs' and 'rampires' would be 'scarps' and 'ramparts' in modern English, and though the latter terms remained in use until the 19th century, the former were going out of use by the mid-17th century and both may well have been seen as slightly archaic by then; these spellings have therefore been kept, as they might have been chosen to fit in with Face's deliberate use of archaic language. In terms of their potential for sexual innuendo most of these structures involve hollows or cavities (see note to 58 above) though that becomes less the case as the list progresses until 'water-works' brings us firmly back to base, whilst with his 'half-moon' Face shifts to a slightly different analogy with shape; as with the artillery list, though, a too precise application of these terms to the female body would be to miss the overall literary effect. *OED* does not give 'water-works' as meaning 'the urinary system' until 1902 [*waterwork*, 3.c, *pl. euphem.*] but that is clearly what is intended here; Williams, in his entry for *firework*, gives an instance of 'whores [being] represented in terms of their sexual and eliminatory organs, two men having 'been joynt purchasers, In fire, and water-works, and truckt together;' cf. also the Bawd's song in Middleton's *A Fair Quarrel*, 4.4.130-5: 'Whate'er we get ... | By sailors newly landed, | To put in for fresh waters.'

A rescue, goodman knight?
 TAFFETA Call up my men!
 Where be these knaves? Have they no ears or hearts?

Enter two or three with clubs.

Beat hence this rascal. Some other fetch a warrant.
 I'll teach him know himself.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM Down with the slave!
 SIR OLIVER
 120 'Tis not your beard shall carry it. Down with the rogue!
 CAPTAIN FACE
 Not Hercules 'gainst twenty!

Ex[eunt CAPTAIN] FACE [and servants.]

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Ah, sirrah,
 I knew my hands no longer could forbear him.
 Why did you not strike the knave, Sir Oliver?
 SIR OLIVER
 Why, so I did.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM But then it was too late.
 SIR OLIVER
 125 What would you have me do when I was down,
 And he stood thundering with his weapon drawn
 Ready to cut my throat?

Enter ADRIANA.

ADRIANA The rogue is gone,
 And here's one from the Lady Somerfield
 To entreat you come with all the speed you can
 130 To Saint John's Street.

-
- 116 *goodman*] a form of respectful address usually used for those of low social rank, and here used ironically.
 118 *warrant*] a writ authorising an arrest, and issued by a person with the power to do so on behalf of a court of law rather than an individual; Taffeta seems to have forgotten that as a Justice of the Peace Tutchim should have been able to do this (cf. IV iv 24, where he tells Lady Somerfield that he will provide a warrant for the arrest of William).
 120 *carry it*] see III i 45 and note.
 121 *Not ... twenty*] i.e., 'not even Hercules could hold out against twenty' – though at the most there are five men confronting him.
 122 *forbear*] 'leave alone, keep off' (*OED*, v.4.c).
 126 *thundering*] (a) 'shouting invective' (*OED*, vbl.n.3) or (b) 'beating me severely' (*OED*, vbl.n.2.b).
 126 *with ... drawn*] if 'shouting invective' then this would mean simply 'with his sword in hand', but if 'beating me severely' then one would invert this phrase to 'with his drawn weapon,' –i.e., 'with his naked sword.' In either case, there is the inevitable innuendo in which 'weapon = penis.'

JUSTICE TUTCHIM Which I will do.

TAFFETA Gentlemen,

I am sorry you should be thus disturbed

Within my house but now all fear is past

You are most welcome. Supper ended,

I'll give a gracious answer to your suit.

135 Meanwhile, let nought dismay, or keep you mute.

Ex[eunt].

130 *Which ... do]* though Tutchim agrees to go 'with all the speed [he] can' he does no such thing as when we next see him (in IV i) he is still at Taffeta's house and somewhat the worse for drink, having accepted her invitation to stay for supper.

[Act III, Scene v.]

Enter THROAT, FRANCES, *and* DASH.

THROAT

Pay the coachman, Dash, pay him well,
 And thank him for his speed. Now *Vivat Rex*,
 The knot is knit which not the law itself,
 With all his Hydra heads and strongest nerves,
 5 Is able to disjoin. Now let him hang,
 Fret out his guts, and swear the stars from heaven,
 'A never shall enjoy you. You shall be rich.
 Your lady mother this day came to town
 In your pursuit. We will but shift some rags
 10 And straight go take her blessing.

FRANCES That must not be. E3v

Furnish me with jewels and then myself,
 Attended by your man and honest Beard,
 Will thither first, and with my lady mother
 Crave a peace for you.

THROAT I like that well.

15 Her anger somewhat calmed I, brisk and fine,
 Some half hour after will present myself
 As son-in-law unto her, which she must needs
 Accept with gracious looks.

FRANCES Ay, when she knows
 Before by me from what an eminent plague

20 Your wisdom has preserved me.

THROAT Ay, that, that –
 That will strike it dead. But here comes Beard.

Location] Throat's chambers, after his return from St Giles where he and Frances married (see III ii 3).

2 *Vivat Rex*] 'long live the king' (Latin); this outburst of royalist enthusiasm derives, presumably, from a perception that the king is responsible for the laws that make Throat's marriage secure.

4 *Hydra heads*] the Hydra was a nine-headed snake which grew nine more heads when any one was cut off; its capacity to generate nine problems for every one solved by an opponent makes it an apt metaphor of the law.

4 *nerves*] 'those elements which constitute the main strength of something, its sinews or tendons, its vigour' (*OED*, n.2.a, 1.a, and 3a).

6 *fret out*] 'wear away by gnawing' (*OED*, v¹.2.a).

6 *from*] 'out of' (*OED*, prep.9).

7 *enjoy*] 'have the pleasure of sex with you' (*OED*, v.3.a and 4.b); see II ii 73 and note.

9 *shift some rags*] 'change out of these clothes into others' (*OED*, *shift*, v.9; *rag*, n¹.1.b).

11 *furnish ... jewels*] 'furnish' probably here means 'supply' (*OED*, v.4.a) though 'decorate, embellish' (*OED*, v.5.b) could be included in the sense; the 'jewels' Frances requests would, of course, also be understood as 'testicles' (Williams).

14 *a peace*] as there is as yet no quarrel between Throat and his (supposed) mother-in-law, this would mean 'a state of friendly relations' (*OED*, n.15.b).

15 *brisk*] 'lively, cheerful' (*OED*, adj.1 and 1.a) or, possibly, 'well-dressed, spruce' (*OED*, adj.3).

19 *eminent*] 'signal, noteworthy' (*OED*, adj.4).

19 *plague*] 'calamity, evil' (*OED*, n.2.a).

21 *strike it dead*] 'settle the matter for good' (*OED*, *strike*, v.70?); cf. I ii 206 and note.

Enter BEARD.

BEARD

What, are you sure? Tied fast by heart and hand

THROAT

I now do call her wife. She now is mine,

Sealed and delivered by an honest priest

25 At Saint Giles in the Field.

BEARD

God give you joy, sir.

THROAT

But where's mad Smallshanks?

BEARD

Oh, hard at hand,

And almost mad at loss of his fair bride.

Let not my lovely mistress be seen,

And see if you can draw him to compound

30 For all his title to her. I have sergeants

Ready to do the feat when time shall serve.

THROAT

Stand you aside, dear love.

[FRANCES stands aside.]

Nay, I will firk

My silly novice as he was never firked

Since midwives bound his noddle. Here they come.

*Enter W[ILLIAM] SMALLSH[ANKS], TH[OMAS]
SMALLSH[ANKS], and BOUTCHER.*

WILLIAM

35 Oh, Master Throat, unless you speak good news

My hopes are crossed and I undone for ever.

24 *sealed and delivered*] 'formally handed over' – a legal phrase (see *OED*, deliver, 8.b).

25 *Saint ... Field*] see III ii 3 and note above.

29 *compound*] 'settle the dispute, make terms,' possibly, additionally, 'by agreeing a compromise' or 'by agreeing a compensatory payment' (*OED*, v.10, 11 and 12); a term used in law.

30 *title*] in law, 'the legal right to possession,' (*OED*, n.7.a) usually of property, but in the 17th century that term could comprehend women.

31 *do the feat*] 'do the deed,' (*OED*, n.1) or, in this case, 'enact our plan;' the 'feat' Beard is referring to is made clear in the conversation following William's arrest between 79-95 of this scene.

32 *firk*] (a) probably, here, meaning 'cheat,' but it could also mean (b) 'beat or thrash' in a figurative sense, or (c) 'fuck' – also in a figurative sense (for that meaning of 'firk' and the possible pun see I iii 111 and note).

34 *since ... noddle*] i.e., 'since he was a baby.' It was the practice at this period to 'swaddle' babies (that is, bind them quite tightly in a cloth to keep them from moving) from the moment they were born; the cloth could be wrapped around the whole head or held on to the head by means of a strap running round the forehead and the back of the head; as 'noddle' could mean the back of the head, the crown of the head, or the whole head, the phrase 'bound his noddle' could refer to either of these ways of swaddling.

36 *My ... crossed*] cf. III iii 16.

- THROAT
 I never thought you'd come to other end,
 Your courses have been always so profane,
 Extravagant and base.
 WILLIAM Nay, good sir, hear!
 40 Did not my love return? Came she not hither?
 For Jove's love, speak.
 THROAT Sir, will you get you gone,
 And seek your love elsewhere, for know my house
 Is not to entertain such customers
 As you and your comrades.
 WILLIAM Is the man mad,
 45 Or drunk? Why Master Throat, know you to whom
 You talk so saucily?
 THROAT Why, unto you, E4
 And to your brother Smallshanks. Will you be gone?
 BOUTCHER
 Nay, good sir, hold us not in this suspense.
 Answer directly – came not the virgin hither?
 THROAT
 50 Will you be gone directly? Are you mad?
 Come you to seek a virgin in Ram Alley
 So near an Inn of Court, and amongst cooks,
 Alemen and laundresses. Why, are you fools?

-
- 38 *courses*] 'personal conduct or behaviour, especially of a reprehensible kind' (*OED*, n.22.b).
 38 *profane*] strictly speaking, behaviour that contradicts the demands of religion, but the word could cover any kind of reprehensible conduct, such as disturbing the peace or frequenting bawdy houses (*OED*, a.3).
 39 *base*] 'immoral, despicable' (*OED*, a.9).
 43 *customers*] 'companions,' or more simply, 'people one associates with' (*OED*, n.4.a). As William is looking for a woman, and 'customer' was the common term for a prostitute's client, Throat may be playing upon that sense of the word and hence also suggesting, 'my house isn't the kind of place to provide what you and your comrades are looking for.'
 46 *saucily*] 'rudely, insolently' (*OED*, a¹.2.a), with also, possibly, a glance at 'lewdly.'
 49 *virgin*] in this case, simply 'young woman' – i.e., one whose age could allow the presumption of virginity (*OED*, n.3.a); Throat, however, takes the term more literally in his reply.
 52 *So ... Court*] the Inn of Court referred to is probably the Inner Temple, in the Temple precinct within which Ram Alley also lay, but its subordinate Clifford's Inn was also just over the road on Fleet Street (Sugden).
 52 *cooks*] cf. I iii 123, and see also note to I i Title.
 53 *Alemen*] 'alehouse keepers' (*OED* *ale*), but 1693 is the earliest illustration; under *man*, n¹.4.p, they are defined as 'manufacturers of ale' but no dated exemplification is given; Sugden notes that there was a brewery in Ram Alley in Henry VIII's reign, but gives no indication of its date of closure; if the meaning here is 'alehouse keepers' there may be an implication that they are also pimps, since taverns and brothels were closely related businesses.
 53 *laundresses*] for the reputation of laundresses (who acted as caretakers in the Inns and who also had a reputation for extending their services beyond washing dirty linen – see I i 82 and note); the Inns of Court were all-male societies with a large proportion of young, single men – up to 70% according to Finkelpearl, *Op. Cit.*, p.6 – and so had a reputation for licence (for Throat's encomium on the good old days of sexual freedom at the Inns of Court see III ii 15-29).

- WILLIAM
 Sir, leave this firk of law, or by this light
 55 I'll give your throat a slit. Came she not hither?
 Answer to that point.
 THROAT What, have you lost her?
 Come, do not gull your friends.
 WILLIAM By heaven, she's gone,
 Unless she be returned since we last left you.
 THROAT
 Nay then, I cry you mercy. She came not hither,
 60 As 'am an honest man. Is't possible
 A maid so lovely, fair, so well demeaned,
 Should be took from you? What, from you three
 So young, so brave and valiant gentlemen?
 Sure, it cannot be.
 THOMAS 'Afore God, 'tis true.
 WILLIAM
 65 To our perpetual shames, 'tis now too true.
 THROAT
 Is she not left behind you in the tavern?
 Are you sure you brought her out? Were you not drunk
 And so forgot her?
 WILLIAM A pox on all such luck!
 I will find her, or by this good light
 70 I'll fire all the city. Come, let's go.
 Whoever has her shall not long enjoy her.
 I'll prove a contract. Let's walk the round.
 I'll have her if she keep above the ground.

Ex[eunt WILLIAM, THOMAS and BOUTCHER].

THROAT
 Ha ha ha! 'A makes me sport, i' faith!

73s.d. *Ex[eunt ...]] Exit Q1.*

- 54 *firk of law*] 'legal trick or cheat.'
 59 *cry you mercy*] 'beg your pardon' (*OED*, *mercy*, n.3).
 60 *'am*] ellipsis of 'I.'
 61 *well demeaned*] 'well mannered, well behaved' (*OED*, ppl.a.).
 70 *fire ... city*] cf. III iii 12 above.
 71 *enjoy*] 'possess with delight' (*OED*, v.3.a) but also, more strongly, 'have sex with' (*OED*, v.4.b).
 72 *prove a contract*] William and 'Constantia' have not yet been formally married, but an agreement to marry at some point in the future could be taken at this period as constituting a *de facto* and legally binding contract to marry.
 72 *walk the round*] strictly speaking '*the* round' would refer to a patrol regularly walked by the watch of a garrison or town (*OED*, *round*, n¹.14) but '*a* round' could be simply a roundabout route or course which comes back to where it started (*OED*, *round*, n¹.12.c); the latter seems more likely – 'let's repeat the route we have just taken.'
 73 *if ... ground*] 'if she is not in her grave' – i.e., 'she is still alive.'

- 75 The gull is mad, stark mad. Dash, draw the bond
 And a release of all his interest
 In this my loved wife.
 BEARD Ay, be sure of that,
 For I have certain goblins in buff jerkins
 Lie in ambuscado for him.

*Enter [WILLIAM, THOMAS, and BOUTCHER] with the
 SERGEANTS.*

- SERGEANT I arrest you, sir.
 WILLIAM
 80 Rescue! Rescue!
 THROAT Oh, he is caught.
 WILLIAM I'll give you bail!
 Hang off, honest catchpoles. Master Throat, good, wise,
 Learned and honest Master Throat, now, now,
 Now or never help me.
 THROAT What's the matter?
 WILLIAM
 Here are two retainers, hangers-on, sir, E4v
 85 Which will consume more than ten liveries,
 If by your means they be not straight shook off.
 I am arrested.
 THROAT Arrested? What's the sum?
 WILLIAM
 But thirteen pound, due to Beard the butler.

79s.d.] Q1 *after* 78 79s.p. SERGEANT] *Off.* Q1.

- 75 *draw*] ellipsis of 'up' – 'write out in due form' (*OED*, 63.a and 89).
 75 *bond*] 'a document setting out a binding agreement' (*OED*, 8.a).
 76 *release*] generally, 'a discharge or acquittance' but more specifically, and probably here, a legal term for a document which makes over an estate or other property to another person (*OED*, 2.c and 4.a).
 76 *interest*] 'right or title to ownership' (*OED*, 1.a); the words in these two lines all have a legal application, but they seem to be applied with varying degrees of specificity within that particular discourse.
 78 *goblins ... jerkins*] i.e., 'sergeants or catchpoles' (officers of the law who arrested people for debt), who wore jackets made of buff leather (*OED*, *buff*, n².2.b); seeing them as 'goblins' – i.e., as supernatural creatures – reflects the common feeling that catchpoles 'haunted' and inflicted evil on other people; cf. in Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 7.1.14, when Sir Davy meets Sergeant Curtalax: 'you see, I'm haunted now with sprites.'
 79 *ambuscado*] 'ambush' – 'an affected refashioning of *ambuscade* after Spanish' (*OED*, n.1).
 80 *Rescue!*] a cry used by those attempting to avoid being taken into legal custody (though expressed here as an imperative verb rather than, as usually, a noun) (*OED*, n.2.a).
 81 *Hang off*] 'let go your hold' (*OED*, 25).
 84 *retainers, hangers-on*] both terms for servants, dependants or followers, the latter disparaging (*OED*, *retainer*², 2.a and *hanger*², 5.a), but used here ironically.
 85 *liveries*] 'allowances of food dispensed to servants or retainers' (*OED*, n.1.b). There might be a glance at the legal term, 'the delivery of property into a person's possession,' – i.e., 'they would consume ten inheritances.'

- Do but bail me and I will save you harmless.
 THROAT
 90 Why, here's the end of riot. I know the law.
 If you be bailed by me the debt is mine,
 Which I will undertake.
 WILLIAM Law there, rogues!
 'Foot! I knew he would not let me want
 For thirteen pounds.
 THROAT Provided you seal a release
 95 Of all your claim to Mistress Somerfield.
 WILLIAM
 Sergeants, do your kind. Hale me to the hole.
 Seal a release! Sergeants, come, to prison.
 Seal a release for Mistress Somerfield!
 First I will stink in jail, be eat with lice,
 100 Endure an object worse than the devil himself,
 And that's ten sergeants peeping through the grates
 Upon my lousy linen. Come, to jail.
 'Foot! A release!
 THOMAS There's no conscience in it.
 BOUTCHER
 'Tis a demand uncharitable.
 THROAT Nay, choose.
- [FRANCES comes forward.]
- FRANCES
 105 I can hold no longer, impudent man.
 WILLIAM
 My wife! 'Foot! My wife! Let me go, sergeants.

93. knew] know Q1.

89 *save you harmless*] 'free you from liability to pay any loss, indemnify you' (*OED*, *harmless*, a.2); cf. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 3.4.109, where Easy, referring to the two putative citizens who might provide his bail, agrees, 'I'll be bound to save them harmless;' also *The Puritan Widow*, 1.4.209-10, where Nicholas, agreeing to help Captain Idle escape from prison, makes the proviso: 'You see, cousin, I am willing to do you any kindness, always saving myself harmless.'

90 *riot*] 'dissipation, debauchery, extravagance' (*OED*, n.1.a).

90-2 *I ... undertake*] Throat points out that if he takes on the debt William cannot free him from liability for it, but he accepts it nonetheless.

92 *Law there*] 'I have, in this matter, what the law allows me' (*OED*, *law*, n.1.d and *there*, adv.6.b).

94 *seal*] 'sign, solemnly agree to' (possibly by actually affixing a wax seal but that idea is probably merely latent here) (*OED*, v¹.1.c).

96 *do ... hole*] 'act according to your nature' – i.e., do your job, and drag me off to the worst dungeon in the prison (*OED*, *kind*, n.3.c; *hale*, v¹.1.b; *hole*, n.2.b); *OED* notes that the phrase 'do one's kind' specifically meant 'perform the sexual function' and whilst the second meaning may make no additional sense here, 'drag me to the hole' also contains an equally irrelevant but very obvious sexual equivoque.

102 *lousy*] probably literally, given 99, 'crawling with lice' but also in the figurative sense, 'filthy' (*OED*, a.1.a and 2).

105 *hold*] 'restrain myself' (*OED*, v.27).

105 *impudent*] 'shameless' (*OED*, a.2).

- FRANCES
 Oh, thou perfidious man! Dar'st thou presume
 To call her wife whom thou so much hast wronged.
 What conquest hast thou got, to wrong a maid,
 110 A silly, harmless maid? What glory is't
 That thou hast thus deceived a simple virgin,
 And brought her from her friends? What honour was't
 For thee to make the butler lose his office
 And run away with thee? Your tricks are known.
 115 Did'st thou not swear thou should'st be baronised,
 And had'st both lands and fortunes, both which thou want'st?
 WILLIAM
 'Foot! That's not my fault. I would have lands
 If I could get 'em.
 FRANCES I know your tricks,
 And know I now am wife unto this man.
 OMNES
 120 How?
 THROAT I thank her, sir, she has now vouchsafed
 To cast herself on me.
 FRANCES Therefore subscribe.
 Take somewhat of him for a full release, F1
 And pray to God to make you an honest man.
 If not, I do protest by earth and heaven,
 125 Although I starve, thou never shalt enjoy me.
 BEARD
 Her vow is passed, nor will she break her word.
 Look to it, mitcher.
 FRANCES I hope 'a will compound.

-
- 109 *got*] 'gained, achieved' (*OED*, ppl.a.).
 110 *silly*] this word had a range of meanings at this period, the predominant ones being: 'deserving of pity' (*OED*, adj.1a); 'defenceless' (1.b); 'weak' (2.a); 'simple, unsophisticated' (3.a); any or all of these could apply here; the least likely meaning, given that 'Constantia' is talking about herself, is the one most used today – 'feeble-minded, foolish, lacking common sense' (4 and 5a).
 110 *harmless*] 'doing no harm' (*OED*, a.4), but possibly 'free from guilt' (*OED*, a.3) – either meaning would be appropriate; cf. Prologue, 25.
 115 *baronised*] 'created a baron' (*OED*, v.rare – and in fact the only example quoted is this line). Cf. II ii 49-51, where William asks Throat to tell 'Constantia' that he 'stand[s] in hope | To be created baron.'
 116 *want'st*] 'lack' (*OED*, v.2.a) rather than 'desire' (*OED*, v.5.a), though William picks up on the latter sense to some extent in his reply.
 120s.p. *OMNES*] 'all' (Latin) – and again at 152.
 120 *vouchsafed*] 'condescended' (*OED*, v.6).
 121 *subscribe*] 'sign your name (sc. to the release document)' (*OED*, v.6), or possibly simply, 'give your assent, submit' (*OED*, v.7 and 8) but given the usage in 144 below this latter is less likely.
 122 *somewhat*] 'some amount (sc. of money)' (*OED*, n.2.a).
 127 *mitcher*] the word has four possible meanings, any of which, given that it appears to be a generalised insult thrown out by Beard, could apply here: (a) 'a petty thief' (*OED*, n.1); (b) 'a sneaking pander' (*OED*, n.2); (c) 'one who pretends poverty' (*OED*, n.2.b); (d) 'a lazy or work-shy person' (*OED*, n.3).
 127 *compound*] see 29 and note above; Frances' line is presumably spoken aside to Throat.

- WILLIAM
 'Foot! Shall I give two thousand pound a year
 For nothing?
 THOMAS Brother, come, be ruled by me.
 130 Better to take a little than lose all.
 BOUTCHER
 You see she's resolute. You'd best compound.
 WILLIAM
 I'll first be damned ere I will lose my right,
 Unless 'a give me up my forfeit mortgage,
 And bail me of this action.
 FRANCES [*Aside to THROAT*] Sir, you may choose –
 135 What's the mortgage worth?
 WILLIAM Let's have no whispering.
 THROAT
 Some forty pounds a year.
 FRANCES Do it. Do it.
 Come, you shall do it. We will be rid of him
 At any rate.
 THROAT Dash, go fetch his mortgage.

[*Exit DASH.*]

- So that your friends be bound, you shall not claim
 140 Title, right, possession in part or whole,
 In time to come, in this my loved wife.

-
- 128 *two ... year*] 'Constantia's' income, which her husband would take over; cf. II i 83-4, where William mentions this same income to his father; presumably he drops it into the conversation here as further bait for Throat.
- 130 *Better ... all*] not listed by Dent as a proverb, but a commonplace idea and similar to such proverbs as 'better is half a loaf than no bread' (H36) and 'better half than nothing' (H36.11).
- 133-4 *give .. action*] William comes to the object of his plan: being bailed to avoid imprisonment and getting Throat to accept liability for the 'debt' to Beard will not benefit him financially in the least – what he needs is the mortgage he has had to forfeit to Throat (see I i 32-4) which will give him back ownership of the land.
- 136 *some ... year*] an odd phrasing; this sum should refer to the annual interest payable on the mortgage, but as William has forfeited his mortgage – and hence the land – by not keeping up the interest payments, this would no longer apply; it could also refer to the amount that William would have to pay Throat to redeem the mortgage, but that would be a one-off payment, not a yearly sum; finally, it could be the income derived from the land which Throat would sacrifice by returning the mortgage to William, but that would not, strictly, be the worth of the mortgage but of the land itself. For the value the pound at this time see II iv 94 and I i 102.
- 138 *at any rate*] more likely, 'at any cost, on any terms' (*OED*, *rate*, n¹.14.a) than, 'in any case' (*OED*, *any*, adj.1.d).
- 139 *So that*] 'provided that, on condition that' (*OED*, *so*, conj.26.a).
- 139 *be bound*] 'will become surety (sc. for your honouring this agreement)' (*OED*, *bind*, v.17.a); a legal usage.
- 140 *Title ... whole*] Throat again presents 'Constantia' as a piece of property in whom the husband has a legal right of ownership, but slips into bawdy innuendo when he gives one of the conditions as being that William will have no right to possess any 'part' of her, that 'part' being also, punningly, the 'w/hole;' for a similar pun see I i 61 and note above.
- 141 *In ... come*] one suspects, given the pun in the previous line, that this phrase also suggests 'eventually to have an orgasm' (but see notes to II iii 37 and II i 96).

I will restore the mortgage, pay this debt,
And set you free.

WILLIAM They shall not.

BOUTCHER We will.

Come, draw the bonds, and we will soon subscribe them.

Enter DASH.

THROAT

145 They're ready drawn. Here's his release.

Sergeants, let him go.

DASH Here's the mortgage, sir.

WILLIAM

Was ever man thus cheated of a wife?

Is this my mortgage?

THROAT The very same, sir.

WILLIAM

Well, I will subscribe. God give you joy,

150 Although I have but little cause to wish it.

My heart will scarce consent unto my hand.

'Tis done.

THROAT You give this as your deeds?

OMNES We do.

THROAT

Certify them, Dash.

WILLIAM What, am I free?

THROAT

You are. Sergeants, I discharge you.

155 There's your fees.

BEARD Not so. I must have money.

THROAT

I'll pass my word.

BEARD Foutre! Words are wind!

I say I must have money.

THROAT How much, sir?

BEARD

Three pounds in hand, and all the rest tomorrow.

144 *bonds / subscribe*] see 75 and 121 and notes above.

152 *deeds*] 'written documents setting out an agreement and signed, sealed and delivered by the parties to the agreement' (*OED*, 4); 'give' in this line possibly means 'deliver,' and, since answered by 'omnes' presumably is addressed also to Boutcher and Thomas who have agreed to 'subscribe' the bonds drawn up by Dash.

153 *Certify them*] as everyone has indicated that they have ‘signed, sealed and delivered’ the bonds, ‘them’ here presumably refers to the bonds not the parties agreeing to them, and hence is an instruction to Dash to sign or ‘guarantee’ them himself as a witness (*OED*, *certify*, v.1).

156 *Foutre*] ‘fuck that!’ (French).

156 *Words are wind*] proverbial – ‘words are but wind’ (Dent, W833); cf. *Ham.*, III iv 197: ‘if words be made of breath’ – though one suspects that Beard has in mind air issuing from the other end of the body (i.e., *OED*, *wind*, n¹.10.a rather than 10.b).

THROAT

There's your sum. Now, officers, be gone.

F1v

[Exit SERGEANTS.]

160 Each take his way. I must to Saint John's Street
And see my lady mother. She's now in town,
And we to her shall straight present our duties.

THOMAS

Oh Jove, shall we lose the wench thus?

WILLIAM

Even thus.

Throat, farewell. Since 'tis thy luck to have her,
165 I still shall pray you long may live together.
Now each to his affairs.

THROAT

Good night to all.

Ex[eunt WILLIAM, THOMAS and BOUTCHER].

Dear wife, step in.

[Exit FRANCES.]

Beard and Dash, come hither.

Here, take this money. Go borrow jewels
Of the next goldsmith. Beard, take thou these books.
170 Go both to the brokers in Fetter Lane;
Lay them in pawn for a velvet jerkin
And a double ruff. Tell him 'a shall have
As much for loan tonight as I do give
Usually for a whole circuit, which done
175 You two shall man her to her mother's. Go.

Ex[eunt BEARD and DASH].

162 *present our duties*] 'pay our respects' (*OED*, *duty*, 1.a).

168 *Go ... jewels*] this is in response to Frances' request at 11 above to 'furnish me with jewels' and are the jewels which William tells Throat Frances ran away with at V iii 234-5; a pause at the end of the phrase and a kind of exasperated explanatory stress on 'Of the next goldsmith' in the following line would operate the 'jewels = testicles' innuendo, suggesting that Throat sees himself as being in need of additional 'masculinity' in order to achieve his sexual objectives.

170 *brokers*] 'dealers in second-hand clothes' and 'pawnbrowsers' (*OED*, n.2).

170 *Fetter Lane*] this lane ran north from Fleet Street almost directly opposite Ram Alley, and came out in Holborn just west of St Andrew's Church; it was known for its pawnbrowsers (Sugden).

171-2 *velvet ...ruff*] expensive and showy items of clothing; the ruff in particular was an article of conspicuous consumption used to display the face to advantage; portraits of James I show that he was prone to wearing very elaborate ruffs.

171 *jerkin*] a men's sleeveless and often ornate overgarment for the upper part of the body.

174 *circuit*] one of the twice-yearly journeys of itinerant justices around a group of county courts for holding assizes; as the circuits lasted for one to three weeks, Throat's offer of paying as much interest for one night as he would normally do for the length of a circuit is a generous one.

175 *man*] 'escort her' (*OED*, v.5) but (accidentally on Throat's part one would assume) with a glance at 'occupy' in the sexual sense; cf. III iv 110 and note.

- My fate looks big. Methinks I see already
 Nineteen gold chains, seventeen great beards, and ten
 Reverend bald heads proclaim my way before me.
 My coach shall now go prancing through Cheapside,
 180 And not be forced to hurry through the streets
 For fear of sergeants. Nor shall I need to try
 Whether my well-grassed, tumbling foot-cloth nag
 Be able to outrun a well-breathed catchpole.
 I now in pomp will ride, for 'tis most fit.
 185 He should have state that riseth by his wit.

Ex[it].

182. well-grassed] wel-grast Q1.

176 *looks big*] (a) 'full, swollen up' (*OED*, *big*, a.5; (b) 'about to give birth' (*OED*, *big*, a.4).

177-8 *Nineteen ... heads*] Throat imagines himself driving through London like a great aristocrat, preceded by a large retinue of richly-dressed, self-important attendants; cf. Hoard's soliloquy in Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 4.4.11-9, after his marriage to Jane; like Throat, who mistakenly believes Frances to be a rich heiress, Hoard believes Jane to be a rich widow who will provide him with the means to travel in state with a great following of servants.

182 *well-grassed*] 'well-grazed, well-fed' (*OED*, *grass*, v.2).

182 *tumbling*] 'moving with a tossing, rolling gait' (*OED*, ppl.a.).

182 *foot-cloth nag*] 'a light horse bearing a richly-ornamented cloth hanging down to the ground on either side' (*OED*, *foot-cloth*, 1).

183 *well-breathed*] 'of sound wind (i.e., able to run strongly for a good length of time)' (*OED*, a.)

185 *state*] 'costly and imposing display such as befits a person of rank' (*OED*, n.17.a); possibly, 'an exalted position' (*OED*, n.16).

Act IV, Scene i.

[Enter] SIR OLIVER [SMALLSHANKS],
JUSTICE TUTCHIM, TAFFETA [and] ADRIANA.

SIR OLIVER

Good meat the belly fills, good wine the brain.

Women please men; men pleasure them again.

Ka me, ka thee, one thing must rub another.

English love Scots; Welshmen love each other.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

- 5 You say very right, Sir Oliver, very right.
I have't in my noddle, i' faith! That's all the fault
Old justices have when they are at feasts.
They will bib hard. They will be fine, sunburnt,
Sufficient, foxed, or columbered now and then.

F2

Act IV ... i] Actus 4. Scæna. I. Q1. 8-9. fine, sunburnt, | Sufficient, foxed, or columbered now and then.] fine: Sun-burnt | Sufficient, foxt, or Columberd now and than, Q1.

Location] a room in Taffeta's house.

- 1-4 *Good ... other*] Jones suggests that 3 and 4 may be from an old song, but there is a greater cohesion between lines 2 and 3 than exists between either 1 and 2 or 3 and 4; taken as a whole, the four lines barely hang together, so whilst they may, in whole or part, come from an untraced song, it seems more likely that Sir Oliver, somewhat the worse for wine, is merely extemporising – and incidentally demonstrating the proverb, ‘a fat belly does not engender a subtle wit’ (Dent, B293).
- 2 *Women ... again*] ‘women delight men; men give them sexual gratification in return’ (*OED*, *please*, v.2.a; *pleasure*, v.1.a; *again*, adv.2).
- 3 *ka ... thee*] ‘you help me and I’ll help you, one good turn deserves another;’ the phrase is of obscure origin but similar to ‘claw me, claw thee,’ which in turn is close to ‘one hand doth clawe an other, a proverb used when one friend doth pleasure another’ (Dent, H87), a notion that Sir Oliver develops with ‘one thing must rub another,’ suggesting that the phrase may have carried some sexual suggestion.
- 4 *English ... other*] the suggestion of such friendly relations between the English and the Scots may well have been seen by some of the contemporary audience as an ironic glance at the arrival in England in 1603 of many Scotsmen along with James I, but for Sir Oliver it ought to be genuine given that he presumably benefited from James’ wholesale creation of baronets very early in his reign. The jibe at the Welsh is presumably that, as nobody else liked them, they had to like each other.
- 6 *noddle*] here, ‘the mind, the head as the seat of thought’ (*OED*, n.3); cf. III v 34 and note.
- 8 *bib*] ‘drink’ – specifically alcohol (*OED*, v).
- 8-9 *fine ... columbered*] in determining the meaning of these words much depends on the punctuation of the phrase as a whole, which in turn partly depends on what grammatical function the words have. Jones ignores ‘fine’ and (following Reed) treats the remaining four terms as adjectives (collectively glossing them as ‘cant phrases for being intoxicated’); Corbin and Sedge, following Dodsley, punctuate, ‘fine sunburnt, | Sufficient fox’d, or columber’d,’ thus treating ‘fine and ‘sufficient’ as adverbs and reducing the terms presumably meaning ‘drunk’ to three. This edition has preferred to take the punctuation of Q1 as suggesting that all five words are adjectival synonyms for ‘drunk’ with the colon after ‘fine’ marking that as a lead word, the remaining four (separated by commas) being simply repetition consequent upon Tutchim’s inebriated state. So, to take each of the five in turn: at IV iv 5 Tutchim says he ‘can be fine with small ado,’ clearly alluding to his drunken state, so it seems reasonable to take that word as being a slang term for ‘drunk,’ though neither *OED* nor Partridge.1 give such a definition. Concerning ‘sunburnt’ Partridge.1 glosses the phrase ‘to have been in the sun’ as ‘to be drunk,’ though from 1770 only,

- 10 Now could I sit in my chair at home and nod
 A drunkard to the stocks by virtue of
 The last statute rarely.
 TAFFETA Sir, you are merry.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 I am indeed.
 TAFFETA Your supper, sir, was light,
 But I hope you think you welcome.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM I do.
 15 A light supper, quoth you. Pray God it be.
 Pray God I carry it cleanly. I am sure it lies
 As heavy in my belly as molt lead,

but that at least suggests some connection in slang between too much sun and too much alcohol. As to 'sufficient,' if that does mean 'drunk' the usage is extremely obscure; one can at best suggest for this term that this might be a nonce usage – an ironic understatement similar to the modern 'mellow.' 'Foxed' certainly was a cant term for 'drunk' – see Middleton, *The Owl's Almanac*, 1860-1: '*Nunquam nisi potus ad arma*, never fight but when thou art foxed;' *Anything for a Quiet Life*, 1.1.148, 'I was got foxed with foolish metheglin;' and his *Hengist, King of Kent*, 5.1.374: 'As blind as one that had been foxed a se'night;' also Robert Harris, *The Drunkards Cop [Cup?]*, 1619: 'there are also tearmes of Art [for being drunk] ... one is coloured, another is foxt, a third is gone to the dogs' (quoted in S. E. Sprott, 'The Damned Crew'). Finally, Harris' list of 'tearmes' suggests that the 'columberd' of Q1 (for which *OED* gives, 'derivation and meaning uncertain: appar., like *fox*, a cant term for "drunk,"') was possibly an error for 'coloured;' in support of that idea is: (a) the words 'columberd' and 'coloured' (which appears spelled thus in Q1 on page B3 – I ii 3 of this edition) are sufficiently close to make a misreading possible as an ornately written /u/ in secretary hand could have an upward flourish which might confuse a hurried reader into seeing /columbrd/; there are, moreover, indications that the writer of the printer's copy was prone to flourishes which appear to add an additional letter to a word (see Introduction, The Text, Press variants); (b) the page in Q1 (F2v) was set by Y, the compositor who was slightly more prone to misreading copy (in particular in such a way as to add these extra letters – he also set 'charyre for 'chayre' in 10); he was also generally more careless (setting 'than' for 'then' at the end of this line, adding a space to 'nod' – or not properly filling out the line – so that it appears as /no d/, leaving out a space before 'by' in 11, and allowing the capital of 'Sufficient' to rise above the line by the height of th 'u' – perhaps by not locking up the forme properly); we might note here, too, that though 'coloured' presented no problem earlier in B3, that page was set by compositor X; (c) 'coloured' makes the line metrically correct; (d) this line is the only illustration given by *OED*, which suggests that there is no other instance of the word to support the definition. Against emendation is, first, the question of why a compositor would, if momentarily puzzled, understand and set a non-existent word rather than a fairly common one (even if 'coloured' was not an obvious word for the context), and second, that Barry's scansion is so wayward that one cannot really use an irregularity as an argument for emendation. Though emendation is tempting, on balance it is felt that alteration is not justified here.

- 10 *chair*] i.e., his judicial chair.
 10 *nod*] 'send' (*OED*, v.8) but also with an implication that the nod of assent is caused by his falling asleep, or 'nodding off' (*OED*, v.2.a) as a result of his bibbing. The image which Tutchim conjures up of the drunken justice sending a man to the stocks for being in the same state brings to mind Lear's 'see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear: change places, and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief.' (*Lr.*, IV vi 151-4).
 11 *by virtue of*] 'by the power of' (*OED*, *virtue*, n.8).
 12 *the last statute*] i.e., 4th of James, 1606, which set a fine of five shillings or six hours in the stocks for the first offence.
 12 *rarely*] 'remarkably well, splendidly' (*OED*, *adv*.3).
 14 *I hope ... welcome*] possibly reflexive – 'I hope you think yourself welcome' – but more likely with ellipsis of 'are' – 'I hope you think you are welcome.'
 16 *carry it cleanly*] 'keep it down' (*OED*, *carry*, v.26.b; *clean/cleanly*, *adv*.3/b).
 17 *molt*] 'molten.'

- Yet I'll go see my sister Somerfield.
 SIR OLIVER
 So late, good Justice?
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM Ay, even so late.
 20 Night is the mother of wit, as you may see
 By poets, or rather constables
 In their examinations at midnight.
 We'll lie together without marrying,
 Save the curate's fees and the parish a labour.
 25 'Tis a thriving course.
 SIR OLIVER That may not be,
 For excommunications then will flee.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 That's true. They fly indeed like wild geese
 In flocks, one in the breech of another.
 But the best is, a small matter stays them,

-
- 20 *Night ... wit*] throughout the rest of this speech and his next it is once again hard to follow Tutchim's train of thought, and even though he is, as he admits, inebriated, he more than ever seems to talk 'like a justice of peace, of a thousand matters and to no purpose' (Middleton, *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*, 14.29-30); he appears to start here with the idea that the lateness of the hour will actually be beneficial to his visiting his sister, as the night provokes the mind to work more efficiently, 'wit' being taken here to refer to those meanings listed in *OED* under *wit*, n.II – 'intellectual capacity, talent' (5.a), 'wisdom' (6.a), and 'liveliness of imagination and expression' (7 and 8.a); cf. 'night is the mother of counsels' (Dent, N174).
- 21-2 *constables ... midnight*] there are two possible interpretations of these lines depending on whether the connection of ideas (a) looks back to the reference to poets, or (b) forward to Tutchim's next line of thought: thus, (a) following on from the mention of poets, constables' night-time examinations are as much an invention as a poet's fictions (a result, one might surmise, of the constables' intake of alcohol); or (b) looking forward to his thoughts of sleeping with someone (see next note), night-time makes constables think about 'examining' those they apprehend more physically than mentally (for an example of which see the scene between Frances and the Sergeant in IV ii below, and there may be a crude pun on the first syllable of 'constable,' spelled 'cunstable' in Q1); in either case the connection with 'night is the mother of wit' is tenuous.
- 23 *We'll ... marrying*] though Lady Somerfield was the last subject of the conversation, it might be assumed that, given his blood relationship to her, Tutchim is now talking to Taffeta but Sir Oliver's reaction (see 25-6 and note below) makes it clear that Tutchim actually is suggesting that he is thinking of having sex with his sister. Incest between brother and sister appears in other plays of this period, most notably in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, and also in Middleton's *No Wit/Help Like a Woman's*. See also IV iv 20 and note.
- 24 *Save ... labour*] by skipping a marriage ceremony Tutchim will obviously avoid having to pay a curate (i.e., a priest – see note to II iv 51) but in what sense that will also save 'the parish a labour' is obscure, unless the curate also metonymically represents the parish.
- 25 *thriving*] 'leading to prosperity' (by saving money?) (*OED*, v.1.a) but possibly also with the additional sense of 'leading to increase' (i.e., through having children).
- 25-6 *That ... flee*] that Sir Oliver understands Tutchim to be suggesting that he will 'lie with' his sister and not with Taffeta is indicated first by the fact that he takes no offence, and second by this reference to excommunication which was, in the Catholic church at least, the punishment for incest – see *I Corinthians*, 5.1-2: 'There goeth a common saying that there is fornication among you, & suche fornication as is not named among the Gentiles: that one shoulde have his fathers wife. | And ye swell, and have not rather sorowed, that he that hath so done this dede, myght be put from among you' (*Bishops' Bible*). 'Flee' here means 'fly' (*OED*, v.6).
- 27-9 *They ... them*] further obscure and over-complicated humour from Tutchim. The lament in Thomas Bell's *The Woefull Crie of Rome, Containing a Defiance to Popery* (1605) that were he to 'relate *verbatim*, the huge Masse of popish Excommunications, time would sooner faile me then matter to write' (p.57) possibly implies that excommunications were common – or very

- 30 And so, farewell.
SIR OLIVER Farewell, good Justice Tutchim.

Exit [JUSTICE TUTCHIM].

Alas, good gentleman, his brains are crazed.
But let that pass. Speak, widow, is't a match?
Shall we clap it up?
ADRIANA Nay, if't come to clapping

much a subject of public discussion – at this period, and that might have led to the idea of their ‘flying in flocks,’ which in turn leads Tutchim to the image of wild geese (cf. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 1.1.58: ‘One day our writs, like wild-fowl, fly abroad’); at this point, though, diverted by his apparent immediate sexual needs, Tutchim possibly slips from thinking about papal writs and birds to those ‘geese’ that frequented Southwark – the ‘Winchester geese’ or prostitutes who worked in the brothels of Southwark owned by the Bishop of Winchester. Still with the idea of actual geese in mind, and having completely forgotten the excommunications that set this train of thought off, he remembers that geese fly in a ‘V’ formation and so could be said to fly ‘one in the breech of another,’ the ‘breech’ being either the garment (britches, which could be singular at this period) (*OED*, n.1.b and c), or the part of the body covered by that garment (the buttocks) (*OED*, n.4), or with a pun on ‘breach’ – ‘the female pudendum’ (Colman and Partridge.2); however, whilst this may be a neat image of real geese in flight, its application to prostitutes is not obvious, unless the idea is that there are plenty of them to be found in the streets and ‘breech’ allows another vaguely relevant sexual innuendo. ‘But the best is’ is one of those affective phrases of the humorist, indicating simply that we have come to the punch line; however, that punch line, ‘a small matter stays them,’ defies explanation – or at least, justification as a punch line to a joke; ‘stays’ most likely means ‘stops, halts’ (*OED*, v¹.20) and perhaps the ‘small matter’ that halts these geese is a customer, or, more specifically, any customer whatever his sexual dimensions – ‘even a man with a small penis can have them’ (cf. *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.1.152-3, ‘’tis a very small thing | That we [widows] withstand, our weakness is so great’); ‘stay’ could also mean ‘comfort’ (*OED*, v².1.b) which could have a sexual suggestion, or take the joke in a quite other direction as it could mean ‘linger, be long in coming’ (*OED*, v¹.7.c). But presumably the humour here derives not from Tutchim’s ‘jokes’ – these being deliberately rambling and obscure – so much as his belief in himself as a humorist; one can imagine that by ‘but the best’ Tutchim has become almost incapacitated with laughter at his own wit, whilst Sir Oliver’s, ‘Alas, good gentleman, his brains are crazed,’ (31) suggests that those on stage are as bemused as the audience surely is by now.

- 33 *clap it up*] ‘agree to marry straight away’ (*OED*, v¹.13.b) with an implication of doing so hastily; perhaps also, ‘strike a bargain’ (*OED*, v¹.7.a) by ‘clapping’ the other person’s hand, and if so, perhaps also suggesting that they take each other’s hand and agree to marry, that informal ceremony often being used to secure a legally binding marriage before the formal public ceremony in a church as in *Wint.*, I ii 103-4: ‘Ere I could make thee open thy white hand | [And] clap thyself my love;’ (but see also note to 57 below); there is probably a glance at ‘to coit’ – see next note (Partridge.2 and see also Williams, under *jumble*, quoting Cotgrave, ‘to clap ... to iumble a woman’). Cf. Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters*, 4.6.116-7, where the Mother, in response to Follywit’s eagerness to marry her daughter, says: ‘Send for a priest, and clap’t up within this hour;’ also *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 3.1.8-9, where a priest tells a couple: ‘I’ll not be long | A-clapping you together;’ and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.1.222-5, where Hoard tells his prospective bride: ‘we’ll ... carry thee away by boat to Cole Harbour, have a priest ready, and there clap it up instantly.’
- 33 *if’t ... clapping*] Adriana takes up here, and in 36 and 37, another sense of ‘clap’: ‘strike together’ (*OED*, v¹, section IV) which along with the sense ‘lie close to, stick to’ (14.a) indicates the sexual act rather than the act of marriage, as in Middleton, *A Game at Chess*, 2.2.37-8: ‘there’s no eminent trader [pimp] deals in hole-sale | But she and I have clapped a bargain up;’ another meaning, ‘to become pregnant’ (Williams), is likely in play as a second level of innuendo and in the sense that this type of ‘clapping’ is the frequent consequence of the first type. ‘Clap’ in the sense of ‘venereal disease’ is not given by *OED* as a verb until the second half of the 17th

- 35 Goodnight, i'faith! Mistress, look before you.
 There's nothing more dangerous to maid or widow
 Than sudden clappings up. Nothing has spoiled
 So many proper ladies as clappings up.
 Your shuttlecock, striding from tables to ground
 Only to try the strength of the back,
 40 Your riding a-hunting – ay, though they fall
 With their heels upward and lay as if

38. shuttlecock] shittill-cocke Q1.

century, but given Adriana's level of apparent alarm one has to ask whether that sense is being played on here – even, perhaps, if it is actually the primary sense. The rest of the speech elaborates three other activities that might be seen as endangering women: playing games, riding horses, and taking journeys in coaches – all superficially innocent but so larded with innuendo by Adriana that in the end they seem equally to be feared as her 'clapping.'

- 34 *look before you*] 'take care, look out for yourself.'
 37 *proper*] 'respectable' (*OED*, adj.8.b) and perhaps 'genuine' (6.a); cf. I i 99 and note above.
 38-9 *shuttlecock ... back*] this is an obscure passage to say the least. First, it is probably the game 'battledore and shuttlecock' that is referred to rather than the cork-and-feather projectile used in that game, and the immediate image that the passage creates is of a player leaping about from tables to ground in such a way as to endanger herself, but the mention of tables is odd: the game shuttlecock was played on any available piece of ground, no other equipment beyond the bat and feathered cork apparently being required; 'ground' *could* be used here more specifically to mean 'an area where a game was played' (as in the modern 'football ground') but, in the context of games, 'tables' appears in books on that subject only as the name of a particular board game or the board on which such a game was played – e.g., 'games that are done sitting are like playing chess, tables and dice' (*Alfonso X's Book of Games*, trans. Golloday, p3) and see also *Francis Willughby's Book of Games* (ed. Cram, Forgeng and Johnston, p.80 and elsewhere) and thus seems odd here. There may be a clue in the word 'striding' which, in addition to the common modern sense of 'taking long steps, passing over obstacles by taking such steps' (*OED*, v.3.a), could mean 'standing with the legs widely diverging' (*OED*, v.1.a, *obs.* in literal sense) and hence could be construed as a sexually suggestive pose, as in Middleton's *The Owl's Almanac*, 926-30: 'Libra ... almost breathless with taking such wide strides ... laid open her case;' how or why, in relation to tables and the ground, such a posture might be adopted in a game of shuttlecock is not at all obvious; however, the next line does seem to develop a sexual innuendo, albeit via rather a loose semantic diversion: 'only to try the strength of the back' means 'simply to test sexual vigour,' and was normally a desideratum of the male partner (as in Sir Oliver's boast at II i 11 that when he was young he had 'an able back') but in Middleton's *Your Five Gallants*, Interim 2.92-3, Tailby clearly sees it as desirable in a female sexual partner as well: 'give me | Good legs, firm back, white hand, black eye, brown hair,' so Adriana might be describing a female coital position that involved tables and the floor, and required greater than average athletic capabilities (cf. Quomodo's daughter Susan in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*, 2.3.74-5: 'methinks it does me most good when I take it standing. I know not how all women's minds are'). We might further note, first, that references to shuttlecock in the drama of this period (whether the game or the cork) frequently carry a sexual innuendo, Middleton, for example, referring to prostitutes as 'shuttlecocks ... which, though they are tossed and played withal, go still like maids all white on the top' (*Father Hubberd's Tales*, 589-90); and second, that the 17th century spelling used in Q1 – 'shittill' – invites an obvious scatological pun (an invitation Middleton couldn't turn down in *Women Beware Women*, 3.3.87-92, where 'shuttlecock' leads to 'stool-ball' in an innuendo-laden conversation about games) and 'cocke' an equally obvious evocation of the penis, all this leading one to wonder whether the sexual activity Adriana imagines involves more than just additional athleticism.
- 40 *riding a-hunting*] riding was a common synonym for having sexual intercourse, whilst hunting was commonly employed as a metaphor for sexual pursuit (cf. also II i 60-6 and III i 4-5).
- 40-1 *fall ... upward*] a more usual coital position for the woman to adopt than that possibly described in 38-9.

- They were taking the height of some high star
 With a cross-staff – no, nor your jumbings
 In horse-litters, coaches or caroches
 45 Have spoiled so many women as clappings up.
 SIR OLIVER
 Why then, we'll chop it up.
 TAFFETA That's not allowed, F2v
 Unless you were son to a Welsh curate.
 But faith, Sir Knight, I have a kind of itching
 To be a lady that I can tell you woos
 50 And can persuade with better rhetoric
 Than oaths, wit, wealth, valour, lands, or person:
 I hope some debts at court, and marrying you,
 I hope the courtier will not stick to pay me.

43. jumbings] iumlings Q1. 49. woos] woes Q1.

- 41-3 *lay ... staff*] the 'cross-staff' was an instrument for taking the altitude of the sun or a star, used mainly at sea for navigation purposes (*OED*, 2); contemporary illustrations show, however, that it was used by a person standing, not lying down, so Adriana's image of someone using it whilst lying down is odd; again one suspects that, as seems to be the case with the shuttlecock passage, the demands of the sexual innuendo supersede accuracy in relation to the vehicle of the image: the cross-staff was basically a piece of wood about a yard long with a shorter cross piece, and Adriana clearly imagines it as another kind of yard in the hands of the supine woman. 'Taking' could also have a sexual innuendo in the sense of 'having a man sexually.'
- 43 *jumbings*] (a) 'being shaken and jolted about whilst travelling' (*OED*, *jumble*, v.3.b); (b) 'to have carnal intercourse' (*OED*, v.6.a, and Williams); concerning coaches as suitable places to have sex, see note to III iv 35-6.
- 44 *horse-litters*] 'enclosed beds or couches hung on poles and carried between two horses' (*OED*, 1).
- 44 *caroches*] see III iv 33 and note above.
- 46 *chop it up*] 'get married' (Jones), as in Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday*, IV iv 147-9: 'These two gullies will be at Saint *Faithes* church to morrow morning, to take master Bridegroom and mistris Bride napping, and they in the meane time shall chop vp the matter at the Sauoy.' Corbin and Sedge's gloss, 'change it, i.e., break off the arrangement,' looks wide of the mark in relation to Sir Oliver's meaning as (a) at no point either before or after this line does he show any inclination to change his mind about marrying Taffeta, (b) there is no reason he should do so because of Adriana's (mock?) dissuasion, and (c) 'chop' in the sense 'to change, alter' (*OED*, *chop*, v².4) would make little sense with the preposition 'up'. Taffeta's reaction, however, could suggest that whilst Sir Oliver uses the phrase as synonymous with 'clap it up' she understands it to mean 'break it off, drop the idea' and replies accordingly; see next note.
- 47 *Unless ... curate*] the joke about the son of a Welsh priest is obscure; either it is a reference to a minor topical and ephemeral scandal or it is another reference to the popular notion that Welsh priests were thought to be pathetically poor (see III ii 49-57) in which case, if Taffeta is taking 'chop it up' to mean 'drop the idea' she might be saying, 'that's not allowed – the only person who would be allowed to do such a thing would be someone so poor as to not be worth marrying;' against that interpretation might be the 'but' in the next line, since if she is saying that changing the arrangement is not allowed, the natural copulative here would be 'no' – i.e., 'that's not allowed – no, you can't change your mind as I like the idea of being a lady;' we could, though, understand her 'but' as an abbreviation – something like, 'only the son of a Welsh curate would "chop it up" – but joking aside ...'
- 48 *itching*] 'a hankering for' (*OED*, vbl.n.2), but with a powerful suggestion of 'a lustful craving for' (Williams); the word had, in the sexual application, a strong sense of a need for manual relief. (See also V ii 3.)
- 53 *will not stick*] 'will not hesitate, be reluctant' (*OED*, v¹.15); if there is glance at the meaning 'fornicate with,' it does not make for a coherent secondary sense.

- SIR OLIVER
 Never fear thy payment. This I will say
 55 For courtiers: they'll be sure to pay each other
 Howe'er they deal with citizens.
 TAFFETA Then here's my hand.
 I am your wife, condition we be joined
 Before tomorrow's sun.
 SIR OLIVER Nay, even tonight,
 So you be pleased with little warning, widow.
 60 We old men can be ready, and thou shalt see
 Before the time that chanticleer
 Shall call and tell the day is near;
 When wenches lying on their backs
 Receive with joy their love-stolen smacks;
 65 When maids awaked from their first sleep
 Deceived with dreams begin to weep
 And think if dreams such pleasures show
 What sport the substance them would show;
 When ladies 'gin white limbs to spread,
 70 Her love but new stolen to her bed,
 His cotton shoes yet scarce put off,

71. shoes] shows Q1.

- 54 *never ... payment*] 'do not doubt that you will be paid' (*OED*, *fear*, v.9).
 57 *condition*] 'on condition that' (*OED*, n.1.c); it is as well that Taffeta adds this proviso, as strictly speaking she could be said to have just married Sir Oliver by using *verba de praesenti*— words of the present tense — in the statement, 'I am your wife' — and in front of a witness, too; even despite the proviso, a Jacobean lawyer could have made hay of this situation were Sir Oliver to press his claim later. See note to III i 54.
 59 *so*] 'if' (*OED*, adv.3.d).
 60 *ready*] the sense could be 'suitably prepared or dressed for the occasion' (*OED*, adj.1.a and b), but the word was also commonly used with a suggestion of 'sexually willing and prepared' (Williams).
 61 *chanticleer*] a generic name for the cockerel (as in Chaucer's *The Nun's Priest's Tale*) whose crowing announces the breaking of dawn.
 63 *wenches*] one might note here the opposition of 'wenches' to 'maids' (65); see also I i 117 and III ii 16, and notes thereto above.
 63 *lying ... backs*] Jones observes, 'the meaning here is obvious, but it is interesting to note that this position also affected dreams;' Williams (under the entry for *back*) does note several references to lying on the back having an effect on dreaming, but one suspects that Barry had the more obvious meaning primarily in mind.
 64 *love-stolen smacks*] i.e., kisses ('smacks') enjoyed by stealth or in secret (*OED*, *stolen*, ppl.a.2); the precise meaning of 'love-stolen' is not easy to pin down, and could be 'stolen from, by, or through love.'
 68 *sport*] (a) 'pleasant entertainment;' (b) 'amorous dalliance or intercourse' (*OED*, n.1.a and b, and Williams).
 68 *substance*] (a) 'the reality' (*OED*, n.10.a); but also possibly (b) 'the tissue or matter which makes an animal organ' (*OED*, n.7.a), the organ in this case being the penis.
 70 *new stolen*] 'recently arrived secretly or stealthily' (*OED*, *steal*, v¹.10.a).
 71 *cotton shoes*] soft shoes or slippers (which would have been made of woollen cloth rather than what we now call cotton) worn indoors and which would enable quiet movement.

- And dares not laugh, speak, sneeze, or cough;
 When precise dames begin to think,
 While their gross, snoring husbands stink,
 75 What pleasure 'twere then to enjoy
 A nimble vicar, or a boy –
 Before this time thou shalt behold
 Me quaffing out our bridal bowl.
 ADRIANA
 Then belike before the morning sun
 80 You will be coupled.
 TAFFETA Yes, faith, Adriana.
 ADRIANA
 Well, I will look you shall have a clean smock,
 Provided that you pay the fee, Sir Oliver.
 Since my mistress, sir, will be a lady,

74. While] Why Q1 and Q2; VVhy Q3. 74. gross, snoring] grose souring Q1 and Q2; grosse louring Q3.

- 72 *dares ... cough*] though the 'and' might suggest that this line links to 'ladies,' the singular verb 'dares' indicates that this refers to the man, who would be in danger of revealing his presence in her bed by making untoward noises.
- 73 *precise dames*] i.e., puritan wives of citizens (*OED*, *dames*, n.7.b); the three lines that follow contain another swipe at puritans (both the laity and the priests), who were persistently represented by 16th and 17th century playwrights as hypocrites – to some extent, one suspects, in revenge for the puritans' antipathy to the theatre.
- 74 *While ... snoring*] this line makes no sense in the Q1 version – 'Why their grose souring husbands stincke' – and though most subsequent editors seem to have been happy to accept Q3's 'VVhy their grosse louring husbands stincke' there is no reason for preferring Q3 to Q1. To take 'souring' first, *OED* offers 'becoming sour ... with reference to character or temper' or 'become morose or peevish' (*OED*, *souring*, vbl.n.2.b, and *sour*, v.1.c), whilst for 'louring,' it gives, 'to frown, scowl; to look angry or sullen' (*OED*, *lour*, v.1); in the context of a passage which generally deals with women's fantasies whilst lying in bed in the early morning – in this case with their husbands asleep next to them – neither of those meanings is persuasive since both would presuppose a conscious state in the husband; it seems necessary therefore to offer some emendation; this page (F3 in Q1) was set by Y who, the compositor study suggests (see Introduction, The Text, Compositor analysis), was slightly more prone than X to misreading copy, and to read 'snoring' as 'souring' requires only the misreading of an /n/ as a /u/; more likely, however, is that the copy was correctly read but a miscast /u/ picked out of the /n/ box and used here (the mistake was common enough, as, for example, Q1 of *Day's Law Tricks* demonstrates); as 'snoring' makes perfectly good sense in the context and could easily have been misread or mis-set, that emendation has been adopted here. 'While' has been adopted here primarily on grounds of sense, though if it had been spelled 'Why!' or 'Wyle' in the copy, a misreading (or alternatively a mis-setting) would be perfectly possible here as well. 'Why' suggests that the women are considering the cause of their husbands' unattractive state, whereas 'While' simply provides us with the picture of the husbands in that unsatisfactory state as their wives fantasise about more attractive possibilities; 'While' thus allows us to understand why the wives might fantasise as they do in 75-6, but without the introduction of the distracting notion of their pursuing questions of causation that is created by 'Why'.
- 76 *nimble*] as noted at II iv 49 and III i 15 above, this word has suggestions of sexual agility or eagerness.
- 78 *quaffing out*] 'drinking copiously from' (*OED*, v.1a and b).
- 78 *bridal bowl*] a drinking vessel which, presumably, was passed round to drink the healths of the bride and groom at a wedding (*OED* gives only this line to illustrate the expression).
- 80 *coupled*] (a) 'married' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.c); (b) 'joined together in sexual congress' (*OED*, *couple*, v.3.a).

- I'll lose no fees due to the waiting maid.
 SIR OLIVER
 85 Why, is there a fee belonging to it?
 ADRIANA
 A knight, and never heard of smock fees?
 I would I had the monopoly of them,
 So there were no impost set upon them.

Enter W[ILLIAM] SM[ALLSHANKS].

- SIR OLIVER
 Whom have we here? What, my mad-headed son!
 90 What makes he here so late? Say I am gone,
 And I the whilst will step behind the hangings.

[He steps aside.]

- WILLIAM
 God bless thee, parcel of man's flesh.
 TAFFETA How, sir?
 WILLIAM
 Why, parcel of man's flesh – art not a woman?
 But widow, where's the old stinkard my father?

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- 86 *smock fees*] 'payments made to a prostitute;' 'smocks' often connoted prostitution, as the entry in Williams makes clear; cf. also IV ii 41, below, where the Sergeant reminds Frances of 'Mistress Sellsmock, your quondam bawd.' The play on the word 'fee' throughout this exchange partly suggests that Adriana is acting the pander by controlling sexual access to her mistress, but also returns to the notion referred to by Constantia in II iii 45ff. that sexual access to the mistress is obtained through having sex with the maid: in 'I'll lose no fees due to the waiting maid' (84) the word 'fees' has more directly the meaning given by Williams – 'coital entitlement.' Cf. also I ii 121 and II iii 79, and notes thereto above. The dig at Sir Oliver for never having heard of 'smock fees' is presumably affected surprise that a gentleman is so ignorant of the ways of the world, and not, as Corbin and Sedge suggest, his ignorance of court practices, with which Adriana is less likely to be familiar than she is with what went on in the alleyways of London.
- 87 *monopoly*] the granting of monopolies by the monarch to favoured individuals was a constant cause of controversy throughout the reigns of Elizabeth and James.
- 88 *impost*] 'a tax or duty' (*OED*, n¹.1); this would be payable to the monarch, and hence deductible from the revenue provided by the monopoly.
- 90 *makes*] 'does' (*OED*, v¹.58.a).
- 91 *the whilst*] 'meanwhile' (*OED*, adv.1).
- 92 *parcel*] see next note.
- 93 *parcel ... woman?*] a 'parcel' here is 'a part, portion or division' of something else (*OED*, n.1.a) and as, according to *Genesis*, Eve was formed from a part of Adam, so a woman is a part of 'man's flesh.' The word 'parcel,' though, was often used contemptuously – 'bit, fragment' – and hence Taffeta's reaction; we might also note, though, as Bly (*Op. Cit.*, p.133) points out, that the actor playing Taffeta is indeed 'man's flesh.'
- 94 *where's ... father*] this is presumably intended to explain William's otherwise unmotivated and fortuitous appearance in Taffeta's house: having now recovered his lands from Throat we might assume that he is looking to pass on the good news to his father.
- 94 *stinkard*] a common term of abuse for an old man, used of Sir Oliver elsewhere – see 154 of this scene and V iii 113-7; cf. also Middleton, *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, 3.3.65-6: 'She's as fine a philosopher of a stinkard's wife as any within the liberties.'

- 95 They say, widow, you dance altogether
 After his pipe.
 TAFFETA What then?
 WILLIAM Th'art a fool.
 I'll assure thee, there's no music in it.
 TAFFETA
 Can you play better?
 WILLIAM Better, widow?
 Blood! Dost think I have not learnt my prick song?
 100 What, not the court prick song – one up and another down?
 Why, I have't to a hair, by this light.
 I hope thou lovest him not.
 TAFFETA I'll marry him, sir.
 WILLIAM
 How! Marry him? 'Foot! Art mad, widow?
 Wo't marry an old, crazed man
 105 With meagre looks, with visage wan,
 With little legs and crinkled thighs,
 With chap-fallen gums and deep-sunk eyes?
 Why, a dog seized on ten days by death
 Stinks not so loathsome as his breath,
 110 Nor can a city common jakes
 Which all men's breeches undertakes

104. Wo't] Woot Q1.

- 95-6 *dance ... pipe*] as in the proverb, 'to dance to a man's pipe' (Dent M488), the 'dance' being sexual intercourse (the metaphor persists in popular song lyrics today) and the 'pipe' being the penis; 'altogether' here means 'entirely' (*OED*, adv.B.1) and 'after' could have the sense 'in compliance or harmony with' (*OED*, prep.12) or 'in pursuit of' (*OED*, prep.4). The following three lines develop the metaphor further.
- 97 *no music*] i.e., nothing to make you cry out with pleasure; for the analogy between music and sex see II iv 63-4 and note.
- 99 *prick song*] any written vocal music but more specifically, 'a descant or counterpoint accompanying a simple melody' (*OED*, 2) with, of course, a pun on 'prick = penis.'
- 100 *court*] i.e., as practised at court (the court being regarded as a hotbed of debauchery), but possibly with a glance also at the idea of 'paying court to a woman.'
- 100 *one ... down*] i.e., 'one' (the man) with an erection and 'another' (the woman) lying on her back.
- 101 *to a hair*] 'to the finest degree,' but with the suggestion of fricative action against the pubic hair, as at II i 20 and II iii 17 (q.v. and notes thereto).
- 103-13 *How! ... favour*] William breaks into octosyllabic couplets for this philippic against his father; cf. the passage where Frances insults Beard (II i 35-42 above).
- 104 *wo't*] 'would you.'
- 105 *meagre*] 'emaciated' (*OED*, a.1).
- 105 *wan*] 'pale, sickly' (*OED*, a.4.a).
- 106 *crinkled*] 'shrunkened' (*OED*, crinkle, v.1).
- 107 *chap-fallen gums*] strictly speaking 'chap-fallen' means 'with the lower jaw (chap or chops) hanging down' (*OED*, a.1) – as Hamlet to Yorick's skull: 'not one now to mock your own grinning – quite chop-fall'n' (*Ham.*, V i 191-2) – but here it possibly means 'having sunken cheeks', with 'gums' synecdochically representing the mouth.
- 108 *seized on*] 'taken, possessed,' possibly 'arrested' (*OED*, *seize*, v.II).
- 110 *jakes*] 'privy' (*OED*, n.1.a).
- 111 *all ... undertakes*] i.e., accepts (*OED*, *undertake*, 1.b) what is produced by men's posteriors (*OED*, *breeches*, 4.a).

- Yield fasting stomachs such a savour
 As doth his breath and ugly favour.
 SIR OLIVER [*From the side.*] Rogue!
 ADRIANA
 That's all one sir. She means to be a lady.
 WILLIAM
 115 Does she so? And thou must be her waiting woman.
 Faith, thou wilt make a fine dainty creature
 To sit at a chamber door and look fleas
 In thy lady's dog while she is showing
 Some slippery breeched courtier rare faces
 120 In a by-window. 'Foot, widow!
 Marry me a young and complete gallant. F3v
 TAFFETA
 How! A complete gallant? What! A fellow
 With a hat tucked up behind, and what we use
 About our hips to keep our coats from dabbling

-
- 112 *yield*] 'give forth, emit' (*OED*, v.11).
 112 *savour*] 'perfume' (ironic) (*OED*, n.2).
 113 *favour*] 'face, countenance' (*OED*, n.9.b).
 116 *creature*] possibly used, as noted by *OED* (n.3.b) as 'expressing commiseration ... with a shade of patronage.'
 117 *look*] 'search for' (*OED*, v.6.d).
 119 *slippery breeched*] i.e., having breeches that are liable to slip off at the least provocation; the word 'slippery' also had strong associations with both shiftiness of character (*OED*, a.4.b) and licentiousness (*OED*, a.5, and Williams) which qualities, by the process of transferred epithet, attach themselves to the courtier in question.
 119-20 *rare ... by-window*] this may mean, quite simply, 'talking to a courtier at a side window and making fine amorous faces at him' (*OED*, *by*, 3.a, and *rare*, adj.¹, 6.a, but used ironically). However, according to Leinwand in a note to Middleton's *Michaelmas Term*, 3.1.201, 'face' could mean 'buttocks and pubic area' (though we should note that Williams gives no entry for *face*, and no example of the word in other entries suggests with any certainty such a usage in this period); if that is a meaning in play here, it is possible that 'rare' puns on 'rear' and that, further, 'by-window' is suggestive of the vagina, that possibility being supported by two references to windows in Lodge, *Wits Miserie* (quoted by Williams under the entries for *brothel-signs* and *lame lover* respectively): 'you shall know her dwelling [i.e., a brothel] by a dish of stewed prunes [an image suggestive of the male genitalia] in the window' (IV.44), and, speaking of a sexually incontinent person, 'lame in one leg like AGESILAUS, & that he brake leaping in Florence out of a window' (IV.58) – i.e., (?) withdrew his detumescent penis after intercourse; it might also be worth noting that a term for illegitimacy at this period was 'to come in at the window' (Dent, W456, and *The Family of Love* (1447-8): 'woe worth the time that ever I gave suck to a child that came in at the window'); taken altogether it has to be said that such a reading does not produce a convincing overall image; it might be arguable, though, that if 'by-window' is taken literally, and 'rare faces' as suggesting the buttocks or genital area, the result could be a picture such as that created by Chaucer in *The Miller's Tale*, when 'at the window out she [Alisoun] putte hir hole, | And Absolon, him fil no bet ne wers, | But with his mouth he kiste hir naked ers' (3732-4).
 122-37 *How! ... spirit.*] Taffeta's portrait of the gallant focuses on three aspects of the type: their lack of dress-sense, their lack of money, and their lack of brains; Mistress Page, in *The Family of Love*, provides a similar description: 'Of all men I love not these gallants: they'll prate much but do little: they are people most uncertain; they use great words but little sense; great beards, but little wit; great breeches, but no money' (229-32).
 123 *tucked up behind*] 'gathered up in folds behind the head' (*OED*, *tuck*, v¹.6.a) or 'with the back edge turned up and tucked underneath' (*OED*, *tuck*, v¹.9.a).
 124 *dabbling*] 'being splashed by mud or water' (*OED*, vbl.n).

- 125 He wears about his neck – a farthingale! –
 A standing collar to keep his neat band clean
 The whilst his shirt does stink, and is more foul
 Than an Inn of Chancery tablecloth.
 His breeches must be pleated as if 'a had
 130 Some thirty pockets, when one poor halfpenny purse
 Will carry all his treasure; his knees all points
 As if his legs and hams were tied together;
 A fellow that has no inside, but prates
 By rote, as players and parrots use to do,

-
- 125 *farthingale*] here probably either the hooped support or simply the style of dress represented by the word rather than the garment itself (for which see note to III iv 61); the placing of the word in the sentence is awkward, perhaps to express Taffeta's heated reaction to William's suggestion (cf. I ii 156 and note); the more obvious ordering would be: 'what we use about our hips to keep our coats from dabbling (a farthingale) he wears about his neck – a standing collar to ...'
- 126-7 *standing ... stink*] the 'standing collar' was a wire support (or 'rebato') used to keep the 'neat band' (a decorated, flat and detachable shirt collar) clear of the shoulders; the collar was the only visible part of the shirt (the rest of the garment was not displayed in public) and making it detachable enabled men to change that item daily, thereby making it look to the outside world as though they were wearing a fresh shirt whilst in reality the shirt was far from clean; cf. Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 1.3.39-40: 'You must always be in a clean band ... how foul soe'er your shirt be.' Taffeta's point is that the 'gallant' was, in matters of hygiene as in matters of dress, all show and no substance.
- 128 *an Inn ... tablecloth*] presumably a side-swipe at the behaviour of 17th century law students at dinner, and hence another joke for the benefit of the Inns of Court men in the audience.
- 129-30 *pleated ... pockets*] i.e., exaggeratedly decorated folds in the cloth of breeches, and in contrast to the unaffected man of the proverb – 'an honest plain man without pleats' (Dent, M185); pockets would have been concealed in the pleats.
- 130 *poor ... purse*] i.e., a tiny purse – the halfpenny was the second smallest coin and a fairly inconsiderable sum of money ('treasure'); however, purse here would mean 'scrotum' (Partridge.2) and as 'treasure' could mean 'semen' (Partridge.2, or, as glossed by Williams, 'genital power') a secondary meaning is that the gallant wears billowing breeches to suggest he needs them to contain his large, productive testicles, though in fact they are nothing to boast about at all; for the use of 'purse' in this sense cf. the passage from *Blurt, Master Constable* quoted in the note to I i 13: 'you shall never give over labouring till out of his [your husband's] purse you have digged a garden' (III iii 92-3).
- 131 *points*] 'the laces that attached the breeches to the hose at the knee' (*OED*, B.II.5).
- 132 *legs and hams*] the 'leg' was 'in the narrower sense, the part of the limb between the knee and foot' (*OED*, n.1.a); the 'ham' was 'the hollow of the knee' or, more usually, either 'the back of the thigh,' (*OED*, n. A.I.1.a) or 'the thigh and buttock collectively' (*OED*, n. A.I.1.b); a multitude of points would give the impression that these needed to be held together, and the reason for that – a weakness in the hams – would suggest either venereal disease or sexual incapacity in general.
- 133 *inside*] 'mind' and hence 'intelligence' (*OED*, n.1.c); given the next comment this is clearly the main sense, but there is also, perhaps, a glance at 'stomach, entrails' and hence, 'courage' (*OED*, n.1.b).
- 133 *prates*] 'talks too much and to little purpose' (*OED*, v.1).
- 134 *by ... players*] as there was a degree of antipathy between the citizens and players one wonders if Barry, tongue in cheek, is giving his citizen character a jibe at actors here by having her suggest that actors speak their lines mechanically and without understanding them (*rote*, *OED*, n².2). Cf. Beaumont's *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*: 'Citizen: This seven years there have been plays at this house, I have observed it, you have still girds at citizens; and now you call your play *The London Merchant*. Down with your title, boy, down with your title!' (Induction, 6-8, ed. M. Hattaway, Ernest Benn, London, 1969.)
- 134 *parrots*] proverbial for their ability to mimic without understanding what they say – see Dent, P60, 'to prate like a parrot.'
- 134 *use to do*] 'are wont to, are in the habit of doing' (*OED*, *use*, v.21).

- 135 And, to define a complete gallant right,
 A mercer formed him, a tailor makes him,
 And a player gives him spirit.
 WILLIAM
 Why so, in my conscience, to be a countess
 Thou would'st marry a hedgehog. I must confess,
 140 'Tis state to have a coxcomb kiss your hands
 While yet the chamber-lye is scarce wiped off.
 To have an upright usher march before you,
 Bare headed in a tuftaffeta jerkin
 Made of your old cast gown, shows passing well.
 145 But when you feel your husband's pulses, that's hell.
 Then you fly out and bid straight smocks farewell.
 TAFFETA
 I hope, sir, whate'er our husbands be,

136. makes] made Corbin and Sedge; makes Q1, Q2, Q3. 137. spirit] spright Q1.

- 135 *right*] 'precisely, exactly' (*OED*, adv.II.5).
 136-7 *A mercer ... spirit*] 'the tailor makes the man' was proverbial (Dent, T18); Taffeta, the mercer's widow, perhaps adds the first tradesman in honour of her husband, whilst Barry counterbalances the jibe at players by adding that the actor, for all his faults, at least provides the gallant with the lines that make him appear animated and vivacious.
 138 *in my conscience*] lit., 'by my sense of what's right' - 'upon my word, truly' (*OED*, IV.9).
 138 *countess*] by marrying Sir Oliver, Taffeta would become a Lady, not a Countess, but the first syllable of that title provides William with a crude - in every sense of that word - pun which, however, when combined with the feminine suffix, creates a rather absurd tautology.
 139 *hedgehog*] 'a person regardless of the feelings of others' (*OED*, 5). Sir Oliver is also linked with this creature in III iv where Adriana tells him to 'Gather yourself | Round like a hedgehog' (64-5) when he hides under Taffeta's farthingale.
 140 *state*] 'a prosperous condition, an exalted position' (*OED*, n.6.a and 16.b).
 141 *chamber-lye*] 'urine' (*OED*).
 142 *upright usher*] (a) 'a household official, usually employed to walk ahead of a person of high rank;' (b) 'a male attendant on a lady;' in either case the 'uprightness' could refer to his stately bearing or his condition of sexual excitement.
 143 *tuftaffeta*] 'a luxurious kind of taffeta with the pile in tufts' (*OED*, 1), with, of course, a pun on Taffeta's name.
 144 *cast*] 'discarded' (*OED*, ppl.a.5).
 144 *passing*] 'exceedingly, extremely' (*OED*, adv.B.a).
 145 *pulses*] 'heartbeats,' indicative of passion (*OED*, n¹.1.c and 2.a); but the word could also mean, 'rhythmical strokes' (4.a) and that, since William is trying to present a graphic picture of the horrors of being married to an old man, may well be the predominant meaning here.
 146 *fly out*] 'run about looking for sexual encounters' (Williams, who notes that the phrase 'to fly at all,' meaning 'to be sexually promiscuous and indiscriminate,' occurs several times in Fletcher); cf. Middleton, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, 1.1.82-4: 'his heat is such, | Were there as many concubines as ladies, | He would not be contained, he must fly out.'
 146 *straight smocks*] it is possible that 'straight' should be spelled 'strait' (Q1 has 'straite') - i.e., 'narrow, constricting' - which would imply that the sort of smock being renounced is too restrictive to allow for casual sexual encounters outside the home; very capacious, loose-fitting smocks with wide gussets inserted into them were seen by contemporary moralists as indicative of equally loose behaviour (and the wider the gussets the looser the wearer); the smock was (as has been noted at I i 57-8, IV i 86, and IV ii 41) an article of clothing which carried strong sexual connotations. Corbin and Sedge have 'straight,' offering the gloss 'honest,' the implication of which would be much as suggested here.

- We may be honest.
 WILLIAM May be! Nay, y'are.
 Women and honesty are as near allied
 150 As parsons lives are to their doctrines,
 One and the same. But, widow, now be ruled:
 I hope the heavens will give thee better grace
 Than to accept the father and I yet live
 To be bestowed. If you wed the stinkard
 155 You shall find the tale of Tantalus
 To be no fable, widow.
 SIR OLIVER How I sweat!
 I can hold no longer.

[*He steps forward.*]

- Degenerate bastard,
 I here disclaim thee, cashier thee, nay, more,
 I disinherit thee both of my love
 160 And living. Get thee a grey cloak and hat
 And walk in Paul's amongst thy cashiered mates
 As melancholy as the best. F4

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- 148 *honest*] 'virtuous' (*OED*, adj.3.b); free from reproach' (*OED*, adj.2.b).
 149 *near allied*] 'similar in nature' (*OED*, *allied*, ppl.adj.2).
 150 *As ... doctrines*] William is being ironic.
 151 *be ruled*] 'be guided, take my advice' (*OED*, ppl.adj.1.a) but perhaps somewhat stronger.
 152 *grace*] 'the virtue (to do what is specified)' (*OED*, n.11.e/13.b); possibly, 'destiny, fortune' (*OED*, n.10).
 153 *and*] possibly 'although' or 'if' (*OED*, C.2 or 4), though 'while' (not given as a meaning by *OED*) would make better sense.
 154 *bestowed*] 'placed,' in the sense of 'married' (*OED*, v.4).
 155 *Tantalus*] a mythical king of Lydia who offended the gods and as a punishment was placed up to his neck in a lake with boughs of fruit above his head; when he got thirsty and bent to drink the water receded, and when he was hungry and raised his head to eat, the boughs were blown out of reach by the wind. (Various accounts of his misdemeanour are given, the most common being that he invited the gods to a meal at which he served up the flesh of his son Pelops; one of the less common explanations was that he stole away and sodomised Ganymede, Jupiter's cup-bearer.)
 157 *degenerate bastard*] Sir Oliver uses both words literally – the son whom he had generated has lost the qualities proper to such a person and hence cannot be his legitimate issue; Lear hurls the same insult at his daughter Goneril (*Lr.*, I iv 254). (As a term of mere abuse 'bastard' is not given by *OED* until 1830.)
 158 *disclaim*] 'reject or disown (as my son)' (*OED*, v.4).
 158 *cashier*] 'dismiss with disgrace from my company and fellowship' (*OED*, v.2.a and b).
 160 *living*] probably 'property' (*OED*, vbl.n.4.a) – i.e., he is cutting William out of his will; but, in the light of Sir Oliver's next injunction, it could refer to the provision of 'maintenance or support' whilst still alive (*OED*, vbl.n.3.a).
 160-2 *grey ... best*] the colour grey conventionally represented hopelessness, gloominess, and melancholy (*OED*, *grey*, adj.5.b); it is tempting to wonder if grey was the colour of hat favoured by the melancholic playwright John Ford whom William Hemminge described in his *Elegy on Randolph's Finger*: 'Deep In a dumpe lacke forde alone was gott | Wth folded Armes and Melancholye hatt' (Moore-Smith, *William Hemminge's Elegy on Randolph's Finger*, pp.181-2).
 161 *walk in Paul's*] the nave of St Paul's cathedral, known as Paul's Walk, was 'a common meeting-place for all kinds of people' (Sugden) and was hence a place to while away one's time or to seek employment if at a loose end.

165 TAFFETA Come not near me.
I forbid thee my house, my out-houses,
My garden, orchard, and my back-side.
Thou shalt not harbour near me.
SIR OLIVER Nay, to thy grief,
Know, varlet, I will be wed this morning.
Thou shalt not be there, nor once be graced
With a piece of rosemary. I'll cashier thee –
Do not reply. I will not stay to hear thee.

[*Exeunt* SIR OLIVER, TAFFETA *and* ADRIANA.]

WILLIAM
170 Now may I go put me on a clean shirt
And hang myself. 'Foot! Who would have thought
The fox had earthed so near me. What's to be done?
What miracle shall I now undertake
To win respective grace with God and men?
175 What if I turned courtier and lived honest?
Sure that would do it! I dare not walk the streets

169s.d. [*Exeunt ...*] *Exit*. Q1.

163-4 *house ... back-side*] whilst on the literal level Taffeta is barring William from her house, all these places, like ‘trunk’ and ‘cupboard’ in III iv 58 (q.v.), are allusive of the female body in general and the genitalia in particular, making it clear that her exclusion is not merely social but sexual as well. For ‘house’ cf. *Lr.*, III i 27-8, where the Fool observes (playing not only figuratively but also grammatically on the word ‘house’): ‘The codpiece that will house | Before the head has any, | The head and he shall louse.’ Gardens and orchards have a long literary history as sexual metaphors (see Chaucer’s *The Merchant’s Tale* for an extended development of the figure); for ‘garden’ see also I i 13 and note. As happens in III iv, the focus of attention shifts from conventional heterosexual intercourse to sodomy at ‘back-side’ – ‘the back yards or out-buildings attached to a dwelling’ (*OED*, 2), but also, of course, ‘the posteriors or rump’ (*OED*, 3). (For the possibility that Taffeta’s house has a garden and orchard, see Introduction, *The Play*, *The topography of the play*.)

165 harbour] 'lodge or shelter yourself' (*OED*, v.7); *OED* notes that the word often had a notion of
devious intent behind it, and the deviousness that Taffeta may suspect here would be that William
might seek to 'lodge himself' in her 'harbour' in an intimate sense (cf. the play on 'dock' at III iii
5-6 above).

166 *varlet*] originally a knight's attendant, by this period the idea of subservience had come to dominate the word's meaning and it was a term of abuse – 'a person of mean or roguish disposition' (*OED*, n.2a and b).

168 *rosemary*] as a plant associated with memory, it was used in wedding ceremonies to symbolise
and encourage remembrance of the wedding vows; the bride, groom and guests would all wear or
carry a sprig of the herb.

170-1 *Now ... myself*] it was the custom for a man about to be either hung or beheaded to be stripped to the shirt, partly as a final humiliation (as to be in one's shirt in public was more or less equivalent to being naked) but also to give the rope or axe easier access to the neck; condemned prisoners who had the resources therefore wore a clean shirt for their execution.

172 *fox*] presumably with reference to the animal's reputation for cunning, William having been outsmarted here by his father; (cf. Dent, F629: 'As wily as a fox').

172 *earthed*] ‘gone to ground, hidden’ (*OED*, v.4.c) – a fox’s hole is known as an ‘earth.’

174 *respective*] 'worthy of respect' (*OED*, adj.4), or possibly 'partial' (*OED*, adj.2.b).

174 grace] 'pardon, forgiveness' (*OED*, n.15.a) or possibly, 'favour' (*OED*, n.6.a).

176 *Sure ... it!*] ironic.

- For I dwindle at a sergeant in buff
 Almost as much as a new player does
 At a plague bill certified forty.
 180 Well, I like this widow – a lusty, plump drab,
 Has substance both in breech and purse,
 And pity and sin it were she should be wed
 To a furred cloak and a night-cap. I'll have her.
 This widow I will have. Her money
 185 Shall pay my debts and set me up again.
 'Tis here, 'tis almost forged, which, if it take,
 The world shall praise my wit, admire my fate.

Exit.

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- 177 *dwindle*] 'shrink with fear' (*OED*, v.1.c).
 179 *plague ... forty.*] the 'mortality bills,' as they were more usually known, were published weekly from 1603 and collected statistics about deaths in London, mainly to give warning of the onset of a plague epidemic; once the number of deaths from plague reached forty in one week the theatres and other places of public resort were closed, meaning that players were unable to work in the city. It was this public health practice that caused the closure of Barry's theatre company based in the Whitefriars, which then led to his indebtedness which in turn led to his flight from London to Ireland to become a pirate.
 180 *lusty ... drab*] 'lusty' could mean 'full of lust' (*OED*, adj.4) but it also commonly meant 'cheerful' (1) 'pleasing in appearance, beautiful' (2.a), 'well-dressed' (2.b), 'healthy, vigorous' (5.a); 'plump,' too, was a complimentary term – 'of full and rounded form' (*OED*, adj¹.3.a) – suggesting good health and spirits; 'drab' however, was less complimentary – primarily, 'a harlot, strumpet, whore' (2), but also 'a dirty and slovenly woman, a slut' (*OED*, n¹.1); as with so many of these words, though, whilst undoubtedly misogynistic, they could be used with varying degrees of negativity, including a patronising familiarity which might have been considered, by the user, affectionate; cf. I i 155 and II i 138 above, where William calls Frances an 'arrant drab' in contexts where he is clearly in a good mood with her.
 181 *substance ... purse*] it is possible that 'breech' should be spelled 'breach' here, as William could be suggesting that Taffeta has 'solid qualities, character' (*OED*, *substance*, n.19.a) in her sexual potential – i.e., her 'breach' in the sense of 'vagina'; 'purse' also means 'vagina' here, as at I ii 121 and, possibly, III ii 26; on the other hand, he could be saying that there is a 'fleshy solidity' (*OED*, *substance*, n.7.b) to her buttocks or 'breech' (cf. the use of this word at IV i 28 and 111). Less uncertain is his assertion that she has considerable means (*OED*, *substance*, n.16.a) in terms of wealth and possessions in her 'purse' in the sense of 'receptacle for money.'
 183 *furred ... night-cap*] i.e., 'a sexually inept old man;' the furred cloak (worn indoors, not specifically in the bedchamber) may be associated with advancement in wealth, social position and hence also in age; the night-cap also was not necessarily worn in bed, but simply indoors – chamber clothing, rather than public clothing; here the innuendo is that it would be needed to hide the old man's cuckold's horns.
 183|4 *have | have*] 'take ownership of' (*OED*, v.14.a) but also 'possess sexually' (*OED*, v.14.e, and Partridge.2), the repetition reinforcing both the second sense and the relationship between the two senses: William sees claiming the widow sexually as the means to restoring his fortunes, and the pun encapsulates the idea that William is here (literally) capitalising on the fortuitous nature of their meeting (see note to line 94 of this scene) by transmuting his inbuilt tendency towards machismo flirtation into the more solid realisation that sexual possession of Taffeta will solve his financial problems permanently.
 186 *forged*] 'fully fashioned' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.a).
 186 *take*] 'succeed' (see II i 32 and note above).
 187 *admire*] 'wonder or marvel at' (*OED*, v.2).

[Act IV, Scene ii.]

Enter BEARD, DASH, FRANCES, SERGEANT[S], [and]
DRAWER.

BEARD

Sergeants, beware. Be sure you not mistake,
For if you do ...

DASH She shall be quickly bailed.
She shall *corpus cum causa* be removed;

s.d. SERGEANT[S], [and] DRAWER.] *Sergeant, Drawers*. Q1. 2. quickly bailed.] 'quickly bayld : Q1, Jones. 4. shall] 'shall Q1 and Jones; 'shall Corbin and Sedge.

Location] an unidentified tavern. For the reason they are there and for the Sergeants' presence see note to line 20.

- 1 *Sergeants*] the s.d. calls for only one sergeant and only one is specified as speaking; Dash refers to 'Sir Sergeant' in 5, also perhaps suggesting that only one is present, though it could be that he is addressing the more senior one at that point. It was common (at least in the drama of the period) for sergeants to work in pairs – cf. III v above, where the sergeants are consistently referred to in the plural both in speech and in the s.d., and William refers to them as 'two retainers' (III v 84); it is therefore probable that Barry had two of these officers in mind as being present but gave the speeches and action to only one (as he did in III v). As to the plural 'Drawers' in this s.d., only one is either addressed or specified as having a speaking role, only one is required for the action in this scene, and only one is ever specified or needed elsewhere in the action; it therefore seems reasonable to assume that either the author or the compositor mentally switched the pluralisation of the two final unnamed and generically defined entrants here, and this edition has therefore chosen to keep the plural in this line and amend the s.d. accordingly. Although that appears to leave one of the sergeants with nothing much to do other than loiter in the background, there would be opportunities for the actor to engage mutely in the action to comic effect.
- 1 *mistake*] probably here, 'transgress, do wrong' (*OED*, v.2.a) – i.e., take advantage of this woman; Beard knows how things might develop if Frances is left alone with the sergeants, and warns them off; Dash intercedes before the situation escalates into violence.
- 2/4 *quickly* | *shall*] this passage has two apparent apostrophes in Q1: one before 'quickly' in line 2 (which Jones retains but Corbin and Sedge omit), and another before 'shall' in line 4 (which both Jones and Corbin and Sedge retain); in 4 the apostrophe could possibly indicate elision of the word 'it,' but (a) this mark (like the one in line 2) is turned to the right, not the left as it normally is when indicating elision, and (b) it would be unusual to use the mark to indicate absence of a whole word. Both occupy what should be an en quad space so one possible explanation is that they are coincidentally close occurrences of turned commas which had been miscast into the space box; this edition has omitted both as they serve no useful purpose and seem aberrant.
- 2 *bailed*] given the next four lines (and the constant repetition of this word throughout the following exchange), one is inclined to suspect a secondary meaning here, possibly based on the meanings 'covered or enclosed' (*OED*, *bailed*, ppl.a², and a verbal form of *bail*, n³.2) or possibly based on a pun with either 'belled' – 'engaged with sexually' (Williams) – or 'billed' – much the same meaning since 'bill' could mean 'penis' (Williams).
- 3 *corpus cum causa*] lit. 'the body with the cause' (Latin), a writ specific to the Court of Chancery by means of which the Lord Chancellor would call prisoners before him from other courts. The term has absolutely no meaningful legal application here – Dash is merely imitating his master by parroting a bit of legal Latin to try and impress (or browbeat) the Sergeant; however, it allows an obscure pun on 'causa' which could also mean 'a law case' and 'case' in turn could mean 'vagina' (cf. II iv 1 and note, and see Mukherji, *Op. Cit.*, p.219 fn., where she observes that 'cause' and 'case' were 'interchangeable words in the legal context') giving the secondary meaning to the line as a whole, 'she shall, body and vagina, be taken away from you;' that would provide a link between the play on 'bailed' and the following three lines of bawdy innuendo which all play on a primary legal meaning (glossed under (a) in the two following notes).

- 5 Your action, entered first below, shall shrink,
 And you shall find, Sir Sergeant, she has friends
 Will stick to her in the common place.
 SERGEANT Sir,
 Will you procure her bail?
 BEARD She shall be bailed.
 Drawer, bring up some wine.

[Exit DRAWER.]

- Use her well –
 Her husband is a gentleman of sort. F4v
 SERGEANT
 10 A gentleman of sort! Why, what care I?
 A woman of her fashion shall find

-
- 4 *action*] (a) 'legal procedure' (*OED*, n.8); (b) 'sexual activity' (Williams offers the definition 'prick-play'). There could be a pun on Actaeon, the hunter who was transformed into a stag as punishment for seeing the goddess Diana bathing naked, and who thus became a figure of both the lustful sexual pursuer and the horned cuckold.
- 4 *entered first below*] to 'enter' could mean (a) 'bring an action before a court in writing' (*OED*, v.22.a and c), and (b) 'to put one thing into another,' and hence, 'copulate with' (19 and 11.c); 'below' may indicate a document held by the sergeant, but also certainly refers to 'the genital area' (Williams); 'first' is obscure: it may relate only to the legal thread of meaning, and simply refer to the order of events – i.e., 'originally, before this arrest took place.'
- 4 *shrink*] (a) 'wither away,' or perhaps, 'fail' (*OED*, v.1.a and 4.b); (b) 'shrivel in detumescence.'
- 5 *Sir Sergeant*] for the ironic and patronising use of the title 'Sir' cf. I iii 72, III i 47 and notes thereto.
- 6 *stick to*] (a) 'remain faithful to, stand by' (*OED*, v.26.b); (b) 'copulate with' (for other uses of this word see I i 44, I ii 201, and III ii 36, and notes thereto above).
- 6 *the common place*] (a) with a pun on 'place/pleas,' the latter word referring to the Court of Common Pleas which dealt with civil disputes relating to, amongst other things, property, land, and money; (b) 'the vagina' – particularly 'common' in this case as Frances is a prostitute. Cf., Middleton, *A Mad World, My Masters*, 1.1.138-40: 'A courtesan! O admirable times! Honesty is removed to the common place.'
- 7 *procure her bail*] an innocent looking phrase, but given the possible equivocation in 2 above, one has to ask whether there is more to it than meets the eye. 'Procure' could mean simply 'obtain' (*OED*, v.5.a), or possibly, in a specific legal usage, 'obtain by bribery' (6.b), but it could also mean 'obtain a woman for the gratification of lust' (5.b), and it is that meaning that leads one to consider whether there might be a further play upon 'bail' here; the obvious contender would be 'bill' which could mean 'penis' (Williams), and which could be used both as a noun and a verb.
- 8 *use her well*] (a) 'treat her properly' (*OED*, *use*, v.18.a; *well*, adv.2.a); (b) 'have sex with her as much as you want' (*OED*, *use*, v.10.b; *well*, adv.13.a).
- 9 *of sort*] generally 'a person of a particular type' and often, at this period, specifically 'of high rank' (*OED*, n².2.a and b); a 'sort' could also be a 'band, company' (n².17.a); *OED* does not give it as having, in those senses, any implication of disparagement until the early 20th century so Beard's comment would appear to have no comic point, making the Sergeant's reaction at 13 therefore simply an expression of his determination not to be impressed or intimidated by Beard's 'warning.'
- 11 *fashion*] (a) 'quality, social standing' (*OED*, n.12.a); (b) 'shape, build' (*OED*, n.2.a) or possibly a weaker form of that sense – 'type, sort.' This comment suggests that the Sergeant thinks Frances is Constantia Somerfield – or at least is a lady – whilst Beard's reaction at the end of the scene suggests that he has presented Frances to the Sergeant as such and maintains that pretence all through the episode; but we learn later in the scene that the Sergeant knows her well; is he playing along with Beard to fool Dash, or just keeping this knowledge to himself for his own

More kindness at a lusty sergeant's hand
Than ten of your "gentlemen of sort."

DASH

Sir, use her well. She's wife to Master Throat.

SERGEANT

15 I'll use her, sir, as if she were my wife.
Would you have any more?

[Re-enter DRAWER with wine.]

BEARD Drink upon that
Whilst we go fetch her bail. Dash, fellow Dash.
With all the speed thou hast run for our master.
Make haste lest he be gone before thou comest
To Lady Somerfield's. I'll fetch another.
She shall have bail.

DASH And a firking writ
Of false imprisonment. She shall be sure
Of twelve pence damage, and five and twenty pound
For suits in law. I'll go fetch my master.

- purposes, or is the author nodding?
- 12 *kindness*] (a) 'good-natured acts or conduct' (*OED*, 4); (b) 'sexual attentions' (Williams suggests, more strongly, 'the sexual act' and whilst some of the examples he gives clearly slide in that direction, most seem mainly to suggest 'behaviour intended to lead to, and possibly including, sexual intercourse').
- 12 *lusty*] for this word's range of meanings see II iv 63 and note above.
- 15 *as ... wife*] the Sergeant clearly implies sense (b) of 'use her' whilst keeping sense (a) still in play so that he can make his threat and still keep a 'denial clause' open, as it were. Frances is clearly in for the type of constabulary examination Tutchim refers to in IV i 21-2 (see note thereto).
- 16-7 *Drink ... bail*] drinking at the prisoner's expense whilst someone went for bail appears to have been one of the tricks of the catchpoles if Middleton's satire of them in *The Black Book*, 693-704, is to be believed: 'when thou hast caught him ... then call thy cluster of fellow vermins together, and sit in triumph with thy prisoner at the upper end of a tavern table where ... waiting for bail, thou and thy counter-leech may swallow down six gallons of charnico and then begin to chafe that he makes you stay so long before Peter Bail comes ... for you know your prisoner's ransom will pay for all this.'
- 18 *our master*] this is probably either an authorial or compositorial error as Beard is clearly referring to Throat (who has gone to see his 'mother-in-law' Lady Somerfield) and he is Dash's master but not Beard's; Beard's employer, in the pretence they are playing out, would be 'Constantia' or the widowed Lady Somerfield (and hence, in either case, his mistress).
- 20 *another*] this is for Dash's benefit – there is no 'another,' as is confirmed by Beard's returning alone at 54; as we learn later in the scene (38-40), this arrest has been set up to give Dash the slip – Beard has no intention of getting as far as Lady Somerfield's as that would give the game away; Beard repeats the assertion that he is going for 'another' at 25, the repetition presumably being reinforcement of the idea for Dash.
- 21 *firking*] the meaning is obscure here – possibly, 'that will trounce you' (*OED*, v.4); Corbin and Sedge suggest 'quick, brisk.' It is most likely not a mere intensive (as 'fucking' might be now) as such usage is exemplified by *OED* only from 1893. Dilke (*Old English Plays*, Vol. II, p.149) quotes Stevens in a note to *Antonio and Mellida*, III i: 'the word is used in such opposite senses by the old writers, it is almost impossible to fix its precise meaning.'
- 23-4 *twelve ... law*] the discrepancy between damages and costs makes a common satirical point about the law.

BEARD
25 And I another.

Ex[eunt BEARD and DASH].

SERGEANT Drawer, leave the room.
Here, Mistress, a health.
FRANCES Let it come, sweet rogue.
DRAWER
Ay, say you so? Then must I have an eye.
These sergeants feed on very good reversions,
On capons, teals, and sometimes on a woodcock
30 Hot from the sheriff's own table. The knaves feed well,
Which makes them horrid lechers.

The DRAWER stands aside.

FRANCES This health is pledged.
And, honest Sergeant, how does Master Gripe,

25s.d. *Ex[eunt ...]] Exit Q1.*

- 25 *And I another]* this statement is rather needlessly repeated from 20 above – possibly an authorial slip.
- 26 *Let it come]* a precise meaning is not obvious; ‘come’ may mean something like ‘come to be’ (*OED*, v.13.a) or ‘come into play’ (*OED*, v.12.a), with ‘it’ referring to the health, the implications of the health, or the person who is offering it. There may be a loose sexual connotation: in his entry for *come* Williams quotes a contemporary definition, ‘*Come about ... To copulate (said only of man by woman).*’ Whatever the precise meaning, though, it is clear that Frances is playing up to the Sergeant’s advances in order to keep him sweet whilst she makes her move to get away (38-40 indicating that she intends to disengage from this encounter if possible) and one might assume that they canoodle whilst the Drawer is talking until ‘This health is pledged’ (31) closes off this tactical ploy in Frances’ larger plan. The Sergeant, however, has his own objectives and outmanoeuvres her with his action from Mistress Sellsmock.
- 27 *have an eye]* ‘observe carefully’ (*OED*, n¹.6.a).
- 28 *reversions]* (a) specifically ‘the remains of a meal’ (*OED*, n¹.4.a), in this case from the Sheriff’s table (see 30) and given to his under-officers; (b) generally, ‘an entitlement to the possession of something after another is done with it’ (*OED*, n¹.2.a) and hence suggestive of a sexual partner someone has tired of, as in Middleton’s *The Roaring Girl*, 9.159-60: ‘Feed at reversion now? | A strumpet’s leaving?’ Cf. also I ii 129 and note.
- 29 *capon ... woodcock]* For ‘capon’ see note to I ii 27; a ‘woodcock’ was ‘an erect penis’ – cf. Day’s *Law Tricks*, 1301-3, where Emilia rejects a dish of woodcocks on the grounds that ‘I neuer sit to meate with these gallants, but there’s Woodcocks cleane through the table;’ also Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 3.1.131-2: ‘I care not if I go and visit her and carry her a woodcock;’ the teal seems to be an innocent bird, though as a type of game it reinforces the general point being made here, that rich food, and especially meat, creates a strong sexual appetite; cf. Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 4.7.3-5: ‘a good dinner, | A fine provoking meal which drew on apace | The pleasure of a day bed, and I had it [i.e., a bout of sexual activity].’
- 32 *Gripe]* as a verb ‘to gripe’ could be ‘to grasp and take into possession’ (*OED*, v¹.2), ‘to apprehend’ (*OED*, v¹.5), ‘to afflict or distress’ (*OED*, v¹.7), or ‘to grope’ (*OED*, v¹.1.c); as a noun it could mean ‘a strong or painful grip’ (*OED*, n¹.1.b and 2.a), or ‘a vulture’ (*OED*, n².2); a use of the word by Middleton in *The Black Book* suggests that ‘an extortion’ could be a further meaning – ‘such lurches [scams], gripes and squeezes as may be wrung out by the fist of extortion’ (686-7); all these senses are appropriate both to the office held by Master Gripe and the manner in which he carries out his responsibilities (see next five notes).

- The keeper of the Counter? I do protest
 I found him always favourable to me.
 35 'A is an honest man. Has often stood to me
 And been my friend, and let me go a-trust
 For victual when 'a denied it knights. But come,
 Let's pay and then be gone. Th'arrest, you know,
 Was but a trick to get from nimble Dash,
 40 My husband's man.
 SERGEANT True, but I have an action
 At suit of Mistress Sellsmock, your quondam bawd.
 The sum is eight good pound, for six weeks board,
 And five weeks loan for a red taffeta gown
 Bound with a silver lace.
 FRANCES I do protest,
 45 By all the honesty 'twixt thee and me,
 I got her, in that gown, in six weeks space

41. Sellsmock] Smel-smocke Q2 *et seq.* 41. quondam] *quandam* Q1.

- 33 *keeper of the Counter*] chief warden of one of the debtors' prisons in London (which one is unspecified here) (*OED*, *keeper*, n.1.a and *counter*, n³.7); Wayne, in her edition of Middleton's *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, notes at 4.3.24 that 'Counter' puns on 'cunt,' and given what Frances says next about Gripe's behaviour towards her, that, too, is appropriate, and would bring particularly into play the meaning of 'gripe' as a verb, 'to grope.'
 34 *favourable*] 'well disposed, kindly' (*OED*, adj.2.a and b).
 35 *stood to*] (a) 'remained faithful to, supported' (*OED*, v.76.h); (b) 'had an erection' (*OED*, v.6.c); possibly, (c) desired, hankered after' (*OED*, v.76.l); there is also a possible suggestion of having intercourse whilst standing, for which sexual preference see note to IV i 38-9 above.
 36 *friend*] the word could describe almost any relationship from 'acquaintance' to 'lover' (*OED*, n.2 and 4), including 'helper, supporter' (*OED*, n.5.a).
 36 *go a-trust*] 'purchase on credit' (*OED*, n.3).
 39 *but ... Dash*] this explains why Frances is in the hands of the sergeants when she was supposed to be at Lady Somerfield's house in St John's Street (see III v 175); the Sergeant's response confirms that he knows who Frances is and that there is something else afoot, though not the details of the deception being practised. The word 'nimble' here appears to be simply a play on Dash's name without the innuendo that accompanies it elsewhere in this play.
 41 *At suit of*] 'prosecuted or pursued by' (*OED*, n.7).
 41 *Sellsmock*] 'smock' is, metonymically, 'a prostitute,' so the name means 'bawd.' There is no argument for following Q2's 'Smel-smocke' which meant 'lecher' and thus points to the other side of the business. (We might note again the correlation of sexual activity with this article of underwear.)
 41 *quondam*] 'erstwhile, one time' (*OED*, adj.C.a).
 42 *eight good pound*] the sum seems somewhat exaggerated, but it would make sense for a plaintiff to inflate a claim; see II iv 94 and note for the value of money at this period. One might wonder whether this 'suit of Mistress Sellsmock' is a genuine one or an invention of the Sergeant designed to prompt Frances into providing him with sex, but Frances' acknowledgement of the loan would suggest it is the former.
 42 *board*] 'meals provided' (i.e., for the women working in the brothel) (*OED*, n.7.a), with perhaps a pun on 'bawd' (and hence, possibly, 'pimping services').
 43-4 *a red ... lace*] if they were to market themselves at the more lucrative end of the business prostitutes needed expensive clothes but could not afford to buy them, hence the loan. One might note again the association of taffeta cloth with prostitution – see note to *Actorum Nomina*, 21.
 45 *honesty*] probably 'respect' (*OED*, 1.b); the word also referred to a woman's chastity (*OED*, 3.b) and there may be an ironic glance in that direction.
 46-9 *I got ... house*] Frances' reply seems to bear no relation to Mistress Sellsmock's suit as presented by the Sergeant: first, she appears to admit to having the gown for six weeks, not five; second, the

Four pound and fourteen pence given by a clerk G1
 Of an Inn of Chancery that night I came
 Out of her house – and does the filthy jade
 50 Send to me for money? But, honest Sergeant,
 Let me go, and say thou didst not see me.
 I'll do thee as great a pleasure shortly.
 SERGEANT
 Shall we embrace tonight?
 FRANCES With all my heart.
 SERGEANT
 Sit on my knee and kiss.

Enter BEARD.

BEARD
 55 What news, boy? Why stand you sentinel?
 DRAWER
 Do but conceal yourself and we shall catch
 My Sergeant napping.
 BEARD Shall maids be here deflowered?
 SERGEANT
 Now kiss again.
 DRAWER Now, now!

Enter CAP[TAIN FACE] and seeing the hurly-burly runs away.

BEARD
 60 Deflower virgins, rogue? Avaunt, ye slave!
 Are maids fit subjects for a sergeant's mace?

Ex[it] SER[GEANT].

-
- payment she says she made is only half the amount claimed by Mistress Sellsmock; third, she says it took her six weeks to earn the sum, but it was paid to her in one night. Is she simply trying to blind the Sergeant with figures, or is this indicative of her own confusion? We might note in passing that the clerk was keeping up the reputation of the legal profession for extravagant sexual entertainment which Throat lamented the decline of at III ii 14-23.
- 49 *jade*] a 'jade' was a horse of inferior breed or condition (*OED*, n¹.1.a) but as used here it was a gendered insult meaning 'whore' or 'slut.'
- 52 *as ... pleasure*] 'as great a favour' (*OED*, n.5.c) but with the obvious suggestion of 'pleasuring' him – 'provide sexual gratification' (*OED*, v.1.a).
- 53 *embrace*] 'have sexual intercourse' (*OED*, v2.1.b) – there is no intervening sense here.
- 57 *napping*] 'sleeping' (*OED*, ppl.a), but that would make sense only if taken figuratively – 'off guard' as it were; Williams notes that it could mean 'at it (sexually)' which is a probable meaning here; it could also mean 'cheating,' which is an attractive possibility but not one supported by *OED* as the first example is from 1673.
- 57 *Shall ... deflowered*] the Sergeant clearly doesn't hear this and Beard does not assault him until 59 so this must be either to himself or to the Drawer, but Beard knows that Frances is no 'maid;' is this maintenance of the pretence that she is a lady purely, then, for the Drawer's benefit?
- 59 *avaunt*] 'be off!' (*OED*, v².3).
- 60 *mace*] (a) 'a heavy staff or club' (*OED*, n¹.1.a) carried by 'sergeants of the mace' or catchpoles (Jones); the weapon was often used as a symbol of authority, and hence the question about whether 'maids' should be 'subject to' the bearer; (b) 'penis.'

So, now are we once more free. There's for the wine.

Ex[it] DRAWER.

Now to our rendezvous. Three pounds in gold
These slops contain. We'll quaff in Venice glasses,
And swear some lawyers are but silly asses.

Exeunt [BEARD and FRANCES].

Enter CAPTAIN FACE.

CAPTAIN FACE

- 65 Is the coast clear? Are these combustions ceased,
And may we drink Canary sack in peace?
Shall we have no attendance here, you rogues?
Where be these rascals that skip up and down
Faster than virginal jacks? Drawers!

-
- 62 *our rendezvous*] the plotting lacks clarity at this point: the only 'rendezvous' Beard has made was with Throat at III v 175 – 'You two [Beard and Dash] shall man her to her mother's' – but he obviously cannot take Frances to Lady Somerfield's so where he is planning to go at this point is unclear; when we next see him his line, 'and is my wench took from me?' (IV iii 26) suggests that he had been planning to have sex with Frances, so shaking off Dash may well have had a motive other than merely avoiding a meeting with Lady Somerfield, and were that Beard's plan it would also give more point to his departing comment in line 64 which suggests he intends to gull Throat. The 'rendezvous' may, therefore, have been arranged with Frances between III v and this scene, she, for her part, intending to run off with the jewels Throat has given her (see V iii 234-5) and either Barry has forgotten to make this explicit or he expects us to fill it in for ourselves.
- 63 *slops*] 'wide, baggy breeches' (*OED*, n¹.4.a). The 'three pounds' they contain was given to Beard by Throat at III iv 159.
- 63 *quaff*] 'drink deeply and repeatedly' (*OED*, v.1.a).
- 63 *Venice glasses*] Venice glassware was noted for its fineness and delicacy, the drinking glasses often having coloured decoration: Beard clearly intends to live it up.
- 64 *asses*] asses were proverbially stupid, but were also associated with cuckoldry through the image of the ass's ears which were equivalent to the cuckold's horns and were 'the sign of the erotic fool' (Williams, entry for *ass's ears*); Bottom, in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, would be the type of such an erotic fool. There is also possibly a pun on 'arses' – a good number of the proverbs cited by Dent that involve the ass rely on this homophonic potentiality.
- 65 *combustions*] 'commotions, tumults' (*OED*, 5.b).
- 66 *Canary sack*] a white (usually sweet) wine from the Canary islands.
- 67 *attendance*] 'service' (*OED*, 3).
- 67 *rogues*] 'rascals,' often applied abusively to servants (*OED*, n.2.a and b) but also, less strongly, in a familiar way (n.3); Face is probably using it with the former implication.
- 69 *virginal jacks*] at its simplest this refers to the instrument, the 'virginal,' in which the strings were plucked by quills attached to 'jacks' – pieces of wood attached to the key lever; when a key was pressed the jack rose or 'skipped' up and the quill plucked the string. There could, however, be some fairly obscure wordplay here. Two other meanings of 'jack' have a contextual relevance: 'a fellow, chap, knave' (*OED*, n¹.2.a) could play upon the fact that the drawers would be, in that sense, 'jacks,' and the tankards they served ale in were also called 'jacks' (*OED*, n².2). A possible pun could derive from the pronunciation of 'jacks' – 'jakes, a privy' (*OED*, n¹⁰), but that makes no coherent sense with 'virginal.' Williams gives 'penis' for 'jack', and there could therefore be a hint that the drawers, being young, are sexually inexperienced and hence, to Face, worthy of his scorn; Williams also notes that 'jakes' was used to mean 'prostitutes' but the correlation with 'virginal' makes even less sense than it does with 'jakes.'

[Enter DRAWER.]

- DRAWER Sir!
- CAPTAIN FACE
- 70 On whom wait you, Sir Rogue?
- DRAWER Faith, Captain,
I attend a conventicle of players.
- CAPTAIN FACE
- How! Players? What, is there e'er a cuckold amongst them?
- DRAWER
- Jove defend else. It stands with policy
That one should be a notorious cuckold,
- 75 If it be but for the better keeping
The rest of his company together.
- CAPTAIN FACE
- When did you see Sir Theophrastus Slop,
The City Dog-Master?

-
- 71 *conventicle*] 'an assembly, meeting' (*OED*, n.1); at this period the term was frequently associated with religious meetings, and particularly those of a clandestine nature held by nonconformist sects; it may be used thus here, though ironically, as players did not generally figure in religiously zealous groups.
- 72 *is ... them?*] 'is one of them by any chance a cuckold?' (*OED*, *ever*, adv.8). Again Face focuses upon the sexual deficiency of others, so that one begins to suspect that the Captain doth protest too much.
- 73 *Jove ... else*] 'God forbid that it should be otherwise' (*OED*, *defend*, v.3.e; *else*, adv.4.a); 'Jove' was frequently used for 'God' in the theatre to avoid accusations of blasphemy.
- 73 *stands with*] 'is consistent with' (*OED*, v.79.e), but in the context probably with a glance at penile erection.
- 73 *policy*] 'expediency, prudence' (*OED*, n¹.3).
- 75-6 *If ... together*] the implication is that one of the players chooses not to challenge a colleague whom he knows to be having sex with his wife in order to avoid causing a rift that would break up the company; Corbin and Sedge suggest that this passage exists 'solely in order to score a point against a rival company of players;' if that is the case it could be an adult company (boy players being too young to be married) and so might be another thrust in the contest between the child and adult companies; however, there is evidence that the 'children of the king's revels' were not boys as much as young men and that one of them might have been married (see Bly, 2000, p.127) in which case this may have been an 'indoor v. outdoor' theatre spat. See also V iii 78 and note.
- 77 *Theophrastus Slop*] an unpleasant sounding character; Theophrastus (c.370-287 BCE) was a Greek philosopher best known for his *Characters*, a series of sketches illustrating the disagreeable aspects of human nature. To 'slop' could be 'to splash liquid' (*OED*, v².1.a) or 'to gobble up noisily' (*OED*, v².2); as a noun it could mean any substance of a liquid and unpleasant nature (though the meaning 'unappetising food' is not given by *OED* until 1657); the word could also be used as a term of contempt (*OED*, n¹.6) and that is perhaps its main force here, its choice possibly being influenced by the use of 'slops' – the article of clothing – only a few lines earlier, albeit in a different scene (see IV ii 63 and note). Why Face should ask after this person is obscure; it could be an indication of his acquaintanceship and hence social standing.
- 78 *City Dog-Master*] possibly an invented and comically low-status job. Jones notes: 'evidently this official was commissioned to take up dogs for bear-baiting,' referencing *Sir Gyles Goosecappe* III i [105-6], 'Ile be sworne, they tooke away a mastie Dogge of mine by commission,' but as the 'they' there refers to some unidentified Frenchmen, that line does little to explain this term; if the job existed it would presumably be to obtain and look after dogs for bear-baiting 'entertainments' provided by the City, though bear-baiting was on the whole run by commercial enterprises

- DRAWER Not today, sir.
 CAPTAIN FACE
 What have you for my supper?
 DRAWER Nothing ready,
 80 Unless you please to stay the dressing, Captain.
 CAPTAIN FACE
 Zounds! Stay the dressing, you damned rogue!
 What, shall I wait upon your greasy cook
 And wait his leisure? Go downstairs, rogue.
 Now all her other customers be served, G1v
 85 Ask if your mistress have a snip of mutton
 Yet left for me.
 DRAWER Yes, sir.
 CAPTAIN FACE And good-man rogue,
 See what good thing your kitchen maid has left
 For me to work upon. My barrow-guttlings grumble
 And would have food.

[Exit DRAWER.]

- Say now the vintner's wife
 90 Should bring me up a pheasant, partridge, quail,

-
- (linked often to theatre companies – see Höfele, *Stage, Stake and Scaffold*, p.7) which one would have expected the City to use if it wished to run one of these events; the Agas map, though, does show a 'Dogge hous' (and it is a substantial looking institution) in Moorfields, just north of All Hallows church in the city wall.
- 80 *dressing*] 'seasoning, saucing' (*OED*, vbl.n.4.a) – possibly more loosely here, though, just 'preparation.'
- 82 | 83 *wait | wait*] possibly a pun rather than thoughtless repetition, playing upon the idea of role reversal, the first 'wait' being 'act as servant to' (*OED*, v¹.9.a and 14.g) and the second 'hang around (until the cook condescends to do some work)' (*OED*, v¹.6.a).
- 82 *greasy*] cf. III i 44 and note, above.
- 85 *snip of mutton*] 'mutton' could mean 'a prostitute,' and so by synecdoche 'female genitalia' (*OED*, n.4) but, unless there is a tautology, the latter is more likely here indicated by the 'snip' – 'a small cut or incision, hole or crack' (*OED*, n.5.a); tautologically or otherwise, the way in which Face is now asking to be 'served' is to have the mistress allay his sexual rather than (or as well as) his alimentary appetite.
- 87 *good thing*] *OED* gives the meaning 'rich food, dainties' only from 1821 (*good thing*, 1.c), but that is clearly the surface meaning here; as with the 'snip of mutton' Face is, however, thinking equally of sexual pleasures, as 'thing = vagina' (Williams); (cf. Middleton, *The Changeling*, 3.3.255-7: 'Thou hast a thing about thee would do a man pleasure – I'll lay my hand on't'). The next line, 'For me to work upon' continues the equivocation: 'for me to chew on/sexually exert myself on.'
- 88 *barrow-guttlings*] 'intestines' – strictly, those of a pig (*OED*, n².3; this line is the only example of the term).
- 89 *vintner's wife*] though a 'vintner' was normally a wine merchant, it could also refer to an inn-keeper (*OED*, 1.a), and that presumably is the sense here (see also 105 below). In the passage that follows Face develops his fantasy that the host's wife will enable him to obtain money and other goods for the sexual satisfaction he will give her.
- 89s.d. *Exit DRAWER.*] For this s.d. see note to 113 of this scene.

- A pleasant banquet, and extremely love me,
 Desire me to eat, kiss, and protest
 I should pay nothing for it. Say she should drink
 Herself three quarters drunk to win my love
 95 Then give me a chain worth some three score pounds –
 Say 'twere worth but forty – say but twenty,
 For citizens do seldom in their wooing
 Give above twenty pounds. Say then 'tis twenty –
 I'll go sell some fifteen pounds worth of the chain
 100 To buy some clothes, and shift my lousy linen,
 And wear the rest as a perpetual favour
 About my arm in fashion of a bracelet.
 Say then her husband should grow jealous.
 I'd make him drunk, and then I'll cuckold him.
 105 But then a vintner's wife, some rogues will say,
 Which sits at bar for the receipt of custom,
 That smells of chippings and of broken fish,
 Is love to Captain Face, which to prevent
 I'll never come but when her best stitched hat,
 110 Her bugle-gown and best wrought smock is on.
 Then does she neither smell of bread, of meat,
 Or droppings of the tap. It shall be so.

112. droppings] drappings Q1

- 91 *banquet*] possibly in the sense of 'a feast' (*OED*, n¹.1) but possibly referring to a course of fruit, sweetmeats and wine (3.b) and hence the dessert to this romantic dinner.
 91 *extremely*] 'exceedingly' (*OED*, adv.2.a), but possibly, 'to the extreme, to the uttermost' (adv.1) – i.e., in modern parlance, 'go all the way.'
 95 *three score*] i.e., sixty. As before (see III i 35 above) Face imagines himself deriving enormous sums of money from these women he is convinced are enamoured of his charms, and though he does here progressively reduce the sum, that is possibly because he holds the common prejudice of the time that citizens were miserly rather than that he is being more realistic; for the value of the pound at this time see note to II iv 94 and I i 102.
 101 *favour*] in the chivalric tradition, a gift from a woman to her lover to be worn by him as a mark of his acceptance of that love – another of Face's affected archaisms.
 106 *sits at bar*] 'sits at the counter where drink is served' (*OED*, *bar*, n¹.28.a); in the light of line 112 'bar' could refer to the piece of wood that held the head of a wine-cask in place, and from below which wine was drawn.
 106 *receipt of custom*] 'in order to welcome those patronising the establishment' (*OED*, *receipt*, n.7.a and b; *custom*, n.5); but the phrase could also imply the (physically literal) reception of a customer by a prostitute; Williams notes in his entry for *house* that Farmer and Henley reference such a phrase under 'vaginal and phallic expressions.'
 107 *chippings*] 'parings of the crust of a loaf' (*OED*, vbl.n.2.a).
 107 *broken fish*] 'fragments of fish left over after a meal' (*OED*, *broken*, ppl.a.1.b).
 109 *stitched*] 'embroidered' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.a).
 110 *bugle-gown*] a dress adorned with bugles or 'tube-shaped glass beads' (*OED*, *bugle*, n³.1 and 2).
 110 *wrought*] 'shaped, fashioned' (*OED*, ppl.a.1), or, embellished, decorated' (*OED*, ppl.a.3.b).
 Whilst the woman might be wearing her best clothes to indicate status, we might note again, here, the association of smocks with sexual encounters.
 111-2 *neither ... or*] the use of 'or' with 'neither' and the provision of more than two differing things in a 'neither ... nor' formulation were both acceptable in this period.
 112 *droppings of the tap*] drips from the cask-tap which may have splashed her clothes as she was drawing off wine.

Enter BOUTCHER, W[ILLIAM] SMALLSHANKS, and
CONSTANTIA.

BOUTCHER
Now leave us, boy.

[CONSTANTIA stands aside.]

Bless you, Captain Face.
CAPTAIN FACE
I'll have no music.
WILLIAM 'Foot! Dost take us for fiddlers?

-
- 113 *Now ... boy]* it is unclear whom Boutcher is addressing here. There are two possible addressees: Constantia (who is listed in Q1 as entering with Boutcher) and the Drawer (none of whose entrances and exits is marked in this scene in Q1). Both are addressed elsewhere as 'boy' (the former consistently by Boutcher and other characters throughout the play, and the latter by Beard at 55 of this scene and possibly by William at 147) so the form of address is of no help. As to other stage movements and action, Constantia speaks at 160 below and no entrance is given for her between that line and this one, whilst the Drawer has been sent by Face to get him some food at 89 (making that the most sensible place for the Drawer to leave) after which Face, presumably thinking himself alone, gives rein to his fantasy about the hostess. At 31 the Drawer remains on stage, aside, despite being told to leave, but he explains that by telling us he needs to observe the action between Frances and the Sergeant (27-31); however, for him to merely hang about on stage throughout Face's soliloquy here would be odd, not because he might 'hear' Face (soliloquies seem to be audible to other characters in *Ram Alley* - see III i where Face is clearly overheard and then interrupted by Sir Oliver and Tutchim) but because he has been sent on an errand and has no reason not to respond to that instruction. At 145 of this scene Boutcher addresses someone as 'boy,' then two lines later the Drawer appears asking for Captain Face, and William immediately says, 'Stand back, boy.' Though the Drawer's entrance might seem to result from Boutcher's 'Come, boy,' the Drawer's question, 'Where's the Captain?' suggests that he has returned with the food Face asked for but fails to see him because the Captain is now on a table (and possibly dressed in some outlandish costume - see 127, note, and 141 below); the Drawer's entrance at this point also, of course, makes it clear that he has been offstage during the preceding action. The 'boy' whom Boutcher addresses at 145 is therefore most likely Constantia (he is asking her to act as his 'assistant' but William intervenes to take up that role instead) and the one whom William addresses is either also Constantia (telling her to step aside and 'be a spectator' rather than a participant in the action) or the Drawer, whose interruption of the business with Face has somewhat annoyed him; the former makes good sense in terms of the relationship of Constantia to the action, but the latter would provide some sensible engagement of those on stage with the Drawer whose sudden appearance is, in fact, oddly irrelevant as there is no follow-up to his question and he makes only one other comment during the remainder of the scene. The solution adopted for this edition is to take Constantia as the 'boy' addressed by Boutcher at this point, but for her to stand aside at the instruction rather than leave the stage entirely (as the Drawer does at 31); this leaves her on stage for her line at 160, and also to hear the exchange between William and Boutcher about herself at the very end of the scene. This entails the assumption that Barry had forgotten that Constantia had been sent off when he brings her into the action as Boutcher's 'assistant;' however, such a minor lapse of memory about the involvement of this character in the action would at least be consistent with the more general tendency Barry seems to have regarding Constantia's presence on the stage (see Introduction, The Play, Reconsidering *Ram Alley*).
- 114 *I'll ... music]* Face, who presumably has not turned to look at them, takes Boutcher and his companions for musicians hoping he would employ them to entertain him whilst eating.

- CAPTAIN FACE
 115 Then turn straight, drawer. Run down the stairs,
 And thank the gods 'a gave me that great patience
 Not to strike you.
 BOUTCHER Your patience, sir, is great,
 For you dare seldom strike. Sirrah, they say
 You needs will wed the widow Taffeta,
 120 *Nolens volens.*
 CAPTAIN FACE Do not urge my patience.
 Awake not fury, new raked up in embers. G2
 I give you leave to live.
 WILLIAM Men say you've tricks,
 You're an admirable ape, and you can do
 More feats than three baboons. We must have some.
 CAPTAIN FACE
 125 My patience yet is great. I say be gone –
 My tricks are dangerous.
 BOUTCHER That's nothing.
 I have brought you furniture. Come, get up,
 Up, upon this table. Do your feats,
 Or I will whip you to them. Do not I know
 130 You are a lousy knave?
 CAPTAIN FACE How! Lousy knave?
 Are we not English bred?
 BOUTCHER You're a coward rogue
 That dares not look a kitling in the face
 If she but stare or mew.
 CAPTAIN FACE My patience yet is great.

-
- 115 *Then ... drawer*] he now takes William for the Drawer; Face's order to 'turn straight' (i.e., go back straight away) is a further suggestion that the Drawer has not been onstage since 89.
 119 *needs will*] 'are determined to' (*OED*, *needs*, adv.1.e).
 120 *nolens volens*] 'whether [she is] willing or not' (Latin).
 120 *urge*] 'provoke' (*OED*, v.7.b).
 121 *new ... embers*] 'recently raked to cover with smouldering ashes' (*OED*, *rake*, v¹.5.a and b); this piece of Pistolian bombast derives from the practice of raking out a fire to keep it alive and smouldering but not flaming.
 122 *tricks*] 'acts of dexterity' (*OED*, n.5.a), as performed by the apes shown in London at this period, but also 'unpleasant characteristics or habits' (*OED*, n.7); by introducing the suggestion that Face is an ape or baboon William also introduces the sexual suggestions of 'trick' (as in the play's subtitle); for sexual associations of apes and baboons see I ii 43 and II iii 95, and notes thereto above.
 124 *feats*] this word could also have associations with the idea of dexterity (*OED*, n.3).
 127 *furniture*] most likely the table that Boutcher refers to in the next sentence, but possibly, 'apparel' (*OED*, n.4.a) to dress him in (see 141), or, as Corbin and Sedge suggest, 'harness, trappings' (*OED*, n.5.c), such as a bridle, to lead him by.
 131 *Are ... bred?*] the point of this is not obvious; it may be that Face is appealing to either common courtesy or common nationality as a way of deflecting Boutcher's aggression.
 132 *kitling*] 'kitten' (*OED*, 2).

- 135 Do you bandy tropes? By Dis, I will be knight,
Wear a blue coat on great Saint George's day
And with my fellows drive you all from Paul's
For this attempt.
BOUTCHER Will you yet get up?
I must lash you to it.
CAPTAIN FACE By Pluto, gentlemen,
To do you pleasure and to make you sport
140 I'll do't.
WILLIAM Come, get up then, quick.
BOUTCHER
I'll dress you, sir.
CAPTAIN FACE By Jove, 'tis not for fear,
But for a love I bear unto these tricks
That I perform it.
BOUTCHER Hold up your snout, sir.
Sit handsomely. By heaven, sir, you must do it.
145 Come, boy.
WILLIAM No, by this good light, I'll play
Him that goes with the motions.

[Enter DRAWER.]

DRAWER

Where's the Captain, gentlemen?

134. tropes?] troopes, Q1. 137. get up?] gee up, Q1

134 *bandy tropes?*] 'exchange figures of speech' – i.e., 'do you respond to my figurative language by knocking your own back to me?' (The 'troopes' of Q1 was an acceptable spelling of the word in the 16th and 17th centuries, so that is probably not a misprint.)

134 *Dis*] the Roman god of the underworld (Pluto in Greek mythology – see 138) and hence a suitably ominous god by which to swear revenge.

134-5 *I ... day*] Face appears to be responding with a trope which plays upon 'knave:' the playing card known as the 'jack' or 'knave' was also at this period called the 'knight' so Face is promoting himself from a status that was associated with baseness of class and morality (the implication of Boutcher's use of 'knave') to one associated with military prowess and honour; the 'blue coat' and 'Saint George's day' are probably references to the Order of the Garter, the most prestigious order of knighthood; St George was the patron saint of the order and Knights of the Garter wore a blue mantle on ceremonial occasions (such as the observance of their patron's day). It is possible, however, that some entirely different, but no longer available, joke is intended.

136 *Paul's*] for the nave of St Paul's cathedral as a social space see note to IV i 160-2 above.

137 *get up*] amended from Q1's /gee up/ on the grounds that (a) in lines 127 and 140 the instruction is 'get up,' and (b) as an instruction to an animal 'gee up' is given by *OED* only from the mid-18th century (and without the preposition at the earliest from 1628) (*gee*, int.¹).

143 *snout*] 'nose' with contemptuous suggestion (*OED*, n.2) but also, as Williams notes, 'the penis' – a line of innuendo taken up by William Smallshanks in his 'advertisement' of the 'motions' below.

144 *handsomely*] 'neatly, elegantly' (*OED*, adv.4).

145 *come, boy*] probably addressed to Constantia; see note to 113 above.

146 *Him ... motions*] either the showman himself or his assistant or 'crier'; 'motions' were usually puppet shows (*OED*, n.13.a) but cf. I ii 72, where the word also seems to be used to refer to this kind of show.

WILLIAM

Stand back, boy, and be a spectator. Gentlemen,
You shall see the strange nature of an outlandish beast
That has but two legs, bearded like a man,
150 Nosed like a goose, and tongued like a woman,
Lately brought from the land of Catita.
A beast of much understanding, were it not given
Too much to the love of venery – do I not do it well?

BOUTCHER

Admirably!

WILLIAM Remember, noble Captain,

155 You skip when I shall shake my whip. Now, sir,
What can you do for the great Turk?
What can you do for the Pope of Rome?
Hark, he stirreth not – he moveth not – he waggeth not.
What can you do for the town of Geneva, sirrah?

147 *Stand back, boy*] possibly also addressed to Constantia, but possibly, in annoyance, to the Drawer; see note to 113 above.

149-53 *That ... venery*] William takes up with vigour the opportunity provided by the word 'snout' in 143, crying up Face as a monstrous creature in a freak show, and ridiculing him sexually – fittingly, some might argue, given the Captain's absurd sexual conceit and his harassment of Taffeta. The passage is complex, offering not only a superficially 'innocent' level of meaning, but two separate – but equally applicable – secondary levels of innuendo. The first of these secondary levels presents Face as a sexual freak with exaggerated genitals and an inflated sense of his own sexual abilities; this line of suggestion could be translated as: 'this bizarre creature has a penis as long as a goose's neck, is, like a woman, forever going on about sex, and frequents brothels, whence we have brought him to you;' the 'goose,' in this reading, could refer to the penis, or mean 'whore's client' (Williams) – and hence serves a double purpose – whilst 'the land of Catita' would be 'a brothel' (see Williams, entry for *Cottyto*). The second line of suggestion is much darker: here Face is an androgynous catamite whose 'two legs, bearded like a man' become the female fork where pubic hair covers a whore's ('goose') vagina which is penetrated ('nosed') in sexual intercourse and licked ('tongued') in cunnilingus; in this reading Catita is the land of sodomites, as is suggested by Marston in *The Malcontent*, when Malevole refers to 'a knight of the land of Catito [who] shall play at trap [i.e., commit sodomy] with any page in Europe' (I iii 57-8). In both these readings the constant pursuit of sexual gratification – 'love of venery' – has meant that Face, who would otherwise enjoy the godlike capability of 'much understanding,' has sunk below the level of the human being and becomes, as Hamlet put it, 'a beast, no more' (*Ham.*, IV iv 35). It might be noted here, finally, that Jones' suggestion of 'Cathay' (China) for 'Catita' is probably wide of the mark.

156-7 *What ... Rome?*] animals were made to respond to instructions as though they were doing things for well-known, high status people; the Stage Keeper, in the Induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, 17-20, complains that the playwright has not included in the action 'a Iugler with a well-educated Ape to come ouer the chaine, for the King of England, and backe againe for the Prince, and sit still on his arse for the Pope, and the King of Spaine.' At the point when *Ram Alley* was written 'the great Turk' – the ruler of the Ottoman Empire – was Sultan Ahmed I (the Fortunate), and the Pope was Paul V.

158 *waggeth*] another synonym for 'stir' and 'move' (*OED*, v.1). This line as a whole is reminiscent of *Rom.*, II i 15-16, where Mercutio is mockingly calling out for Romeo, but 'He heareth not, he stirreth not, he moveth not, | The ape is dead, and I must conjure him.'

159 *Geneva*] the headquarters of the Calvinist protestants; as Face, apparently, like Jonson's well-educated ape, sits 'still on his arse for the Pope' William tries to provoke him to action by asking what he can do for a place that might have been considered the religious antipodes of Rome.

(He holds up his hands instead of praying.)

G2v

- CONSTANTIA
 160 Sure, this baboon is a great puritan.
 BOUTCHER
 Is not this strange?
 WILLIAM Not a whit. By this light,
 Banks his horse and he were taught both in a stable.
 DRAWER
 Oh rare!
 CAPTAIN FACE Zounds! I'll first be damned. Shall sport
 Be laughed at? By Dis, by Pluto, and great Proserpine,
 165 My fatal blade, once drawn, falls but with death.
 Yet if you'll let me go, I vow by Jove,
 No widow, maid, wife, punk, or cockatrice
 Shall make me haunt your ghosts.
 BOUTCHER 'Twill not serve, sir.
 You must show more.
 CAPTAIN FACE I'll first be hanged and damned.

-
- 159s.d. *He ... praying*] the meaning of this direction is puzzling. If one takes Constantia's next line as a straight comment on Face's reaction to William's last instruction (i.e., 'he surely must be a Geneva Calvinist and not a Catholic') that would suggest that the Captain responds positively; in that case, the phrase 'instead of praying' would presumably mean something like 'instead of adopting the usual posture for prayer,' which in turn would imply that strict puritans such as Calvinists prayed with their hands raised, rather than with hands pressed together (which funeral statuary would suggest was the norm in earlier and contemporary English churches, as might also *Rom.*, I v 100: 'palm to palm is holy palmer's kiss'); that there has been, and still is, debate in the church about the proper posture for prayer is certain, but there is only one Biblical passage that recommends praying with hands raised, this being *1 Timothy*, 2.8: 'I will therefore that the men pray, every where lifting up pure handes without wrath, or douting' (*Geneva Bible*, 1583); or, 'I wyll therefore, that the men praye everywhere, lyftyng up holy handes, without wrath and reasonyng' (*Bishops' Bible*, 1568). If, on the other hand, Constantia's comment is ironic (i.e., 'so much for his being a puritan') we would have to assume that Face is defying William by not praying – as one would expect a good Calvinist to do for the town of Geneva – but adopting some other posture, possibly that of supplication in the face of William's assault; such a gesture could equally prompt Constantia to a scornful or ironic comment concerning puritan hypocrisy or religious extravagance. That would be the simpler explanation in terms of the s.d., but one wonders if the principle of *lectio difficilior* should apply here. The s.d. is placed at the very bottom of G2v, but on a separate line and on a page that does not look otherwise unduly crowded, so there seems no reason to suspect abbreviation or any other kind of corruption.
- 162 *Banks his horse*] a common form of the possessive – 'Banks's horse.' Banks was a showman who exhibited, during the reigns of Elizabeth and James, a performing horse called Marocco, one of whose tricks was to bare its teeth, whinny, and chase its handler when asked to bow for the King of Spain.
- 162 *both ... stable*] i.e., both in the same stable.
- 163-4 *Shall ... at?*] One might ask how else sport– 'entertainment, amusement, diversion' (*OED*, n¹.1.a) – should be responded to.
- 164 *Proserpine*] the Latinate version of Persephone, the part-time wife of Pluto or Dis (see note to 134 above) and strongly associated in Greek religion with death.
- 165 *fatal*] 'ominous, fraught with destiny' (*OED*, adj.4.c and 5), and also 'deadly' (6.b).
- 168 *haunt your ghosts*] i.e., pursue and harass your persons (*OED*, *haunt*, n.4; *ghost*, n.4), but Face's archaic usage of the word 'ghosts' results in a slightly absurd other-worldly tautology. Boutcher picks up – or Barry inadvertently repeats – 'haunt' in 171.

[Exit CAPTAIN FACE.]

- WILLIAM
 170 'Foot! Can 'a jump so well?
 BOUTCHER Is 'a so quick?
 I hope the slave will haunt no more the widow.
 WILLIAM
 As for that, take no care, for by this light,
 She'll not have thee.
 BOUTCHER Not have me?
 WILLIAM No, not have thee.
 By this hand, flesh, and blood she is resolved
 175 To make my father a most fearful cuckold,
 And he's resolved to save his soul by her.
 BOUTCHER
 How by her?
 WILLIAM Thus: all old men which marry
 Young wives shall questionless be saved,
 For while they're young, they keep other men's wives,
 180 And when they're old, they keep wives for other men,
 And so by satisfaction procure salvation.
 Why, thou dejected tail of a crab,
 Does not the fair Constantia Somerfield
 Dote on thy filthy face, and wilt thou wed
 185 A wanton widow? What canst thou see
 To dote on her?
 BOUTCHER Only this – I love her.
 WILLIAM
 Dost love her? Then take a purgation,
 For love, I'll assure thee, is a binder

172 *take no care*] 'have no care, don't worry.'

176 *save his soul*] whilst William goes on to give his own theological explication of this idea, it was a common notion that by marrying one avoided the sin of fornication and hence damnation – 'better to marry than to burn' as St Paul put it (1 Corinthians, 7.9, A.V.).

181 *satisfaction*] 'atonement' or 'an act of compensation' (*OED*, 1.a and b); theologically, the atonement for all sin made by Christ through his crucifixion, and in the doctrine of confession, the performance of penalties to make amends for sins confessed.

182 *dejected ... crab*] the tail of the crab is hidden below the thorax, and hence is 'dejected' in the sense that it 'hangs down' like Boutcher's mien, but 'tail' could mean 'penis' whilst the crab was, like all shellfish, associated with Venus and matters amatory, so Boutcher is, in his present state, a lover whose 'tail' merely hangs – i.e., is in a state of detumescence.

185 *wanton*] 'lewd, lascivious' (*OED*, adj.2.a).

187 *purgation*] 'purgative, medicine to cause [in this case] an evacuation of the bowels' (*OED*, n.1.b); see next note.)

188 *binder*] 'cause of constipation' (*OED*, n.6); William may be following up his suggestion that Boutcher is 'dejected' or melancholy, as Burton notes that 'Retention and Evacuation ... are either concomitant, assisting, or sole causes many times of melancholy ... In the first ranke of these, I may well reckon up Costiveness [constipation], & keeping in of our ordinary excrements' (*The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Part I, Sect. 2. Memb. 2. Subs. 4).

- 190 Of all things under heaven there's no fitter parallels than a
 drunkard and a lover, for a drunkard loses his senses – so does
 your lover; your drunkard is quarrelsome – so is your lover; your
 drunkard will swear, lie, and speak great words – so will your
 lover; your drunkard is most desirous of his lechery – and so is
 your lover.
- 195 Well, the night grows old. Farewell.
 I am so much thy friend that none shall bed thee,
 While fair Constantia is resolved to wed thee.

Ex[eunt]. G3

189-93 *Of ... lover*] the first of the four passages in sig.G set in prose; though this is the least amenable of the four to being versified, it could be done within the limits of Barry's very loose metrification – indeed, when it appears in Cotgrave's 1655 miscellany, *The English Treasury of Wit and Language*, it is set out as verse. For further discussion of these passages see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.

193 *drunkard ... lechery*] cf. the Porter on the effects of drunkenness in *Mac.*, II iii 29-36.

[Act IV, Scene iii.]

Enter THOMAS SMALLSHANKS and others.

THOMAS

'Foot! Shall we let the wench go thus?

My masters, now show yourselves gentlemen

And take away the lawyer's wife.

'Foot! Though I have no wit, yet I can

5 Love a wench and choose a wife.

GENTLEMAN

Why sir, what should you do with a wife, that are held none of
the wisest? You'll get none but fools.

THOMAS

How fools? Why may not I, a fool, get a wise child as well as
wise men get fools? All lies but in the agility of the woman. In

Location] an unidentified street; Beard and Frances are on their way to their 'rendezvous' having left the unspecified tavern where they shook off Dash; they have been walking for the time taken to humiliate Face – some twelve or so minutes; that they are not in Fleet Street is made clear by Thomas's telling his companions to take Frances there (12-3). Beard's reference to the darkness closing in (16) suggests that the time is now late evening.

3 *the lawyer's wife*] the 'wench' is indeed now married to Throat: as he tells us at III v 23-5: 'I now do call her wife. She now is mine, | Sealed and delivered by an honest priest | At Saint Giles in the Field;' though Thomas was not present when that was said, he was present when Frances told William, 'know I now am wife unto this man' (III v 119) and so should realise that he cannot marry her himself without committing bigamy. Either this scene is designed to show that Thomas truly is, as his companion somewhat bluntly tells him, 'none of the wisest,' or this is another instance of the looseness of the definition of 'marriage' at this period: just as both Face and Sir Oliver can consider themselves 'married' to Taffeta on the basis of a contractual agreement (in the former case in words of the future tense – see III i 54 and note – and in the latter in words of the present tense but with a condition attached – see IV i 57-8 and note above), so it might be that Thomas, not having heard Throat's statement that he and Frances were actually married by a priest, considers that Frances is as yet still only 'contractually' Throat's wife.

6-14 *Why ... married*] the second of the four passages in sig.G to be set in prose; this one, too is just versifiable, using the Gentleman's line (15) to complete the last one; as it stands in Q1 that half line looks odd.

7 *You'll ... fools*] cf. *Proverbs*, 17.21: 'He that begetteth a foole, begetteth his sorowe: and the father of a foole can have no ioy' (*Bishops' Bible*).

8-9 *as wise ... fools?*] the idea was proverbial; see Dent M421: 'A wise man commonly has a fool to his heir (has foolish children);' cf. Middleton, *A Fair Quarrel*, 1.1.405-8: 'Wise men beget fools, and fools are the fathers | To many wise children. *Hysteron proteron*, | A great scholar may beget an idiot, | And from the plough-tail may come a great scholar.'

9 *All ... woman*] 'agility' inhabits the same semantic field as 'nimble' (see note to II iv 49-50); cf. Middleton, *More Dissemblers Besides Women*, 2.3.80-1, where Andrugio tells Aurelia: 'Sure if you prove as quick as your conceit | You'll be an excellent breeder;' and Day, *Humour Out of Breath*, G4v, 'There's mettle Father, how can wee choose but get cocking [spirited] children, when father and mother too are both of the game.' Thomas's point is that a lively sexual partner will produce lively children and since, up to the late 17th century, most theories of conception held that in order to conceive the woman had to actively enjoy intercourse (see McLaren, *Reproductive Rituals: The Perception of Fertility in England from the Sixteenth Century to the Nineteenth Century*, p.21) it would seem only a short step to argue that a dull and sexually disengaged bedfellow would beget dull and intellectually disengaged children. Towards the end of the 17th century the anonymous compendium of earlier works on sex and childbirth, *Aristotle's*

- 10 troth, I think all fools are got when their mother's asleep,
therefore I'll never lie with my wife but when she is broad
waking. Stand to't, honest friends! Knock down the Lieutenant
and then hurry the wench to Fleet Street. There my father and I
will this morning be married.

Enter BEARD and FRANCES [masked].

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- Masterpiece, or the Secrets of Generation Displayed in all the Parts Thereof* (first printed 1684) contrary to Thomas' view, blames men rather than women who are 'not so hot, and consequently (*sic*) not so desirous of Copulation' of proceeding 'faintly and drowsily, whence it happens that the children fall short of the Parents nature, wit and manners, and hence it is that wise Men frequently beget stupid sloathful children of feeble minds' (p.24 of 1694 edition), whilst over a century later than *Ram Alley*, but like *Aristotle's Masterpiece* also summarising earlier views, Nicolas Venette, the French writer on conjugal love, implies that too much agility on the part of the woman might have precisely the effect that Thomas fears when he warns against 'such postures as ... are forbidden and Contrary to Health' (such as the woman being on top) as these will lead to children that are 'Dwarfs, Cripples, Hunch-back'd, Squint-ey'd, and stupid Blockheads' (quoted in McLaren, *Op. Cit.*, p.45). Perhaps the point is that Thomas misunderstands the more subtle aspects of contemporary medico-sexual theorising just as he appears to misunderstand the concept of bigamy.
- 12 *stand to't*] (a) 'fight vigorously' (*OED, stand*, v.76.c), or possibly, 'prepare for action' (*OED*, v.76.d), and with (b) a bawdy innuendo on 'stand' as in II i 36 and elsewhere, and on 'to't' as at I i 61 and elsewhere.
- 13-4 *There ... married*] there were three places where Thomas could get married in Fleet Street: St Dunstan's in the West (between Chancery Lane and Fetter Lane), St Bride's (at the bottom of Shoe Lane), and the Liberties of the Fleet (which were bounded by Fleet Lane to the North, Fleet Hill to the south, Old Bailey to the east, and Fleet Ditch to the west); this last might seem the most likely given that, as Sugden notes of the clergy who were entitled to perform marriages in this area, 'no questions were asked and no formalities insisted on' (entry for *Fleet Prison*); Sugden, in his entry for *Fleet Street*, references this scene and identifies the Liberties of the Fleet as Thomas' intended destination. However, it is now late evening, and Thomas refers in 14 to 'this morning,' meaning presumably the morning of the next day – which is indeed when his father intends to marry Taffeta; so despite the Gentleman's 'to Fleet Street – go, the curate there stays for you' (20) it may well be that Thomas does not intend Frances to be taken directly to where a marriage ceremony will be performed. More likely, given that Sir Oliver heads for Taffeta's house in V ii to meet her, and that Adriana is strewing herbs outside Taffeta's house for her to 'walk to church on' in V iii, it is Taffeta's house from which Sir Oliver intends to leave for his marriage service and hence also where Thomas intends Frances to be taken. All this remains a matter of speculation because wherever Frances is supposed to be taken she never gets there – she and her abductors are taken by the watch and hauled off to Lady Somerfield's house. However, what is said by Thomas here provides further evidence for Fleet Street as the location of Taffeta's house, which would fit with her being rich as it was, according to Sugden, 'a fashionable suburb' (entry for *Fleet Street*) (see Introduction, The Play, Topography of the play). One further question arises as to whether Sir Oliver intends to get married in the Fleet Liberties – a place where 'a disreputable business in irregular marriages was carried on' (Sugden, entry for *Fleet Street*) – a possibility as there has not been time for the conventional banns to have been read (as were required by the date of the play's writing) and he has said nothing about getting a licence. If a church is his destination, St Bride's rather than St Dunstan's would seem the more likely as the action never goes further west than Ram Alley, and if his son intends to get married with him, that, too, would presumably be the intended location for his marriage, but concerning this we cannot be certain. This lack of clarity about time and place (which elsewhere in the play is quite precise), the odd passages of prose, and, at 28, Beard's declaration that he had never met Frances before, all lead one to ask whether this section of the play was left partly unfinished, was not properly revised, or was worked on by another writer who did not have the same imaginative picture of the action and topography as Barry.

- 15 GENTLEMAN
Stand close. They come.
BEARD
By Jove, the night grows dark and Luna looks
As if this hour some fifty cuckolds were making.
Then let us trudge.
GENTLEMAN
Down with'em! Down with them! Away with her, Master
20 Smallshanks, to Fleet Street – go, the curate there stays for you.

[Exeunt THOMAS, FRANCES and others.]

- BEARD
And stays the curate?
What's here? Knocked down, and blood of men let out?
Must men it darkness bleed? Then Erebus look big,
And Boreas blow the fire of all my rage
25 Into his nose. Night, thou art a whore

-
- 15 *stand close*] 'stand aside secretly – conceal yourselves' (see III i 29 and III ii 40 and notes).
16-7 *Luna ... making*] Beard's meditation on the moon might be seen as contradictory given that the moon, the astrological symbol of chastity (the virgin huntress Diana was the goddess of the moon), is here seen as the overseer of cuckoldry (the shape of its new and old phases being suggestive of horns); this is perhaps less an indication of Beard's lack of education (see note to 24-5 below) than a general cultural contradiction, the moon being often representative of women's sexual parts (cf. III iv 115 and IV iv 21, and notes thereto) and hence their sexual activity; the idea is made explicit in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the Exchange*: 'Fiddle: why, the Moone is not chaste. *Berry*: How prov'st thou that? *Fiddle*: Why, sire, ther's a man in the middle of her, how can she be chaste then?' (825-8); and also Middleton, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 1.2.133-7: '*Sir Walter*: Methinks she [Allwit's pregnant wife] shows gallantly, like a moon at full, sir. | *Allwit*: True, and if she bear a male child, there's the man in the moon sir. | *Sir Walter*: 'Tis but the boy in the moon yet, goodman calf. | *Allwit*: There was a man, the boy had never been there else [i.e., she must have had sexual intercourse with a man otherwise she could not be pregnant].' The reference to the lack of light – 'the night grows dark' – and to cuckoldry both imply that the moon Beard is looking at is a crescent moon, but this conflicts with the reference to the full moon at IV iv 21. We might finally note that the figure of 'fifty' appears to be merely arbitrary, and that Barry perhaps missed a trick here as, were it a waning moon, the shape would be like a 'C' and hence make the Roman numeral for a hundred.
17 *making*] 'in the process of being made' (*OED*, vbl.n¹.1.a).
19-20 *Down ... you*] the third passage in sig.G to be set in prose; this one would fit well into verse, using Beard's two half-lines to complete the first and the last of the Gentleman's speech. As is the case with the second passage, those incomplete half-lines look odd if one follows the setting of Q1, which might make a good case for rendering them into verse.
22 *blood ... out*] i.e., Beard has got the worst of the encounter and is bleeding; we might note again the Pistolian self-aggrandisement indicated by his representing himself as another person, seeing himself as it were from the outside and speaking of that self as though a third party observer of an enacted dramatic scene.
23 *Erebus*] Darkness, one of the primordial deities spawned by Chaos at the very beginning of time according to ancient Greek cosmogony; Lemprière (*Classical Dictionary*) notes that the word was sometimes used in poetry to indicate the underworld (or a part of it) and that may be the way it is being used here as Beard, in bombastic vein again, invokes the powers of hell to assist his revenge.
24-5 *Boreas ... nose*] Boreas was the north wind and contemporary maps often showed the four winds,

- Smallshanks a rogue, and is my wench took from me?
 Sure I am gulled. This was no cockatrice.
 I never saw her before this daylight peeped.
 What, drop'st thou, head? This surely is the heir,
 30 And mad Will Smallshanks lay in ambuscado
 To get her now from me. Beard, Lieutenant Beard,
 Thou art an ass! What a dull slave was I
 That all this while smelt not her honesty.
 Pate, I do not pity thee. Had'st thou brains,
 35 Lieutenant Beard had got this wealthy heir G3v
 From all these rogues. Blood! To be thus o'er-reached
 In pate and wench! Revenge, Revenge, come up,
 And with thy curlèd locks cling to my beard.
 Smallshanks, I will betray thee. I now will trudge
 40 To Saint John's Street to inform the Lady Somerfield
 Where thou art. I will prevent the match.
 Thou art to Fleet Street gone. Revenge shall follow,

29. drop'st] dropes Q1 (G, E); dropst Q1 (O, L, Y, F). 30. Will] will (*roman*) Q1. 32. ass! What] asses; what Q1 (E); asses what Q1 (O, G, L, Y, F). 33/4. That ... | Pate] Q1 (O, G, L, Y, F); Pate ... | That Q1 (E).

one in each corner, with distended cheeks and flared nostrils; the north wind in England is usually a cold wind so why Boreas should represent Beard's rage is unclear: is the inexact classical reference a further deliberate representation of an unlettered person overstretching his cultural resources? We might also note that the other classical references make up nothing very coherent, though the coincidence of Erebus looking 'big' (i.e., sexually aroused), Boreas blowing fire into his 'nose' (i.e., exciting his penis), Night being likened to a 'whore,' (i.e., a faithless woman), and, four lines later, Beard noting that his 'head droops' (i.e., his penis sexually deflates) possibly add up to a subliminal gibbering of sexual disappointment as the Lieutenant realises his expected 'rendezvous' with Frances is not going to take place after all.

- 28 I ... *peeped*] this is one of the more puzzling elements of the plot, as when we first see Beard and Frances together in II i they behave as if they know each other well, he saying the plot will work 'if she can forbear her rampant tricks' (31) – i.e., not behave like the whore she is – and she saying of him, as though quoting what she knew to be general knowledge, 'all men know | Thy nose stands compass like a bow' (35-6); perhaps, though, that was intended as just the edgy badinage of two strangers, uncertain of their own status and vying to assert themselves, whilst the point here is that Beard thinks he has twigged the real game – i.e., the woman was not a prostitute disguised as Constantia but the real Constantia disguised as a prostitute, William's plan being not to deceive Throat on that point but Beard, and that William has now stolen her back from him – and that he can believe anyone could come up with such an utterly absurd plan is further confirmation of his stupidity.
- 30 *ambuscado*] 'ambush' (*OED*, n.); see III v 79.
- 34 *Pate*] here primarily 'head' but in 37, as the head is the seat of the intellect, 'brains' (*OED*, n¹.2).
- 36 *o'er-reached*] 'outwitted, outdone' (*OED*, v.6.b).
- 38 *curlèd locks*] Beard is possibly conflating the personified figure of Revenge with the Eumenides (or Furies) who were represented in Greek mythology as having live snakes for hair; their job was to pursue, torment and punish the guilty and hence they could be seen as agents of revenge; because they were associated with the underworld (where they also punished the guilty dead) it would be appropriate to summon them from below; cf. Norton and Sackville, *Gorboduc*, IV ii 11-3: 'The dreadful Furies, daughters of the night, | With serpents girt, carrying the whip of ire, | With hair of stinging snakes;' also Marlowe, *Doctor Faustus*, ix 20: 'Hell, and the Furies' forked hair.' They did, however, normally operate as a trio (or group) rather than individually, as those two illustrative quotations demonstrate.

And my incensèd wrath shall like great thunder
Disperse thy hopes and thy brave wife asunder.

[Exit.]

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- 43 *incensèd*] ‘enraged’ – lit. ‘inflamed with wrath’ (*OED*, ppl.a².2); in heraldry it describes an animal with fire issuing from its mouth and ears (*OED*, ppl.a².3).
 44 *Disperse*] ‘scatter in all directions’ (*OED*, v.1.a).

[Act IV, Scene iv.]

Enter LADY SOMERFIELD *and* JUSTICE TUTCHIM.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

Say as I say, widow, the wench is gone,
But I know whither. Stolen she is? Well,
I know by whom. Say as I say, widow.
I have been drinking hard. Why, say so, too.

5 Old men they can be fine with small ado.
The law is not offended. I had no punk,
Nor in an alehouse have I made me drunk.
The statute is not broke. I have the skill
To drink by law. Then say as I say still.

LADY SOMERFIELD

10 To what extremes doth this licentious time
Hurry unstayed youth! Nor Gods, nor laws,
Whose penal scourges are enough to save
Even damned fiends, can in this looser age
Confine unbounded youth. Who dur'st presume
15 To steal my youth's delight, my age's hope,

Location] a room in Lady Somerfield's house in St John's Street.

1 *Say ... say*] a phatic utterance with the import of something like, 'listen to me.' The repetition of the phrase and Tutchim's admission that he is (still) under the influence of alcohol (4) indicate that we should not expect standard English from him here.

5 *fine*] 'drunk'? See note to IV i 8-9 above.

5 *ado*] 'difficulty, trouble' (*OED*, n.4).

6-9 *The ... law.*] Tutchim's claim that he has not broken the law is interesting: section II of the 1606 *Act for repressing the odious and loathsome Sin of Drunkenness* (4 Jas.1 c.5) states that: 'all and every Person or Persons, which ... shall be drunk, and of the same Offence of Drunkenness shall be lawfully convicted, shall for every such Offence forfeit and lose Five Shillings of lawful Money of England,' without specifying how or where they came to be drunk; however, section IV later states that: 'if any Person or Persons within this Realm of England ... shall remain or continue drinking or tipling in any Inn, Victualling-house or Ale-house, being in the same City, Town, Village or Hamlet wherein the said Person or Persons (so remaining drinking or tipling) doth dwell and inhabit at the time of such drinking and tipling; and the same being viewed and seen ... or duly proved in such Manner and Form as limited in and by One Act of Parliament ... intituled, *An Act to restrain the inordinate haunting and tipling in Inns, Ale-houses and other Victualling Houses* ... then every Person or Persons so offending shall forfeit and lose for every such Offence, the Sum of Three Shillings and Four pence of current Money of England.' Tutchim's point is, then, perhaps that someone with 'skill' in the law should be able to argue that the specificity of section IV overrides and sets a condition upon section II.

10 *licentious*] 'unrestrained by law, decorum, or morality;' not necessarily, at this period, purely a matter of unrestrained sexual behaviour (*OED*, adj.2 and 3).

11 *unstayed*] probably, in the light of 14, 'unhindered' (*OED*, ppl.a¹), but the meaning, 'unstable' (*OED*, ppl.a²) could also be intended, or be included.

11 *Nor / nor*] 'neither / nor;' similarly in 17 'or / or' would now be 'either / or.'

12 *penal scourges*] 'lashes inflicted as punishment' with the possible implication also that the punishment is painful and severe (*OED*, *scourge*, n.1.a; *penal*, a¹.1.a and 2).

13 *fiends*] the word was applicable to human beings of extreme wickedness, not only to supernatural beings (*OED*, n.4.a).

14 *unbounded*] 'uncontrolled, unchecked in their actions' (*OED*, ppl.a.2 or 3).

- Her father's heir, and the last noble stem
 Of all her ancestors? Fear they or Gods or laws?
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 I say as you say, sister, but for the laws,
 There are so many that men do stand in awe
 20 Of none at all. Take heed they steal not you:
 Who woos a widow with a fair full moon
 Shall surely speed. Beware of full moons, widow.
 Will Smallshanks has your daughter, no word but "mum."
 My warrant you shall have when time shall come.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 25 Your warrant?
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM Ay, my warrant, widow.
 My warrant can stretch far. No more, but so –
 'Twill serve to catch a knave, or fetch a doe.

G4

-
- 16 *stem*] 'branch of the line of descent' (*OED*, n¹.3.d).
 20 *steal*] (a) 'abduct, kidnap' (*OED*, v.3.e), but as always with the sense of 'take property belonging to another;' (b) in the light of the next line, 'gain the affections of' (*OED*, v.3.f); there may also be a glance at 'to steal a marriage' meaning 'to get married secretly' (*OED*, v.5.d). Presumably by making these innuendos Tutchim is following up on the libidinous – not to mention incestuous – idea of seducing his sister implied at IV i 23 (q.v. and note thereto).
 21 *Who ... moon*] if Tutchim is in obscurantist mode again that may be because he realises he is on dangerous ground here; as noted at III iv 115 and IV iii 16 the moon was associated with female genitalia, and the 'with' may perhaps mean here 'possessed of' rather than 'at the time of' – i.e., the 'moon' is an attribute of the widow rather than the calendar; added to that could be 'fair' meaning 'free from restraints, open' (*OED*, adj.16) and 'full' meaning 'large, plump' (*OED*, adj.10.a), possibly 'sated' (4.a), or even 'having in it all that it can hold' (1.a), all senses with a strong sexual innuendo; bizarre though the linkages may be, such a reading does at least cohere with Tutchim's warning, 'Beware of full moons, widow' – i.e., 'beware of occupied vaginas.' However, the reference to the moon may also be the author undercutting Tutchim with an indication to the audience that he is mad, since the moon was associated (as now) with lunacy; cf. Middleton, *No Wit/Help Like a Woman's*, 3.147-9: 'He says his father is troubled with an imperfection at one time of the moon, and talks like a madman;' and Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, IV i 129-30: 'There let [the mad folk] ... | ... act their gambols to the full o'th' moon.' We might, finally, note that if this line is taken to indicate that the action takes place during a full moon, it conflicts with the suggestion in the previous scene that the moon is either new or nearly waned (see IV iii 16 and note).
 22 *speed*] 'succeed, attain his end' (*OED*, v.1.a).
 23 *mum*] 'be silent' (*OED*, B.int.); the phrase 'no word but "mum"' presents a paradox that corresponds neatly with Tutchim's drunken state.
 24 | 5 | 6 *warrant* | *warrant* | *warrant*] Lady Somerfield's question and apparent surprise suggest she understands some meaning to Tutchim's 'warrant' other than the usual legal one, and Tutchim's next speech, with its implications of erection and sexual pursuit, indicate that he uses 'warrant' here to mean 'penis' (as at II iii 32) making line 24 mean something like, 'you will have my penis when we get round to having sex.' All this would be obscure though, even for Tutchim, and would perhaps require the actor to reinforce the first 'warrant' with some suggestive physical action.
 26 *stretch far*] i.e., 'achieve a large erection.'
 27 *serve ... knave*] Tutchim is punning suggestively but also keeping open the defence that his meaning is entirely innocent as there is a clear legal sense of 'warrant' in connection with 'catch a knave;' 'serve,' however, has sexual connotations, and 'catch' could, by circumstantial innuendo, pick up a hint of sexual activity; is Tutchim alluding to a homosexual liaison at this point or is he suggesting that it is Lady Somerfield who might 'catch' the knave?
 27 *fetch a doe*] 'pursue and catch a female deer' (*OED*, *fetch*, v.1.a), but 'doe,' as Williams notes, is 'woman in her sexual capacity.' The word 'fetch' could also mean 'steal' (*OED*, v.1.c) and in

Enter SERVINGMAN.

SERVINGMAN

Here's a gentleman much desirous to see you, madam.

LADY SOMERFIELD

What is 'a for a man?

SERVINGMAN

30 Nothing for a man, but much for a beast.

I think him lunatic, for 'a demands

What plate of his is stirring i'the house.

'A calls your men his butlers, cooks, and steward,

Kisses your woman, and makes exceeding much

35 Of your coachman's wife.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

Then he's a gentleman, for 'tis a true note of a gentleman to
make much of other men's wives. Bring him up.

[Exit SERVINGMAN.]

Ah, sirrah, makes 'a much of your coachman's wife? This gear
will run a-wheels then, shortly – a man may make much more of

27s.d. Enter SERVINGMAN.] *Enter Servingmen.* Q1.

that sense would look back to 20; 'attract irresistibly' (*OED*, *fetch*, v.4) could be in play, too, as could possibly be the senses 'sexually arouse' or 'bring to orgasm,' given by Partidge.1 only from 19th century but 'fetch' is clearly used with such an implication at the end of a run of bawdy innuendos in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, 1.3.75-8 (see Jowett's note to line 78).

29 *What ... man?*] 'what sort of a man is he?' (*OED*, *for*, 19.c). Cf. Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 1.4.18: 'But come, what was 'a for a man?' Also *The Family of Love* (586): 'What should he be for a man.'

30 *much ... beast*] 'a great deal of a beast' (*OED*, *much*, 2.e?).

32 *stirring*] 'moving about' ? (*OED*, v.11) but in a passive sense – 'being moved about.'

34 *exceeding*] 'extremely,' possibly with implication of 'excessively' (*OED*, *adv*.2).

36-46 *Then ... thee*] the fourth passage in sig.G of Q1 to be set as prose; 44, however, is set as a single (and regular) line of verse split between two speakers, and 42-3 looks as though it was going to be set as verse as it starts a new line at 'A punk' with an upper case /A/ but then is set as prose to 'clap.' However, 42-3 would split after 'cuckold' to make a regular line, leaving 'of ... clap' to make another regular line, with the next one – 'And that ... my lady' – a further regular line split between Tutchim and the servingman (see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy).

36 *note*] 'indication, defining characteristic' (*OED*, n².9).

37 *make much of*] 'treat with marked courtesy or affection' (*OED*, *make*, v.21.a).

38 *sirrah*] addressed to Lady Somerfield; the term was normally applied to boys or men of a lower class than the speaker, but it could be applied familiarly to women; Mistress Gallipot addresses her friend Mistress Openwork as 'sirrah' without any comic or ironic intention in Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 8.10; cf. also V iii 12 and note.

38 *gear*] 'business' (*OED*, n.10.c); (b) 'sexual organs' (Williams) in this case male (see notes to I i 137 and I iii 57).

39 *run a-wheels*] 'proceed swiftly' (*OED*, *wheel*, n.13.b); for 'wheel' Williams gives 'vagina' so with 'gear' the whole line would mean, 'this penis will be moving in a vagina very soon;' cf. Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, G3r: 'Wag: they say, twill shortly runne vppon wheeles with me for my Maister swears a will haue me carted, because a thinks I have layen with my Lady. | *Sla*: Nay then twill runne vpon wheeles with thee indeed.'

39 *make*] the repetition of the word begins to push it towards suggestiveness; it could mean 'mate with' (*OED*, v²) and such an idea is almost certainly in play by now; more specifically, though,

another man's wife than 'a can do of's own.

LADY SOMERFIELD

How much, brother?

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

A man may make with ease a punk, a child, a bastard, a cuckold
of another man's wife, all at a clap,
And that is much, I think.

Enter SERVINGMAN and THROAT.

SERVINGMAN

That's my lady.

THROAT

45 For that thou first hast brought me to her sight, I here create thee
Clerk o'the Kitchen. No man shall beg it from thee.

SERVINGMAN

Sure the fellow's mad.

[Exit SERVINGMAN.]

LADY SOMERFIELD

What would you, sir? I guess your long profession

By your scant suit. Your habit seems to turn

50 Your inside outward to me. Y'are, I think,
Some turner of the law.

THROAT

Law is my living,

And on that ancient mould I wear this outside.

Tutchim plays on the sense 'beget' (*OED*, v¹.17) when he says that 'a man may make ... a child, a bastard, | of [i.e., 'with'] another man's wife.'

41 *How much, brother?*] again, Lady Somerfield plays the straight man to Tutchim's comic.

43 *all ... clap*] 'at one stroke' (*OED*, *clap*, n¹.7), the 'stroke' being the coital thrust, but also with a glance at 'an unwanted pregnancy' in the sense of 'a sudden mishap' (Williams).

45 *For that*] 'because' (*OED*, conj.1).

46 *Clerk o'the Kitchen*] 'a household officer with responsibility for the kitchen records and accounts' (*OED*, *clerk*, n.6); this job would have required both literacy and numeracy – accomplishments most likely well beyond the servingman and hence a further reason for his response to Throat's gift beyond surprise at Throat's assumption of the right to bestow it.

48 *long profession*] i.e., 'the occupation you have pursued for a long time.' Law was one of the 'learned professions' at this time.

49 *scant suit*] at its simplest, 'meagre dress, poor quality clothes' (*OED*, *scant*, adj.5; *suit*, n.13.a), with a contrastive glance at 'long' and so a sad comment on Throat's desperate attempt to look impressive in his 'velvet jerkin' and 'double ruff' (see III v 171-2); but there is also a possible pun on 'suit' in two other senses: (a) 'the duty of attendance on a superior' (senses covered by 1 and 2) in which sense Lady Somerfield would be commenting on his 'scant' or meagre profession of service towards her; and (b) the legal sense of 'a case in law' (senses 7 and 10.a) in which case the meaning would be something like, 'thinly presented case.'

49 *habit*] (a) 'mode of dress, clothing' (*OED*, n.1), possibly that 'characteristic of a profession' (2.a); (b) 'bearing, demeanour' (4); in either case, Throat's 'inside, or inner nature, reveals itself all too clearly to Lady Somerfield by his 'outward' self-presentation.

51 *turner*] (a) either someone who 'turns or works wood' or 'a potter' (*OED*, n¹.1.a and b) – in either case a manual worker, and hence a slight on Throat's professed 'learned' vocation, with also (b) a suggestion that he 'diverts or twists' the law to his own purposes (*OED*, *turn* v. senses under IV).

52 *that ancient mould*] 'mould' could be 'the body as a support for clothes' (*OED*, *mould*, n³.4.b) combined with a sense of 'the pattern or model upon which something is shaped' (n³.1.a) and

- Suit upon suit wastes some, yet makes me thrive:
 First law, then gold, then love, and then we wive.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 55 A man of form, like me, but what's your business?
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 Be brief, good sir – what makes this bold intrusion?
 THROAT
 Intrude I do not, for I know the law.
 It is the rule that squares out all our actions;
 Those actions bring in coin; coin gets me friends.
 60 Your son-in-law hath law at's fingers' ends.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 My son-in-law!
 THROAT Madam, your son-in-law.
 Mother, I come (be glad I call you so) G4v
 To make a gentle breach into your favour,
 And win your approbation of my choice.
 65 Your cherry-ripe sweet daughter (so renowned

hence refer to the law as that which determines Throat's outward physical appearance, making this phrase mean something like, 'that long-standing body of knowledge;' but there may also be a glance at the idea of Throat's own body as being the support for his clothes – i.e., 'mould' in the sense of 'the earth from which we are made' (*OED*, n¹.4), as in Middleton, *The Owl's Almanac*, 2068-9: 'Men's bodies are but of earthly mould.'

- 53 *suit upon suit*] Throat picks up the primary sense in Lady Somerfield's use of the word – clothing – and puns more directly on the legal sense – the 'law suits' which provide him with his 'living' and enable him to 'thrive.'
- 53 *wastes*] 'exhausts, impoverishes' (*OED*, v.4.a and 7). There was also a specific legal use of the word – 'destroys or impairs something, or causes it to deteriorate in value' (v.2).
- 54 *wive*] 'marry' (*OED*, v.1).
- 55 *form*] 'method, regulated procedure' (*OED*, n.11.a).
- 57 *intrude*] Throat possibly takes up a more specific sense than is suggested by Lady Somerfield's 'intrusion' – 'the act of thrusting oneself uninvited into a place' (*OED*, 1.a) – using the legalistic meanings, 'thrust oneself into possession of something to which one has no title or right' (*OED*, v.3) or 'enter forcibly' (v.1.b).
- 58 *rule*] (a) 'a regulating principle, esp. one governing procedures of law' (*OED*, n.3.a); possibly with a pun on (b) 'a graduated measuring rod, ruler' (n.17.a).
- 58 *squares out*] 'regulates or directs according to some standard or principle' (*OED*, *square*, v.4.d). For the overall drift of this line, cf. Dash's encomium of the law at I iii 34-41.
- 59 *actions*] here, 'legal processes or suits' (*OED*, n.8), punning on the meaning in the previous line: 'deeds, the things we do' (*OED*, n.3.a).
- 63 *a gentle ... favour*] 'a mild infringement upon your goodwill' (*OED*, *breach*, n.4; *favour*, n.1.a) or, more loosely, 'a small request for your indulgence.' However, as noted elsewhere, 'breach' can also mean 'vagina' (see notes to I ii 117, IV i 27-9, and IV i 181), whilst the word 'favour' strongly suggests 'sexual benevolence, used of women,' (Williams), and whilst these meanings do not add up to make any sensible secondary sense, the inevitable, incoherent innuendo perhaps betrays Throat's social ineptitude (see note to 83-93 below) – ironically as he is doing his best to impress here by adopting an upper-class linguistic register.
- 65 *cherry-ripe*] the cherry as metaphor for luscious sweetness is obvious enough (and proverbial – see Dent, C277.11, 'as sweet as a cherry') as is also the suggestion of the redness of lips (see Tilley, C277, 'as red as a cherry') and nubile ripeness carried by the image (which possibly derives from the street cry 'cherry-ripe,' in use during the very early 17th century). As a sexual referent, it seems to have applied at this period to the male genitals (cherries commonly grow in pairs, size and shape roughly correspond to the testicles, and the stones equate linguistically to the testicles) so Constantia's 'cherry-ripeness' would be a readiness for sexual contact with a

- For beauty, virtue, and a wealthy dower)
 I have espoused.
 LADY SOMERFIELD How! You espouse my daughter!
 THROAT
Noverint universi, the laws of heaven,
 Of nature, church, and chance have made her mine.
 70 Therefore, deliver her by these presents.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 How's this? Made her yours, sir? *Per quam regulam* –
 Nay, we are lettered, sir, as well as you –
Redde rationem per quam regulam?
 THROAT
Femini ludificantur viros.
 75 By that same rule these lips have taken seisin.
 Tut! I do all by statute law and reason.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 Hence, you base knave, you pettifogging groom,
 Clad in old ends, and pieced with brokery.
 You wed my daughter?

75. seisin.] season, Q1.

- man; however, in the proverb 'eat not cherries (prunes) with your lord' (Tilley, C279) – which appears, from the examples quoted by Tilley, to be a warning not to sexually share women with one's social superiors – the cherries (or prunes) do seem to represent women. The association of 'cherry' with virginity is much more recent (not being given by *OED* until late 19th century) and so most likely not in play here.
- 66 dower] 'dowry' (*OED*, n².2.a).
- 67 espoused] frequently used to describe a pre-marriage contract of betrothal (*OED*, v.1) but used here, as Throat makes clear in 69, to refer to a completed marriage (*OED*, v.3).
- 68 *Noverint universi*] 'know all men by these presents [i.e., this document]' (Latin), the opening phrase of legal documents, and quoted with dubious relevance here by Throat, but played upon by him in 70 (see next note).
- 70 deliver ... presents] 'surrender her to me, given the circumstances I have just described' (*OED*, deliver, v¹.7.a; present, n¹.2). 'Deliver' may be used in the legal sense, 'hand over formally a corporeal chattel' (*OED*, deliver, v¹.8.b).
- 71 *Per ... regulam*] 'by what rule, principle, or law?' (Latin). Throat replies in 75, using the first meaning.
- 72 lettered] probably 'educated, learned,' rather than merely 'literate' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).
- 73 *Redde ... regulam*?] 'give your reason, by what rule, principle, or law?' (Latin).
- 74 *Femini ... viros*] 'women make fools of men' (Latin). The phrase occurs in William Lily's *A Short Introduction of Grammar Generally to be Used* (a Latin primer that would have been familiar to all schoolboys of the 16th and 17th centuries) where it is given as an example of the use of the accusative; the phrase has no legal relevance at all, and as before, Throat is merely dredging up scraps of Latin in order to try to sound educated, though ironically, of course, it is exactly by this 'same rule' (his next line) that he has achieved the married state.
- 75 seisin] 'possession,' a legal term (*OED*, n.1); but see note to 96 below.
- 77 pettifogging] one who 'pettifogs,' i.e., a 'lawyer of inferior status, a rascally attorney' (*OED*, n.1).
- 77 groom] 'an inferior fellow, a servant (not necessarily one employed in a stable)' (*OED*, n.3); it could also be a shortened form of 'bridegroom' (*OED*, n.6).
- 78 ends] 'half-lengths of cloth, pieces left over' (*OED*, n.5.a).
- 78 brokery] 'second-hand clothes' (*OED*, 2) – which is exactly what Throat is wearing (see III v 170-2).

JUSTICE TUTCHIM You, Sir Ambo-dexter,
 80 A summoner's son and learned in Norfolk wiles –
 Some common bail or counter lawyer
 Marry my niece? Your half-sleeves shall not carry her.
 THROAT
 These storms will be dissolved in tears of joy,
 Mother, I doubt it not. Justice, to you
 85 That jerk at my half-sleeves and yet yourself
 Do never wear but buckram out of sight,
 A flannel waistcoat or a canvas truss,

-
- 79 *Ambo-dexter*] in law, 'a lawyer who takes fees from both sides' (Latin for 'right-handed on both sides') (*OED*, B.n.2). This, too, is precisely what Throat does – see II ii 11 and note.
 80 *summoner's*] 'a petty legal officer, whose job it was to tell people when they were required to appear in court' (*OED*, 1). Chaucer portrays a thoroughly unpleasant summoner with at least one characteristic that Throat might have learnt from his father: 'A few termes [of Latin] hadde he, two or three, | That he had lerned out of som decree; | No wonder is, he herde it al the day' (*The Prologue*, 670-73).
 80 *Norfolk wiles*] 'Norfolk is said to have been remarkable for litigation, and the quirks and quibbles of its attorneys' (Grose, *A Provincial Glossary*, p.197).
 81 *common bail*] someone who makes money by agreeing to act as bail for an arrested person; *OED* gives its earliest illustration of the term from 1678: 'BUTLER *Hud.* III. iii. 765 Where Vouchers, Forgers, Common-bayl And Affidavit-men, ne'r fail T'expose to Sale all sorts of Oaths.' As noted at IV ii 2 (q.v.) there is the possibility of a pun on 'bail.'
 81 *counter lawyer*] a lawyer whose main clients were debtors – i.e., people in one of the 'counters' or debtors' prisons of London (*OED*, *counter*, n³.7) and hence, one might imagine, the least profitable type of client.
 82 *half-sleeves*] obscure; possibly it refers, as Corbin and Sedge suggest, to a shorter sleeved gown worn by those studying law or not yet fully qualified as lawyers; alternatively, it could be another shift like the neat band (see IV i 126 and note) to look clean by having an exposed part of the shirt which can be changed every day whilst the body of the garment is worn for some time. Whatever the meaning, the term is clearly not complimentary.
 82 *carry her*] 'bear her off' – see III i 45 and note.
 83-93 *These ... politic*] this speech, like others in *Ram Alley*, raises the question as to whether we are dealing with the successful portrayal of a character who has lost control of his ability to express himself intelligibly or witnessing that same loss of control in the author. As has been observed elsewhere (most noticeably, perhaps, in Beard's speech at IV iii 22-45, but see also note to IV i 27-9) many of the individual words can carry a secondary meaning (see notes that follow), but the overall effect of these meanings is to create a subliminal suggestiveness rather than a coherent secondary sense running throughout the speech. Here, two classes of secondary meaning run through the speech: first there is the usual sexual innuendo, though it seems that there is no coherent line of secondary meaning developed through this innuendo, the incoherence perhaps being merely indicative of (a) Throat's sexually excited state and (b) his social ineptitude (see note to 63 above); second is the more successfully thematic play on the idea of incompleteness carried by the rather obscure terms 'half-sleeves,' 'half-arms,' and 'small hair,' which reveal not, one might argue, Throat's own awareness of his inadequacies so much as the author's representation of him as ironically betraying those inadequacies (one might recall Dogberry's unhappy self-description in *Ado*, IV ii 74-87).
 85 *jerk*] 'sneer' (*OED*, v¹.5).
 86 *buckram*] 'a coarse linen cloth' (*OED*, n.2). It was also the material used to make lawyers' bags (see I iii 3-5).
 87 *flannel*] 'a woollen cloth' – again, of varying degrees of fineness (*OED*, n.1.a), and again presumably with the implication that it is the cheaper option being referred to.
 87 *canvas truss*] a 'truss' was 'an undergarment to which stockings or hose were sewn or laced' and being unseen it could be made of a coarser material such as canvas without betraying one's straitened circumstances – as Throat says in the next line, 'a shift of thrift;' this public discussion of Tutchim's underwear is a serious breach of courtesy which further confirms that Throat is

- (A shift of thrift – I use it), let's be friends.
 You know the law hath tricks – ka me, ka thee.
 90 *Viderit utilitas*, the mot to these half-arms.
Corpus cum causa needs no bombasting.
 We wear small hair, yet have we tongue and wit:

-
- completely out of his social sphere here – though he, of course, is entirely unaware of that.
- 88 *shift*] ‘an ingenious expedient’ perhaps with a sense that (a) the expedient is necessitated by circumstances, and (b) that it is a subterfuge (*OED*, n.3.a; 5.a; 4.a); also punning on ‘a change of clothes’ (*OED*, n.9.a) and possibly ‘an undergarment’ (*OED*, n.10.a).
- 89 *ka me, ka thee*] ‘you scratch my back and I’ll scratch yours’ – see IV i 3 and note (though here without any sexual suggestion).
- 89 *the ... tricks*] proverbial: ‘the law has tricks’ (Dent, L102.11; cf. Tilly, T523, ‘he has as many tricks as a lawyer’).
- 90 *Viderit ... half-arms*] the Latin tag comes from Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, Book III 671, and could be rendered: ‘let expediency see to itself’ (trans. J. H. Mozley) or alternatively ‘look to the profit’ or ‘look to what is useful;’ it occurs in an ironic passage where the poet seems to be warning lovers to beware of accidentally leading others to sexually enjoy the object of their affections – something that eventually Throat will unwittingly do in relation to Constantia. He appears to understand the quotation as a straightforward exhortation to take what one can from a situation, again mistaking the meaning of the original (a) because he uses it out of context and (b) because he does not actually understand the Latin (see 74 of this scene and note). Throat offers it as the ‘mot’ or ‘motto’ (*OED*, 1) to a partial coat of arms – ‘half-arms’ (playing on the idea that his ‘half-sleeves’ cover only half of his arms).
- 91 *Corpus cum causa*] ‘the body with the cause’ (Latin), with perhaps the same apparent pun on ‘causa – case’ as at IV ii 3 (q.v.) where the term is used by Dash in a passage of convoluted possible innuendos; Throat could here be claiming that he has both the ‘body and the vagina’ of Lady Somerfield’s daughter.
- 91 *needs no bombasting*] i.e., either (a) the writ by which he claims possession of ‘Constantia’ ‘requires no justification with inflated, grandiose language’ (*OED*, *bombast*, v.2.b) or, (b) ‘the fact that I have the woman with good cause needs no further justification.’ However, there are two possible puns on ‘bombast’: (a) pronounced ‘bum-baste’ it could mean ‘thrashing the buttocks’ (*OED*, *baste*, v³) – Corbin and Sedge follow the spelling of Q1, ‘bumbasting,’ and gloss ‘sound beating’ – in which case we might recall the more innocent sense of ‘firing the posteriors’ (though *baste*, v².1, ‘to moisten with liquid,’ is tempting if we wish to follow the parallel with that phrase further); (b) taking the original meaning of ‘bombast’ – ‘to stuff and fill out clothes with cotton-wool’ (*OED*, v.1) – it could offer an allusion to penile erection, but that does not provide a coherent secondary sense, whereas (a) would – ‘my right of possession makes any punishment unjustifiable.’
- 92 *We ... wit*] obscure; Throat seems to be going back to Tutchim’s ridicule of his appearance and saying something like, ‘I may not look much but I have the nous to make a living as a lawyer;’ there are, however, other possible meanings in play which deserve some exploration. Corbin and Sedge suggest that ‘small hair’ describes Throat’s lowly position in his profession; if they are thinking of the kind of wig he might wear in court that would be a misapprehension since lawyers’ wigs indicating status did not come into use until the end of the 17th century; however, there might be something in the apparent proverbial association of hair with social status (as in the proverb ‘to be of the right hair’ – Dent, H25.10), long hair being indicative of aristocratic status and short with the professional or citizen classes. Alternatively ‘small’ could refer to quantity, in which case one might suspect a reference to the loss of hair associated with venereal disease, such loss being linked by Sharpham with lawyers in *Cupid’s Whirligig*, F2v, ‘he had neuer a hayre on his beard this three or foure yeare, but might a bin an vtter barrester, for they haue moulted [i.e., lost their hair] all fiue or sixe times;’ the following ‘yet we have tongue and wit’ here might then suggest that such a disadvantage would be compensated for through a little bit of initiative and cunnilingus; if that were the case, we would have to take the primary meaning as, ‘I may not be a gentleman or a great lawyer but I have a tongue and the intelligence to use it to advantage,’ whilst the dramatist undercuts the speaker with the ironic secondary meaning that he is sexually diseased. Another possible reading (though admittedly less plausible given the semantic gymnastics required of the auditor to grasp it) could be that ‘wear’ means (of the man)

- Lawyers close-breeched have bodies politic.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 Speak! Answer me, Sir Jack! Stole you my daughter?
 THROAT
 95 Short tale to make, I fingered have your daughter.
 I have ta'en livery and seisin of the wench.
 Deliver her, then. You know the statute laws.
 She's mine without exception, bar, or clause.
 Come, come – restore.
 LADY SOMERFIELD The fellow's mad, I think.
 THROAT
 100 I was not mad before I married,

-
- 'to have sex with' (Williams, and cf. Dent, W731: 'Woo, wed, and bed, or wear, her'), 'small hair' could be the woman's pubic hair which he 'wears,' whilst 'tongue' could be 'penis' (Williams) and 'wit' the sense to use that organ to advantage; in this reading 'yet' would not be introducing a contrary fact or circumstance – i.e., meaning 'in spite of which' (*OED*, conj.9.a) – but have the sense 'in addition to which, furthermore' (*OED*, adv.1.a).
- 93 *close-breeched*] Throat appears to be returning to the criticism of his appearance, acknowledging now that his trousers are somewhat tight; however, as noted elsewhere (see, e.g., note to IV i 27-9) 'breeches' could refer to the part of the body they covered, so 'close-breeched' could be understood as an accidental admission that he is, in modern parlance, 'tight-arsed.' 'Close,' as Williams notes, 'frequently carries sexual overtones' especially around the idea of secrecy, and, if there is a pun on 'breach (i.e., vagina) there may be a glance at the idea that he can keep his sexual behaviour a secret, or can play a 'close' game, as he has done hitherto in relation to Lady Somerfield's daughter; that idea would connect well with the notion that he can be, in these matters 'politic' (see next note).
- 93 *bodies politic*] punning on (a) 'in law, a nation or society as a state or legal entity' (*OED*, *body*, n.14) and (b) his own body seen as 'able to behave with cunning to achieve its own ends' (*OED*, *politic*, adj.2.d).
- 94 *Sir Jack*] 'Jack' was a generic name for a common person (*OED*, n¹.1.a), and the 'Sir' is applied contemptuously, as it was by Tutchin at III i 47 (q.v.); 'Jack' could also mean 'penis' (Williams, though his earliest citation is 1618) and that meaning could be in play here as a slight upon Throat's pretensions to sexual possession of Lady Somerfield's daughter.
- 95 *short tale*] with a pun on 'tail = penis' and thereby ironically undercutting Throat by suggesting that his member is of minor dimensions.
- 95 *fingered*] (a) 'filched, stolen' (*OED*, v.4.a); (b) 'sexually groped, provided with manual pleasures' (cf. II i 96, and note) – in which case there might be an implication that, given his inadequate penile dimensions, Throat can do no more to give her sexual satisfaction; (c) 'finger' could also, though, mean 'penis' (see I ii 131 and note) in which case the innuendo could be more simply, 'I have had sex with her.'
- 96 *livery and seisin*] erroneous phrasing of 'livery of seisin,' a legal term for the delivery of property into the possession of a person by means of a physical object' (*OED*, *livery*, n.5.a, and cf. 75 above); in the case of a house purchase, for example, this could be done by giving the new owner the key to the door and here it is, by implication of 95, 'Constantia's' surrender to Throat of her vagina; this passage is further evidence that women in this play are seen as (a) reduced to their sexual function, and (b) items of moveable property in the marriage market.
- 97 *Deliver*] see 70 of this scene and note.
- 98 *exception*] the word has a variety of specific legal uses but all basically mean 'objection;' if there is a specific usage here the most likely one would be '(in a Court of Equity) an objection to a defendant's answer as insufficient' (*OED*, n.4.c).
- 98 *bar*] 'an objection of sufficient force to arrest an action at law' (*OED*, n¹.18).
- 98 *clause*] 'a proviso or stipulation in a legal document' (*OED*, n.2).
- 99 *restore*] obscure; Throat has had nothing taken from him yet that he could demand reinstatement of; it is possible the word is being used in a sense apparently obsolete even by the 17th century – 'revive, recover (sc. yourselves)' (*OED*, v¹.9).

But, *ipso facto*, what the act may make me
That know I not.
JUSTICE TUTCHIM Fellows, come in there.

En[ter two] or [three] SER[VANTS].

H1

By this, sir, you confess you stole my niece,
And I attach you here of felony.
105 Lay hold on him. I'll make my mittimus
And send him to the jail. Have we no bar
Nor clause to hamper you? Away with him!
Those claws shall claw you to a bar of shame
Where thou shalt show thy goll. I'll bar your claim
110 If I be Justice Tutchim.
THROAT Hands off, you slaves!
Oh, favour my jerkin, though you tear my flesh –
I set more store by that! My *audita*
Querela shall be heard, and with a *certiorari*
I'll fetch her from you with a pox!

Enter BEARD.

BEARD
115 What's here to do? Is all the world in arms?

-
- 101 *ipso facto*] 'by the fact itself, by that very fact' (Latin); the term is used rather inappropriately for the context.
- 101 *what ... me*] possibly with reference to the proverb 'marrying is marring' (Dent, M701).
- 104 *attach*] 'arrest' (*OED*, v.1.a).
- 104 *felony*] 'a crime that was more serious than a misdemeanour' (*OED*, n¹.4.b), which would include stealing. For a discussion of the word 'stole' in relation to the abduction of 'Constantia' see note to V iii 220.
- 105 *mittimus*] see III i 51 and note.
- 106-9 *Have ... claim*] Tutchim puns through these four lines on 'bar' ('the bar of a court' in 108 and 'create a barrier to' in 109) and 'clause' ('claws = hands' and 'claw = hold' in 108). See also next note.
- 109 *show ... goll*] 'goll' was a cant term for 'hand;' cf. Middleton, *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*, 4.58: 'Done, 'tis a lay [bet]: join golls on't.' Also *A Fair Quarrel*, 4.4.158-9: 'Shake golls with the captain, he shall be thy valiant friend.' To 'show the goll' would be to hold it up, as was customary when taking an oath; Tutchim is thus warning Throat that when he is put on trial he will have to give evidence under oath. However, *OED* also gives 'goll' as a variant of 'gull = throat,' so Tutchim may be pursuing his punning vein with an obscure play on the lawyer's name.
- 111 *favour*] 'treat with care' (*OED*, v.7).
- 112 *that*] i.e., the jerkin.
- 112-3 *audita Querela*] 'the complaint having been heard' (Latin); an action brought by a defendant to defer a judgement on account of some matter arising since its pronouncement. Throat's evocation of the procedure is irrelevant as no judgement has been pronounced in this case at all.
- 113 *certiorari*] 'to be certified' (Latin); a writ from a superior court issued to a lower court demanding the records of a trial in which a party claims not to have received justice.
- 114 *fetch*] 'get, obtain' (*OED*, v.5.a), but the word could also mean 'steal' (*OED*, v.1.c).
- 114 *with a pox!*] on one level a simple oath – 'a pox on you!' or 'damn you!' – but on another level quite literally: given her profession it is quite likely that Throat will obtain Frances in a diseased state.

- More tumults, brawls and insurrections?
 Is blood the theme whereon our time must treat?
 THROAT
 Here's Beard, your butler. A rescue, Beard! Draw!
 BEARD
 Draw? Not so – my blade's as ominously drawn
 120 Unto the death of nine or ten such grooms
 As is a knife unsheathed with the hungry maw
 Threatening the ruin of a chine of beef.
 But, for the restless toil it took of late,
 My blade shall sleep awhile.
 THROAT Help!
 BEARD Stop thee, Throat,
 125 And hear me speak, whose bloody characters
 Will show I have been scuffling. Briefly, thus:
 Thy wife, your daughter, and your lovely niece
 Is hurried now to Fleet Street. The damned crew
 With glaives and clubs have rapt her from these arms.
 130 Throat, thou art bobbed. Although thou bought'st the heir,

-
- 117 *theme ... treat?*] either 'the text (as of a sermon) to be discussed' (*OED*, n.2), or, possibly, 'the matter to be thus treated with action (rather than words)' (*OED*, n.1.b).
 118 *rescue*] possibly simply 'get me out of this,' as at III v 80 (q.v.), but here it might be the legal term meaning, 'a forcible removal of someone from legal custody' (*OED*, n.2.a).
 119-24 *my ... awhile*] 'blade, 'unsheathed knife' and 'beef' could all mean 'penis' (Williams) and to 'draw' could mean 'to take out the penis preparatory to having intercourse' (Partridge.2) (cf. also II i 37 and 99, III iii 10-1 and notes thereto); 'chine' could refer to the back as the seat of sexual strength (see note to 122) and 'toil' to 'sexual activity,' as could 'took' (as in 'to take, sexually'); overall Beard's speech thus possibly carries a secondary sense of himself as the eager libertine being threatened with ruin (or at least, detumescence) by overdoing it, but, wearied with excess, deciding to rest from these frantic exertions. For the primary senses of these words and phrases see next six notes; for a similar use of 'draw' and 'blade' see V i 150.
 119 *ominously*] 'menacingly' (*OED*, adv.1.b).
 121 *with ... maw*] 'with' means 'by the agency of' (*OED*, prep.37.a, poss. 40), the agency here being the 'hungry stomach' or 'hungry appetite' (*OED*, maw, n.1.a or 4).
 122 *ruin*] 'destruction' (*OED*, n.6.c).
 122 *chine of beef*] (a) 'the joint consisting of the meat around the backbone, usually the ribs or sirloin' (*OED*, n.3); (b) 'used to indicate the strength of back required by the sexual athlete' (Williams); see also note to 119-24.
 123 *for*] 'because of' (*OED*, prep.21).
 123 *took*] 'undertook, performed' (*OED*, v.17 and 52).
 124 *Stop thee*] 'shut up' (*OED*, v.37.d) with a pun on the idea of 'blocking the passage of a bodily organ' (*OED*, v.9.a).
 125 *characters*] 'impressed or engraved marks' (*OED*, n.1.a) with the further possible sense of 'emblems (sc. of my recent encounter)' (*OED*, n.6).
 126 *scuffling*] the word had the more precise meaning in the 17th century of 'fighting at close quarters in a disorderly manner' (*OED*, v¹.1.a).
 127 *Thy ... niece*] Beard addresses respectively, Throat, Lady Somerfield, and Tutchim.
 128 *the damned crew*] see II i 100 and note.
 129 *glaives*] this word could refer to a number of different weapons – a spear, a kind of halberd, or a sword.
 129 *rapt*] 'carried off by force' (*OED*, past tense of *rape*, 5 in the same sense, though there is perhaps an element of the sense of sexual rape).
 130 *bobbed*] 'made a fool of, cheated' (*OED*, v¹.1).

Yet hath the slave made a re-entry.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

Sirrah, what are you?

THROAT My lady's butler, sir.

BEARD

Not I, by heaven.

THROAT By this good light, he swore it,

And for your daughter's love he ran away.

BEARD

135 By Jove, I gulled thee, Throat!

JUSTICE TUTCHIM More knavery yet.

Lay hands on him. Pinion them both,

And guard them hence towards Fleet Street. Come, away.

BEARD

Must we be led like thieves and pinioned walk?

Spent I my blood for this? Is this my hire?

140 Why then, burn rage, set beard and nose on fire.

JUSTICE TUTCHIM

On, on I say.

THROAT Justice, the law shall firk you.

H1v

[Exeunt.]

131 *re-entry*] probably simply in the sense of returning to the affair (*OED*, 2.a) but with perhaps a glance at the legal sense, 'the act of re-entering upon possession of something that had been given to another' (*OED*, 1.a).

137 *towards Fleet Street*] i.e., where Beard (127-8 above) says 'Constantia' has been taken.

139 *Spent ... blood*] primarily 'have I suffered these wounds?' However, given that 'spend' could mean 'ejaculate' (see note to Prologue, 21-31) and that 'blood' could mean 'semen' (Williams, and see also note to V i 116) there is a secondary sense in play: 'have I had these ejaculations?'

139 *hire*] 'recompense, reward' (*OED*, n.3).

140 *set ... fire*] primarily, 'cause me to go red in the face,' but if 'beard and nose' represent 'pubic hair and penis' (i.e., the genital region) this could be an allusion to syphilis (one effect of which was to cause a burning sensation when urinating) – a future consequence, perhaps, of Beard's 'spending' too much of his 'blood' with the wrong type of sexual partner.

141 *firk you*] here, figuratively, 'give you a good thrashing,' as in III v 32, but probably with a glance at the sense, 'fuck you.'

Act V, Scene i.

Enter WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS .

WILLIAM

On this one hour depends my hopes and fortunes.

'Foot! I must have this widow. What should my dad

Make with a wife, that scarce can wipe his nose,

Untruss his points, or hold a chamber-pot

5 Steady till 'a pisses. The doors are fast.

'Tis now the midst of night, yet shall this chain

Procure access and conference with the widow.

What though I cheat my father? All men have sins:

Though in their several kinds, all ends in this –

10 So they get gold, they care not whose it is.

Begging the court, use bears the city out,

Lawyers their quirks, thus goes the world about,

So that our villainies have but different shapes.

Th'effects all one, and poor men are but apes

15 To imitate their betters. This is the difference:

Act V ... i] Actus Quinti. Scæna i. Q1.

Location] the scene starts in the street outside Taffeta's house, and the initial dialogue between William and Adriana takes place with her above him and hence on the upper stage or balcony of the house (from which at 30 she threatens to tip the contents of a chamber-pot on him); however, at Taffeta's entrance the location appears to move seamlessly to the interior: at 48 William expresses a fear that Taffeta 'will not come down' and at 59 he asks Adriana to 'leave the room,' so presumably Taffeta enters below but into a room (at 42 we are told she is already in her night-dress so she would not come into the street); that, however, does not quite tally with the indication at III iv 51-2 that Taffeta's private rooms are upstairs in her house (Captain Face is there said to be 'coming upstairs') so either Barry is practising a theatrical sleight of hand here, or he has himself momentarily forgotten where his characters are in relation to the staged space.

1 *depends*] for the plural subject/singular verb construction see Abbott 333; cf. also 21 of this scene and II iv 5 and 100.

3 *Make with*] probably 'do' (*OED*, v¹.58.a) but possibly 'have to do with' (*OED*, v¹.71).

4 *untruss his points*] 'undo the laces that hold up his hose,' these being very complicated; see II iii 63 and IV i 131 and notes thereto.

5 *fast*] 'locked, bolted' (*OED*, adj.5).

6 *this chain*] i.e., the one he and Frances cheated his father out of at II i 114-9.

9 *Though ... kinds*] 'though [these sins] all have their individual or particular characteristics' (*OED*, *several*, adj.1.c; *kind*, n.9). 'Kind' could refer also to sexual activity or behaviour (Williams), or even the sex organs (Williams and *OED*, n.7.a, though the latter suggests this sense was obsolete by mid-16th century); these senses may be in play here through the idea of sins of a sexual nature, or sins of the different sexes; see also note to 'shapes' below.

11 *use*] (a) 'usury' (*OED*, n.5.b); (b) possibly 'employment for sexual purposes' (*OED*, n.3.b) – much what William has in mind for Taffeta.

11 *bears [...] out*] 'supports' (*OED*, *bear*, v¹.3.a).

12 *quirks*] 'shifts, evasions, quibbling arguments' (*OED*, n¹.1.a); see also III i 3 and note.

12 *thus ... about*] (a) 'that's the way the world goes round' (*OED*, adv.A.5.a); or possibly, (b) 'that's how the world goes about its business' (*OED*, adv.A.10).

13 *shapes*] 'forms' (*OED*, n¹.1.a) but also possibly, 'genitalia' (Williams) – the idea of irregular sexual behaviour being much on William's mind at the moment; cf. the possible use of 'kind' in 9 above.

15-19 *This ... devil*] a moral commonplace of the period for which the *locus classicus* would be

- All great men's sins must be humoured,
 And poor men's vices largely punished.
 The privilege that great men have in evil
 Is this: they go unpunished to the devil,
 20 Therefore I'll in. This chain I know will move.
 Gold and rich stones wins coyest lady's love.

[He] knocks.

[Enter ADRIANA above].

- ADRIANA
 What would you, sir, that you do knock so boldly?
 WILLIAM
 I must come in to the widow.
 ADRIANA How! Come in?
 25 The widow has no entrance for such mates.
 WILLIAM
 Do'st hear, sweet chambermaid? By heaven, I come
 With letters from my father. I have brought her stones,
 Jewels and chains, which she must use tomorrow.

21. lady's] ladies Q1

- Lear's, 'Through tatter'd clothes [small] vices do appear; | Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. [Plate sin] with gold, | And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks; | Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it' (*Lr.*, IV iv 164-7). Various proverbs carried much the same idea; Dent, under L116, quotes Dekker, *Match Me in London*, IV i 58-60: 'the weake | And smaller flies i'th Spiders web are tane | When great ones teare the web, and free remaine.'
- 20 *This chain*] William's use of this chain to help seduce his father's intended wife is neatly ironic, given that Sir Oliver himself used it to buy a sexual favour from William's supposedly intended wife in the earlier scene; William may well have been wearing it since II i.
- 21 *Gold ... love*] proverbial – see Tilley, M1074, 'money makes marriage,' and M1050, 'if money goes before all ways lie open;' however, this variation develops the idea of wealth as not just financial but sexual as well: 'rich stones' are (a) 'valuable jewels' (*OED*, *rich*, adj.4.a; *stone*, n.7.a), (b) 'productive testicles' (*OED*, *rich*, adj.8; *stone*, n.11.a), and possibly also (c), 'testicles inflamed (with lust)' (*OED*, *rich*, adj.6.c). For the plural subject/singular verb construction cf. 1 of this scene, and II iv 5 and 100.
- 23 *come ... widow*] (a) with the obvious sense of 'enter the house to see her' and (b) with the equally obvious innuendo, 'sexually penetrate her;' Adriana's exclamation and repetition of the word in the second half of the line reinforces the secondary meaning and also indicates that she fully understands William's intentions with regard to her mistress.
- 24 *entrance*] again (a) with the obvious sense of 'door' (*OED*, n.5) and (b) that of 'sexual passageway,' both physical and figurative.
- 24 *mates*] (a) 'companions, associates' (*OED*, n².1.a); (b) 'sexual partners' (whether married or not) (*OED*, n².3.a); possibly also (c) with hint of the slightly contemptuous usage 'fellows' (*OED*, n².1.c).
- 26-7 *stones ... tomorrow.*] Williams notes the use of 'jewels' to mean, as did 'stones,' the testicles, but 'chains' appears to be used, uncharacteristically for this play, in its literal sense; perhaps the fact that William has one in his hands makes it a physical representative of sexual temptation (see 6-10 above for the intended use of the chain in this way); however, the conclusion of his sentence, with its equivoque on 'use' – 'employ sexually' (*OED*, v.10.b) – suggests that it should be included in the list of sexual items that William is offering Taffeta.

- ADRIANA
 You're a needy knave, and will lie.
 Your father has cashiered you, nor will 'a trust you.
 30 Be gone, lest I do wash you hence.
 WILLIAM Do'st hear?
 By this good night, my father and I are friends.
 Take but this chain for token – give her that,
 And tell her I have other things for her
 Which by my father's will I am commanded
 35 To give to her own hands.
 ADRIANA Say you so?
 In troth, I think you'll prove an honest man,
 Had you once got a beard – let me see the chain. H2
 WILLIAM
 Do'st think I lie? By this good light, Adrian,
 I love her with my soul. Here's letters
 40 And other jewels sent her from my father.
 Is she a-bed?
 ADRIANA By my virginity,

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- 28 *needy*] 'poverty-struck' (*OED*, adj.1.a), with perhaps a glance at the more modern sense, suggesting he is in need of sex.
 29 *Your ... you*] see IV i 158.
 30 *wash you hence*] i.e., 'cleanse the place of your presence by tipping the contents of a chamber-pot over you;' it was common practice to empty these receptacles from the projecting upper-storey of houses into the street below, though perhaps not often as a means of defence against unwelcome visitors.
 31 *By ... night*] William's usual oath is 'by this good light' but the variation here makes a humorous allusion to the time of day and, in theatrical terms, helps to reinforce the point that the scene takes place at night.
 32 *token*] (a) 'evidence (sc. of my reconciliation with my father)' (*OED*, n¹.a); (b) 'sexual parts' (Williams) and in this case male. We might note in passing here that it is probably at this point that William passes the chain to Adriana, suggesting that the height of the balcony in the theatre was not that great.
 33 *other things*] glancing at the sense of 'thing = penis,' an addition to the list of sexual items on offer, and which Taffeta might like to have in 'her own hands' (35) and 'use.'
 34 *will*] 'command, order' (*OED*, n¹.7.a), but the word could also mean 'carnal desire' (*OED*, n¹.2), and if that is part of William's meaning here, it is employed, one would imagine, with a kind of ironic *schadenfreude*.
 36 *honest*] probably in the sense of 'having honourable motives' and perhaps with a glance at 'sexually virtuous' (*OED*, adj.3) and in both senses glancing back to the word 'lie' in 28; cf. the proverb, 'an honest man is as good as his word' (Dent, M184).
 37 *Had ... beard*] perhaps suggesting that William is still in his mid-teens.
 38 *Adrian*] thus in Q1, and the loss of the final 'a' makes the line metrical, but the name is right at the edge of the page and may have been shortened by the compositor to make it fit.
 39 *I ... soul*] though this might seem a strange admission for William to make if he is trying to persuade Adriana that he is there purely on behalf of his father, he presumably intends her to understand 'soul' as 'the spiritual part of a human being in contrast to the purely physical' (*OED*, n.2.a) and hence is asserting that his love for Taffeta is spiritual rather than sexual; the soul was also, however, regarded as 'the seat of the emotions or sentiments' (*OED*, n.3.a) so he might be keeping his options open with a suitable equivocation.
 39-40 *Here's ... father.*] as these are purely fictitious, he presumably gestures to his clothing here.
 41 *By my virginity*] an oath chosen, perhaps, in case Adriana finds she wishes not to honour it.

She is uncased, and ready to slip in
 Betwixt the sheets, but I will bear her this
 And tell her what you say.
 WILLIAM But make some haste.

[Exit ADRIANA above.]

- 45 Why so, 'twill take. 'Zeart! How a waiting maid
 Can shake a fellow up that is cashiered
 And has no money. 'Foot! Should she keep the chain
 And not come down I must turn citizen,
 Be bankrupt, and crave the king's protection.
 50 But here she comes.

42. uncased,] uncast Q1.

- 42 *uncased*] 'undressed, stripped naked' (*OED*, v.1.b), with a probable glance at 'case = vagina' (see II iv 1 and note), and with the consequent suggestion that being 'uncased' it is no longer hidden but 'made available' (see Bly, *Op. Cit.*, p.63); Sharpham uses the word in a similar sense with reference to a man making himself sexually available in *Cupid's Whirligig*, H4v: '*Exh[ibition]*: You haue a prettie sweete dwelling here Lady, I will euen presume heere to vncase myself. | *La[dy]*: Then I am sure we shall haue musicke.'
- 42 *slip in*] 'slide gently' (into bed) – an intransitive usage (*OED*, v¹.11) – but with a suggestive glance at the transitive sense (*OED*, v¹.18) of 'gently introducing something into something else'; the line break could suggest a pause for the potential (but not provided) grammatical object that would emphasise this innuendo.
- 43 *bear*] 'carry' (*OED*, v¹.I) with perhaps a pun on 'bare' following up on 'uncased.'
- 45 *take*] see II i 32 and note.
- 46 *shake ... up*] the primary meaning is clearly 'agitate, upset the nerves of,' though *OED* does not give this meaning until 1884 (*shake*, v.21.g); there is possibly also a glance at the sexual connotations of 'shake' ('to cause to quiver with sexual pleasure' – Williams) playing upon the idea of the waiting maid as a kind of sexual entrée – either as the portal to the mistress (see II iif 48-67) or as an object of sexual gratification in herself (see III iv 38-42).
- 48-9 *I ... protection*] this is obscure; William is clearly not speaking seriously, so the comment is probably only loosely related to any underlying legal reality. His notion that he must 'turn citizen' in order to declare himself bankrupt could derive from the statute 13 Eliz.1. c.7 (1571) which states that only a 'Merchant or other person using or exercising the trade of Merchandise ... seeking his or her trade of living by buying and selling' (which, in London, could be interpreted as meaning a citizen) could be declared bankrupt. 'The king's protection' may be either (a) an ironic description of one of the favoured escape routes for a bankrupt – i.e., to voluntarily commit yourself to a debtors' prison such as the Fleet or Ludgate where you were beyond the reach of your creditors, for which contrivance see W. J. Jones, 'The Foundations of English Bankruptcy: Statutes and Commissions in the Early Modern Period,' p.24, who quotes Dekker: 'How many of them have been since, and at this hour are, earthed in the King's Bench, the Fleet and that abused sanctuary of Ludgate! Here they play at bowls, lie in fair chambers ... and jeer their creditors;' cf. also the modern phrase 'at her Majesty's pleasure;' or (b) seek 'the protection of the king's law' through sanctuary in a place such as Ram Alley (though strictly speaking the protection of sanctuary derived not from monarch but the church's ownership of the area which claimed that right). We might also note that William's implied distaste at the idea of becoming a citizen seems to preclude the idea that he will become one by marrying Taffeta, so the shift to a different class is entirely from her side, a shift which we know from the dialogue between her and Adriana in I ii is being actively pursued (see note to I ii 11 and the indication at II iii 16 that Sir Oliver is seen by her as a prospective husband).

[Enter TAFFETA and ADRIANA below.]

- TAFFETA What would you, sir, with us
That on the sudden and so late you come?
WILLIAM
I have some secrets to acquaint you with.
Please you to let the chambermaid shake off,
And stand as sentinel.
TAFFETA It shall not need.
55 I hope I have not brought her up so ill
But that she knows how to contain your secrets
As well as I, her mistress. Therefore, on.
WILLIAM
It is not fit, forsooth, that I should on
Before she leave the room.
ADRIANA 'Tis not, indeed,
60 Therefore I'll wait in the withdrawing-room
Until you call.

[Exit ADRIANA.]

- TAFFETA Now, sir, what's your will?
WILLIAM
Dear widow, pity the fate of a young,
Poor, yet proper gentleman. By Venus' pap,
Upon my knees I'd creep unto your lap
65 For one small drop of favour, and though this face
Is not the finest face, yet 't'as been praised
By ladies of good judgement in faces.
TAFFETA
Are these your secrets?
WILLIAM You shall have secrets

66. 't'as] t'as Q1.

51 *on the sudden*] 'suddenly, impetuously' (*OED*, *sudden*, C.n.1.b).

53 *shake off*] 'leave the room, make herself scarce' – usually used transitively and given only thus in *OED*, (*shake*, 19.b – 'get rid of a person').

57 | 8 *on | on*] Taffeta means simply, 'speak,' but William plays on the sense 'get on' – i.e., 'sexually mount.' Adriana clearly understands that sense.

60 *withdrawing-room*] the full, and originally the strictly correct, form of the modern 'drawing room' – i.e., a private chamber to which the occupants of a house could withdraw when not in company.

63 *proper*] as at I i 99 and IV i 37 (q.v.).

63 *pap*] 'breast' (*OED*, n¹.1.a).

64 *creep*] primarily 'approach in an abject or servile manner' (*OED*, v.3.b), but a search of Williams shows that the word strongly suggested achieving sexual intercourse through a sly or furtive approach to a woman; cf. Taffeta's use of the word in 73 below.

64 *lap*] this was used to refer to the genital area generally, but also, more specifically to 'the female pudendum' (*OED*, n¹.2.b).

65 *favour*] 'kindness' generally (*OED*, n.2), but specifically, 'sexual benevolence' (Williams).

68-9 *secrets* | *More pleasing*.] i.e., his genitalia (*OED*, *secret*, n.1.j, and Williams).

- More pleasing. Nay, hear, sweet widow.
 70 Some wantons do delight to see men creep,
 And on their knees to woo them.
 TAFFETA I am none of those.
 Stand up. I more desire a man should stand,
 Than cringe and creep, that means to win my love.
 I say, stand up and let me go, y'ad best.
 WILLIAM
 75 For ever let me creep upon the ground,
 Unless you hear my suit.
 TAFFETA How now, Sir Sauce!
 Would you be capering in your father's saddle? H2v
 Away, you cashiered younger brother. Be gone!
 Do not I know the fashions of you all?
 80 When a poor woman has laid open all
 Her thoughts to you, then you grow proud and coy,
 But when wise maids dissemble and keep close,

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- 70 *wantons*] 'lewd women' (*OED*, B.n.3), perhaps with a suggestion of the sense 'over-indulged, spoilt' (B.n.1).
 72 *Stand ... stand*] the first 'stand' is clearly primarily an instruction to William to get up on his feet, but it leads readily to the second which carries the overtly sexual meaning – 'I prefer my men to be visibly virile when they are trying to seduce me.'
 73 *cringe*] Williams suggests that this word was associated with the weak-kneed posture caused by venereal disease, also referred to as 'crinkling in the hams,' and which was seen as causing erectile dysfunction (cf. Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, I ii 79-82: 'not one amongst twenty of your skirmishing captains that have some privy maim or other that mars their standing upright. I like him the worse, he crinkles so much in the hams.' But the posture could possibly also be indicative of impotence, and that may be the implication here.
 74 *y'ad best*] 'it would be best for you' (*OED*, *best*, adj.4).
 76 *hear my suit*] 'respond to my entreaty for your love' (*OED*, n.12); William is suggesting something more than that Taffeta should simply 'hear' his suit, and hence her response.
 76 *Sir Sauce*] 'Sir Impudence' (*OED*, *sauce*, n.6.a).
 77 *capering ... saddle*] i.e., 'having sex with your father's wife' and playing upon the common assimilation of having sex to riding a horse; there is, though, a slight mixture of metaphor in that 'capering' is 'dancing, frolicking' (*OED*, v¹), with (a) the common sexual innuendo related to 'dancing' (Williams' entry for *caper* gives 'fornicate') and (b) possibly a pun on 'caper,' the berry used in the making of sauces (and Williams quotes, interestingly, in his entry, Dekker, *The Sun's Darling* (II i 175-6): 'one that loves mutton [whores] so well, he alwaies carries capers about him').
 79 *fashions*] 'ways of behaving' (*OED*, n.5.c).
 80 *When all*] the phrasing of this line would lead the audience to initially understand the sexual sense of 'laid open' – i.e., 'made herself sexually available or receptive' (Williams; see also II iv 1 and note, and cf. the appropriately named Mistress Openwork in Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 3.237-8, complaining of her husband's infidelity: 'I were as good shut up shop, for when I open it, I take nothing'); however, the beginning of the next line diverts the meaning towards the innocent sense 'unreservedly revealed' (*OED*, *open*, adj.12).
 81 *proud and coy*] both these words were capable of similar diametrically opposite meanings: (a) 'sexually excited or lascivious' (*OED*, *proud*, adj.8.a; *coy*, adj.5), and (b) 'of distant or disdainful demeanour' (*OED*, *proud*, adj.1.a; *coy*, adj.3); the phrase thus encapsulates, as it were, the alpha and the omega of the gallant's trajectory of desire.
 82 *dissemble*] 'pretend, put on a false appearance' (*OED*, v¹.5.a); it is interesting to note that Taffeta seems unable to imagine a woman's genuinely not wanting to have sex with a man.
 82 *keep close*] the sexual opposite of 'laying open,' and hence 'are sexually unavailable or

- Then you poor snakes come creeping on your bellies
 And with all-oiled looks prostrate yourselves
 85 Before our beauty's sun, where once but warm,
 Like hateful snakes, you strike us with your stings
 And then forsake us. I know your tricks. Be gone!
 WILLIAM
 'Foot! I'll first be hanged. Nay, if you go
 You shall leave your smock behind you, widow.
 90 Keep close your womanish weapon – hold your tongue.
 Nor speak, cough, sneeze, or stamp, for if you do,
 By this good blade, I'll cut your throat directly.

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- unreceptive,' this sense derived from the idea of keeping the legs closed together to prevent sexual intromission.
- 83 *poor ... bellies*] a 'poor snake' was a 'needy person' (*OED*, *snake*, n.3.a), but there is (a) allusion to the serpent of *Genesis* which successfully tempted Eve and was consequently told by God, 'upon thy belly shalt thou go' (3.14); (b) phallic suggestion (via analogy of shape and movement); and (c) evocation of the male precoital position (continued in the following line with 'prostrate').
- 84 *all-oiled looks*] with reference, possibly, to the overall glossy appearance of a snake's skin, but also suggesting, perhaps, that the paramour's gaze, like oil, is 'unctuous or slippery'; there may also be a pun on 'œillade' – 'an amorous glance or ogle' (*OED*) – as in *Lr.*, IV v 25: 'she gave strange eliaids [F1, aliads, Q1, Q2] and most speaking looks;' the variations in spelling of the *Lear* line, and the other variation, 'illiads' in *Wiv.* (F1) I iii 61, suggest perhaps more than usual latitude or uncertainty concerning the pronunciation of this word; finally, it is interesting to note that oil figures prominently in the parable of the ten virgins – five of whom were 'wise' – and one might wonder whether the phrase 'wise maids' in 82 brought this slightly offbeat image to Barry's mind.
- 85-6 *where ... stings*] an allusion to Aesop's fable *The Woodman and the Serpent* in which a snake, having been saved from death by a woodman, tries to sting one of his children as it lay by the fire of his home; the reference may be at secondhand as (a) the parallel is not precise, the serpent in the tale being warmed in the woodman's bosom and in front of his fire, and (b) the fable had passed into proverb – 'to nourish a viper (snake) in one's bosom' (Dent V68, the entry for which quotes Cooke, *Greene's Tu Quoque*, H4: 'Men you are cald but you're a viperous brood, Whom we in charitie take into our bosomes, And cherish with our heart: for which, you sting us'); cf. also Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, F4r: 'Thou venem'd Snake, frozen with beggarie, | Now being thaw'd by thy masters bountie. | Wouldst sting the bosom that did reiuue thee.' 'Stings' here are (a) 'the venom-teeth of snakes' (or, possibly, their tongues, which were erroneously believed to be poisonous) (*OED*, n².2); (b) 'penises' (Williams); and (c) possibly 'venereal infections' (Williams).
- 87 *tricks*] here with a particularly strong suggestion of specifically sexual behaviour (see note to I i Title, and elsewhere).
- 90 *Keep ... weapon*] that the tongue was a 'woman's weapon' was proverbial (see Dent W675, 'a woman's strength is in her tongue / a woman's weapon is her tongue'). However, in view of the repetition of 'keep close' from 82 above one might wonder whether there is a glance at the idea of the 'womanish weapon' as being the genitalia (usually those of a man but the meaning was so strong that it could easily be transferred *ad hoc* to those of a woman) so that the first part of the line becomes a punning ironic suggestion – 'alright, keep your legs together to protect your vagina' – followed by the mock-innocent denial – 'oh no! I didn't mean *that*, I meant your *tongue*.' Cf. the exchange between Ferdinand and his sister in Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, I i 336-8: '*Ferd*: Women like that part which, like the lamprey, | Hath ne'er a bone in't. *Duch*: Fie sir! *Ferd*: Nay, | I mean the tongue.'
- 91 *cough ... stamp*] all means by which a lady (or a prostitute) might communicate with a servant keeping watch on the other side of a chamber door; cf. Othello to Emilia (*Oth.*, IV ii 27-9): 'Some of your function, mistress; | Leave procreants alone, and shut the door; | Cough, or cry "hem," if anybody come.'
- 92 *directly*] 'immediately' (*OED*, adv. 6.a).

- Peace! Stir not. By heaven, I'll cut your throat
 If you but stir. Speak not – stand still – go to.
 95 I'll teach coy widows a new way to woo.
 Come, you shall kiss. Why so – I'll stab, by heaven,
 If you but stir! Now hear – first kiss again –
 Why so, stir not. Now come I to the point:
 My hopes are past, nor can my present state
 100 Afford a single half-penny. My father
 Hates me deadly. To beg, my birth forbids.
 To steal, the law, the hangman and the rope
 With one consent deny. To go a-trust,
 The city common council has forbid it.
 105 Therefore my state is desperate – stir not –
 And I by much will rather choose to hang
 Than in a ditch or prison-hole to starve.
 Resolve! Wed me, and take me to your bed,
 Or by my soul, I'll straight cut off your head
 110 Then kill myself, for I had rather die
 Than in a street live poor and lousily.
 Do not I know you cannot love my father?
 A widow that has known the quid of things
 To dote upon an old and crazed man
 115 That stinks at both ends worse than an elder pipe;

97. Now hear] now heere Q1.

- 94 *go to*] *OED* gives this phrase as an expression of 'disapprobation, remonstrance, protest, or derisive incredulity' (*go*, v.93.b), but it has here more the force of 'go on, do as you're told;' cf. *Rom.*, I v 77-8, where Capulet forbids Tybalt from confronting Romeo at his entertainment: 'What, Goodman boy? I say he shall, go to! | Am I the master here, or you? go to!'
 98 *point*] 'the essential idea, the main business' (*OED*, n.28.a), but one is necessarily suspicious of any mention of something with a point, so perhaps with a glance at the sense 'penis' (Williams).
 99 *past*] 'gone' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).
 100 *afford*] 'provide me with' (*OED*, 4.a).
 101 *deadly*] 'implacably, could wish me dead' (*OED*, adv.2).
 101 *to ... forbids*] cf. Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, E4r: 'Why then thou art a Gentlemen by profession, and tis a shame for a Gentleman to beg.'
 103 *With ... deny*] 'are in agreement with one another to forbid' (*OED*, *consent*, v.2.b; *deny*, v.9).
 103 *go a-trust*] 'to live on or take up credit' (*OED*, n.3); cf. the use of this term at IV ii 36..
 104 *The ... it*] the City Council, or Court of Common Council, was a body used by the Aldermen to consult with the citizens, or commoners, of London; William's reference to their prohibition against living on credit is obscure; a search of the Subject Index to the Journals of the Common Council, 1598-1609, revealed nothing likely to throw any light on this allusion.
 111 *lousily*] 'meanly, scurvily' (*OED*, this line being the only illustration of the word).
 113 *quid*] in logic, 'the essence or real nature of a thing, its quiddity' (*OED*, n¹.1), the 'thing' in question here being either sexual experience in general or the male sex organ in particular.
 114 *crazed*] this could refer to both physical infirmity and mental derangement (*OED*, ppl.a.4 and 5).
 115 *elder pipe*] obscure; the 'pipe' is probably the musical type, not the smoking pipe, since elder was commonly used to make flutes (and hence was popularly called 'the pipe tree'), though Middleton refers in *A Fair Quarrel*, 4.1.246, to 'smoke out of a stinking pipe,' and the wood (which has a soft, easily removed pith) could as easily have been used to make simple smoking pipes as to make musical pipes; certainly the tree had a malodorous reputation: Shakespeare, *Cym.*, IV ii 59, describes grief as 'the stinking elder,' and Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, C3r, refers to 'the stinkingst Elder,' the epithet possibly expressing no more than intense disgust for a

- Who, when his blood and spirits are at the height,
 Hath not a member to his palsy body
 But is more limber than a king's-head pudding
 Took from the pot half-sod? Do I not know this?
 120 Have you not wealth enough to serve us both?
 And am not I a pretty handsome fellow
 To do your drudgery? Come, come – resolve,
 For by my blood, if you deny your bed,
 I'll cut your throat without equivocation.
 125 If you be pleased, hold up your finger. If not,
 By heaven, I'll gar my whinyard through your womb.
 Is't a match?
 TAFFETA Hear me but speak.
 WILLIAM You'll prate too loud.
 TAFFETA
 No.

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- tree which was traditionally held to be the one from which Judas hanged himself (and in some accounts also the one used to make the cross); presumably Barry is simply picking up on that reputation. There may also be an equivocal on 'pipe' which, like the flute, was an analogue of the penis; combined with a pun on 'elder' referring to age this line could, for the modern psychologist, betray William's primal horror at the thought of his father's sexuality.
- 116 *when ... height*] i.e., when he is at his most sexually aroused: blood was considered the source of the passions and 'spirit' could be 'the mind as the seat of feeling and action' (*OED*, n.17.a) as well as 'readiness to assert oneself' (*OED*, n.13.a); however, both 'blood' and 'spirit' could mean 'semen' (Williams) the latter being seen as deriving from the former (cf. IV iv 139 and note).
- 117 *member*] (a) 'limb' generally; (b) 'penis' specifically (*OED*, n.1.a and b).
- 117 *palsy*] probably 'tremulous' rather than literally 'affected with the palsy' (*OED*, adj.).
- 118 *but ... limber*] 'except that is more flaccid' (*OED*, *limber*, adj.1.c).
- 118 *king's-head pudding*] at this period a pudding would most likely have been a savoury mixture of fat, offal and oatmeal encased in an animal's stomach or intestine, and hence like a very fat modern sausage; it inevitably suggested, and was frequently used as more or less a synonym for, the male organ (Williams and *OED*, n.5.b – though only from 1719); the 'king's head' presumably refers to a tavern or shop famous for its puddings; there was a King's Head in Fleet Street, and Sugden suggests that may be the one meant here, as much of the action of *Ram Alley* takes place in that street; however, Sugden also mentions 'the sign of the K. H. in the butchery,' possibly in Smithfield, which was adjacent to Hosier Lane (where William Smallshanks lodged); given such a location puddings may well have been a speciality of that tavern. For another image of the flaccid pudding, albeit in comparison to a hat, cf. *Blurt, Master Constable*, II i 26-7: 'limber like the skin of a white pudding when the meat is out.'
- 119 *half-sod*] 'half-boiled, not fully cooked' (*OED*, *sod*, ppl.a.1.a).
- 121 *pretty handsome*] the punctuation of Q1 (followed here) makes 'pretty' adverbial and in that case it would range in meaning from 'considerably' to 'tolerably' (*OED*, adv.1.a); if treated as an adjective (and so followed by a comma) it would have the meaning 'clever, skilful, apt,' or more generally, 'agreeable, commendable, fine' (*OED*, adj.2.a and 3) rather than 'good-looking' (4.a), which would create a tautology with 'handsome.'
- 122 *do your drudgery*] (a) 'do the work you would find dull and wearisome' (*OED*, *drudgery*); (b) 'keep you sexually satisfied,' in which sense the term has a strong and – for a would-be seducer – oddly contradictory suggestion of sex as 'an irksome demonstration of prowess rather than as fun' (Williams). Cf. Chapman's *The Widow's Tears*, E4v, where Eudora mockingly asks Tharsalio whether he thinks she would consider him an acceptable suitor and he replies: 'Your drudge Madam, to doe your drudgerie.'
- 123 *deny*] with ellipsis of 'me.'
- 126 *gar ... womb*] 'drive my sword through your stomach' – though most likely 'womb' would also be intended in its more usual sense (*OED*, *gar*, v.3; *whinyard*, n.1.a; *womb*, n.1 and 2).
- 127 *prate*] 'talk' (*OED*, v.1.a).

- WILLIAM Nor speak one word against my honest suit?
TAFFETA
No, by my worth.
WILLIAM Kiss upon that and speak.
TAFFETA
130 I dare not wed. Men say you're naught – you'll cheat,
And you do keep a whore.
WILLIAM That is a lie.
She keeps herself and me. Yet I protest,
She's not dishonest.
TAFFETA How could she then maintain you?
WILLIAM
Why, by her comings in – a little thing
135 Her friends have left her which with putting to best use
And often turning yields her a poor living.
But what of that? She's now shook off. To thee

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- 128 *honest*] the word here probably carries more or less the full range of meanings given by *OED* under *honest*, adj.3: 'virtuous, sincere, fair, upright, open and undisguised,' and even perhaps, 'chaste' in the sense that sex within marriage was regarded as a form of chastity at this period.
- 129 *worth*] (a) 'moral character' (*OED*, n.3); (b) 'financial standing' (n.5).
- 130 *naught*] (a) 'good for nothing, worthless' (*OED*, adj.1.a); 'immoral, particularly with regard to sexual conduct' (*OED*, adj.2.a and b).
- 130 *cheat*] the modern sense 'be sexually unfaithful to a spouse' was not, according to *OED*, available until mid-20th century; here the meaning is probably simply 'deceive, defraud by deceit' (*OED*, 2).
- 131|2 *keep* | *keep*] whilst the main point of William's rejoinder is that it is Frances who supports him rather than he her there is also a subtle difference in the way he uses the word 'keep:' Taffeta's means that he maintains her for the purposes of sexual enjoyment' (*OED*, v.20, and as at I i 64 and elsewhere) but William insists that it is merely a financial arrangement (*OED*, v.19); however, having done so he has to counter another possible objection which he does with typically evasive equivocation.
- 133 *dishonest*] (a) 'unchaste, lewd' (*OED*, adj.2); (b) possibly also in the sense, 'capable of thieving or other similar behaviour' (*OED*, adj.5).
- 133 *How ... you*] it is interesting to note that Taffeta cannot imagine how a woman could support a man unless by his acting as her pimp – or fence, if sense (b) of 'dishonest' is understood.
- 134 *comings-in*] (a) 'revenues, income' (*OED*, vbl.n.7.c); (b) 'acts of entrance' in the sexual sense – i.e., sexual encounters with men (vbl.n.7.a; Williams, *come in*); (c) 'vagina' in the sense of 'means of entrance, an entry' (vbl.n.7.b); the pluralisation of 'comings' which is usual for sense (a) might not seem appropriate for sense (c), though the singular of the elaborating phrase that follows – 'a little thing' – does support such a reading.
- 134 *a little thing*] (a) in terms of finance, 'a small amount' – possibly in the sense of a small inheritance as it was 'left her'; (b) in terms of sexual behaviour, 'vagina.'
- 135 *use*] (a) in terms of finance, 'lending out at interest, usury' (*OED*, n.5); (b) in terms of sexual behaviour, 'employing for sexual purposes, having sexual intercourse' (*OED*, n.3.b).
- 136 *turning*] (a) in terms of finance, 'investing and realising a profit' (*OED*, *turn*, v.78.i) but perhaps also with a sense of continuous reinvestment (a possible sense of *turn*, v.15.b?) as is suggested by Volpone when he says (*Volpone*, I i 39): 'I turne no moneys, in the publike banke;'; (b) in terms of sexual behaviour, there are two possible meanings in play: more likely (i) 'having sex' (Colman and Williams); but possibly also (ii) 'being fickle or inconstant, directing desire from one person to another' (*OED*, *turn*, v.36 and 28).
- 136 *yields*] 'furnishes, provides' (*OED*, v.13.a) but perhaps with a hint at the sense covered by *OED* under *yield*, v.III, 'to surrender, submit.'

- I'll only cleave. I'll be thy merchant,
 And to this wealthy fair I'll bring my ware
 140 And here set up my standing. Therefore resolve –
 Naught but my sword is left. If't be a match,
 Clap hands, contract, and straight to bed.
 If not – pray, forgive, and straight goes off your head.
 TAFFETA
 I take thy love.
 WILLIAM Then straight let's both to bed.
 TAFFETA
 145 I'll wed tomorrow.
 WILLIAM You shall not sleep upon't.
 An honest contract is as good as marriage.
 A bird in hand – you know the proverb, widow.

-
- 138 *cleave*] 'cling to, hold to' (*OED*, v².3 and 5). The word may have a stronger sexual meaning linked to the same sense (Williams), but this meaning may be derived from the other range of senses covered under v¹ in *OED* – 'split, penetrate'; see Cohen's note on the name 'Cleveland' (Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, Interim 2.1) which he sees as carrying the sexual innuendo 'place of cleaving, cleft.'
- 138 *merchant*] William here (albeit perhaps ironically) acknowledges his entrance to the citizen class, but also implies that he is 'purchasing' Taffeta and, perhaps further, jokingly hints that he will act as her bawd (for 'merchant = bawd' see Williams) though the main force of the mercantile metaphor here is to stress the correlation of sex and money.
- 139 *wealthy fair*] (a) 'flourishing periodical market' (*OED*, *wealthy*, adj.3; *fair*, n¹.1.a); (b) 'rich beauty,' possibly 'beloved' (*OED*, *wealthy*, adj.2; *fair*, n².2); Williams notes that as a place of holiday and fun a fair suggests sexual availability, and the word clearly frequently appears with that suggestion; it was also fairly common to play not only on the two senses of 'fair' but also on the adjectival and the nominal senses.
- 139 *ware*] (a) goods for sale' (*OED*, n³.1.a); (b) 'sexual organs' (*OED*, 4.c) (see also I ii 11 and note).
- 140 *standing*] (a) 'stall' (*OED*, vbl.n.4.a and 5); (b) 'erection' (Williams); cf. Middleton, *The Owl's Almanac*, 2402-6: 'Many fairs are in England, and (being wenching fellows as you are) I think not but you have set up your standings and opened booths in all or the best of them.'
- 141 *Naught ... left*] i.e., 'I have only my sword left to enable me to thrive,' but 'my sword,' of course, also means 'my penis' (which is equally what he is employing as a means to securing his future); cf. Middleton, *An/The Old Law*, 3.1.240-1: he that goes a-wooing to a widow without a weapon will never get her.' Cf. also note to II iii 69.
- 142 *clap hands*] 'shake hands (to seal the agreement)' (*OED*, *clap*, v¹.7.a); cf. IV i 33 and note.
- 142 *contract*] 'enter into a legal agreement (to marry)' (*OED*, v.3.c).
- 143 *pray ... head*] it was customary for people about to be beheaded to say their prayers and forgive the executioner before placing their head on the block.
- 145 *I'll wed tomorrow*] Taffeta insists, as she did with Sir Oliver, on having a public wedding ceremony; for William's response see next note.
- 146 *An ... marriage*] William is quite correct: at this period neither priest nor witness were required to make a marriage valid; though the church did not strictly approve of such arrangements, an agreement between the two parties in words of the present tense would constitute a legally binding marriage and such an agreement is made between William and Taffeta in the neatly split line 153.
- 147 *A ... proverb*] Tilley B363: 'a bird in the hand is better than two in the bush;' one might suspect in William's use of the proverb a sly suggestion that Taffeta might provide him with manual pleasures, the 'bird' being assimilable to 'penis.'

TAFFETA

So let me tell thee, I'll love thee while I live
 For this attempt. Give me that lusty lad
 150 That wins his widow with his well-drawn blade,
 And not with oaths and words. A widow's wooing,
 Not in bare words, but should consist in doing.
 I take thee to my husband.

WILLIAM I thee to wife.
 Now to thy bed and there we'll end this strife.

[Exeunt.]

148. So] To Q1; O Hazlitt

148 So] some emendation of Q1's 'To' is necessary here and this seems the best solution: it makes good sense, and upper case 'T' and 'S' were next to each other in the compositor's case so that /T/ could easily be picked instead of /S/, or a /T/ could have been miscast into the /S/ sort and then have been quite randomly selected by the compositor. 'Now' would make sense in the line but 'To' would be an odd mistake for that.

149 lusty] see II iv 63 and note.

150 well-drawn blade] whilst William has literally 'won' Taffeta at the point of his drawn sword, she here punningly conflates the literal with the metaphorical sense of the 'well-drawn blade' – the 'naked and erect penis' (cf. III iii 10-1). For the popular idea (at least, presumably, amongst men) that widows required a more direct approach to wooing cf. Middleton, *No Wit/Help Like a Woman's*, 6.92-3: 'nothing kills a widow's heart so much | As a faint bashful wooer.' See also note to IV iv 119-24.

152 Not ... doing] the slightly unusual construction here emphasises how *not* to do it; modern phrasing would be: 'should consist not in bare words but in doing.'

152 doing] (a) 'action' (*OED*, vbl.n.1.a); (b) 'having sex' – 'getting on with it' (*OED*, vbl.n.1.b and Williams).

[Act V, Scene ii.]

Enter SIR OLIVER and FIDDLERS.

SIR OLIVER

Warm blood, the young man's slave, the old man's god,
 Makes me so stir thus soon. It stirs, i'faith,
 And with a kind of itching pricks me on
 To bid my bride *bonjour*. Oh, this desire
 5 Is even another filched Promethean fire
 By which we old men live. Performance, then –
 Ay, that's poor old men's bane. That in old men
 Comes limping off more lame, God knows, than he
 Which in a close, a hot and dangerous fight

H3v

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- Location*] in the street outside Taffeta's house; this is made clear by William's appearance on her balcony at 21; Sir Oliver's comment in 2 that he is stirring 'thus soon' indicates that the time is early in the morning which follows William's 'seduction' of Taffeta the night before.
- 1 *Warm ... god*] the suggestion is that 'warm blood' or 'passion' is at the command of young men, whereas old men have to pray to the gods for it; the more usual formulation, though, would represent the young man as the slave, as in the proverb: 'to be passion's slave' (Dent, P89.11).
- 2 *stir*] 'go out into the world, leave my house' (*OED*, v.12.c and 13), but with a glance at the idea of the blood being 'stirred' – i.e., 'sexually stimulated or roused;' see also next note.
- 2 *stirs i'faith*] the idea of being sexually roused is here made explicit as Sir Oliver declares that 'his blood is stirred indeed.'
- 3 *itching*] 'an uneasy desire' (*OED*, vbl.n.2), here of a sexual nature; the word implies that sexual desire is a kind of irritant that needs to be relieved through frictional activity, but see also IV i 48 and note.
- 3 *pricks me on*] 'spurs me on' (*OED*, v.10.a), with an obvious innuendo based on 'prick = penis' (that organ being both the cause and the location of the 'itching').
- 4 *bonjour*] 'good-day' (French); Sir Oliver is perhaps presenting himself as having something of the Frenchman about him, they being considered as particularly inclined to amorous pursuits.
- 5 *filched ... fire*] Prometheus stole ('filched') fire from the gods to give it to human beings and, according to the popular version of the Greek myth, was punished for this impiety by being chained to a rock where he was visited daily by a vulture which ripped out and ate his liver; Sir Oliver seems to be returning to the idea that, if old men want to indulge in sex, they depend on divine intervention for the necessary fuel to heat their blood; there is also possibly an allusion through the classical reference to the contemporary belief that the liver was the seat of passion.
- 6 *Performance*] echoing William's comments on his father's impotence in the previous scene (V i 116-9), Sir Oliver now sadly observes that, for old men, 'Between the desire | And the spasm | ... Falls the Shadow' (T. S. Eliot, 1963, p.92). Cf. Middleton, *Michaelmas Term*, 3.4.10-1: 'Like an old lecher ... | Whose mind stands stiff, but his performance down.'
- 7 *bane*] 'woeful fate, ruin' (*OED*, n¹.5).
- 8 *limping ... lame*] 'limping' glances at the idea of being limp as a result of detumescence; 'lame' is used adverbially rather than adjectivally, and in terms of sexual inadequacy would mean simply 'unsatisfactorily, deficiently' (*OED*, *lamely*, adv.); since lameness would necessarily cause one to limp the phrase is somewhat tautological but we are used to this linguistic foible in Sir Oliver.
- 9 *a close ... dismembered*] 'close' and 'hot' are words that would naturally correlate with 'fight,' and the result of a vigorous hand-to-hand engagement could quite easily be the loss of a limb ('dismemberment'), but these are also all words which could carry strong sexual suggestion: 'close' implies not only physical proximity but also, as Williams notes, 'ideas of secrecy and intimacy' (entry for *close*), and see also the quotation from *Women Beware Women* in the note to *subtlety*, (13 below); 'hot,' as has been noted before, suggests, as it does now, 'sexually ardent' (Colman); 'fight' too, was used to refer to enthusiastic coital activity (see also notes to III iv 85

- 10 Has been dismembered and craves by letters patents;
 Yet scarce a woman that considers this.
 Women have tricks, firks, and farthingales.
 A generation are they full of subtlety,
 And all most honest where they want the means
 15 To be otherwise. Therefore I'll have an eye
 My widow goes not oft to visit kinsfolks.
 By birth she is a Ninny, and that, I know,
 Is not in London held the smallest kindred.
 I must have wits and brains. Come on, my friends,

10. letters patents] letter patents Q1.

and 106-7) though it would perhaps require some contextualisation to operate that innuendo; however, if 'close' was not sufficient warning to the audience to suspect an incipient innuendo, 'hot' would certainly do the trick, and 'dismembered' – i.e., 'deprived of his virile member' – would complete the necessary verbal setting.

- 10 *craves ... patents*] i.e., begs using an open letter or document authorising the bearer to engage in that activity (*OED*, *craves*, v.2; *patent*, adj.1, from the Latin for 'open').
- 11 *Yet scarce*] ellipsis of 'there is' between these two words.
- 12 *tricks*] with the usual innuendo – i.e., not just 'means of deceiving' (*OED*, n.1.a) but also 'ways of acting sexually,' possibly involving deceit.
- 12 *firks*] here 'dodges, subterfuges' (*OED*, n.2) as at III v 54, but with perhaps a glance at the homophone 'fucks' giving the word a similar quality of equivocation to 'tricks.' Once again, Sir Oliver is indulging in tautology.
- 12 *farthingales*] the link between this word and 'tricks' and 'firks' is not obvious, but perhaps Sir Oliver is thinking of the use Taffeta made of her farthingale to hide him in III iv – 'the best and safest place in the chamber' (62) – and extrapolating from that experience the idea that women use this article of clothing to hide other things. A similar idea is present in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, 2.2.129-34, when Sordido, musing on the deceitfulness of women, says: 'Faith, choosing of a wench in a huge farthingale | Is like the buying of ware under a great penthouse. | What, with the deceit of one, | And the false light of th'other – mark my speeches – | He may have a diseased wench in's bed, | And rotten stuff in's breeches.'
- 13 *generation*] 'a species, class or group of people' (*OED*, n.6); cf. II i 158 and note.
- 13 *full*] possibly 'fully occupied by, absorbed in' (*OED*, adj.3) suggesting that women spend all their time thinking of subtle ways to deceive their husbands; but possibly, more simply, 'replete with' (*OED*, adj.1.a).
- 13 *subtlety*] 'craftiness, cunning, guile' (*OED*, 3) and probably with reference to the temptation of Eve by the serpent, with whom she – and consequently all women – became associated in conventional theology: 'And the serpent was subtiller then every beast of the field which ye lord God hadde made' (*Genesis* 3.1, *Bishops' Bible*); that there was an association of 'subtlety' with sexual deviousness is suggested by Hippolito's insistence in Middleton's *Women Beware Women* (which, we might note, was possibly echoed in 12 above) that it is an attribute of lechery: 'Art, silence, closeness, subtlety, and darkness | Are fit for such a business' (4.2.7-8). There may also be a residual – but not obviously relevant – allusion to the cursing of the false prophet Bar-jesus by Paul in *Acts* 13, 10: 'O full of all subiltie and all mischiefe, thou childe of the deuyll, thou enemie of all righteousness, wylt thou not cease to peruert the wayes of the Lorde' (*Bishops' Bible*).
- 14 *all*] either (a) 'every one of them' (*OED*, A.adj.2) with ellipsis of 'they are' (understood from the previous line), or (b) acting as an intensive to 'most' – 'completely, entirely' (*OED*, C.adv.2, 3 or 7).
- 14-5 *most ... otherwise*] i.e., 'are at their most honest only when they lack the means to be dishonest,' for similarly cynical commentaries on women's honesty see II iv 29-31 and IV i 149-51.
- 15 *have an eye*] 'take care that, keep watch to ensure that' (*OED*, n¹.6.a).
- 17 *Ninny*] 'a simpleton, fool' (*OED*, n¹).
- 19 *I ... brains*] 'I must be alert and take care' ('wits' as in *OED*, n.3.c, and 'brains' probably as used in II iv 101).

- 20 Out with your tools and to't – a strain of mirth
And a pleasant song to wake the widow.

Enter W[ILLIAM] S[MALLSHANKS] above in his shirt.

- WILLIAM
Musicians! Minstrels! 'Foot, rogues!
For God's love, leave your filthy, squeaking noise
And get you gone. The widow and myself
25 Will scramble out the shaking of the sheets
Without your music. We have no need of fiddlers
To our dancing. 'Foot! Have you no manners?
Cannot a man take his natural rest
For your scraping? I shall wash your gut-strings
30 If you but stay a while. Yet, honest rascals,
If you'll let us have the t'other crash

20. to't] toot Q1

- 20 *tools*] (a) 'instruments' (*OED*, n.2.a); (b) 'penises' (*OED*, n.2.b; Williams; Partridge.2).
20 *to't*] 'set to work,' but with the bawdy innuendo implied at I i 61 and elsewhere; the spelling of Q1 may suggest a pun on 'toot' which could mean both (a) 'stick out' (*OED*, v¹.1) with, of course, further bawdy innuendo, or (b) 'make a wind instrument sound' (*OED*, v².1); however, Q1 spells this abbreviation the same way at V iii 132 where the meaning is unambiguously 'to't'.
20 *a strain of mirth*] 'a joyful song' (*OED*, *mirth*, n.1.a; *strain*, n².13.a); 'strain' carries a possible sexual innuendo, in that, as a verb, it could mean 'to clasp tightly in a sexual embrace' (Williams and Partridge.2), whilst as a noun in the sense noted here it links readily (as evidenced by citations in entries for *jig*, *straw*, and *whistle* in Williams) to the common association of music and dance with sex; we might note also *Tw.N.*, I i 4: 'That strain again, it had a dying fall.'
22s.d. *in his shirt*] see note to 36 below.
25 *scamble out*] 'muddle through' (*OED*, v.4.d), with strong suggestions of struggling wildly with others and randomly throwing the limbs about (*OED*, v.1.a and 5).
25 *the ... sheets*] the name of a dance which was, in the 16th and 17th centuries, notes *OED*, 'often used jocularly for sexual intercourse' – as was also, of course, the word 'dancing' itself, and William uses the word in that sense in 27. Dent lists the phrase 'to dance the shaking of the sheets' as proverbial (S265.11).
28 *natural rest*] (a) 'sleep;' (b) 'sexual intercourse,' playing on 'nature = female pudendum,' (*OED*, n.8) and 'rest' in the sense of something on or in which another thing can be held (for example, the instrument used to support a gun – *OED*, n¹.11.a or 12.a); there could also be an antithesis of 'natural rest' meaning 'sleep' as against the musical 'rest' – 'a pause or interval' (*OED* n¹.7.a).
29 *scraping*] primarily the harsh noise produced by the fiddlers moving their bows over the strings of their instruments, but with a glance at the idea of fricative activity suggestive of coition.
29 *wash*] William threatens the musicians with the same liquid weapon as Adriana threatened to deploy against him (see V i 30 and note).
29 *gut-strings*] i.e., their viol-strings, which would have been made of gut (*OED*, *gut*, n.8, though 1659 is given as the earliest date for this term, and 1611 for 'gut' on its own as meaning 'viol-strings').
31-2 *the t'other ... time*] 'crash' here presumably means 'dance' though *OED* gives no such precise definition; the idea is perhaps covered by 'a bout of revelry' (n¹.3) or is an extension of that sense determined by the context, but the word seems to be used to mean 'a dance' in Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, II 4-5, when Jenkin says to his friends at the wedding feast, 'now that they are busy in the parlour, come strike up, we'll have a crash here in the yard.' William is presumably playing again on the equation of 'dancing' with 'having sexual intercourse' and hence is suggesting that if the musicians will let them 'dance' in that sense, he and Taffeta will

The widow and I'll keep time. There's for your pains.

[*He throws them money and exits above.*]

SIR OLIVER

How's this! Will the widow and you keep time?

What trick, what quiddit, what vagary is this?

35 My cashiered son speak from the widow's chamber,
And in his shirt? Ha! Sure she is not there.

'Tis so – she has took him in for pity,

And now removes her chamber. I will home,

On with my neatest robes, perfume my beard,

40 Eat cloves, eryngoes, and drink some aqua-vitae
To sweeten breath and keep my womb from wambling,
Then like the month of March come blustering in,

H4

34. vagary] figure Q1. 41. Womb] weame Q1

'keep time' – i.e., maintain the rhythm of coition. Though 'the t'other' ('the tother' in Q1) is strictly speaking a pleonasm ('tother' being an abbreviation of 'the other', and modern English signalling the elision with the apostrophe) it was treated as a single word meaning 'other' and hence given an article.

32 *There's ... pains*] William evidently relents and pays the musicians for their trouble and to go away so that he and Taffeta can continue their own 'dance.' He also clearly has not seen his father, who seems to be some way apart from the group of musicians (see next note).

33 *Will ... time*] though Sir Oliver repeats the phrase that his son has just used, the rest of his speech suggests that he has not necessarily heard all of what William has just said to the musicians; we therefore might assume (a) that the repetition is a weak form of dramatic irony or (b) a moment of carelessness on the part of the author who forgets either that he just used the phrase or that Sir Oliver is supposed not to have heard his son's last speech.

34 *quiddit*] essentially the same word and meaning as 'quid' which would appear to have been caught up from the previous scene (see V i 113 and note), though this can also mean 'a nicety or quirk in an argument, a quibble;' however, Barry seems to have taken out of that the more restricted meaning of 'quirk = a freak event' and applied the word in that sense here.

34 *vagary*] 'departure from propriety, freakish event' (*OED*, n.3.a). This line as a whole is another example of Sir Oliver's tendency to tautology.

36 *in his shirt*] even if Sir Oliver has not heard what William has just said, he clearly immediately suspects that this state of undress (wearing only one's shirt was more or less equivalent at this period to being naked) indicates that something untoward has been going on between his son and Taffeta. We might note again the association of linen underwear – which shirts essentially were – with sexual activity (see also Williams, entry for *shirt*).

38 *removes her chamber*] 'moves from her room into another' (*OED*, *remove*, v.9.a).

40 *cloves ... aqua-vitae*] for 'eryngoes' and their supposed aphrodisiac properties see II iii 93 and note; cloves, along with other spices (see 47 below) were used to freshen the breath, for which reason Sir Oliver claims he will also drink 'some aqua-vitae' (lit. 'water of life' – Latin – and probably here a distilled alcohol such as brandy); alcohol had a reputation as an aphrodisiac, albeit a dubious one as Macbeth's Porter observes – 'Lechery, sir, it provokes and unprovokes: it provokes the desire but it takes away the performance' (*Mac.*, II iii 29-30) – and aqua-vitae was, Williams notes, 'continually mentioned as part of the bawd's equipment' (entry for *aqua-vitae*), though whether as a sexual stimulant, as something with which to entertain clients, or simply as a personal drug is not clear from his illustrations. In alchemy aqua-vitae, or 'unrectified alcohol' (*OED*, 1), supposedly had revivifying powers.

41 *keep ... wambling*] 'prevent feelings of nausea in my stomach' (*OED*, *wamble*, v.1.b; *womb*, n.1.b).

42 *blustering in*] 'make a boisterous entrance' (*OED*, ppl.a.1); March was – and still is – traditionally seen as the windy month.

- Marry the widow, shake up this springal,
 And then as quiet as a sucking lamb
 45 Close by the widow will I rest all night.
 As for my breath, I have crotchets and devices:
 Ladies' rank breaths are often helped with spices.

[Exeunt SIR OLIVER and FIDDLERS.]

-
- 43 *shake up*] most likely 'berate soundly, give a dressing down' (*OED*, v.21.f), but possibly, 'rouse up, wake' (*OED*, v.21.c).
 43 *springal*] 'youth, stripling' (*OED*, *springal*(*d*², 1), possibly with a pun on 'springle' (also spelled 'springal' in the 17th century) – 'a snare' (*OED*, n²).
 44 *as ... lamb*] proverbial: 'as gentle (quiet, meek, mild, etc.) as a lamb' (Dent, L34) but the addition by Sir Oliver of the idea that the lamb is still suckling has an obvious sexual suggestion. Is there perhaps also a hint at the proverb, 'the humble lamb sucks its own dam and others also' (Dent, L35)?
 45 *Close by*] obviously 'very near, alongside' (*OED*, adv.1.a) but as noted elsewhere the word has various sexual undertones which can be, as they seem to be here, contradictory (see note to I ii 182|3): Sir Oliver would no doubt intend to suggest that this 'closeness' is one of post-coital intimacy (see note to 9 of this scene), but as he envisages in the second half of this line that he will then 'rest all night' the other sense of 'close' comes into play (see, e.g., II i 32, or V i 82 and notes thereto) suggesting that sexual exhaustion will all too soon overcome him.
 46 *crotchets*] here 'clever or fanciful ways of dealing with things' (*OED*, n¹.9b). Cf. III i 2 and note above.
 46 *devices*] 'ingenious tricks, stratagems' (*OED*, n.6).
 47 *rank*] 'having an offensively strong smell' (*OED*, adj.12.a), but with a possible glance at the meanings, 'lustful' or 'grossly indecent' (*OED*, adj.13 and 14.a).
 47 *spices*] see note to 40 above.

[Act V, Scene iii.]

Enter ADRIANA, and another [MAID] strewing herbs.

ADRIANA

Come, strew apace. Lord, shall I never live
To walk to church on flowers. Oh, 'tis fine
To see a bride trip it to church so lightly
As if her new chopines would scorn to bruise
5 A silly flower. And now, I prithee, tell me,
What flower thinkest thou is likest to a woman?

MAID

A marigold, I think.

ADRIANA Why a marigold?

MAID

Because a little heat makes it to spread,

s.d. *strewing*] *strawing* Q1. 1. Strew] straw Q1. 7s.p. (and throughout scene) MAID] *Vi.* Q1.

Location] in the street immediately outside Taffeta's house.

- 1 *strew apace*] 'scatter [the flowers] quickly' (*OED*, *strew*, v.1; *apace*, adv.1.a).
- 2 *to ... flowers*] it was customary in the 17th century to scatter flowers and herbs on the path between a bride's house and the church.
- 3 *trip it*] 'step nimbly' (*OED*, v.3), but also 'fall' in the moral sense (v.9) and that sense would link to 'lightly,' a word having strong connotations with sexual freedom or looseness; see next note.
- 4 *chopines*] a high shoe with, usually, a cork sole, worn to add height; they were particularly popular in, and hence associated with, Venice, a place of lewd repute in England; the light cork soles led to their being seen as suggestive of 'lightness in the heels' – i.e., a propensity in the women who wore them to fall over with their feet in the air in order to indulge in sexual intercourse; cf. Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*, 9.85-7, where Goshawk imagines seducing two women in a boat: 'It's but liquoring them soundly, and then you shall see their cork heels fly up high;' *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, 3.2.199-202: 'how they have laid them [the stools], | E'en as they lie themselves, with their heels up! | How they have shuffled up the rushes, too, Davy, | With their short figging little shuttle-cork heels! | These women can let nothing stand as they find it;' Sharpham, *The Fleer*, 2.1.146-9: '*Felicia*: What's the reason, Fleer, the citizen's wives wear all cork in their shoes? *Antifront*: Oh, madam, to keep the custom of the city only to be light-heeled;' and, Dekker and Webster, *Westward Ho*, II ii 64-6, where a bawd invites a woman she intends to sell to a customer to 'tread softlie, and come into this roome: here be rushes, you neede not feare the creaking of your cork shooes.'
- 4 *bruise*] 'crush' (*OED*, v.1) rather than merely 'damage the skin.'
- 5 *silly*] a number of meanings could apply: (a) 'frail' (*OED*, adj.2.b); (b) 'simple' (*OED*, adj.3.a); (c) 'deserving compassion' (*OED*, adj.1.a); (d) 'defenceless' (*OED*, adj.1.b); (e) 'innocent' (a meaning which *OED* does not explicitly give but it could be an extension of sense 3.a or 3.b).
- 5 *flower*] possibly also 'virgin, or virginity' (Williams), and if that is the case, 'chopines' might also have some suggestive force possibly with a pun on 'choppings' meaning 'thrustings' (*OED*, *chop*, v¹.7.a, and see note to IV i 46).
- 7s.p. *MAID*] this character, who has the speech prefix '*Vi.*' in Q1 (possibly short for 'Virgin'), appears nowhere else; at I ii 75 Taffeta calls out to a person called Fabia, presumably a maid, but no character of that name appears either there or elsewhere; the *Actorum Nomina* lists an unnamed chambermaid which could refer to both of these characters, or to a single character who was given one name at the very beginning of the play and, the writer having forgotten that name, another at the very end; as '*Vi.*' is clearly not the full name of the character, and as, on balance, it seems safe to assume that the gender is female (see note to 12 and 47 below), this edition has opted for emendation to 'Maid.' (For a fuller discussion of this problem see Introduction, The Text, The printer's copy.)
- 8-9 *Because ... leaves*] i.e., because it does not need much stimulation to make it sexually receptive;

- And open wide his leaves.
 ADRIANA Th'art quite wide.
 10 A marigold doth open wide all day,
 And shuts most close at night. I hope thou knowest
 All wenches do the contrary. But, sirrah,
 How does thy uncle, the old doctor?
 Do'st think he'll be a bishop?
 MAID Oh, questionless,
 15 For has got him a young wife, and carried her
 To court already. But now, I prithee, say:
 Why will the widow wed so old a knight?
 ADRIANA
 Why, for his riches.
 MAID For riches only?
 Why, riches cannot give her her delight.
 ADRIANA
 20 Riches, I hope, can soon procure her one
 Shall give her her delight. That's the devil –
 That's it, i' faith, makes us waiting gentlewomen
 Live maids so long.
 MAID Think you so?
 ADRIANA Yes, in faith.
 Married women quite have spoiled the market
 25 By having secret friends besides their husbands,
 For if these married wives would be content
 To have but one a-piece, I think, in troth,
 There would be doings enough for us all,

-
- 'heat' is (a) the warmth of the sun, and (b) sexual ardour; 'spread' is (a) 'unfold its petals' (*OED*, v.13) and (b) 'lay down with the limbs extended in a sexually inviting manner' (*OED*, v.2.a); 'open wide' is conventionally suggestive of a woman opening her legs to receive a lover (see V i 80 and note); 'leaves' here means 'petals' (*OED*, n¹.2) but also figuratively refers to the limbs.
- 11 *close*] see V i 82 and note.
- 12 *sirrah*] this term of address could be used to a female inferior or equal – see IV iv 38 and note; as Boucher refers to Adriana and her companion as 'fair maids' in 47 its use here does not provide any substantial argument against the second servant's gender being female.
- 13 *doctor*] presumably of divinity, given his prospects. The tenor of the conversation between Adriana and the Maid so far, the rather unreverend behaviour of this gentleman (see next note), and the oddity of a chambermaid's having an uncle who is so highly educated all lead one to suspect that 'uncle' and 'bishop' are being used euphemistically here, but if so the words, used in that way, have escaped the attention of lexicographers of 17th century slang; however, we might note the use of 'aunt' to mean 'a female bawd' at I i 69.
- 14-6 *Oh ... already*] the implication is that he, being old, will not be able to sexually satisfy the young wife, so she will (with his permission, perhaps) amuse herself by seducing influential courtiers who have bishoprics in their gift; the 'marriage of January and May' theme leads easily into their next subject of conversation.
- 19 *delight*] 'sexual pleasures' (Williams).
- 21 *Shall*] ellipsis of 'who' before this word.
- 21 *devil*] 'the worst of it, the nub of the problem' (*OED*, 15, though the earliest example given is 1710).
- 23 *maids*] this could mean simply 'unmarried women,' not necessarily 'virgins' (*OED*, n¹.1.a) but Adriana may be surreptitiously staking a claim to the latter status for the sake of propriety.
- 27 *a-piece*] 'per woman,' but with a quibble on 'piece = penis' (Williams).
- 28 *doings*] 'sexual activity, copulation' (*OED*, vbl.n.1.b).

- 30 And, till we get an act of parliament,
For that our states are desperate.
Come, strew apace.

Enter BOUTCHER and CONSTAN[TIA].

CONSTANTIA So ho ho, master!

BOUTCHER Boy?

CONSTANTIA

In troth, I thought you'd been more fast asleep

H4v

Than a midwife or a puritan tailor

At a Sunday evening's lecture. But, sir,

31. strew apace] straw apace Q1.

- 30 *for that*] probably, 'as regards that' (*OED*, prep.26.a); but 'for' could be indicative of an obstacle (*OED*, prep.19.c) which would give 'because of that.' This edition has followed the punctuation of Q1 at the end of 29; were the comma there omitted one would read, 'till we get an act of parliament for that' – i.e., 'for that purpose.'
- 30 *states*] possibly marital status – 'states as married or single women' (*OED*, n.15.c).
- 31 *So ho ho*] a greeting or a call to gain attention; Constantia's next speech expressing astonishment at the earliness of the hour suggests she has been taken by surprise at Boutcher's early rising and is trying to catch him up.
- 32 *you'd been*] sc. 'you would have been' – probably a subjunctive expressed as an indicative; see Abbott, 361.
- 32-4 *more ... lecture*] puritan lectures (informal sermons) were famous for their length, so it is not surprising that anyone would drift off during one, especially on a Sunday evening, but why midwives and tailors should be particularly susceptible to somnolence on these occasions is not obvious, unless the cause for the former was the unsocial hours often imposed on them by the nature of their work (they were required to attend a woman in labour whatever the time of day or the weather – see Evenden, *The Midwives of Seventeenth-Century London*, p.30) and for the latter the visually demanding nature of stitching by hand in sometimes poorly lit rooms. However, there may be another reason for at least the tailor's weariness; one of the constant jibes levelled at puritans in plays was that they were sexual hypocrites, whilst tailors had a reputation for making full use of their intimate access to women when measuring for and fitting gowns, so the puritan tailor could be exhausted by his sexual exertions. As to the midwife, she is also clearly a puritan: first, she is at the lecture, and, second, there seems to have been a close association between puritan women and midwifery – see Middleton, *More Dissemblers Besides Women*, 2.3.67, 'Spoke like the sister of a puritan midwife,' and the comment on *The Bloody Banquet* below; being a puritan in itself makes her an object of suspicion in the theatrical context, but these women also occupied an ambivalent position in the patriarchal society of early modern England in that they oversaw childbirth – then an entirely female affair – and were thus expert in a sphere men were excluded from; moreover, they were licensed to baptise children who were in danger of dying immediately after birth (Evenden, *Op. Cit.*, pp.26-7) and so intruded into another otherwise entirely male sphere (that of the priesthood); the male response to this appears to have been to disparage and denigrate them in a variety of ways, suggesting, for example, that they did not just legitimately assist at births, but also assisted illicitly at conceptions – that is, they were bawds; this view is articulated by Roxano in Middleton's *The Bloody Banquet*, 1.4.115-7, in a comment which interestingly also links the midwife with the puritan: 'A man can scarce know a bawd from a midwife by the face, an hypocritical puritan from a devout Christian, if you go by the face;' that connection is present in the multiply punning name Autolycus gives to the midwife he claims wrote the ballad of the userer's wife who 'was brought to bed of twenty money-bags at a burthen' (*Wint.*, IV iv 263-4) – 'one Mistress Tale-porter' (*Ibid*, 269-70), a name which could mean, besides 'teller of lies (or tales)' also one who acts as a porter (door-keeper) to tails (prostitutes), or one who transports (is a porter) available pudenda (tails) to clients. Midwives were also

- 35 Why do you rise so soon?
 BOUTCHER To see the widow.
 CONSTANTIA
 The weaker you. You are forbid a widow,
 And 'tis the first thing you would fall into.
 Methinks a young, clear-skinned country gentlewoman
 That never saw baboons, lions, or courtiers
 40 Might prove a handsome wife. Or what do you say
 To a citizen's daughter that never was in love
 With a player, that never learnt to dance,
 That never dwelt near any Inn-a-Court?
 Might not she in time prove an honest wife?
 45 Faith, take a maid and leave the widow, master.
 Of all meats I love not a gaping oyster.
 BOUTCHER
 God speed your works, fair maids.
 ADRIANA You much mistake.
 'Tis no work.

demonised by some as witches (Evenden, *Op. Cit.*, p.27), perhaps because of their similarity to 'cunning women' (women who claimed to possess arcane knowledge of curative techniques and herbs), whilst perhaps the most extreme misogyny directed at the profession is revealed in another Whitefriars play, Sharpham's *Cupid's Whirligig*, C4r, where a midwife is said to have 'turn'd herMaphrodit ... for as your hermaphrodit hath two members, the one to beget, the other to bring foorth, so hath your Midwife too means, the one to bring you to beget, the other to bring it foorth when'tis begotten.'

- 37 *fall into*] 'be taken by, engaged with' (*OED*, *fall*, v.63.e, perhaps d) but with bawdy innuendo on sexual penetration.
- 38-40 *a young ... wife*] for another encomium on the unsophisticated country girl see Frances' speech at I i 65-72; for exotic animals as spectacles see I ii 43 and 71, and as fashionable pets III iv 22.
- 40 *handsome*] not only 'good-looking, physically becoming' (*OED*, adj.6a) but also 'skilled, clever' (2.b) and 'seemly, decent' (3).
- 41-4 *a citizen's ... wife*] there is more than a tinge of irony in Constantia's consideration of the city girl as a prospective wife: the break across lines 41 and 42 allow for a significant pause followed by a telling qualification ('never was in love – With a player'), 'dance' would be intended to be taken as 'engage in sexual intercourse' (see IV i 95-6 and note, and note to V ii 25), and for the reputation of the Inns of Court see III ii 15-22; after all that the audience might well be wondering how long it would take such a girl to 'prove an honest wife.'
- 46 *meats*] (a) 'foods' (*OED*, n.1.a); (b) 'the body as a source of sexual pleasure' sometimes specifically 'the female genitalia' (*OED*, n.3.e); (c) there may also be a glance at 'prostitutes' (*OED*, n.3.e); given Taffeta's overt sexuality and forwardness.
- 46 *a gaping oyster*] 'to gape like an oyster for the tide' was a proverb suggesting great eagerness or desire for something (Dent, O114); here the 'oyster' (commonly used to mean 'vagina') is synecdochically the widow 'defined through her sexual part' (Williams, entry for *oyster*), whilst the image is graphically reinforced by the word 'gaping,' which is a good deal more than just an 'allusion to ... sexual readiness' (Williams, entry for *gape*).
- 47 *fair maids*] see note to 7s.p. above.
- 47-50 *God ... think*] it is possible that this conventional quibbling conversation between a servant and a member of the upper classes revolves around the theological sense of the word 'works' – 'moral acts that might bring a person into a state of grace, or indicate him or her as being in a state of grace' (*OED*, n.1.a) – and of 'preparation' – an act or observation undertaken before a religious rite or ceremony' (*OED*, n.7); Adriana is possibly punningly suggesting that the 'work' they are doing by preparing for a marriage is a 'work' in the theological sense since marriage saves a person from sinning – 'for it is better to marrie then to burne,' as St Paul put it (*I Corinthians*, 7.9, *Bishops' Bible*).

- BOUTCHER What, then?
 ADRIANA A preparation
 To a work, sir.
 BOUTCHER What work, sweet ladies?
 ADRIANA
 50 Why, to a marriage. That's a work, I think.
 BOUTCHER
 How! A preparation to a marriage?
 Of whom, kind maids, of whom?
 ADRIANA And why "kind maids"?
 I hope you have had no kindness at our hand
 To make you say so. But, sir, understand
 55 That Sir Oliver Smallshanks, the noble knight,
 And Mistress Taffeta, the rich widow,
 Must this day be coupled, conjoined,
 Married, espoused, wedded, contracted,
 Or, as the puritan says, put together.
 60 And so, sir, to the shifting of our clean smocks
 We leave you.

[*Exeunt ADRIANA and MAID.*]

- BOUTCHER Married! And today!
 Dissension, jealousy, hate, beggary,
 With all the dire events which breed dislike
 In nuptial beds, attend her bridal steps!
 65 Can vows and oaths, with such protesting action
 As if their hearts were spit forth with their words,
 As if their souls were darted through their eyes,
 Be of no more validity with women?
 Have I for her contemned my fixed fate,

52 *kind* | *kind*] Adriana takes Boutcher's compliment 'friendly, willing to assist' (*OED*, adj.5) in the bawdy sense, 'on intimate terms' (*OED*, adj.6) or 'sexually complaisant,' (Williams), 'kindness' (line 53) being 'sexual favours.'

53 at our hand] with an innuendo suggesting that the favours might have been, or involved, manual pleasures.

59 *as ... together*] the phrase 'put together' was used to mean 'marry' but *OED* records the usage as pre-dating the major period of the Reformation in England (1530) so the ascription of the phrase to puritans seems odd – unless it became a standard form adopted by them to avoid suggesting that marriage was a sacrament, or a form of words preferred by them as closer to that plainness which they aspired to in all things.

60 *shifting ... smocks*] 'changing into our clean undergarments' (see also I ii 46 and note).

62 *dissension*] 'discord, disagreement leading to strife and quarrelling' (*OED*, n.1).

64 *attend*] 'follow closely upon, accompany' (*OED*, v.10.b).

65 *protesting action*] 'gestures and movements mimetic of their solemn promises' (*OED*, *protest*, v.4; *action*, n.6.a); there may be a glance at the idea of 'action' as 'performance or playing' (n.12) as the next two lines suggest a comment on the quality of an actor along the lines of Hamlet's praise of the player who renders Aeneas' account of Priam's death (*Ham.*, II ii 468 ff.).

68 *validity*] 'value, worth' (*OED*, 4).

69 *contemned*] 'despised, scorned' (*OED*, ppl.a.).

69 *fixed*] 'unalterable' (*OED*, ppl.a.2).

- 70 Neglected my fair hopes, and scorned the love
Of beauteous, virtuous and honoured Constantia?
CONSTANTIA
Now works it with my wish – my hopes are full. II
BOUTCHER
And I engaged my worth and ventured life
Or yonder buffoon, Face, to have men scorn
75 And point at my disgrace? First will I leave to live –
There, take my purse. Live thou to better fate.
Better thus die than live unfortunate.

BOUTCH[ER] *hangs himself.*

- CONSTANTIA
Ay me accurst! Help! Help! Murder! Murder!
Cursed be the day and hour that gave me breath!
80 Murder! Murder! If any gentleman
Can hear my complaints, come forth and assist me!

[Enter WILLIAM SMALLSHANKS.]

WILLIAM
What outcries call me from my naked bed?

74. buffoon, Face] buffolne face Q1

- 70 *fair*] ‘promising, likely to succeed’ (*OED*, adj.14.a).
72 *Now ... wish*] ‘now things are turning out as I would desire them to’ (*OED*, *work*, v.23).
72 *full*] ‘complete, perfectly realised’ (*OED*, adj.7.a).
73 *engaged my worth*] ‘committed (and in the process compromised, or risked compromising) my good character or reputation’ (*OED*, *engage*, v.2 and 13.a; *worth* n¹.3).
75 *my disgrace*] i.e., the disgrace of failing in his suit to Taffeta, rather than any disgrace he might have suffered from his involvement with Face.
75 *leave*] ‘cease’ (*OED*, v¹.10.a).
76 *live*] i.e., ‘go on living to a better destiny’ (*OED*, *live*, v¹.9.a; *fate*, n. 4.a).
77s.d. *BOUTCHER ... himself*] how this is achieved on stage is a challenge to the comic ingenuity of the company; first Boutcher has to find something with which to make a noose and then somewhere to attach it, and both have to be clearly inadequate to the task as he is obviously unsuccessful – see 97 below.
78 *Murder! Murder!*] Constantia echoes the cry of Bellimperia in Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy* when her lover Horatio is murdered and she calls out to his father for help: ‘Murder! Murder! Help, Hieronimo, help!’ (II iv 61). What follows when William appears from Taffeta’s house is a mélange of macabre humour, farce, pastiche, meta-theatre and self-referentiality as the actor playing William deliberately badly acts someone playing the role of Hieronimo; if, as Stern suggests (*Making Shakespeare*, p.72) the role of Hieronimo was inextricably linked with the actor Richard Burbage, this episode may have been played in the original Whitefriars performances primarily as a parody of Burbage rather than *The Spanish Tragedy*; this may also have been another bout in the battle between the ‘aery of children, little eyases’ and the adult companies that Rosencrantz describes in *Ham.* II ii 339, or the indoor and outdoor theatres. (See also IV ii 72-6 and note.)
81 *plaints*] ‘lamentations, cries of sorrow’ (*OED*, n.1); *OED* notes that from 1600 the word is ‘chiefly poetic.’
82-3 *What ... am*] cf. Hieronimo’s response to Bellimperia’s cries: ‘What outcries pluck me from my naked bed | ... Who calls Hieronimo? speak, here I am’ (*The Spanish Tragedy*, II v 1-4).

- Who calls Jeronimo? Speak! Here I am.
 CONSTANTIA
 Good sir, leave your struggling and acting,
 85 And help to save the life of a distressed man.
 Oh, help, if you be gentlemen!
 WILLIAM What's here?
 A man hanged up and all the murderers gone,
 And at my door to lay the guilt on me?
 This place was made to pleasure citizens' wives,
 90 And not to hang up honest gentlemen.

Enter TAFFETA.

- TAFFETA
 Where be these lazy knaves? Some raise the house.
 What meant the cry of murder? Where's my love?
 WILLIAM
 Come, Isabella, help me to lament,
 For sighs are stopped, and all my tears are spent.
 95 These clothes I oft have seen. Ay me, my friend!
 Pursue the murderers! Raise all the street!
 CONSTANTIA
 It shall not need – 'a stirs. Give him breath.
 WILLIAM
 Is there yet life? Horatio, my dear boy,

-
- 84 *struggling*] this could refer to abstract qualities such as the passions and hence mean 'struggling with emotions' but Constantia's recognition that William is deliberately hamming it up – 'leave your struggling and acting' – suggests that the word probably describes the contorted actions made by William as he overplays the distraught Hieronimo – and hence might be a further comment on the way Burbage played the role.
- 86-90 *What's gentlemen*] cf. *The Spanish Tragedy*, II v 9-12: 'But stay, what murd'rous spectacle is this? | A man hang'd up, and all the murderers gone! | And in my bower, to lay the guilt on me! | This place was made for pleasure, not for death.' William makes two significant changes to the original here: 'bower' becomes 'door' to take account of the urban location, and the innocent 'for pleasure' is changed to the sexually suggestive 'to pleasure citizens' wives' – the very activity he has just been engaged in (but possibly also with a hint at the anecdote recorded by John Manningham in 1602 concerning Burbage and the citizen's wife who took a fancy to him in the role of Richard III and made an assignation with him under that name, only to pipped at the post by Shakespeare who had heard the assignation being made and played 'William the Conqueror'; see Stern, *Op. Cit.*, p.72).
- 91 *these lazy knaves*] i.e., the servants.
- 91 *Some ... house*] 'somebody wake up the rest of the household' (*OED*, *some*, indef.pron.1.a; *raise*, v.5a).
- 93-4 *Come ... spent*] cf. 'Here, Isabella, help me to lament; | For sighs are stopp'd, and all my tears are spent' (*The Spanish Tragedy*, II v 36-7).
- 95 *These ... seen*] cf. 'Those garments that he wears I oft have seen' (*The Spanish Tragedy*, II v 13); it is at this point that the character William seems to recognise that the hanged man is his friend Boutcher, but even though the character appears to genuinely lament, the actor seems determined to continue the parodic comedy – see 98 and Boutcher's reaction at 101.
- 97 *breath*] either, 'air' or, 'the opportunity to breathe' (*OED*, n.8.a).
- 98-100 *Horatio ... begun*] cf. 'O poor Horatio, what hadst thou misdune, | To leese thy life, ere life was new begun?' (*The Spanish Tragedy*, II v 28-9); 'misdune' is 'done wrong, done amiss' (*OED*, v.2).

- Horatio, Horatio, what hast thou misdone
 100 To lose thy life when life was new begun?
 BOUTCHER
 'Zeart! A man had as good be hanged outright.
 As to endure this clapping. Shame to thy sex,
 Perfidious, perjured woman, where's thy shame?
 How can thy modesty forbear to blush,
 105 And knowest I know thee an adultress?
 Hath not thy vows made thee my lawful wife
 Before the face of heaven? Where is thy shame?
 But why speak I of shame to thee, whose face
 Is steeled with customed sin, whose thoughts want grace
 110 The custom of thy sin so lulls thy sense.
 Women ne'er blush, though ne'er so foul th'offence. 11v
 To break thy vow to me and straight to wed

-
- 101 *as good*] 'as well' (*OED*, *good*, 21.a).
 101 *outright*] 'entirely, altogether' with the sense, 'so that I am properly finished off' (*OED*, *adv.*3).
 102 *clapping*] 'noisy talk, clamour' (*OED*, *vbl.*n.2); possibly a further hit at Burbage's playing of Hieronimo.
 103 *shame*] commonly used to mean 'the privy parts' of both men and women (*OED*, *n.*7), and there could well be a play on that sense here in that Boutcher is punningly asking Taffeta where she has been putting those parts; see note to 107-9 below.
 104 *forbear to*] 'fail to, manage to refrain from' (*OED*, *v.*5).
 106-7 *Hath ... heaven*] Boutcher claims – ironically, given that Captain Face did the same – that he is effectively married to Taffeta by virtue of her promise that she would marry him in the future – a contract through 'verba de futuro' (see III i 54 and III iv 73-6 and notes thereto); however, Boutcher is stretching a point: Taffeta did 'vow, | By sacred Vesta's ever hallowed fire, | To take thee to my bed' (II iii 99-101) if he rid her of 'that fleshly Captain Face' (II iii 105), but she could reasonably retort that promising to go to bed with him is not the same as promising to marry him; however, if he has over-interpreted her 'vow,' she has also gone back on her word insofar as she has neither married nor gone to bed with him; that said, the modern reader might see here the unacceptable face of masculine sexual disappointment glaring angrily through the text yet again.
 107 *Before ... heaven*] there were no witnesses to Taffeta's vow so Boutcher appeals, as contemporary marriage law would have allowed him to appeal, to the idea that God witnessed it, as he witnesses everything.
 107-9 *Where ... sin*] the repetition of the phrase from 103 would reinforce the pun, whilst 108 develops it further – 'why do I even mention such crude matters as the genitals to one whose face is inured to blushing by her being so used to employing those parts in sinful behaviour.'
 109 *customed*] 'customary, normal' (*OED*, *ppl.*a.1), but also possibly suggesting that she is a prostitute as the word also could mean 'frequented by customers' (*OED*, *ppl.*a.3).
 109 *want*] 'lack' (*OED*, *v.*2.a).
 109 *grace*] 'seemliness' (*OED*, *n.*1.b), shading into 'decency,' and with perhaps also a glance at the theological sense, 'the influence of God's mercy to inspire virtue' (*OED*, *n.*11) or, more generally, just 'virtue' (*OED*, *n.*13.b).
 110 *custom*] 'habitual practice' (*OED*, *n.*1.a), with, again, perhaps a glance at the idea of 'continual business derived from clients' (*OED*, *n.*5).
 110 *lulls*] 'deludes into a sense of false security, renders quiescent' (*OED*, *v.*¹.2.b).
 110 *sense*] a complex word which could mean 'the faculties of the mind or soul' (*OED*, *n.*7.a) or simply 'reason' (*OED*, *n.*10.b) but often, as here, in the context of moral conduct; 'recognition of what is virtuous' might best define this usage (covered by 15.b, 16.a and 17).
 111 *though ... th'offence*] 'however dreadful the offence might be.'

- A doting stinkard ...
 WILLIAM But hold your tongue,
 Or, by this light, I'll truss you up again!
 115 'Zeart! Rail on my wife! Am I a stinkard,
 Or do I dote? Speak such another word
 And up you truss again! Am I a stinkard?
 BOUTCHER
 The knight your father is.
 WILLIAM Why, who denies it?
 He supplants thee and I supplanted him.
 120 Come, come, you shall be friends. Come, forgive her,
 For, by this light, there is no remedy,
 Unless you will betake you to my leavings.
 CONSTANTIA
 Rather than so I'll help you to a wife,
 Rich, well-born, and by some accounted fair,
 125 And for the worth of her virginity
 I dare presume to pawn my honesty.
 What say you to Constantia Somerfield?
 WILLIAM
 Do'st know where she is, boy?
 CONSTANTIA I do. Nay, more –
 If he but swear to embrace her constant love
 130 I'll fetch her to this place.
 WILLIAM 'A shall do it, boy
 'A shall do it. Go fetch her, boy.

-
- 113 *doting*] (a) 'infatuated, foolishly loving' (*OED*, ppl.a.2); (b) 'weak-minded, imbecile' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).
 113 *but*] operating as an emphatic - 'just!' (*OED*, B.adv.2, elliptic development of conj.6.b - ?).
 114 *truss*] 'hang' (*OED*, v.7).
 115 *rail on*] 'insult, abuse' (*OED*, v⁴.1.b).
 122 *betake you to*] 'have recourse to, resort to' (*OED*, v.4).
 122 *leavings*] 'left-overs, remains of a meal' (*OED*, vbl.n.2.b); cf. Middleton, *The Roaring Girl*, 6.251-3: 'Have you so beggarly an appetite ... | To dine upon my scraps, my leavings?' As Corbin and Sedge point out, the reference is to Frances, not Taffeta at some future date when William has tired of her.
 123 *so*] 'that' (*OED*, 4.a).
 123 *help you to*] 'assist you in finding, provide you with' (*OED*, v.7) but possibly, following 'leavings,' with a play on the sense, 'serve with food at a meal' (*OED*, v.8.a).
 125-6 *for ... honesty*] there are two possible readings of these lines: (a) the 'boy' says he would be willing to pledge his honesty that Constantia Somerfield is a virgin; (b) he says that were he to pawn his honesty it would be valued at the same worth as her virginity; the 'boy' can, of course, claim that 'his' honesty – in the sense of 'honourable character' (*OED*, n.3.a) – is of equal value to Constantia's virginity because, speaking for herself, her honesty – in the sense of 'chastity' (*OED*, n.3.b) – is that virginity; this mercantile image that sees virginity as a high-value tradeable commodity is a central one in the play. The word 'worth' possibly has some additional meaning such as 'authenticity' which might derive from the connotations of genuineness – 'true worth' – that have accrued around that word.
 129 *embrace*] 'accept eagerly' (*OED*, v².2.d), possibly with a glance at *OED*'s v⁴, 'fasten, buckle to himself', and possibly also with a hint of the sexual meaning of the word – a 'coital euphemism' as Williams puts it (entry for *embrace*; see also *OED*, v².1.b).
 129 *constant*] 'faithful, steadfast' (*OED*, adj.2), and with an obvious pun on her name.

[Exit CONSTANTIA.]

Enter SIR OLIVER and FIDDLERS.

'Foot! My father!

Stand to't now, old wench – stand to't now.

SIR OLIVER

Now, fresh and youthful as the month of May,

I'll bid my bride good-morrow. Musicians, on,

135 Lightly, lightly, and by my knighthood's spur

This year you shall have my protection

And yet not buy your livery coats yourselves.

Good-morrow, bride! Fresh, fresh as the month of May

I come to kiss thee on thy wedding day.

WILLIAM

140 Saving your tale, sir, I'll show you how:

"April showers spring May flowers ..."

132. to't] too't Q1. 138. Good-morrow] God morrow Q1. 141. spring] Q1; bring Q3 and all subsequent editors except Jones.

- 132 *stand to't*] (a) as at IV iii 12, 'put up a good fight' (*OED*, v.76.c); (b) possibly, 'prepare for action' (*OED*, v.101.c with a bawdy innuendo; as the phrase is addressed to a woman 'stand' could refer to the coital position and 'to't' to the activity (see IV i 38-9 and note). (Williams.)
- 132 *old wench*] whilst 'wench' was frequently used as an endearing form of address to a sweetheart, the addition of 'old' seems somewhat ungallant on William's part, though it, too, could be a familiar term, as in the modern 'old girl' (*OED*, adj.8.c).
- 133 *fresh ... May*] proverbial: 'as fresh as (the month of) May' (Dent, M763); the comparison is a long-standing literary trope – cf. Chaucer's description of the Squire in *The Prologue*: 'He was as fresh as is the month of May' (92); Sir Oliver's evocation of the trope is, however, not without its dangers, as he also inevitably brings to mind the equally proverbial coupling of January and May – 'to match May with January' (Dent, M768) – which refers to the (usually disastrous) marriage of young women to old men (again, see Chaucer, *The Merchant's Tale*).
- 135 *knighthood's spur*] the wearing of spurs (in particular gilded spurs) was a sign of knighthood, so they were worn to impress others, and especially, if Marston is to be believed, city women whom a knight wished to seduce: 'as your knight courts your city widow with jingling of his gilt spurs' (*The Malcontent*, I viii 26-7); 'spur' could also mean 'penis' (Williams), so by invoking this sartorial index of his social status Sir Oliver is also invoking his sexual intentions for the coming day.
- 136 *protection*] 'patronage' (*OED*, 1.a), to protect them from being arrested as vagabonds or masterless men.
- 137 *And ... yourselves*] i.e., 'at no expense to yourselves' as he will provide the coats designed to indicate that they are of his household; cf. Sharpham, *Cupid's Whirligig*, E4v, 'thou shalt weare my liuery too, ile give it thee, thou shalt not buy't thyself.'
- 140 *saving your tale*] 'no offence to your esteem' (*OED*, *saving*, prep.2; *tale*, n.9 – though this sense obsolete well before 1600s), or, 'no offence to your telling of your story' (*OED*, *saving*, prep.2; *tale*, n.1.a), or, 'no offence to what you have just said' (as glossed by Corbin and Sedge), or even, 'to save you the trouble of telling your story;' there is presumably a pun on 'tail = pudendum' (*OED*, n.¹.5.c, and Williams) in which sense the secondary meaning is something like, 'excepting, putting aside, or no offence to your private parts,' the parts in question being either Sir Oliver's or Taffeta's (in the sense that Sir Oliver would regard them as 'his' by virtue of marrying her). Whatever the meaning of this obscure phrase, William's point is that he will show his father how to greet 'his bride' under the new circumstances.
- 141 *"April ... flowers"*] 'spring' here could mean 'cause to spring up' or, perhaps, 'sprinkle (with rain),' or both. William is mocking his father's comparison of himself to May, pointing out that

So merrily sings the cuckoo.
The truth is, I have laid my knife aboard –
The widow, sir, is wedded.

SIR OLIVER Ha?

WILLIAM Bedded.

SIR OLIVER Ha!

WILLIAM

Why my good father, what should you do with
Would you be crested? Will you needs thrust
In one of Vulcan's helmets? Will you perforce
Wear a city cap and a court feather?

SIR OLIVER

Villain! Slave! Thou ha'st wronged my wife.

147. One] on Q1. 149. Villain! Slave!] Villaine, slave, Q1.

the younger April has, as it were, rained on the older May's parade. William, taking over the role of the musicians, probably sings the line, which is most likely remembered from Thomas Tusser's *A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry*, chap. XXXIX: 'Sweet April showers | Do spring May flowers.' There is no need for Corbin and Sedge's emendation, following Q3 and subsequent editors, of 'spring' to 'bring.'

- 142 *So ... cuckoo*] whether May will continue to sing merrily is another matter as the cuckoo, of course, reminds us of the cuckold, this possibly being an allusion to Spring's lines from the song at the end of *LLL*: 'The cuckoo then on every tree | Mocks married men; for thus sings he, | "Cuckoo; | Cuckoo, cuckoo"' (V ii 888-901). 'So' could mean either 'thus' (i.e., 'that is how the cuckoo sings') or 'therefore' (i.e., 'for that reason the cuckoo sings').
- 143 *laid .. aboard*] 'taken sexual possession' – 'knife' being, as at IV iv 121, 'penis' and the nautical metaphor of taking a ship as at I ii 107-8, though there Constantia's intention is less focused on actual coition. Cf. *Rom.*, II iv 201-2: 'there is a nobleman in town, one Paris, that would fain lay knife aboard.'
- 146 *crested*] 'adorned with a crest' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.a) as a knight's helmet or armorial bearings might be with a plume, but also as the cuckold's head would be with horns; Williams, in his entry for *crest*, cites '*The Family of Love* (c. 1602) IV. iv. 15 [1484-5 in Shepherd] ... "Europa's sea-form [i.e., the horned bull] be his perpetual crest."'
- 146 *head*] 'the area of sensitivity or vulnerability in the cuckold' (Williams, entry for *head*) but also the 'glans or head' of the penis (Williams); cf. *The Family of Love*, where a character observes, 'little knows a man what elements 'a is to pass, when 'a puts his head under a woman's girdle' (1520-1, and 46 lines after the line quoted in the previous note). See also next note.
- 147 *Vulcan's helmets*] Vulcan, the smith of the gods in Roman mythology, was particularly noted for (a) making the armour (which would have included a helmet) of Achilles and (b) being married to Venus and cuckolded by Mars; here the helmet becomes metaphorically the vagina of the cuckold's wife into which the 'head/penis' is thrust.
- 148 *city cap*] possibly the 'city night-cap,' this being the cap that the cuckolded citizen has to wear to hide the horns he has grown as a result of his wife's 'night-work,' (see Williams, entry for *cap*), but given 'wear' (which could mean 'have intercourse with') 'cap' here may mean 'woman' (i.e., something 'worn' by the man – see Williams, *cap*.2) with, again, an innuendo about the sexual voracity of citizens' wives.
- 148 *court feather*] again, the feather represents the cuckold's horn (cf. the idea of the heraldic plume in 'crested,' 146 above); feathers may have been associated with the court (see Coppélia Kahn's note to 3.0.4 of Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*) and hence the epithet 'court' here, but the correlation of 'city cap' and 'court feather' may be a hint at the inappropriateness of Sir Oliver, as a knight and courtier, allying himself with a citizen's widow; though William is, of course, doing exactly that: he is a younger brother, and must perforce make his own way in a world where the rules of primogeniture put such children at a disadvantage when it came to inheriting their father's social status.
- 149 *Villain! Slave!*] Sir Oliver repeats this imprecation three times, and each time it is punctuated

- WILLIAM Not so. I2
 150 Speak, my good wench – have I not done thee right?
 TAFFETA
 I find no fault, and I protest, Sir Oliver,
 I'd not have lost the last two hours' sleep
 I had by him for all the wealth you have.
 SIR OLIVER
 Villain! Slave! I'll hang thee by the statute –
 155 Thou hast two wives.
 WILLIAM Be not so furious, sir.
 I have but this. The other was my whore,
 Which now is married to an honest lawyer.
 SIR OLIVER
 Thou villain slave, thou ha'st abused thy father.
 BOUTCHER
 Your son, i'faith, your very son, i'faith!
 160 The villain boy has one trick of his sire:
 Has firked away the wench – has pierced the hogshead
 And knows by this the vintage.
 SIR OLIVER I am undone.
 BOUTCHER
 You could not love the widow, but her wealth.
 SIR OLIVER
 The devil take my soul, but I did love her.
 TAFFETA
 165 That oath doth show you are a northern knight,
 And of all men alive I'll never trust
 A northern man in love.

154. Villain! Slave!] Villaine slave, Q1. 158. villain slave,] villaine slave Q1.

differently in Q1; this edition has treated the first two occurrences as two nouns, as do Corbin and Sedge, but the third as an adjective plus noun. See note to 158 below.

150 *done thee right*] playing upon Sir Oliver's 'wrong'd' – 'subjected her to harm or prejudice' (*OED*, 1) – William insists he has treated Taffeta 'with justice and fairness' (*OED*, *right*, n¹.4.a).

154-5 *I'll ... wives*] the statute referred to is the Bigamy Act of 1603 (1 Jac.1. c.11) which moved jurisdiction over this offence from the ecclesiastical courts to the common law courts and made bigamy a felony.

158 *villain slave*] here the punctuation of Q1 is preferred as 'villain' operates better as an adjective – i.e., 'villainous slave' – as it does in the phrase 'villain boy' in line 160.

158 *abused*] possibly 'deceived' (*OED*, ppl.a.3) rather than 'wronged' (*OED*, ppl.a.2).

159-61 *Your ... wench*] Boutcher seems to be ribbing Sir Oliver by quoting back at him what he said at II i 9-14 (q.v. and notes thereto), but Boutcher was not present at that point; see also next note.

161-2 *has ... vintage*] these words also seem to be a sarcastic echo of Sir Oliver's lines to Tutchim at III i 18-9 (q.v. and notes thereto), but, again, Boutcher was not present in that scene. Dent gives 'to pierce a hogshead' as a proverb (H504.1) but illustrates it with only this line.

165 *a northern knight*] 'northern' could mean 'Scottish' (as in Sharpham, *The Fleeer*, 3.1.126-7: 'Send her an oaten cake, 'tis a good northern token') and hence here perhaps a reference to the Scottish retainers brought down from Scotland by James – not regarded by the English as cultivated gentlemen; alternatively it could refer to Hotspur, son of the Earl of Northumberland in *IH4* (a play which Barry clearly knew well as is evidenced by the close modelling of Captain Face on Pistol), and the stage exemplar of hot-headed chivalry, who swears frequently and declares that one should swear 'a good mouth-filling oath' (III i 254).

- SIR OLIVER And why – and why, slut?
TAFFETA
Because the first word he speaks is, “the devil
Take his soul!” And who will give him trust
170 That once has given his soul unto the devil?
WILLIAM
She says most true, father. The soul once gone,
The best part of a man is gone.
TAFFETA And i’ faith
If the best part of a man be once gone,
The rest of the body is not worth a rush
175 Though it be ne’er so handsome.
- Enter LADY SOMERFIELD, THROAT and BEARD bound,
[OFFICERS] and JUSTICE TUTCHIM.*
- LADY SOMERFIELD
Bring them away.
WILLIAM How now?
My lawyer pinioned? I begin to stink
Already.
LADY SOMERFIELD Cheater! My daughter!
WILLIAM. She’s mad!
THROAT
My wife, sir, my wife!
WILLIAM They’re mad, stark mad!
180 I am sorry, sir, you have lost those happy wits
By which you lived so well. The air grows cold,
Therefore I’ll take my leave.
LADY SOMERFIELD Stay him, officers.
Sir, ’tis not your tricks of wit can carry it.
Officers, attach him, and this gentleman,
185 For stealing away my heir.

178. Cheater! My daughter!] Cheater my daughter. Q1.

173 *best ... man*] Taffeta slides from considering spiritual parts to sexual parts.

177-8 *I ... Already*] i.e., ‘things are not looking good for me and I’ve only just got things sorted out.’

178 *Cheater! My daughter!*] this is clearly addressed to William as Tutchim told her ‘Will Smallshanks has your daughter’ (IV v 23) the phrasing of which suggests that Lady Somerfield knows him, and hence her recognising him here; if the Somerfield and Smallshanks families do know each other, though, it is surprising that in II i Sir Oliver did not spot that when the girl presented to him by William removed her mask it was not Constantia.

180 *happy*] ‘felicitous, capable’ (*OED*, adj.5.a).

183 *tricks of wit*] ‘clever ruses, ingenious and devious ploys’ (*OED*, *trick*, n.1.a; *wit*, n.5.a).

183 *carry it*] see III i 45 and note.

184 *this gentleman*] presumably, as Throat and Beard are already bound and under arrest, this refers to Boutcher, but he makes no remonstrance (as one might expect) and no further obvious reference is made to his being in the hands of the officers, unless his ‘Hear me but speak’ at 207 below is indicative of his impatience at being physically restrained.

185 *stealing*] see note to 220 below.

WILLIAM You do me wrong.
'Zeart! I never saw your heir.
THROAT That's a lie
You stole her, and by chance I married her.
WILLIAM
God give you joy, sir. I2v
THROAT Ask the butler else.
Therefore, widow, release me, for by no law,
Statute, or book case of *vicesimo*
190 *Edwardi Secundi*, nor by the statute
Of tricessimo Henrici Sexti,
Nor by any book case of *decimo*
Of the late queen am I accessary,
195 Part or party confederate, abetter,
Helper, seconder, persuader, forwarder,
Principal or maintainer of this late theft,
But by law, I forward and she willing,
Clapped up the match, and by a good statute
200 *Of decimo tertio Ricardi Quarti*
She is my leeful, lawful, and my true
Married wife, *teste* Lieutenant Beard.
WILLIAM
Who lives would think that you could prate so fast

200. *Ricardi*] *Richardi* Q1.

187 *by chance*] 'by the way things fell out (*OED*, n.1.a) rather than 'by accident.' Throat also insists on the distinction between William's part in what happened and his – William 'stole her' (i.e., committed a felony) and Throat 'married her' (i.e., did something lawful).

190-1 *vicessimo ... Secundi* 'the twentieth (year) of Edward II' (Latin).

192 *tricesimo ... Sexti* 'the thirtieth (year) of Henry VI' (Latin).

193 *decimo*] 'the tenth (year)' (Latin).

194 *the late queen*] i.e., Elizabeth I.

195 *Part or party confederate*] ‘partly or jointly allied with another for an unlawful purpose’ (*OED*, *part*, B.adj.b; *confederate*, pa.ppl.) or perhaps ‘partial or joint accomplice’ (*confederate*, B.n.2). In this speech, which reiterates the point that he has acted lawfully and not in cahoots with William, Throat imitates and Barry parodies the pleonastic discourse of legal documents.

195 *abetter*] 'one who supports or instigates an offence' (*OED*).

196 *seconder*] 'one who supports the designs of another' (*OED*, 3.a).

197 *Principal*] in law, 'the person responsible for a crime' (*OED*, B.n.2.b).

197 *maintainer*] ‘one who aids another in a crime’ (*OED*, n.3.b); there was also another, more specifically legal sense – ‘one who unlawfully supports a suit in which he or she is not concerned’ (*OED*, n.4) – and it may be that Throat intends to use a legal term but applies it wrongly.

198 *forward*] 'ready, eager,' (*OED*, adj.6.a).

199 *Clapped up*] see VI I 33 and note.

200 *decimo ... Quarti*] 'the thirteenth (year) of Richard IV' (Latin); either Throat's Latin or his history has let him down again as there has never been a Richard IV of England or Great Britain.

201 *leeful*] 'lawful' (*OED*, a.a).

202 *teste*] 'witness' (Latin).

203 *prate* 'talk' – usually in an idle or irrelevant way (*OED*, n).

- 205 Your hands being bound behind you. 'Foot! 'A talks
 With as much ease as if 'a were in's shirt.
 SIR OLIVER
 I am witness thou had'st the heir.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM So am I.
 THROAT
 And so is my man, Dash.
 BOUTCHER Hear me but speak.
 Sit you as judges. Undo the lawyer's hands
 That 'a may freely act, and I'll be bound
 210 That William Smallshanks shall put your Throat to silence
 And overthrow him at his own weapon.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 Agreed. Take each his place, and hear the case
 Argued betwixt them two.
 OMNES Agreed! Agreed!
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 Now, Throat, or never, stretch yourself.
 THROAT Fear not.
 WILLIAM
 215 Here stand I for my client, this gentleman.

-
- 204 *Your ... you*] this may be a comment on Throat's personal habit of gesticulating when talking, but Timon's 'No, not a word, how can I grace my talk, | Wanting a hand to give['t] that accord?' (*Tim.*, V ii 17-8) suggests that an expressive use of the hands to support what was spoken might have been a general tendency in oratory during this period.
 205 *as ... shirt*] i.e., as though at ease in his own house where he can lounge about thus informally attired.
 206 *So am I*] this is not true: Tutchim was not present in II i when William introduced Sir Oliver to 'Constantia;' he heard about the elopement later and at second hand from Sir Oliver in III i. Is Barry slipping again, as he appears to slip at 159-62 above when Boutcher repeats words he could not have heard, or is this another indication of Tutchim's willingness to abuse, when it suits him, the integrity of the law he is supposed to maintain as a Justice of the Peace?
 209 *be bound*] 'make myself responsible for the fact that, will act as a surety' (*OED*, *bind*, v.17.d) with a pun on the sense that Throat is 'bound' – i.e., 'tied up' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.a).
 210 *put ... silence*] 'reduce to silence' (*OED*, *put*, v¹.25.a); 'Throat' here is both the person and the vocal organ.
 211 *at ... weapon*] i.e., 'using the weapon in which he is expert' – the 'weapon' being, in this case, legal argument, but one inevitably suspects an innuendo on 'weapon = penis,' in which case Boutcher would be suggesting that William will defeat Throat in this machismo contest over men's sexual possession of women. 'To beat one at his own weapon' was proverbial (Dent, W204). See Introduction, The Play, Sex, money, power, wit and machismo.
 214 *stretch yourself*] 'exert yourself to the utmost' (*OED*, v.20.a); (b) 'open (your throat) wide' (*OED*, v.21.b) – i.e., 'talk well;' there is a visual suggestion of stretching out the neck, perhaps in order to reach something, which may also suggest the sense 'hang' (*OED*, v.18.b), though it would be ironic on Tutchim's part – 'now go hang yourself!' If the innuendo on 'weapon' (211) is still hanging in the air, there may also be a suggestion that Throat needs to get a decent erection to engage effectively in his phallic duel with William.
 215s.p. *WILLIAM*] Jones suggests amending to give the speech to Boutcher but William speaks 'for my client' – i.e., himself – at 227 below, so presumably he is jokingly dividing himself into the two roles of lawyer and client here.

- THROAT
 I for the widow.
 WILLIAM Begin.
 THROAT Right worshipful,
 I say that William Smallshanks, madman,
 Is, by a statute made in *octavo*
 Of Richard *Couer-de-Lion*, guilty to the law
 220 Of felony for stealing this lady's heir.
 That 'a stole her, the proof is most pregnant:
 He brought her to my house, confessed himself
 'A made great means to steal her. I liked her
 And, finding him a novice, truth to tell,
 225 Married her myself, and, as I said,
 By a statute *Ricardi Quarti*,

219. *Couer-de-Lion*] Cordelion Q1. 224. And, finding him a novice,] (And finding him a novice) Q1.
 226 *Ricardi*] *Richard* Q1.

- 216 *the widow*] i.e., Lady Somerfield, not Taffeta; presumably Throat claims to be representing her rather than himself in order to further validate his claim to 'Constantia,' Lady Somerfield being the parent and hence the person with legal authority to give her daughter in marriage.
 218 *octavo*] i.e., 'the eighth year' (Latin); no such statute as Throat describes was passed in any year of Richard I's reign, but see next note.
 219-20 *guilty ... felony*] this is an unusual use of the preposition 'to' and it is not obvious whether 'guilty' is connected only to 'the law' or whether it relates to the whole phrase 'the law of felony' – i.e., the law relating to felony (the more serious class of crimes); in either case, though, the sense remains essentially the same: William is culpably responsible in the eyes of the law for committing a felony.
 220 *stealing ... heir*] the statute 3 Hen.7. c.2 (1487), Abduction of Women, enacted that the taking of women 'being heirs apparent unto their ancestors ... by misdoers contrary to their will, and after married to such misdoers ... or defiled ... be felony' (quoted in E. H. East, *A Treatise of the Pleas of the Crown*, Vol. I, p.452); a marginal note (though obviously much later) in G. Crabbe's *A History of English Law*, p.432, describes this statute as 'Stealing women.' A later statute of Elizabeth I (39 Eliz.1. c.9) made the offence capital, and in Armin's *The History of the Two Maids of More-clack*, IIv, Sir William Vergir insists that he has a precedent for demanding the death of Toures whom he has accused of stealing his daughter: 'Yes, remember *Donningtons* man, *Grimes*, | Who for an heire so stolne and married, | Was hanged.' 'Stealing' is therefore presumably being used here in the strict legal sense of the term (as also when Tutchim at IV iv 103-4 accuses Throat of a felony in that he 'stole' Lady Somerfield's daughter) thereby reinforcing the persistent representation throughout *Ram Alley* of women as a form of male property – something that can be owned and therefore stolen. However, as has already been observed in these notes, the word 'steal' is employed ambiguously throughout the play to mean, according to the motives of the speaker, 'leave a place stealthily,' 'elope,' or, as here, 'take dishonestly;' we might also note that Williams suggests that 'steal' 'is allusive of covert sex;' the full range of those meanings seems to be in play throughout this part of the final scene, from the point at which Lady Somerfield calls on the officers to arrest William and Throat 'For stealing away my heir' (185). A similar semantic range is played on in Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* where Yellowhammer's declaration, 'You'll steal away some man's daughter' (1.2.207) and Tim's cry, 'Thieves, thieves! My sister's stol'n! Some thief hath got her,' both employ the sense of a criminal act of theft, whilst Touchwood Junior's, 'She'll steal hither' employs the more romantic sense of escaping from a restrictive parent in order to marry a lover.
 221 *pregnant*] 'compelling, clear, obvious' (*OED*, adj.¹), with a glance at the meaning 'with child' (*OED*, adj.².1.a).
 223 *made great means*] 'took more than ordinary efforts' (*OED*, *great*, adj.11.a; *means*, n².10.b).
 226 *Ricardi Quarti*] 'Richard IV' [Latin]; no such king existed, of course.

- She is my lawful wife.
 WILLIAM For my client,
 I say the wench brought unto your house
 Was not the daughter to rich Somerfield. I3
 SIR OLIVER
 230 What proof of that?
 WILLIAM This gentleman.
 THROAT Tut, tut –
 He is a party in the cause. But, sir,
 If 'twere not the daughter to this good widow,
 Who was it? Answer that.
 WILLIAM An arrant whore,
 Which you have married, and she is run
 235 Away with all your jewels. This is true –
 And this Lieutenant Beard can testify –
 'Twas the wench I kept in Hosier Lane.
 BEARD
 What, was it she?
 WILLIAM The very same.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 Speak, sirrah Beard, if all he says be true.
 BEARD
 240 She said she was a punk, a rampant whore,
 Which in her time had been the cause of parting
 Some fourteen bawds. He kept her in the suburbs,
 Yet I do think this wench was not the same.
 BOUTCHER
 The case is clear with me.
 OMNES Oh strange!

230 *this gentleman*] it is possible that William points to himself here, dividing himself into yet a third person, a witness in the case; that would explain Throat's objection and make another joke at the lawyer's expense of his apparent po-faced acceptance of William's offer of himself as a witness. It may be, however, that William points to Boutcher.

234-5 *she ... jewels*] it is reasonable to assume that when Frances asks Throat to 'furnish me with jewels' at III v 11, this follows plans she had made with William (and at III v 168 Throat instructs Beard and Dash to 'go borrow jewels' to satisfy that request); William presumably now assumes that all has gone to plan and that Frances has made off with the loot; there is also, of course, an innuendo on 'jewels' as at V i 27 (q.v. and note to 26-7) suggesting that Frances has deprived Throat of his masculinity by thus duping him.

237 *Hosier Lane*] the location of I i.

244 *clear*] 'evident, of obvious solution' (*OED*, adj.9.b – though the earliest example given is from 1664; but cf. I iii 54 and note above).

240 *rampant*] see II i 31 and note.

241 *parting*] 'separating' (*OED*, vbl.n.2.a.(a)) but from whom or what is unclear; if from herself it could suggest that she was extremely quarrelsome (and to reinforce that idea Beard exaggerates the number of bawds from whom she had parted) but grammatically that would be odd. It is just possible that it means 'causing to die, parting this life' (*OED*, vbl.n.4) in that she had worn the bawds out with her 'rampant' behaviour.

243 *Yet ... same*] Beard persists in his view that Frances is not the person William represented her to be, though the uncertainty in the way he expresses himself here suggests that he is no longer sure that she is Constantia pretending to be Frances pretending to be Constantia (see IV iii 28 and note).

- THROAT
 245 This is not true. How lived you in the suburbs
 And 'scaped so many searches?
 WILLIAM I answer,
 That most constables in out-parishes
 Are bawds themselves, by which we 'scaped the searches.
 SIR OLIVER
 This is most strange.
 LADY SOMERFIELD What's become of this woman?
 BEARD
 250 That know not I. As I was squiring her
 Along the street, Master Smallshanks set upon me,
 Beat me down, and took away the maid
 Which I suppose was daughter to the widow.
 WILLIAM
 'A lies! Let me be hanged if 'a lie not!
 SIR OLIVER
 255 What confusion is this!

[Enter CONSTABLE and OFFICERS with THOMAS
 SMALLSHANKS and FRANCES masked.]

- CONSTABLE Bring them forward.
 God preserve your worship. And it like you, madam,
 We were commanded by our deputy
 That if we took a woman in the watch
 To bring her straight to you, and hearing there
 260 You were come hither, hither we brought them.

-
- 246 *searches*] a parish constable 'had the right to enter any house where he suspected that adultery or fornication was being committed, and to carry the offenders before a Justice without first having obtained a warrant' (Le Hardy, W., *County of Middlesex: Calendar to the sessions records: new series, volume 1: 1612-14*, Preface); such searches could be initiated by the constables themselves, by the Justices or by private citizens; see William Lambarde, *The Duties of Constables* (1612), p.12-18: 'any of these Officers aforesaid may take (or arrest) suspected persons, which ... do haunt any house, where is suspition of bawdrie: and they may carry them before a Iustice of the Peace ... And I do like wel of their opinion, which do hold, that if information be given to any such officer, that a man and a woman be in adulterie, or fornication together, then the officer may take company with him, and if that he find them so, hee may carry them to prison.' In 1613, one Susan Browne, a spinster of Holborn, was 'taken in bed with a Scotsman in a common bawdy house ... kept by Christopher Thwaytes, described as a "gentleman"' (Le Hardy, *Op. Cit.*).
- 247 *out-parishes*] the parishes lying outside the city walls and hence, here, in the suburbs.
- 250 *squiring*] 'escorting' (*OED*, vbl.n.).
- 251 *Master ... me*] Beard says at the time of the abduction that he believes it to be William who has attacked him – see IV iii 31-2.
- 259-60 *hearing ... them*] 'there' is Lady Somerfield's house in St John's Street, but that Lady Somerfield and her party were outside Taffeta's house would not be known by her servants in St John's Street as she had left there intending to go to somewhere in Fleet Street – unless, of course, Taffeta's house *is* in Fleet Street; the Constable's happening upon her now is, like her discovery of William, pure serendipity but, being the stock comic constable of the 17th century stage, he does not actually realise his lucky error.

- SIR OLIVER
The one is my son. I do acknowledge him.
What woman's that?
THOMAS The widow's daughter, sir.
WILLIAM
Blood! Is he gulled, too?
THOMAS My brother stole her first.
Throat cozened him, and I had cozened Throat
265 Had not the constable took us in the watch.
She is the widow's daughter. Had I had luck!
THROAT
And my espoused wife.
LADY SOMERFIELD Unmask her face.
My daughter! I defy her!
WILLIAM Your worship's wife! I3v
THROAT
I am gulled and abused, and by a statute
270 Of *tricessimo* of the late queen
I will star-chamber you all for cozenage,
And be by law divorced.
WILLIAM Sir, 'twill not hold.
She's your leeful, lawful, and true wedded wife,
Teste Lieutenant Beard.
BEARD Was't you that brake my head?
WILLIAM
275 But why should'st think much to die a cuckold,
Being born a knave? As good lawyers as you
Scorn not horns.
THROAT I am gulled. Ay me accursed!

266. She is the widow's daughter. Had I had luck!] She is the widow's daughter, had I had luck,

- 263 *is ... too*] William should not be surprised at this as he deliberately did not tell his brother the details of the plot to fool Throat at the very beginning – see the opening and closing lines of II i.
266 *She ... luck*] as punctuated in Q1 the sentence makes little sense – though perhaps one is not necessarily expected to make sense of what Thomas says; at this point Thomas still thinks the woman is 'the widow's daughter' and if that were the case she would still be the widow's daughter whatever bad luck he had had in trying to obtain her; however, if one treats Q1's comma as a fullstop (which is often how they were used, and indeed how one is used at the end of the line) in the first sentence he dejectedly restates his belief that the woman is Constantia Somerfield, and the second means something like, 'would I had had the luck (sc. to obtain her)' (*OED*, *luck*, n.2.a) – another example in the play of the expression of severe male sexual disappointment.
268 *defy*] 'repudiate, reject' (*OED*, v¹.1.b or 5). (Though 1.b is apparently obs. by 1400 I can't actually see any difference between it and 5).
269-72 *a statute ... divorced*] there were no statutes of Elizabeth I that dealt with either cozenage or divorce.
270 *tricessimo*] 'of the thirtieth (year)' (Latin).
273-4 *She ... Beard*.] William quotes the lawyer's words (201-2 above) back at him.
274 *brake*] 'broke' (old form of the past tense).
275 *think much*] 'a great matter' – in modern English, 'a big deal' (*OED*, *much*, quasi.n.2.g).
276-7 *As ... horns*] cf. *The Family of Love* (1028-9): 'What wise men bear is not for me to scorn; | 'Tis a[n] honourable thing to wear the horn.'

- Why should the harmless man be vexed with horns,
When women most deserve them?
WILLIAM I'll show you, sir:
280 The husband is the wife's head, and, I pray,
Where should the horns stand but upon the head.
Why, wert not thou begot (thou foolish knave)
By a poor summoner on a sergeant's widow?
Wert not thou a puritan, and put in trust
285 To gather relief for the distressed Geneva,
And did'st not thou leave thy poor brethren
And run away with all the money? Speak –
Was not that thy first rising? Go,
You're well coupled, by Jove you are. She is
290 But a younger sister newly come to town.
-
- 278 *harmless*] 'free from guilt' (*OED*, adj.3), or, 'inoffensive, not causing harm' (*OED*, adj.4); cf. Prologue, 25.
279 *When ... them*] i.e., 'it is women, not men, who should suffer and put up with the consequences of infidelity.' This is the crucial moment in the main plot of the play: Throat realises (within the parameters of the patriarchal mindset that determine the characters of this play) that because a 'proper' matrimonial relationship cannot obtain in a marriage with a prostitute he has been effectively emasculated and hence defeated ('gulled') by William in this phallic combat of wit. Throat could also be playing here on the two distinct meanings of the word 'horn': i.e., the 'horns' that the woman deserves are not those of the cuckold (which she bestows on her husband) but those of the sexually excited male (which the husband should bestow upon her).
280 *husband ... head*] playing on the obvious senses of 'head' as (a) part of the body and (b) 'ruler, chief' (*OED*, n¹.25); it was a commonplace of pre-modern attitudes to marriage that the husband ruled the wife; see *Ephesians*, 5.23: 'For the husbände is the head of the wyfe, euen as Christe is the head of the Churche' (*Bishops' Bible*), and, more generally, *I Corinthians*, 11.3: 'the man is the womans head' (*Bishops' Bible*); but there may also be a complex shifting of meanings around 'head' and 'horn' in which the former means 'prepuce' (Williams and Partridge.2) and hence by synecdoche the husband as the sexual controller of the wife, and the latter, again synecdochically, both (a) the erect, sexually capable male and (b) the sexually deflated, detumescent male cuckold who has lost that control; Sharpham makes a similar play on the word in *Cupid's Whirligig*, 12v: 'you goe dreaming hanging downe your head, that tis no maruell your wife makes you a Cuckold: for the husband being the wiues head, why when the head goes downe thus, the heeles must needes mount up.' For a similar play on 'head' cf. Moll in Middleton's *The Roaring Girl*, 4.43-6: 'I have the head now of myself, and am man enough for a woman; marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden loses one head, and has a worse i'th'place.'
282-3 *wert ... widow*] Tutchim has already told us that Throat is 'a summoner's son' (IV v 80), so this gives us the other half of the lawyer's immediate genealogy.
284 *a puritan*] given Throat's greed, lechery and duplicity, one suspects, in this additional detail about his past, another hit at the hypocrisy of puritans.
284 *put in trust*] 'entrusted with the job of' (*OED*, *trust*, n.5.a).
285 *relief ... Geneva*] funds were collected in the churches of England to relieve the inhabitants of Geneva who were besieged by Charles Emmanuel of Savoy until July 1603; cf. *The Family of Love* (2020-2): 'Now, truly, truly, however he came by that ring, by my Sisterhood, I gave it to the relief of the distressed Geneva.'
288 *rising*] 'advancement in fortune' (*OED*, vbl.n.8), with a probable glance at 'penile erection;' this latter sense first links the idea of sexual excitement with irregular financial activity, and second (in the next line) with the suggestion that Throat will get some sexual pleasure from this marriage as he is 'well coupled' with a woman who makes money out of irregular sexual activity.
289 *coupled*] (a) 'joined in marriage' (*OED*, ppl.a.1.c); (b) 'matched' in the sense, 'paired together' (*OED*, ppl.a.1).
290 *younger sister*] a 'sister' was slang for 'a prostitute,' (Williams) especially one used or kept by a puritan (playing ironically on their common use of the term to address women in their

- She's current metal, not a penny the worse
 For a little use – whole within the ring,
 By my soul.
 BEARD Will 'a take her, thinkest thou?
 BOUTCHER
 Yes, faith, upon her promise of amendment.
 JUSTICE TUTCHIM
 295 The lawyer is gulled.
 THROAT
 Am I thus over-reached, to have a wife,
 And not of the best neither?
 FRANCES Good sir, be content.
 A lawyer should make all things right and straight.
 All lies but in the handling. I may prove

communities); Frances is 'younger' in the sense that she is relatively new to the game, and only recently arrived in London, as she herself suggests when we first see her: 'I did enjoy a quiet country life, | Spotless and free, till you corrupted me' (I i 65-6).

- 291 *current metal*] primarily 'genuine and valid coin' (*OED*, *current*, adj.5; *metal*, n.6.a); but on the secondary level, 'current' could mean 'in circulation' (*OED*, adj.4) and hence, of a woman, making herself sexually freely available; cf. Middleton, *A Fair Quarrel*, 1.1.382-3, where Jane tells her lover, 'I am not current | In any other's hand.' 'Metal' also puns on 'mettle,' the 'sexual vigour' of either a man or a woman, and hence 'not only available but game for it.' There may also be a hint that she is 'good coin' in the sense of being free of venereal disease. This phrase initiates a run of equivoques that play on monetary and sexual vocabulary. (See Introduction, The Play, Sex, money, power, wit and machismo.)
 291-2 *not ... use*] the primary sense as regards coinage is, 'not even a penny the less in value as a result of the wear caused by passing through so many hands,' but there is a double pun on 'use' (a) a legal term, 'deriving profit from property' (*OED*, n.4.a) or possibly more simply, just 'usury' and (b) 'employment for sexual purposes' (*OED*, n.3.b), in both cases covertly acknowledging that Frances has been actively engaged in prostitution.
 292 *whole ... ring*] on the primary level, the phrase refers to the tendency of the fragile coinage of the period to crack (or for people to clip it to obtain the precious metals of which coins were made); provided that any damage did not extend beyond the second circle within which the inscription round the circumference was enclosed the coin retained its face value and so for currency purposes remained good – 'whole within the ring;' the phrase 'to be cracked within the ring' meant, of a woman, that she had a reputation as either a prostitute or a libertine ('cracked = damaged' and 'ring = vagina'); cf. Middleton, *Your Five Gallants*, 2.4.125-1, where Fripp punningly compares a damaged gold coin to a prostitute: 'Here's Mistress Rose-noble [i.e., the coin] | Has lost her maidenhead – cracked in the ring. | She's good enough for gamesters and to pass | From man to man;' and in John Day, *Law Tricks*, 75-6, Lurdo, on being asked whether he has parted from the wife he claims has been unfaithful to him, replies: 'What a question's that? | Shall I weare crackt rings, Diamonds with a flaw.' Here William, whilst he appears to be vouching for Frances' sexual 'value' (and possibly also that she is 'current metal' in the sense of being free of venereal disease) again covertly acknowledges that she is partially 'damaged goods' in that there is a 'crack' in her reputation but it is not so bad that Throat should refuse to accept her as valid currency in what amounts to a commercial exchange – the prostitute for the heiress. We might also note a possible pun 'whole – hole,' further developing (though without any further coherent secondary meanings) the bawdy innuendo around female sexual parts.
 296 *over-reached*] see IV iii 36 and note.
 298 *right and straight*] (a) correct, set in proper order and free from misunderstandings' (*OED*, *right*, adj.15.a; *straight*, adj.3.j and 6.a) and (b) with a suggestion that the aforementioned 'things' (i.e., 'penises') should be uncurved and rigid.
 299 *handling*] (a) 'management' (*OED*, vbl.n2); (b) 'manual pleasures,' through which innuendo Frances slyly promises Throat that he will get the sexual entertainment that he believes this turn of events has denied him.

- 300 A wife that shall deserve your best of love.
 SIR OLIVER
 Take her, Throat. You have a better jewel now
 Than ever. Kiss her, kiss her, man – all friends.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 Yet in this happy close, I still have lost
 My only daughter.
 WILLIAM Where's thy page, Boutcher?

[Enter CONSTANTIA.]

- CONSTANTIA
 305 Here I present the page. And that all doubts
 May here be cleared, here in my proper shape,
 That all your joys may be complete and full,
 I must make one. With pardon, gentle mother, I4
 Since all our friends so happily are met,
 310 Here will I choose a husband. This be the man
 Whom, since I left your house in shape of page,
 I still have followed.
 WILLIAM 'Foot! Would I had known so much!
 I would have been bold to have lain with your page.
 CONSTANTIA
 Say, am I welcome?
 BOUTCHER As is my life and soul.
 LADY SOMERFIELD
 315 Heaven give you joy!
 Since all so well succeeds, take my consent.
 WILLIAM
 Then are we all paired: I and my lass,
 You and your wife, the lawyer and his wench;

300 *your ... love*] modern English would phrase, 'the best of your love.'
 301 *jewel*] presumably with reference back to William's statement that the 'arrant whore' whom Throat has married 'is run | Away with all your jewels' (233-5 above), and possibly with a glance at the same sense of 'jewel' suggesting that this marriage will actually make a better man of Throat.
 303 *close*] (a) 'conclusion' (*OED*, n².1); (b) 'union, conjunction, marriage' (*OED*, n².3); cf. *Gent.*, V iv 116-7: 'Come, come, a hand from either. | Let me be blest to make this happy close.'
 305 *present*] (a) in the usual sense of 'bring into your presence' (*OED*, v.1.a and 11.a) but also perhaps (b) in the sense, 'represent, stand for,' (7.a) and even (c) 'represent (as character) on a stage' (7.b); (the word also had a specific legal sense, 'to bring before a court' which may also be in play here).
 306 *proper*] 'genuine, real' (*OED*, adj.6.a).
 306 *shape*] (a) 'appearance, form' (*OED*, n¹. 5.a); (b) punning on the sense 'sexual organs' (n¹.16) so that the phrase 'proper shape' means 'as the woman I actually am;' (c) possibly, following up on the third suggested sense of 'present' in the previous line, with a glance at 'theatrical role or stage dress' (n¹.8.a and b).
 307 *full*] 'complete, entire' (*OED*, adj.7.a) rather than 'containing all they will hold' (adj.1.a).
 308 *make one*] 'join with you' – see II i 159 and note.
 312 *still*] 'continually, constantly' (*OED*, adv.3.a).

- And father – fall you aboard of the widow.
 320 But then my brother –
 THOMAS Faith, I am a fool.
 WILLIAM
 That's all one. If God had not made
 Some elder brothers fools, how should witty
 Younger brothers be maintained?
 Strike up, music, let's have an old song.
 325 Since all my tricks have found so good success,
 We'll sing, dance, dice, and drink down heaviness.

[*Exeunt.*]

FINIS

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- 319 *fall ... widow*] 'set about seducing;' the implication of the phrase here is somewhere between its use at I ii 107 and 143 of this scene – more than just 'flirt with' as in the former, and less aggressively sexual than the latter; the 'widow' in this case is, of course, Lady Somerfield.
 321 *all one*] 'one and the same,' and hence, 'of little account' (*OED*, all, C.adv.5.b).
 323 *maintained*] 'supported, provided with a livelihood' (*OED*, v.9.a).
 325 *so*] as at II iii 73 (q.v., and note thereto) the word acts here as an intensive – 'such' (*OED*, adv.14.a).
 326 *heaviness*] 'dejection' or possibly 'dullness of mind' (*OED*, 1.e and d).

Epilogue.

Thus two hours have brought to end
 What many tedious hours have penned.
 'A dares not glory nor distrust,
 But he (as other writers must)
 5 Submits the censures of his pains
 To those whose wit and nimble brains
 Are able best to judge. And as for some
 Who, filled with malice, hither come
 To belch their poison on his labour,
 10 Of them he doth entreat no favour
 But bids them hang or soon amend,
 For worth shall still itself defend.
 And for ourselves we do desire

Epilogue] Epilogus. Q1.

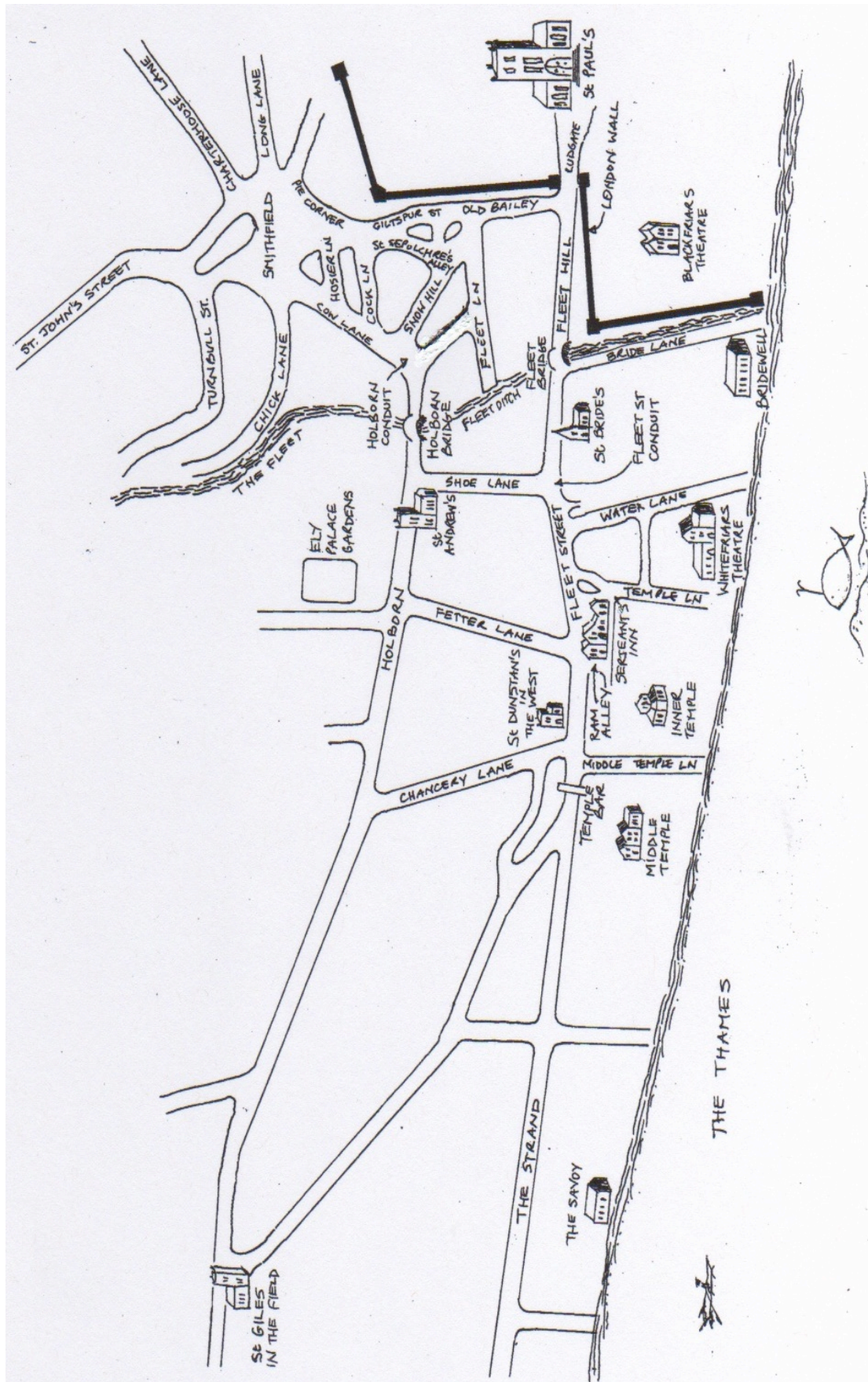
- 1 *two hours*] the standard length of time given for an Elizabethan or Jacobean play, though in modern performances they tend to last for closer to three hours; cf. *Rom.*, Prologue 12, 'two hours' traffic of our stage,' Jonson, *The Alchemist*, Prologue 1-2, 'these two short houres | We wish away,' Middleton, *Hengist, King of Kent*, 1.0.7-9, 'if all my power | Can win the grace of two poor hours | Well apaid I go to rest,' and *The Hog Hath Lost His Pearl*, Epilogue 15-6, 'For this our author saith, if't prove distasteful, | He only grieves you spent two hours so wasteful.' It may be that the term 'two hours' comprehends a considerable number of additional minutes and actually mean 'anything less than three hours;' alternatively it could be that the words were spoken much faster in early modern pronunciation than they are in modern speech, though the figures given by Crystal in *Pronouncing Shakespeare* (p.65) suggest that the difference would be fairly minimal with early modern pronunciation taking some ten to fifteen minutes less over a whole performance. Stern (*Op. Cit.*, pp.145-6) suggests that plays were sometimes cut in performance according to circumstances, which could make the printed versions longer than those actually staged, but again one would think the resulting difference to be small, and also that would make performance times variable rather than a standard 'two hours.' For a summary of the contemporary evidence for the length of a performance see David Klein, 'Time Allotted for an Elizabethan Performance.'
- 3 'A] i.e., the author.
- 3 *glory*] 'boast' (*OED*, v¹.2).
- 3 *distrust*] 'lack confidence, be unduly diffident' (*OED*, v.1.b – though given there as requiring a preposition; this seems to be a sense not covered by *OED* under 'distrust', though it would follow from definition given for 'distrustful').
- 5 *censures*] 'judgement, criticism' (though not necessarily in an adverse or negative manner) (*OED*, n.3).
- 5 *pains*] 'the trouble taken to accomplish the work' (*OED*, n¹.6.a).
- 6 *nimble*] 'quick in apprehending, clever' (*OED*, adj.1).
- 7-11 *as ...amend*] the author takes the conventional line of rejecting as invalid all negative criticism of his work on the grounds that it is based on mere malice, not 'true' critical judgement (which, by corollary, presumably would give only positive reviews); cf. the Prologue to *The Family of Love*: 'Nor let the fruit of many an hour fall | By envy's tooth or base detraction's gall, | Both which are tokens of such abject spirits, | Which wanting worth themselves hate other merits' (6-9).
- 9 *belch*] here probably 'vomit' in a figurative sense (*OED*, v.4.b) rather than merely, 'give vent to, vociferate' (*OED*, v.2).
- 12 *worth*] 'personal or intellectual merit' (*OED*, *worth*, n¹.3); the general idea of the line as a whole is that 'worth' is by its own nature a defence against detraction. The occurrence of the word in a similar context and sense in the passage from the Prologue to *The Family of Love* quoted in the note to 7-11 is perhaps worth noting.
- 13 *ourselves*] the Epilogue is now speaking for the actors rather than the author.

- 15 You'll breathe on us that growing fire
 By which in time we may attain
 Like favours which some others gain,
 For be assured, our loves shall tend
 To equal theirs, if not transcend.

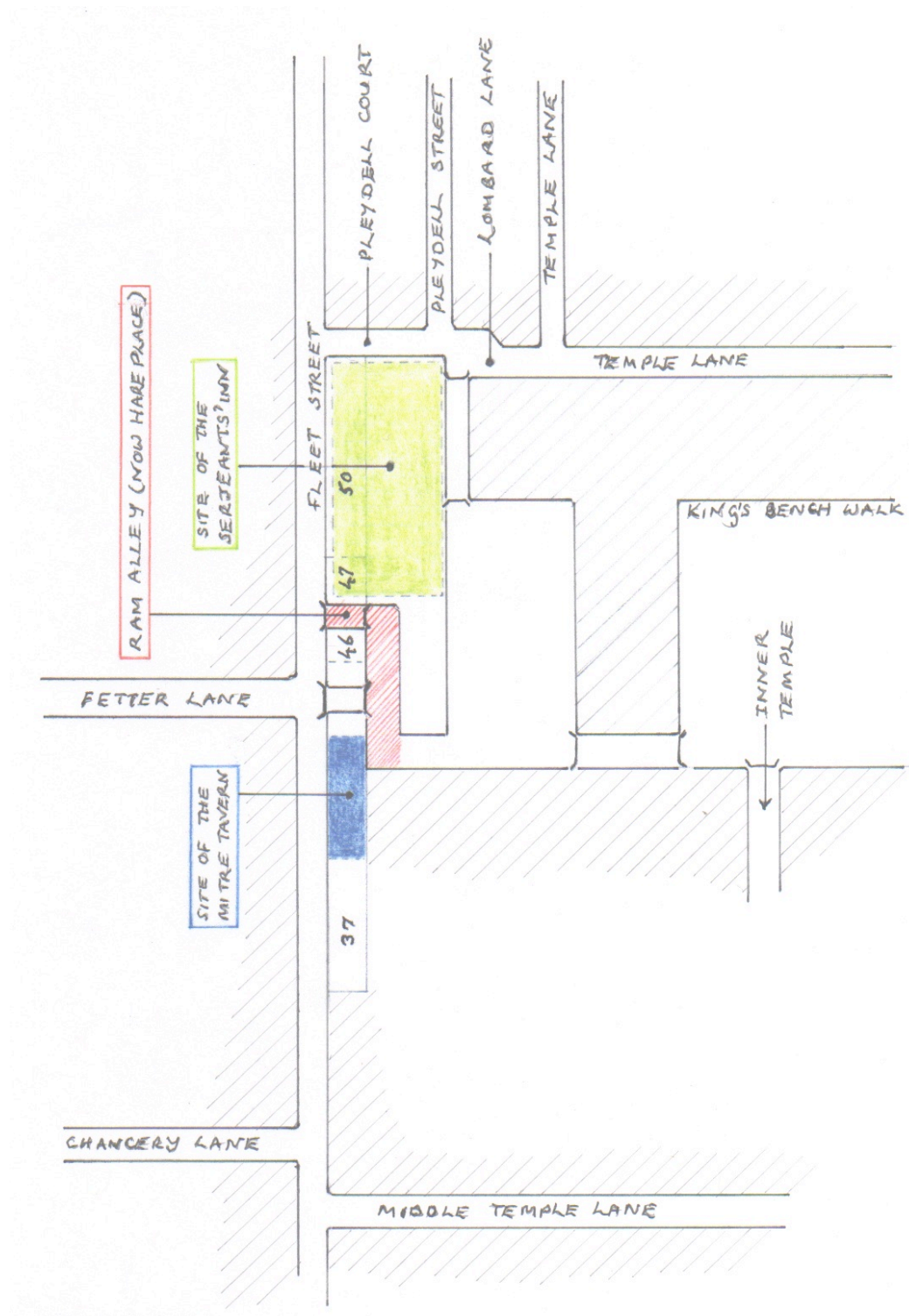
FINIS

I4v

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- 14 *growing fire*] this phrase possibly means 'fire that causes growth' rather than 'fire that is itself growing' and presumably refers to the ardour of the appreciative audience expressed in their applause and commendations which will eventually encourage that higher status patronage which other playhouses enjoyed – that is, the 'favours, which some others gain' – and which the Children of the King's Revels company was, from its earliest days, so much in need of. An interestingly similar but more extended image based on the same idea occurs in the Epilogue to *The Family of Love*, 2181-5 (though the labours of the author and the actors seem to be conflated in this case): 'so from your hearts comes fire, | That gives both ardour to the wit refin'd, | And sweetens th'incense of each willing mind. | O may that fire ne'er die; nor let your favours | Depart from us;' (one might note also the occurrence of the word 'favours' in both these Epilogues); the phrase may derive, albeit in a very loose way, from alchemy in which fire was responsible for the refining process of purification through which both the chemicals being worked upon and the spiritual state of the alchemist were brought to a higher state, and in that sense might be seen to cause growth. The other kind of fire that caused growth of another kind was, of course, lust.
- 16 *like favours*] 'similar goodwill, friendly regard or inclination to commend' (*OED*, *like*, adj.1; *favour*, n.1.a/b).
- 17 *tend*] 'be inclined, disposed' (*OED*, v².3.b).



Map 1: The western and north-western suburbs of London at the end of the sixteenth century (based on the Agas and Norden maps)



Map 2: Ram Alley in modern London

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Subject Index to the Journals of the Common Council, 1598-1609, London
Metropolitan Archives

Maps

The following maps of early modern London were consulted at the London Metropolitan Archive:

Agas, 1570

Norden, 1593

Ryther, c.1645

Faithorne and Newcourt, 1658

The on-line version of the Agas map was also frequently consulted at:

<http://mapoflondon.uvic.ca/map.htm>

along with the interactive version at:

<http://lettuce.tapor.uvic.ca/~london/imap/htdocs/>