Dyese Elliott-Newton

Invading Her Space:
The Violent Dismantling of Female 'Enclosures' in Shakespearean Comedy

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization
in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies.

Central European University

Budapest

June 2018

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Dyese Elliott-Newton

(USA)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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I, the undersigned, **Dyese Elliott-Newton**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

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Abstract

Based on close readings of Shakespearean comedy, specifically *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, this thesis metaphorically uses 'enclosure' to define specific characteristics that made women targets for violence in early modern England. *Taming* depicts the widespread practice of land enclosure, and offers this practice of privatizing land as a catalyst for violence against women in the enclosure of the private domestic space. *Measure* depicts a woman's virginity as being one possible culprit that subjects her to violence. This idea is explained by looking at both the hymen and the convent as enclosures for women. Moreover, the play juxtaposes brothels with convents, brothel mistresses with nuns, in order to showcase how these two institutions (and the women therein), posed a threat to a male oriented society, since they were female dominated spheres, not subject to external male authority. *Merchant* rethinks the concept of skin as an enclosure, and assesses the ways in which dark complexioned (African) women were dehumanized and marginalized in Elizabethan-Stuart England. Conceptual metaphor theory will be used in order to assess the nature of enclosure within the context of each work. This theory rests on the idea that metaphors begin as literal, decontextualized terms, and individuals may then supply personal understanding and meanings to these terms. Finally, the metaphor is born when these decontextualized and individual definitions are fully merged and generally understood by society at large. And so the metaphor of 'enclosure' is effectively employed by Shakespeare to showcase his understanding of identity and gender in early modern England, a society reaffirming its own identity in the wake of the Protestant Reformation.

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I would like to start off by thanking Jesus, my Lord and Savior, because His mercies are new every morning. With that, my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude for the support system that He has provided me with as I have navigated through this program and this work.

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To Tom Rooney, thank you for all of your editing and constructive criticism. It has been a joy to converse with another Bevington Bearer here on campus. Your pep talks definitely got me through the last leg of this journey. You should advertise them on the CAW website. Thank you sir!

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INTRODUCTION
Establishing the Boundaries of 'Enclosure'

Shakespeare's comedies are pregnant with commentaries on and representations of the daily lives of women in early modern England. Naturally, given the society in which these plays are set, the discussion of women in the texts typically relates to marriage and sexual status, each woman being classified as either maid, wife, widow, or prostitute. My thesis aims to venture beyond these categories in order to examine a shared experience of Shakespeare's women that exists independently of their respective labels—this being the shared experience of violence in each of its many forms. From beatings and public humiliation to rape and abandonment, and still considering everything in between, Shakespeare's women endure countless abuses, which are typically 'resolved' through marriage by the end of each play. It is no secret that these resolutions and conclusions are problematic at best, and they often leave readers and viewers both disoriented and frustrated.

This particular thesis cannot address each of the comedies, as it would exceed the given parameters, so I have systematically narrowed my selection to *The Taming of the Shrew* (c. 1592-1594), *Measure for Measure* (c. 1603-1604), and *The Merchant of Venice* (c. 1596-1598).[1] I have chosen this triad because, while portraying many of the major conventions of Shakespearean comedy, such as marriage contracts and strong female orators, they also portray gendered violence as specifically targeting a particular characteristic occupied by the woman violated.[2] The

[1] William Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew," in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 7th edition (Boston: Pearson, 2013); William Shakespeare, "Measure for Measure," in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 7 edition (Boston: Pearson, 2013); William Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice," in *The Complete Works of Shakespeare*, ed. David Bevington, 7 edition (Boston: Pearson, 2013). I will be using Bevington's seventh critical edition of the complete works in order to conduct my analysis of the plays. Any quotes and citations from the plays will be referenced from this edition and indicated by act, scene, and line number.
[2] Christy Desmet, "'Who Is't Can Read a Woman?' Rhetoric and Gender in Venus and Adonis, Measure for Measure, and All's Well That Ends Well," in *Reading Shakespeare's Characters: Rhetoric, Ethics, and Identity*

aforementioned plays respectively showcase violence that targets personality, virginity, and race (or dark complexion), and my work will explain each of these facets using the concept of "enclosure."[3]

The term 'enclosure' will be used in a myriad of ways throughout the body of this work. It is a term that is particularly useful for examining and sifting through the female experience because it has bearings in both economics and religion, both of which had been widely used to justify and reinforce the poor treatment of women during the period. As it pertains to economics, 'enclosure,' was a practice that encouraged the privatization of common land, thereby eradicating common right.[4] This gradually diminished and ultimately dissolved the lucrative practice of cultivating one's individual property—a practice that was particularly engaged by peasants. Though economically motivated, enclosure had steep social ramifications.[5] This severance of peasant males from their properties inadvertently redirected them into the domestic sphere—the domain of the women.

This social dynamic takes center stage in *The Taming of the Shrew.* The play's induction portrays, albeit with humor, the strained relationship between lords and common men. The lord in this portion of the text displaces Sly the Tinker to a "female space" simply because he has the

(Univ of Massachusetts Press, 1992), 134–163 Desmet writes that skillful rhetoric takes center stage in *Measure for Measure*, and it manifests in the character of Isabella in this play. She writes that the heroine's skill for public oration is the defining feature of her character and identity. She remarks that Isabella is the only female character in *Measure* that possesses control over her voice, which gives her speeches even greater significance.

[3] I do realize that race is not yet an established construct at the time that these plays were written. However, the thesis argues that the treatment of black women as portrayed in early modern drama, illuminates the existence of a societal anxiety towards their presence in England. This anxiety was used to create and reinforce negative ideas based on these women's 'blackness." That being said, I am simply using race as a contemporary term to facilitate understanding, but this will be explained in greater depth in chapter three.

[4] Edward Carter Kersey Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure* (London: Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1912); J. M. Neeson, *Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

[5] Bruce G. Carruthers and Laura Ariovich, "The Sociology of Property Rights," *Annu. Rev. Sociol.* 30 (2004): 23–46.

power to do so.[6] This reassignment has grave consequences not only in the case of the common man (whom Sly represents), but, as the rest of the play portrays, and scholarship informs, the wives of such men were at risk as well. As lords enclosed on the land of common men, these men, in turn, enclosed on the female domestic space, usurping authority of the space and silencing the agency of their wives, relegating them to a life of crippling compliance (at the threat of violence) in a space traditionally dominated by the female.[7] Hence, *Taming* provides us with a stepwise demonstration of the demise of the "shrew," or the contemporary colloquial term for the domineering woman. Kate, a strong-willed, noble woman of great wealth undergoes a painful process of domestication in order to satisfy her husband's need for dominance. The "taming" of shrews became commonplace in the wake of land enclosures.[8] These enclosures displaced both the finances and reputations of men whose wealth and social status rested solely on their being landowners. Therefore, being removed from the land, the domestic sphere was the only realm in which men felt powerful enough to assert their authority. The threatening female characteristic that Kate occupies in this play is the formidable personality. The practice of land enclosure catalyzes the invasion of Kate's domestic enclosure (the home and the garden) and abuses towards her, both verbal and physical.

The religious aspects of enclosure are invoked in the case of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*. Isabella is a woman who desires to take holy orders, but she is placed in grave danger

[6] The identification of the Lord's chamber as a "female space" in the induction is an argument that I will develop in chapter one. For now, I am briefly introducing it for the sole purpose of establishing my research questions in this thesis.

[7] Lynda E. Boose, "Taming of the Shrew, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure," in *Shakespeare Reread: The Texts in New Contexts*, ed. Russ McDonald (Cornell University Press, 1994), 193–225.

[8] Ibid. Boose further discusses the relationship between enclosure and the practice of openly humiliating "shrews."; Natasha Korda, "Household Kates: Domesticating Commodities in The Taming of the Shrew," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1996): 109–131. Korda argues that the innovative nature of *Taming* derives not from its discussion of shrew taming since there have been many works to treat the subject; rather, Shakespeare is the first to describe this process in economic terms. She further links shrew taming to the rise of capitalism.

before she is able to take her vows. When her brother Claudio is sentenced to death for fornication resulting in the impregnation of his lover, Isabella is summoned to plead her brother's case before Lord Angelo. Isabella's visit to the deputy proves to be futile. Angelo insists on maintaining the harsh sentence, only willing to issue Claudio's reprieve if Isabella is willing to surrender her virginity. After his first meeting with Isabella, Angelo privately admits that he could never be so moved by a prostitute, but he is internally torn asunder by the charms of this "virtuous maid" (2.2 190-3). Angelo's admission acknowledges virginity as the second threatening characteristic that a woman may occupy. In this case, enclosure applies in a few different ways. From the Middle Ages well into the early modern period, the hymen was perceived as the "enclosure" of a woman's virginity, and there are many accounts of procedures that were done to confirm its existence and function.[9] Realizing that anatomists devoted a great deal of their efforts to studying the structure of the hymen and the thorough documentation of this obsession, it is only natural in the context of this work to treat the hymen as a type of enclosure that may make a women susceptible to violence—specifically rape.

In its treatment of virginity as an enclosure, *Measure* still ventures one step beyond the physical enclosure of virginity to address the enclosure of the convent, which may be interpreted as the enclosure for a collective of virgins. During this period, joining the convent was viewed as an act of a resistance because it violated the requirement for a woman to lose her virginity (within marriage).[10] The convent served as a safe haven for women who wished to take vows and live a life of purity and celibacy, but this institution gradually dissolved following the rupture of marriage's status as a sacrament and the prioritization of marriage over virginity that was ushered

[9] Kaara L. Peterson, "The Ring's the Thing: Elizabeth I's Virgin Knot and All's Well That Ends Well," *Studies in Philology* 113, no. 1 (2016): 101–131.
[10] Kimberly Reigle, "Staging the Convent as Resistance in *The Jew of Malta* and *Measure for Measure*." *Comparative Drama* 46, no. 4 (2012): 497-516.

in by the Protestant Reformation.[11] One of the primary reasons that Isabella seeks refuge in the convent is that she is not safe in the city, which is the site of debauchery.[12] Thus, it is no surprise that she is immediately endangered once she leaves the convent to help her brother. This presents yet another form of enclosure in the text. Isabella is stuck between the values of the city and the convent. She is not a woman of the city (a prostitute), but she has not yet taken her vows. And as I will argue in chapter two, she is textually enclosed between Mistress Overdone, the brothel owner, and Francisca, the nun. This positioning is not coincidental, as both brothels and convents were perceived as female spaces (or enclosures) that were run by female authority figures.[13] Therefore Isabella emerges as a figure that embodies the personas of both nun and prostitute, a popular female type throughout literature.[14] Both personas resist the Protestant ideal of marriage,

[11] See Martin Luther, "The Estate of Marriage," trans. Walther I. Brandt, 1522. Luther writes, "from this you can now see the extent of the validity of all cloister vows. No vow of any youth or maiden is valid before God, except that of a person in one of the three categories which God alone has himself excepted. Therefore, priests, monks, and nuns are duty-bound to forsake their vows whenever they find that God's ordinance to produce seed and to multiply is powerful and strong within them. They have no power by any authority, law, command, or vow to hinder this which God has created within them. If they do hinder it, however, you may be sure that they will not remain pure but inevitably besmirch themselves with secret sins or fornication. For they are simply incapable of resisting the word and ordinance of God within them. Matters will take their course as God has ordained." See also John Witte, *From Sacrament to Contract: Marriage, Religion, and Law in the Western Tradition* (Presbyterian Publishing Corp, 2012), 2–11. Witte describes the different categories of marriage that identifies within the institution of marriage post-Reformation, focusing on the differences between sacramental marriages in Catholicism versus what he calls social marriages in Lutheran doctrine.

[12] See Thomas Dekker, *The Seuen Deadly Sinnes of London Drawne in Seuen Seuerall Coaches, through the Seuen Seuerall Gates of the Citie Bringing the Plague with Them.* (At London : Printed by E[dward] A[llde and S. Stafford] for Nathaniel Butter, and are to be solde at his shop neere Saint Austen's gate, 1606), in this popular work, Dekker describes the different city gates of London as being representative of the seven cardinal sins; See also Dyese Elliott-Newton, "From Gate to Gate: A Study of the Restorative Power of Marriage in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure" (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016). In a previous project I directed my attention to the importance of location in *Measure*. Within this analysis, I argued that that the city place of *Measure's* Vienna was a site of licentiousness, connecting this idea to the "Liberties" of early modern London. The Liberties was the site of brothels and theaters during the period, and it was usually near the city gates (sometimes right outside and sometimes just within). Yet, it is interesting to consider Claudio's description of his own sexual crime upon his arrest was that he had taken "too much liberty." Considering this, a virgin like Isabella, has no place within the context of brothels and licentious behavior. Her aims to remain pure are not respected or safe there, as made clear during her encounter with Angelo immediately after leaving the convent.

[13] Ulrike Strasser, "Nuns and Whores : Houses of Women in the Male Public Sphere," in *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion, and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (University of Michigan Press, 2004), 57–85.

[14] Tracy Fessenden, "The Convent, the Brothel, and the Protestant Woman's Sphere," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 25, no. 2 (2000): 451–478.

which makes Isabella's virginal status even more threatening than the sexual status of both Overdone and Francisca.[15]

The third chapter presents skin as a third type of enclosure. According to the *OED*, enclosure was also conceptualized as "an outer covering or case" or "an envelope" in the sixteenth century.[16] In *The Merchant of Venice* the Prince of Morocco makes amends for his dark complexion, likening it to "shadowed livery" (2.1.1-2). This reinforces the idea of skin as enclosure, however, being that this enclosure is fixed, the Prince's description of his skin also begs readers and viewers to consider the usage of props such as blackface and textiles to represent blackness on the Elizabethan stage. Though the textual evidence for skin as an enclosure emerges from the lips of the prince, my interest in complexion is particularly directed at the pregnant Negro maid who is hidden in the margins of act three. Though she is not depicted on stage, she is slandered to a degree that compelled me to explore and determine the provocations of such verbal (and most likely physical) aggression towards her character. Since the Negro woman cannot change her complexion, it is important to both consider and address her egregious experiences of violence in Shakespeare's England.

While Kate and Isabella are the heroines in their respective works and, therefore, receive a significant amount of attention and agency within the texts, the blackamoor maid is literally a marginal character—both silent and absent. Because of this, I will rely heavily on literature which addresses aspects of performance, perceptions of blackness in the framework of the Christian tradition, and anxiety towards black sexuality in order to interpret the Negro maid's function within

[15] Marie H. Loughlin, *Hymeneutics: Interpreting Virginity on the Early Modern Stage* (Bucknell University Press, 1997).
[16] "Enclosure, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed April 16, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/61738.

this play. *Merchant* briefly, though powerfully, expresses that the Negro maid's intersection of blackness and femininity positions her as the greatest threat (within the group of women and social others), and therefore, secures her place at the bottom of early modern England's social hierarchy. And so, my thesis will conclude with the presentation of dark skin (or blackness) as yet another enclosure which makes women targets for violence.

These plays work together to reveal 'enclosure' as an object or space that was meant to serve as an agent of protection. However, as this thesis argues, each of these protective objects and/or spaces at some point became threatening to some aspect of English patriarchalism. This, in turn, incited some form of external pushback, which resulted in suppression, marginalization, and in some cases, erasure of the women who existed within these enclosures. Enclosures can be constructed by the self, by the government, and/or by nature, but in each of the plays that I assess, enclosures were dismantled or displaced by the privileged English male and his anxiety stemming from the possibility of being himself disestablished from the top of the social hierarchy.

Methodology

This work will follow a triad structure in which each of the three plays is presented in its own chapter. Each chapter will present a different aspect of violence based on the type of enclosure that is discussed within that particular section. The ordering of the chapters is intended to begin with the most concrete definition of enclosure as the capitalistic practice of privatizing common land; progressing with a slightly more abstract concept of enclosure as the hymen and the convent; and lastly with the most abstract of the interpretations presenting enclosure as a metaphor for skin. And so, my thesis begins by exploring a concrete economic principle and concludes with a metaphor, but each of these definitions, both literal and metaphorical, is necessary for enhancing our understanding of the social climate of Elizabethan England.

This approach is grounded in conceptual metaphor theory in literature. Zoltán Kövecses states that the cognitive linguistic approach to metaphor includes three different categories of metaphors. These are the supraindividual, the individual, and the subindividual.[17] The supraindividual relies on the usage of tools such as dictionaries to assess linguistic expression outside of a metaphorical context. Afterwards, speakers are able to supply metaphorical meanings to these decontextualized definitions, which is the individual level of this process. A metaphor is then said to have reached the subindividual category once its usage has surpassed the individual to adopt a meaning that is grounded with "bodily and/or cultural basis."[18]

My work follows this methodology closely since I am beginning with definitions of "enclosure" as listed in the Oxford English Dictionary (supraindividual). Then, I am coupling these decontextualized definitions with concepts extracted from my close readings of the plays in order to expand the original definitions of enclosure (individual). Lastly, I am comparing my own definitions with criticisms of the plays and secondary literature illuminating issues of gendered violence, female space, and constructions of race in the literary context of Shakespearean drama and the historical context of early modern England (subindividual).[19]

I have chosen this methodology because it facilitates reflection on the author's methods and purposes, and it assists modern readers in developing a greater understanding of the early modern context that the plays are set in. In regards to the author's methods, I would argue that Shakespeare uses 'enclosure' from the supraindividual level all the way to the subindividual level.

[17] Zoltán Kövecses, "Conceptual Metaphor Theory: Some Criticisms and Alternative Proposals," *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics* 6, no. 1 (2008): 168–184.
[18] Ibid., 2.
[19] Raymond W. Gibbs Jr, "Evaluating Conceptual Metaphor Theory," *Discourse Processes* 48, no. 8 (2011): 529–562; See also Edward Slingerland, "Conceptual Metaphor Theory as Methodology for Comparative Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 72, no. 1 (2004): 1–31.

At least in the case of *The Taming of the Shrew* 'enclosure' would have certainly resonated with the audience, given the pervasiveness of the practice. Enclosure in regards to virginity and dark skin may have been maintained at Shakespeare's individual level since he likens both of them to livery in *Measure* and *Merchant* respectively; while they do have some cultural basis, perceptions of both virginity and "blackness" were nuanced, manifold and constantly evolving in the wake of the Reformation. My hope is that this methodology will not only be useful for reflecting on these problems in history as this thesis does, but that it may also serve as a starting ground for any future research that may wish to assess any remnants of enclosure in our modern society and any attempts that have been made to dismantle them.

CHAPTER ONE
He Thrusts Himself into this Maze

Like many of Shakespeare's plays, *The Taming of the Shrew* is a work that capitalizes on the usage of "metatheatre," a term coined by Lionel Abel in the 1960s to describe the convention of placing a play within a play.[20] This device is effectively used to supply a visual representation of invasion and "enclosure" within the context of this work. Though the play itself is fictional, it functions within its contemporary understanding of the greater social implications of land enclosures during the late sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century. From the beginning of the induction to the end of act five, the reader/viewer witnesses the displacement of various characters that results from these themes of invasion and enclosure.

The induction is responsible for showcasing the displacement of male figures into female space. This intrusion into female space is depicted in two ways: first, the lord orders his attendants to remove a drunken Sly to his "fairest" chamber which is made "sweet" for this purpose, and, secondly, a male player is hired to act as though he is Sly's wife (In.1.45-8).[21] Next, within the induction, a play begins, which is the enactment of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Therefore, *Taming,* is enclosed within the induction. The actual play is responsible for showing how this displacement of the males impacts the females, catalyzing acts of what would be readily understood today as domestic violence. Therefore, this induction and play work together to illuminate the causal relationship between land enclosure and domestic violence. Still, it is important to note that the violence is precise because there is a particular type of woman that is brutalized as a result of

[20] See Lionel Abel, *Metatheatre: A New Vision of Dramatic Form* (New York, NY: Hill & Lang, 1963).
[21] There is a third dimension of metatheatre that is always lingering which is the fact that all women on the stage are played by young boys; but this will layer will not be the focus of my analysis.

enclosure. This type of woman is the one who is strong-willed and formidable, as expressed in the play's title.[22] Consequently, *Taming*, in its entirety, is a helpful tool for understanding land enclosure and how it led to the exploitation of the domineering woman's private space. In order to understand the inner workings of themes of enclosure in *Taming*, it would best to begin with a brief history of the practice in order to situate the induction. Then, I will juxtapose different events in the induction with similar events in *Taming* to show exactly how enclosure is inciting violence in the domestic sphere.

In medieval England, the majority of land was referred to as common. Common in this case refers to the concept of "common right"—a meticulous system that upheld the common, or basic rights of cultivators and their claims to the land that they managed and cultivated.[23] G.K. Gonner describes common right as an "essential part of agriculture" since it outlined the specifics concerning land ownership, and it ensured that the respective cultivators gained profits from the land that they worked.[24] This means that common right was a system that provided lucrative occupation for the English peasantry. Even tenants of the manor were able to secure small strips of arable land (yardland) that ran adjacent to their tenements, and common right protected their rights to this portion of land.[25]

During this period, the land was often claimed by settlers who marked off land for themselves from the supply of empty uncultivated land in the marshes and other such uninhabited spaces. Since land was erratically chosen, properties had the potential to be close to each other.

[22] "Shrew, n.3," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press.) The OED defines shrew as "a person, esp. (now only) a woman given to railing or scolding or other perverse or malignant behaviour; frequently a scolding or turbulent wife." This is the definition that is alluded to in the title of the play, since Kate depicts the type of woman that would have been classified as a shrew in the period.
[23] Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*, 3.
[24] Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*.
[25] Ibid.

In such cases, there was a natural line of demarcation formed between two different properties. This "line" was known as "the meers," and it was simply a patch of land that that was left uncultivated by the two adjacent neighbors.[26] J.M. Neeson writes that it is impossible to discuss and analyze the nature of common right in England between the fifteenth and nineteenth century without engaging the problem of land enclosure.[27] His argument is based on the fact that enclosure was the main culprit in the gradual termination of common right as well as the dissolution of the small farm.[28] Though the decline took place over time, the existence of common right in the nation was officially eradicated between 1750 and 1850 as a direct result of parliamentary enclosure; however, the argument has been made that the death of English peasantry had taken place long before the official establishment of parliamentary enclosure in 1750, making the new law merely a formality.[29]

Parliamentary enclosure, described as the cause of the "dismantling of the open field system" was enacted more than a century after *Taming* was written, but J.R. Wordie states that the beginning of enclosure may have occurred as early as the fifteenth century, with the "preeminent" century for enclosure being the seventeenth century.[30] By 1600, the counties of Kent, Cornwall, Devon, Essex, Cheshire, Monmouthshire, and Lancashire were "wholly enclosed," an area which encompassed approximately 10,592 square miles.[31] There are also counties that are listed as heavily enclosed by 1600 which include Shropshire, Herefordshire, Sussex, Suffolk, Surrey,

[26] Ibid., 6. According to Gonner, "hades", "balks," and "mirebalks" were also terms used to describe the uncultivated patch of land between two adjacent properties.
[27] Neeson, *Commoners*, 15.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., 17.
[30] Donald N. McCloskey, "Economics of Enclosure: A Market Analysis," *European Peasants and Their Markets: Essays in Agrarian Economic History. WN Parker & EL Jones. Eds*, 1975, 125 as cited in J. Ross Wordie, "The Chronology of English Enclosure, 1500-1914," *The Economic History Review* 36, no. 4 (1983): 483.
[31] Wordie, "The Chronology of English Enclosure, 1500-1914," 489.

Somerset, Northumberland, North Riding, and Dorset.[32] Still, scholars distinguish a list of counties which endured the highest amount of enclosure between 1455 and 1607, at an enclosure rate of 8.94 percent during the period: Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, and Warwickshire (in particular the southeast of the county).[33] This emphasis on the rate of enclosure in Warwickshire is of great importance to the narrative of *The Taming of the Shrew*, since this county is both the birthplace of Shakespeare and Sly the Tinker, who is the main person of interest in *Taming's* induction. Thus, the facts concerning the practice of enclosure and its progression are key to the play, as this practice is one that would have had a significant impact on the town that Shakespeare and some members of his contemporary audience were socialized in. Not only this, but the induction contains two direct references to this site, which require close attention.

When Sly the Tinker wakes up in the Lord's Chamber, he is startled by the attendants who insist on calling him "Your Lordship," and "Your Honor." After many attempts to discourage the superior titles of address, Sly exclaims,

> What would you make me mad? Am not I Christopher Sly, old Sly's son of Burton-heath, by birth a peddler, by education a cardmaker, by transmutation a bearherd, and now by present profession a tinker? Ask Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot, if she know me not. If she say I am not fourteen pence on the score for sheer ale, score me up for the lyingest knave in Christendom. (In. 2. 17-24).

Sources indicate that Burton-heath may reference Barton on the Heath, a town just outside of Stratford-upon-Avon.[34] Wincot is also a nearby village.[35] The mentioning of these villages is intriguing because it does not seem to have anything to do with the actual play when examined at

[32] Ibid., 490.
[33] Ibid., 493.
[34] Stanley Wells, "Barton-on-the-Heath," in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 2015), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198708735.001.0001/acref-9780198708735-e-237.
[35] Stanley Wells, "Wincot," in *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 2003), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198117353.001.0001/acref-9780198117353-e-3076.

surface level; however, these specific geographical locations in the induction serve to direct the audience to relate the events that take place in *Taming* back to the events taking place in Warwickshire. Furthermore, Sly's "transmutation" within the induction works alongside the geographical references to instruct audiences to acknowledge the workings of "enclosure" in the text.

The induction begins in medias res, introducing the audience to Sly at the climax of an altercation between the hostess of the alehouse and himself. In the heat of the argument, he refers to her "as a baggage" (Ind.1.3).[36] "Baggage" is a derogatory term meaning "contemptible woman or prostitute."[37] The duplicitous definition of "baggage" is enlightening. It demonstrates language that makes a woman's personality an indicator of her sexual status; consequently, women who are labeled as disagreeable are then sexually objectified and/or rendered disposable. This is not seen as clearly in the hostess's case because Sly does not have the power to "feeze," or fix, her as he so threatens. Still it is necessary to acknowledge that Sly's language prepares readers and viewers for the type of slander that is directed at Kate throughout the play.

In act one scene one, Baptista informs Gremio and Hortensio that he will not permit anyone to marry his younger daughter, Bianca, until he has found a husband for his elder daughter, Kate. This is Kate's first introduction in the play. She does not speak, yet she is immediately met with harsh insults from these two men. Hortensio calls her a devil, and Gremio suggests that she be carted through town, a punishment that required a woman to be brought through the streets of the town on a cart in order to publicly humiliate her.[38] In the event that Kate was carted, it would

[36] Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew" Induction. 1. 3. All subsequent quotations of Taming are from this edition and will be cited parenthetically within the text by act, scene, and line.
[37] Ibid, 111. See Bevington's footnotes for line 3.
[38] Shakespeare, "Taming of the Shrew," 116 See Bevington's notes.

tarnish her reputation even further.[39] Observing the scene from a distance, Tranio and Lucencio also notice the young women. Since Kate is hurling insults at Hortensio and Gremio, Tranio, though far away and having never met Kate, surmises that she is a "wench" (1.1.68-9). Additionally, Bianca is presented as her sister's foil. While Kate is aggressive and foul-mouthed, Bianca is depicted as demure. And so, once more, though Lucentio has never met Bianca, her silence leads him to believe that she must be a maid (1.1.71).

It is interesting to see that Kate's verbal lashing of Hortensio and Gremio is done in self-defense, but as she defends her honor, she is perceived to be a wench. Interestingly enough she felt as though her father was prostituting her, since he seemed so eager to be rid of her (1.1.57-8). Thus, it is important to realize that Kate's first act of aggression in the play is provoked. It also shows that she uses her personality as a weapon to protect herself, but it is the very characteristic that makes Kate a threat to men, and, therefore, makes her a target for violence. Fortunately, like Sly, Hortensio and Gremio have no power to fix Kate. There is a boundary placed around them because they do not possess the authority of a father or a husband.

Since Sly does not possess the power to alter someone's status in life, the induction directs the audience's attention to someone who does: the lord. The latter certainly does not waste any time in showcasing his social authority. Without any real provocation, when the lord enters the alehouse to find Sly asleep, he is moved to play a harsh prank on the drunk tinker:

> Oh, monstrous beast, how like a swine he lies
> Grim death, how foul and loathsome is thine image
> Sirs, I will practice on this drunken man.

[39] For more information on types of punishments that were carried out on women identified as "scolds" and "shrews" see Lynda E. Boose, "Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1991): 179–213.

What think you, if he were conveyed to bed,
Wrapped in sweet clothes, rings put upon his fingers,
A most delicious banquet by his bed,
And brave attendants near him when he wakes,
Would not the beggar forget himself?

(In.1.33-40)

Once more, it is evident that the lord was not in the least provoked to disturb Sly. Still he cannot resist the urge to do so, and he is curious to see if the poor tinker will fall for his trick. The lord's first impression of Sly is telling because it illustrates the strained relationship that existed between lords and peasants during the propagation period of enclosure. In this fictional case however, Sly does not lose land to the lord; rather, his autonomy over his own body is confiscated. He is then relegated to a new status and new sphere, which the lord orders to be made fair and sweet and decorated with "wanton pictures" (In.1.45-50).

Lynda Boose writes that land enclosures were carried out by wealthy landlords who made up the entrepreneurial real estate class.[40] This detail lets us know that the lord's power over Sly is fueled by his wealth. In fact, Boose explains that each of the occupations that Sly had associated himself with are indicative of his belonging to a poor class that was most widely targeted by the invasive landlords.[41] Additionally, cardmakers, which are among Sly's list, were members of the cloth-working industry, and they were responsible for most of the riots that took place in response to the enclosures.[42] In fact, the term "rogue," as used by the hostess at the alehouse, was a derogatory term reserved for this new vagrant class that was comprised of displaced peasant

[40] Boose, "Taming of the Shrew, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure."
[41] Ibid., 208–9.
[42] Ibid., 209.

landowners.[43] This means that Sly represented a group that would have caused a significant amount of trouble and anxiety for the lord and his elite class.[44]

Boose also adds that the "wanton pictures" in the lord's chamber mostly likely portrayed vivid rape scenes, a decorative touch that points to the way in which land acquisition is often characterized as rape.[45] This is important because it is further suggestive of this relationship between conquering land and the female body. It also reinforces the relationship between husbandry in the agrarian and domestic spheres, which the lord himself references by saying that the transformation of Sly must be "husbanded with modesty" (In.1.67).[46] Boose adds that much of the anxiety incited by land enclosure was a poor man's fear of losing his place as a husband (in the agrarian sense), which in turn reallocated this anxiety to his household where he was also a husband in the marital sense.[47] I would, however, like to emphasize that the lord's insistence that the husbanding must be "modestly" done because Petruchio takes a similar approach.[48]

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[43] Ibid., 208–9.

[44] Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–35. Breitenberg writes that the coinage "anxious masculinity" is redundant because the authority said to be naturally prescribed to men is a status that must be reaffirmed and protected at all costs. He argues that the best way to understand male anxiety is by thinking of it as a social phenomenon developed in response to contradictions of patriarchalism and is then "played out reciprocally in the male body, a body that is the site of socially constructed anxieties about sex and gender but is by no means their origin. The male anxiety in *Taming* supports this definition as it rises in response to men losing land, work, and social authority.

[45] Boose, "Taming of the Shrew, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure."

[46] See Benjamin Bertram, "Measure for Measure and the Discourse of Husbandry," *Modern Philology* 110, no. 4 (2013): 459–488 It is interesting that the lord makes reference to husbandry as he describes his alteration of Sly, but it is a clever usage since husbandry is a term that overlaps with the agrarian and domestic spheres. It particularly addressed how men were expected to work or conduct themselves in each of these respective contexts. Within the plays, there is an abundant usage of husbandry as a metaphor to discuss the functions of and expectations within marriage such as, but not limited to courtship, sexual intercourse, and pregnancy. Bertram writes that the discourse of husbandry was of great importance in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Agricultural tracts and pamphlets were looked to not only for instruction concerning agrarian life, but also on the improvement of domestic and religious life. I would go as far as to call husbandry its own literary genre of the period since it certainly was an integral part of the English identity and a useful tool for describing the framework of English culture.

[47] "Husband, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), OED defines husband as "a man who tills and cultivates the soil; a farmer, a husbandman" and dates this usage back to 1300; Boose, "Taming of the Shrew, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure," 207.

[48] Emily Detmer, "Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and The Taming of the Shrew," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48, no. 3 (1997): 273–294. Detmer suggests that Petruchio's domestication of Kate may have been

As in the case of the lord, Petruchio is wholly unprovoked in his pursuit of Kate, since he has never met her, and thus, has not secured her affections. Still, he decides that he will alter her status and make her his wife without her consent. Just as the first sight of Sly incited the lord to action, likewise in first hearing about the heiress Petruchio is moved into action.[49] He says,

> Signor Hortensio, thus it stands with me:
> Antonio, my father, is deceased,
> And I have thrust myself into this maze,
> Happily to wive and thrive as best I may.
> Crowns in my purse I have and goods at home,
> And so am come abroad to see the world.
>
> (1.2.52-7)

In this excerpt, Petruchio admits to thrusting himself into the maze of Padua, a city which is likened to a "fruitful" and "pleasant" garden at the beginning of the play (1.1.1-4). This passage is important because it reveals that Petruchio was not welcomed into this intimate space; instead he forced his way in and decided that he was going to try his luck at finding a rich wife. Georgianna Ziegler draws attention to the importance of this garden space by reminding her readers of a patriarchal tradition which used the "enclosed garden" as a metaphor for characterizing a chaste woman.[50] This then, elucidates the fact that Petruchio's intrusion into this space also coincides with the violation of Kate's personal autonomy. This also resonates with the way that the lord

perceived as modestly husbanded because he did not physically abuse Kate. I will address this argument in greater depth later in the chapter.

[49] For more information on the heiress-at-law see Eileen Spring, *Law, Land, and Family: Aristocratic Inheritance in England 1300 to 1800* (University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

[50] Georgianna Ziegler, "My Lady's Chamber: Female Space, Female Chastity in Shakespeare," *Textual Practice* 4, no. 1 (1990): 76.

encroaches on Sly and his space. This rupture of the garden also resonates with the presence of the wanton pictures in the fair and sweet chamber.[51]

Baptista consents to Petruchio's marrying Kate because Petruchio is rich. Once the contract is established, Petruchio begins to act on his newly acquired authority over Kate. However, once the wedding ceremony takes place, he truly begins his domestication of Kate.[52]

Hearkening back to the induction, there are three symbols of Sly's transformation that are captured in the wedding ceremony. Each of these aspects is also represented after the ceremony, in order to characterize the beginning of Petruchio and Kate's married life in Verona. These three symbols are clothing, horses, and a mourning wife. Each of these symbols represent increased authority in the case of Sly and Petruchio, but they represent greater oppression in the case of Kate.

When the lord discusses how the trickery scene should unfold, he says,

> Someone be ready with a costly suit,
> And ask him what apparel he will wear;
> Another tell him of his hounds and horse,
> And that his lady mourns at his disease.
>
> (In.1.58-61)

[51] Ziegler, "My Lady's Chamber" Ziegler also writes that the idea of private space emerged during the Elizabethan period, and even when the concept did surface, privacy was usually about the reclusion of the entire family rather than the individual. During the feudal period, young women were perceived as potential threats to the harmony of their home and the general patriarchal authority of the family, so daughters were typically "enclosed" in their own private section of the house where they could not inflict harm on males in the home with their charms and tricks. Nevertheless, during the sixteenth century and into the seventeenth century, the idea of privacy began to shift from the family to the individual and the space became more secular in nature; therefore, there was no longer a need so separate daughters for fear of their provocative nature. Instead both men and women had their own designated private spaces; however, the woman's space was still intended to preserve her chastity and reputation.

[52] Elizabeth I, *Book of Common Prayer*, 1559. Though the ceremony is not depicted on stage, I have included Queen Elizabeth's Book of Common Prayer since it outlines the procedure for a proper wedding ceremony during the period.

On the day of the ceremony, Petruchio arrives late. However, when he finally approaches the venue, Biondello runs ahead of him to let the party know that the groom is on his way, and he tells them about Petruchio's unsightly appearance. First, Biondello provides a detailed account of Petruchio's old, tattered clothing,

> Why, Petruchio is coming in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches thrise turned; a pair of boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another laced; an old rusty sword ta'en out of the town armory, with a broken hilt and chapeless; with two broken points… (3.2.43-8)

Petruchio's clothes are similar to the tattered clothes that Sly wears before he is abducted by the lord. This is an interesting parallel. My argument is that Sly and Petruchio are juxtaposed in this instance to signify Petruchio's ascension into a positon of authority over Kate. Sly's change of clothes signify a change in social status, and Petruchio can now dress however he pleases because the marriage contract has been agreed upon. Furthermore, when the tailor comes to visit the couple at their home, Petruchio will deny Kate the chance to buy new clothing. Whenever Kate says she likes a particular item of clothing, Petruchio contradicts her.[53] Kate stands her ground, asserting that she has the right to speak her mind and that Petruchio's betters have endured her opinions (4.3.73-6). Though she makes her point and Petruchio 'hears' her, he does not allow her to have a new gown.

[53] Korda, "Household Kates." Korda writes that Petruchio's approach to domestication reflects the rise of capitalism, since he trains Kate in her ability to consume rather than her ability to produce. She writes that in the sixteenth century, the home was ideologically redefined as space for consumption, thus shifting a housewife's value from her productive capabilities such as cleaning and baking, to her consumptive skills, manifested in her ability to practice leisure. This is the basis of "housework theory"—since domestic labor has no exchange value in a capitalistic society, it is then rendered useless. Furthermore, Korda writes that the drudgery of this new type of housewifery was produced by the fact that leisure was expected to be performed, which Korda identifies as "subsidized nonproductivity."

The next symbol is the horse. The lord bids the attendants to persuade Sly that he has hounds and horses. This is a marker of status, since horses are an asset. Petruchio's horse, however, is quite startling. Biondello goes into great detail concerning the state of the animal,

> his horse hipped with an old mothy saddle and stirrups of no kindred; besides, possessed with the glanders and like to mose in the chine; troubled with the lampass, infected with the fashions, full of windgalls, sped with spavins, rayed with yellows, past cure of the fives, stark spoiled with the staggers, begnawn with the bots, swayed in the back and shoulder-shotten; near-legged before and with, a half-cheeked bit and a head-stall of sheep's leather which, being restrained to keep him from stumbling, hath been often burst and now repaired with knots; one girth six time pieced and a woman's crupper of velour, which hath two letters for her name fairly set down in studs, and here and there pieced with packthread. (3.2.42-62)

According to Bevington, this horse has about fifteen diseases.[54] Petruchio's horse is a direct reflection of his level of care and skill as husbandman. To have a horse in such a state is a poor reflection on a man in this society, and it also signifies miserliness.[55] His poor treatment of his horse suggests that he does not take care of his property, and it also foreshadows the state that Kate will be in once she moves in with him. In fact, one of the diseases that the horse has is lampass, "a thick, spongy flesh growing over a horse's upper teeth and hindering his eating."[56] This detail is notable because when Kate moves in with Petruchio, he starves her. He asserts that both of them are "choleric" and certain foods "planteth anger," so he recommends a fast (4.1.158-65).[57] She claims that even "beggars that come unto [her] father's door" are given a supply of food, yet she

[54] Shakespeare, "Taming of the Shrew," 130 Bevington notes that all of the diseases are listed in Gervase Markham's pamphlets on horsemanship. See Gervase Markham, "How to Choose, Ride, Train, and Diet Both Hunting Horses and Running Horses," 1593.
[55] See Gervase Markham, *Cheap and Good Husbandry, for the Well-Ordering of All Beasts and Fowls,* The twelfth edition. (London : printed by John Streater, for George Sawbridge, at his house on Clerken-well-Green, 1664).
[56] Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew," 130.
[57] See Michael C. Schoenfeldt, *Bodies and Selves in Early Modern England: Physiology and Inwardness in Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Milton* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 24. Schoenfeldt writes that a key component of the Galenic philosophy was making sure one's diet perfectly corresponded with his/her virtue, or humor. This alignment was used to help in assessing both health and disease. Moreover one's diet and digestive health were thought to have a strong influence over one's mental health as well as his/her soul.

cannot even get her basic needs met in her new home (4.3.4-5). Where she was a dominant woman in her previous household, she now has the status of one of the servants—required to yield to Petruchio's every whim and desire.

Joan Hartwig argues that the relationship between horses and women is of great importance in the play. She states that this relationship is meant to signify both women and horses as commodities.[58] Additionally, the tedious training that must be done to break a horse is similar to that which Petruchio imposes on Kate. More specifically, Hartwig makes the assertion that the journey to Padua in act four scene five is representative of repetitive training exercises that would be needed for a horse since Petruchio turns back to Verona whenever Kate contradicts him.[59] The same is true for all of the 'exercises' that are carried out in their house. She is not permitted to eat or sleep if she does not obey.

The last symbol is the lady, who in seeing her husband's peculiar behavior, "mourns at his disease," or mental illness. This is the persona that the player is instructed to imitate in order to persuade Sly that he is a lord who has been asleep for fifteen years. Kate bears the same sentiments, and she makes them known when she expresses concern at Petruchio's being tardy for the wedding ceremony. She is anxious about the possibility of Petruchio's absence knowing that she would bear the brunt of the shame and that her reputation would be fully tarnished. During her lament she calls Petruchio a "mad-brain rudesby"[60] and a "frantic fool." Finally after being married to Petruchio for some time, a distraught Kate crumbles under the abuse of a man who claims "he does it under name of perfect love" (4.3.12). This moment in the text is important because Kate is

[58] Joan Hartwig, "Horses and Women in" The Taming of the Shrew"," *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 1982, 285.
[59] Ibid., 288.
[60] Shakespeare, "The Taming of the Shrew," 130"rudesby" is defined as "unmannerly fellow."

utterly broken after being married for only a short time. This woman who has grown up with wealth and privilege is now without clothes, starving, and distressed. However, Kate quickly catches on to Petruchio's mad game, and she begins to yield to his erratic fits so that she does not have to remain a prisoner in her own home.

Considering the entire spectrum of Petruchio's domestication tactics, Emily Detmer argues that Shakespeare's contemporary audience may have still perceived Petruchio as showing great restraint because he does not physically abuse Kate.[61] For this reason, I argue that he is similar to the lord who "modestly" husbands his transformation of Sly. Detmer writes that Petruchio's behavior would have been classified as a "civilized" method of getting his wife in order.[62] She asserts that though Petruchio never hits Kate or abuses her in any physical way, his mental, physical, and social abuse does indeed scar her. Detmer passionately exclaims that "the popular discourse on wife-beating reform attempted to change men's attitudes about their use of physical violence without discussing women's experience of subordination."[63]

In light of Detmer's visceral argument and my own analysis of the play, I do not think that Kate genuinely experienced a genuine change of character. Rather, it seems that she realized the unrelenting nature of her circumstances: there was nothing she could do to regain her personal autonomy or leave the confines of her abusive home unless she complied with Petruchio's desires. It is sad to know that the aggressive personality that Kate used as a protective measure to deflect men's advances was the very characteristic that subjected her a lifelong union with the worst man of all. *Taming's* induction perfectly encloses this narrative, showing how the practice of enclosure

[61] Detmer, "Civilizing Subordination."
[62] Ibid., 274.
[63] Ibid., 279.

is one that incited male anxiety, which, in turn, led to many egregious forms of domestic violence and female subjugation.[64]

[64] Stephen Greenblatt, ed., *The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition*, 1997, 199–200 The Norton makes reference to the *Taming of a Shrew*, which was printed in 1594. This rendition is said to have been based off of performances of Shakespeare's *Taming*. I make note of this interpretation of the play because, in this case, the induction does fully enclose the play. At the end of act five, Sly wakes up and claims that he had a dream and now knows "how to tame a shrew."

CHAPTER TWO
She Must Assume Her Destined Livery

> Be that you are
> That is a woman; if you be more, you're none.
> If you be one, as you are, well expressed
> By all external warrants, show it now
> By putting on the destined livery.
> (2.4.135-9)[65]

After giving Isabella an unsettling ultimatum--her virginity or her brother's life--Angelo reminds her that she is a woman, and that, in order to affirm her station as one, she must put on the "destined livery." David Bevington clarifies that putting on the "destined livery" means "assuming the characteristic frailty that all women possess," which, of course, in Angelo's mind, would be equivalent to yielding up her virginity at some appointed time. I am intrigued by Angelo's description of Isabella's sexuality as "livery," as it seems to suggest that Isabella's initiation into sexual activity would be as regular as changing her outer garments. Following this logic, if sexual activity is something one can put on, then sexual abstinence must be something that one can take off (and put on) as well.

The *OED* defines livery as "a distinguishing feature; a characteristic garb or covering."[66] This, of course, overlaps with the definition of enclosure as an "outer covering" as mentioned in the introduction.[67] However, it also resonates with the common belief held in both medieval and early modern Europe that the virgin's hymen served as a marker and enclosure of her chastity, which is well encompassed in the concept of livery as a "distinguishing feature." The hymen distinguishes virgins from the rest. Kaara Peterson delves into the late medieval and early modern

[65] Shakespeare, "Measure for Measure."
[66] "Livery, N.," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed April 26, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/109344.
[67] "Enclosure, N."

obsession with the physiology of virginity—that is, the presence and anatomy of the hymen. She highlights some of the scientific findings of the hymen based on the research of Helkiah Crooke who describes the size, width, and shape of the membrane as it appears in the female body. Crooke's observations are cited as follows:

> In the end of this necke, immediately above the necke of the bladder, they place in Virgins the Hymen . . . which many will have to bee a slender membrane, nervous, not thicke, placed overthwart that it may shut the cavity of the necke of the wombe, yet perforated in the middest like a ring, that in growne mayds it will admit the top of a little finger.[68]

Procedures such as this became popular in the seventeenth century, with scientists such a Crooke developing greater interest in the anatomical structure of the hymen. These endeavors were sparked by Andreas Vesalius, whose dissections on the female body, originally affirmed the existence of this vaginal membrane.[69]

Not only was Isabella enclosed in the livery of her virginity, but she was also seeking to lead a celibate life by taking orders. The convent, of course, is another form of enclosure, and I would like to note that where the hymen is the enclosure for the single virgin, the convent is the enclosure for the collective of virgins. Still, *Measure* ventures even further to present the convent as an alternative female space for the bawdy house (or the brothel) located in the city. Each of these institutions presented options of residence for single, independent females (with obvious moral and religious differences). Therefore, having defined the terms of enclosure, the remainder of this chapter will unpack the ways in which Isabella's complex variety of virginal enclosures made the maid a desirable target for violence in *Measure's* Vienna. It is likely that from these

[68] Helkiah Crooke, "Mikrokosmographia a Description of the Body of Man (London, 1615)," 35; as cited by Kaara L. Peterson in "The Ring's the Thing: Elizabeth I's Virgin Knot and All's Well That Ends Well," *Studies in Philology* 113, no. 1 (2016): 104.
[69] Peterson, "The Ring's the Thing," 105.

findings, one could ascertain the perplexing status of and anxiety concerning the female's virginity in post-Reformation England.

Isabella is first mentioned before she appears on stage. When Claudio is arrested in act one scene two, he immediately begs his friend Lucio to seek out Isabella's help:

> I prithee, Lucio, do me this kind service:
> This day my sister should the cloister enter
> And there receive her approbation.
> Acquaint her with the danger of my state;
> To the strict deputy; bid herself assay him.
> I have great hope in that, for in her youth
> There is such a prone and speechless dialect
> Such as move men; beside, she hath prosperous art
> When she will play with reason and discourse
> And well she can persuade.
>
> (1.2.173-83)

This passage is telling because it exposes Claudio's perception of his sister's character. It is a natural action to appeal to family members in times of hardship, so this is not where the curiosity lies. The peculiarity of Claudio's statement arises from the manner in which he chooses to describe his sister. Firstly, he begins by informing Lucio that Isabella is scheduled to enter the convent and begin her probationary period that very day. This detail is seemingly important since Lucio would need to know where to find Isabella, and he would also need to be aware of the restrictions placed around her upon their meeting. However, Claudio's intention is clarified in the subsequent details. He tells Lucio "in her youth/ there is a prone and speechless dialect/ such as move men." One can surmise that a "speechless dialect" is referring to body language, and this skill, coupled with Isabella's youth, has made her favorable with men. Claudio goes further still, saying that Isabella possesses the "prosperous art" of "[playing] with reason and discourse." This seems to suggest flirtation and seduction because Claudio takes great care in pointing out that her "speechless dialect" specifically moves *men* and that she is quite persuasive in her art. Even with all of these

skills, one is still left to ponder whether it would be enough to provoke the sentiments of Lord Angelo, since the duke describes him in the very next scene as a "precise" man who "scarce confesses/ that his blood flows or that his appetite/ is more to bread than stone" (1.3.50-3).[70] However, with this being Angelo's reputation in the duchy, it is no wonder that Claudio would appeal to his sister who possesses all the persuasive charms of the seductive woman while yet being a maid of stricture.

The meaning of this passage and the dual nature of Isabella's character is also illuminated by the positioning of her introduction within the text. In act one scene two, the reader/viewer is introduced to Mistress Overdone, the notorious brothel owner whose name reflects her own sexual extravagance. Next, of course, is Claudio's verbal introduction of Isabella at the end of the same scene. Then, in act one scene four Isabella is physically introduced alongside Francisca, a nun within the convent she wishes to enter. I argue that Shakespeare intentionally uses this placement to communicate that Isabella is caught, or enclosed between two worlds. In order to unpack this, I will focus in on the character of Mistress Overdone and the way that she describes her space, and from there I will shift to Francisca and her description of life and etiquette in the space of the convent. This juxtaposition will serve to elucidate both Isabella's internal conflict and the fluctuating external perceptions of her that seem to follow her throughout the play.

When Mistress Overdone emerges in act one scene two, she is immediately met with taunts and ridicule as a result of her occupation. Lucio calls her "Madam Mitigation" because, as Bevington notes, "her function is to relieve desire" (1.2.43).[71] What follows is a series of

[70] Peter G. Lake, "Calvinism and the English Church 1570-1635," *Past & Present*, no. 114 (1987): 37 Lake writes that Puritans were referred to as "precisian radicals" because they did their best to impose their views on everyone else around them. ; Glenn Burgess, "The Divine Right of Kings Reconsidered," *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 425 (1992): 837–861 Burgess writes that Puritans made legislation difficult for James I and the rule of Angelo is meant to portray this puritanical attempt to rule a nation with religious legalism. See also, Maurice Hunt, "Being Precise in Measure for Measure," *Renascence* 58, no. 4 (2006): 243–267.

[71] Shakespeare, "Measure for Measure."

degrading jokes about the likelihood of Overdone being a carrier of syphilis and the many diseases that the men have acquired during their exploits in her brothel. Still, it is important to note that the mistress's attention is fixed elsewhere. She has grown accustomed to the banter, and so she easily dismisses the so called gentlemen. Overdone, is, however, quite engrossed in fear as she considers the impact that the new legislation may have on the future prosperity of her business. In a discussion with Pompey her partner in business (a pimp), she confesses the entirety of her worries:

> Overdone: Thus, what with the war, what with the sweat, what with the gallows, and what with the poverty, I am custom-shrunk. How now, what's the news with you?
> Pompey: Yonder man is carried to prison.
> Overdone: Well, what has he done?
> Pompey: A woman.
> Overdone: But what's his offense?
> Pompey: Groping for trouts in a peculiar river.
> Overdone: What? Is there a maid with child by him?
> Pompey: No, but there's a woman with maid by him. You have not heard of the proclamation, have you?
> Overdone: What proclamation, man?
> Pompey: All houses in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down.
> Overdone: And what shall become of those in the city?
> Pompey: They shall stand for seed. They had gone down too, but a wise burgher put in for them.
> Overdone: But shall all our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?
> Pompey: To the ground mistress.
> Overdone: Why, here's a change indeed in the commonwealth! What shall become of me?
> Pompey: Come, fear not you. Good counselors lack no clients. Though you change your place, you need not change your trade; I'll be your tapster still. Courage! There will be pity taken on you. You that have worn your eyes almost out in service, you will be considered. (1.2.81-111)

This excerpt is important because it touches on a few prominent details that the audience must latch onto. Firstly, this passage reminds readers/viewers that running brothels was a lucrative trade for women in early modern England. Especially in the context of this work, it is important to remember that women were also guilty of prostituting other women. However, Overdone's

work secures her independence: she is able to maintain economic stability as a single woman because of her practice. It also important to note that the brothel houses in the suburbs were already successfully removed in accordance with state legislation, which incites Overdone's fear of her own inevitable ruination. However, her pimp pacifies her with his steely assurance that their wealthy connections in government (most likely partakers in Overdone's services) would ensure her continued flourishing. I would like to also highlight that this licentious practice is only capable of continuously thriving in the city—traditionally the site of sinful behavior. All in all, Overdone is presented as a lewd woman who surrounds herself with the company of men who are just as debaucherous as she is. She is also a woman who is preoccupied with making money and maintaining her freedom.

In direct contrast to Mistress Overdone is Francisca, the nun from the votarists of Saint Clare, the order that Isabella wishes to join. Francisca and the convent are not greatly exposed to the audience, which is important for maintaining that element of mystery surrounding these enclosed women. Nevertheless, the short exchange between Francisca and Isabella does shed some light on the character of both women in order to allow for comparison with Overdone. The discussion is as follows:

> Isabella: And have you nuns no farther privileges?
> Francisca: Are not these large enough?
> Isabella: Yes, truly. I speak not as desiring more,
> But rather wishing a more strict restraint
> Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.
>
> *Lucio (within): Ho! Peace be in this place!*
> *Isabella: Who's that which calls?*
>
> Francisca: It is a man's voice. Gentle Isabella,
> Turn you the key, and know his business of him.
> You may, I may not; you are yet unsworn
> When you have vowed, you must not speak with men
> But in the presence of the prioress;

Then if you speak you must not show your face,
Or if you show your face you must not speak.
He calls again.

(1.4.1-14)

With the opening of this scene, Isabella speaks her first lines in the play. It is interesting that the first words we hear from her are those questioning the strictness of the convent, inclining the audience to believe that her standards are of greater austerity than those of the other nuns. It is unlikely that this would have been the case since those of the order of St. Clare lived as aesthetics and observed deep contemplative practice.[72] Instead, given Claudio's preceding description of Isabella, it may be that she does not trust her own willfulness and restraint. Francisca is not given an opportunity to follow up on this statement because Lucio has infiltrated this holy, female space. She must withdraw due to certain protocols. Nevertheless, her final lines supply the audience with further details concerning the life that Isabella so desires to lead. Francisca reminds Isabella that she is only allowed to converse with Lucio because she has not yet taken her vows. The only exception to this rule would be if the prioress were present, and even then, she could not be both seen and heard at the same time. To outside ears this may seems excessive, but once more hearkening back to Claudio's statement, it is presumed that women who are both seen and heard have the capacity to move men. And, as will be seen later seen in the play, being a maid whilst also being seen and heard may place a woman in even greater danger than the occupation of

[72] Ibid. Bevington outlines the basic tenants of the order of Saint Clare in his footnotes. See Jessica Slights and Michael Morgan Holmes, "Isabella's Order: Religious Acts and Personal Desires in" Measure for Measure"," *Studies in Philology*, 1998, 11 Slights and Holmes draw an insightful comparison between Isabella and St. Clare. They argue that Clare's determination to establish a religious order specifically for women is similar to Isabella's desire to become a nun in the first place because in both instances, these women deviated from the norm and denied men the opportunity to control the way they conducted their lives. See also Joan Mueller, *The Privilege of Poverty: Clare of Assisi, Agnes of Prague, and the Struggle for a Franciscan Rule for Women* (Penn State Press, 2006) the introduction and first chapter describe Clare's determination to be as poverty stricken and devout as possible. It is said that even her religious superiors pleaded with her regarding her seemingly excessive habits. This then begs me to identify yet another commonality between Isabella and St. Clare. This, of course, being that they were both far more devout than their peers, as evidenced by Isabella's appeal to Francisca for greater restraint in the convent.

Mistress Overdone. Francisca, therefore, is presented as Overdone's foil. The nun prioritizes chastity, obedience, and the order that governs the collective. However, though opposite in values and behavior, Francisca is also free to live a stable life as a single woman.

In light of these seemingly opposing portrayals of early modern womanhood, it is important to reiterate that Isabella is enclosed between these two worlds. She is neither a prostitute nor a nun, and the play does not seem to leave room for a woman to peacefully exist outside of this binary. In fact, Overdone and Francisca do not seem to experience this conflict to the same degree that Isabella does, but the rapidly changing religious and social climate may displace both Overdone and Francisca into Isabella's turmoil as both the brothels and convents are steadily "plucked down" in the wake of the Reformation.[73]

This conflation of the prostitute and the nun into a single character is not uncommon. This character type underscores the commonalities between the life of a prostitute and that of a nun in under Protestantism. Tracy Fessenden writes that this "nun-as-prostitute figure" is used as a literary tool to blur the boundaries of public and private space, claiming that both nuns and prostitutes simultaneously defied and reinforced their contemporary standards of "legitimate femininity."[74] Fessenden further argues that both the nun and the prostitute, as traditionally veiled women, are used as female characterizations of "instability, hiddenness, and deception." This

[73] Strasser, "Nuns and Whores : Houses of Women in the Male Public Sphere." This chapter is insightful because it paints a vivid picture of the seemingly identical nature of brothels and convents in providing a secure female space in a male dominated world. Strasser states that "the fate of these "unassimilated women" lies at the center of the following discussion-poor women, religious women, prostitutes, and nuns. While we have learned to situate nunneries and brothels at opposite ends of the social, sexual, and moral spectrum, early moderns perceived them as belonging to the same institutional universe."

[74] Fessenden, "The Convent, the Brothel, and the Protestant Woman's Sphere," 451–78. I would like to point out that Fessenden's work specifically addresses the character of Hester Prynne in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, identifying Prynne as a fallen women who has ultimately obtained a saintly status in her local community. Fessenden argues that this nun-as-prostitute character type is well employed in early modern literature, certainly including the works of Shakespeare. This article's placement of this female type is particularly interesting because Prynne is situated in a thoroughly Puritan society, and there was an aggressive push for Puritan legislation during the rule of James I, which *Measure* reflects quite clearly in the character of Lord Angelo.

statement is a powerful one since it provides a more thorough explanation for the language that Claudio uses to describe his sister, and it also hearkens back to this idea of male anxiety since the language suggests that the men were suspicious of these enclosed women. Though Isabella claims to desire a chaste life, Claudio is aware of some fiber of her being that may yet be willing to persuade a man should the occasion prove it necessary. Fessenden characterizes the cultural norm that shapes Claudio's thinking saying,

> …what I read as a predominately male discourse of sex deploys the figures of nun and prostitute to biologize woman's sphere and so render all women, whatever their claims to social privilege, sexual agency, or spiritual autonomy, captives of their female embodiment.[75]

This statement is profound, especially in the context of *Measure's* Vienna. Though Isabella is a virgin desiring the chaste life of religious orders, she has not yet taken her vows, and is still, therefore, a woman of the city. As such, she expected to offer her body as a bartering tool whenever a man bids her to do so.

Though Isabella is an intelligent and eloquent woman, as implied in Claudio's speech, both assertive and brave, as vividly demonstrated in her appeal for justice at the city gate in act five, and fully determined to live a life of faith and celibacy, she is held captive in her female body. Both Claudio and Angelo take advantage of Isabella's duality as both a virgin and a woman of the city for their own personal means. As previously noted, Claudio is aware that Isabella's being both a virgin and persuasive may be of use in persuading Angelo to set him free, and he is able to still access his sister because she is not yet avowed to the order of St. Clare. Angelo seeks to use his power over Claudio's life as a means to exploit Isabella's virginity to satisfy his own lustful appetite. He also only has access to Isabella because she is still within the realm of the city. It may

[75] Ibid., 457.

be helpful to examine the direct conversations between Angelo and Isabella and the subsequent one between Isabella and Claudio.

Claudio proves to be correct in his assessment of the value of Isabella's virginity in conjunction with her art of persuasion in arousing the interest of Angelo. In act two scene two when Isabella goes to appeal her brother's case before him, she is announced by her virgin status, and it seems to be the reason that Angelo concedes to seeing her:

> Servant: Here is the sister of the man condemned
> Desires access to you.
> Angelo: Hath he a sister?
> Provost: Ay, my good lord, a very virtuous maid,
> And to be shortly of a sisterhood,
> If not already.
> Angelo: Well, let her be admitted.
> (2.2.21-5)

One may also observe that when Isabella approaches Angelo to defend Claudio, she vocalizes her reluctance to defend his sin, but her choice of diction affirms this idea of being enclosed between two different spheres of female space. She says:

> There is a vice that most I do abhor,
> And most desire should meet the blow of justice,
> For which I would not plead, but that I must;
> For which I must not plead, but that I am
> At war twixt will and will not
> (2.2.32-6)

Due to Claudio's irresponsibility, Isabella is forced to defend actions that she herself, finds abhorrent. In fact, one should recognize that Claudio's emergency halted the beginning of her probationary period at the convent, which was set to begin that day. Once Isabella leaves the convent to go to Claudio's aid, there is this foreboding sense that she may not make it back. Outside its walls, she remains endangered.

As Isabella entreats Angelo on her brother's behalf there is a moment in the text where the world of the prostitute and nun seem to verbally collide. As I have noted in previous research of the play, when Isabella makes her case before Angelo, Lucio interjects with asides that seem to be coaching Isabella in a particular sexual exercise.[76] His lines are as follows:

> Give't not o'er so. To him again, entreat him!
> Kneel down before him; hang upon his gown.
> You are too cold. If you should need a pin,
> You could not with more tame a tongue desire it.
> To him, I say.
> (2.2.47-51)
> You are too cold.
> (61)
> Ay, touch him; there's the vein.
> (75)
> Ay, well said.
> (94)
> That's well said
> (114)
> Oh, to him, to him, wench! He will relent.
> He's coming, I perceive't.
> (128-29)
>
> Thou'rt I'th' right, girl. More o' that.
> (134)

The suggestion made by Lucio's lines is self-explanatory. In light of the nun-as-prostitute theory, it would be helpful to look at Isabella's lines just before Lucio's interjections. If read in isolation, Isabella's speech would read as follows:

> O just but severe law!
> I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honour!
> (44-5)
> But might you do't, and do the world no wrong,
> If so your heart were touch'd with that remorse
> As mine is to him?

[76] Elliott-Newton, "From Gate to Gate: A Study of the Restorative Power of Marriage in Shakespeare's Measure for Measure," 61. I would like to point out that I have analyzed the following lines in previous research, but the aim of my analysis was to illustrate and entirely different point, which ultimately led me to very different conclusions.

(57-8)

I would to heaven I had your potency,
And you were Isabel! should it then be thus?
No; I would tell what 'twere to be a judge,
And what a prisoner.

(72-5)

To-morrow! O, that's sudden! Spare him, spare him!
He's not prepared for death. Even for our kitchens
We kill the fowl of season: shall we serve heaven
With less respect than we do minister
To our gross selves? Good, good my lord, bethink you:
Who is it that hath died for this offence?
There's many have committed it.

(88-93)

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,
And he, that suffers. O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant.

(111-14)

Could great men thunder
As Jove himself does, Jove would ne'er be quiet,
For every pelting, petty officer
Would use his heaven for thunder;
Nothing but thunder! Merciful Heaven,
Thou rather with thy sharp and sulfurous bolt
Splits the unwedgeable and gnarlèd oak
Than the soft myrtle: but man, proud man,
Dressed in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assured,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven
As make the angels weep; who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

(115-128)

We cannot weigh our brother with ourself:
Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them,
But in the less foul profanation.

(131-3)

This “monologue” portrays an enclosed Isabella using the same words to talk to both worlds. Remember that she is in direct conversation with Angelo, the representation of strict moral code and puritanical laws. Lucio, on the other hand, represents the licentiousness of the city. For

Angelo, Isabella appears as a saint, but Lucio addresses her as if she were a harlot. This is precisely the point. As previously stated, everything she does, even things of an entirely moral or religious nature must still be filtered through her sexuality because she is enclosed in the female body. Once again, her virginal status complicates this even further because it is both her greatest power and her greatest vulnerability. It gains her access to Angelo, but it also positions her as a victim of his lust and authority.

After this heated altercation with Isabella concerning Claudio's fate, once alone, Lord Angelo reveals the truth: his interest in Isabella is owing to her virginal status and strict adherence to it. He is surprised by his own lust towards the maid, but he admits it (privately) nonetheless. He states:

> From thee, even from thy virtue!
> What's this, what's this? Is this her fault or mine?
> The tempter or the tempted, who sins most?
> Ha!
> Not she: nor doth she tempt: but it is I
> That, lying by the violet in the sun,
> Do as the carrion does, not as the flower,
> Corrupt with virtuous season. Can it be
> That modesty may more betray our sense
> Than woman's lightness? Having waste ground enough,
> Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary
> And pitch our evils there? O, fie, fie, fie!
> What dost thou, or what art thou, Angelo?
> Dost thou desire her foully for those things
> That make her good? O, let her brother live!
> Thieves for their robbery have authority
> When judges steal themselves. What, do I love her,
> That I desire to hear her speak again,
> And feast upon her eyes? What is't I dream on?
> O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,
> With saints dost bait thy hook! Most dangerous
> Is that temptation that doth goad us on
> To sin in loving virtue: never could the strumpet,
> With all her double vigor, art and nature,
> Once stir my temper; but this virtuous maid

> Subdues me quite. Ever till now,
> When men were fond, I smiled and wonder'd how.
> (2.2.168-94)

This soliloquy vividly portrays Angelo's agony, as he has finally encountered a woman who has hijacked his attention. Nevertheless, Angelo is utterly confused by his own feelings and his lack of over control over them, as is captured in his continuous oscillation between awe and anger. As he processes through his mixed feelings concerning Isabella, he finally draws his ultimate conclusion: Isabella's appeal is grounded in her maidenhood. He asserts that not even the polished charms of the "strumpet" could secure his interest, but that he is subdued by this "virtuous maid." Once again, it is intriguing to see how the virtuous woman is immediately juxtaposed with this strumpet and how both of these references surfaced as Angelo reflected on his interaction with Isabella. Even in Angelo's mind, the two distinct female types have merged, which is made clear in his next encounter with Isabella.

It is of no particular concern or great surprise that Angelo has developed an attraction towards Isabella. The problem, rather, is that what begins as attraction quickly evolves into infatuation and turns violent. Approval of Isabella's virtue is abruptly warped into infatuation with her virginity, since by scene four Angelo is ordering Isabella to yield her virginity to him in exchange for her brother's pardon. Many have taken issue with Isabella's character because she holds fast to her personal rules, and she immediately decides that her virginity is of greater value than her brother's life.[77] Though her decision may be unsettling in some regards, one should not be solely concerned with Isabella's decision to preserve self over saving her brother; instead, one should be perplexed and repulsed by Angelo's ultimatum. It is imperative to deal with his crimes

[77] George L. Geckle, "Shakespeare's Isabella," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (1971): 163–168 Geckle consolidates some of the popular sentiments toward Isabella, with many scholars calling her "rigid" and others likening her to a "fiend."

in the text before questioning Isabella's actions. Fortunately, Angelo informs the audience that he specifically targets Isabella for her virginity, thus reinforcing that the enclosure of virginity, though esteemed in some sense, may also make one vulnerable to grave danger.

Marie Loughlin discusses the danger posed by virginity in her book *Hymeneutics*. She describes the period's insistence on virginity as a "transitional" status, evidenced by the culture's categories of "maid, wife/deflowered woman, and widow."[78] These categories are alluded to in act five of *Measure*, when Mariana declares that she is neither maid, nor wife, nor widow at the duke's questioning. Because she identifies with neither of these categories, the duke affirms that she is "nothing," to which Lucio replies that Mariana may be a punk, or a whore (5.1.174-86). Still, Loughlin findings imply that female spaces that are presented as "inviolable virginal spaces or celibate spaces" have the potential to "trigger anxious and panicked suppression by the various male characters."[79] This is an insightful point because it precisely verbalizes Isabella's situation. Isabella is the only woman in the play that causes anxiety. Hearkening back to Angelo's monologue, it is marked by language suggesting anxiety and panic. There is a virgin in his presence that is not transitioning into marriage; instead, she is taking steps to permanently maintain her virginal status.

Angelo's language in scene four so vividly captures this sentiment of suppressing this inviolable virgin. The most disturbing of the lines reads,

> Who will believe thee, Isabel?
> My unsoil'd name, the austereness of my life,
> My vouch against you, and my place i' the state,
> Will so your accusation overweigh,
> That you shall stifle in your own report
> And smell of calumny. I have begun,
> And now I give my sensual race the rein:
> Fit thy consent to my sharp appetite;

[78] Loughlin, *Hymeneutics*, 103–4.
[79] Ibid., 106.

> Lay by all nicety and prolixious blushes,
> That banish what they sue for; redeem thy brother
> By yielding up thy body to my will;
> Or else he must not only die the death,
> But thy unkindness shall his death draw out
> To lingering sufferance. Answer me to-morrow,
> Or, by the affection that now guides me most,
> I'll prove a tyrant to him. As for you,
> Say what you can, my false o'erweighs your true.
> (2.4.155-171)

Angelo reasserts his ultimatum by highlighting his power and authority in the state, and, therefore, reminding Isabella of her own insignificance in comparison. Due to his elevated rank in the social hierarchy, he argues that no one would even consider Isabella's complaints. They would instead view her accusations as slander of a public official whose character is without blemish, which would, in turn, damage her own reputation. Then Angelo fully engages this language of suppression, as his tone becomes biting and sharp. He commands her to "fit [her] consent to his sharp appetite" and to abandon her shyness and deceptive blushing that appear to signal innocence when in reality, according to Angelo, they beg for a passionate encounter. And lastly, I would like to point out that Angelo characterizes Isabella's refusal as "unkindness." Because to refuse him and maintain this inviolable body when virginity is only intended to be transitional, causes anxiety. And that is unkind.

The combination of Claudio and Angelo's behavior towards Isabella places her in increasingly difficult circumstances. Claudio places her in a situation that forces her to consider the option of being raped or else living with the guilt of knowing that she could have saved her brother's life. Angelo's behavior directly threatens both her virginity and her chastity, as yielding to him would certainly have some emotional ramifications and distort Isabella's perception of self. It is also imperative to realize that Angelo's behavior pushes Isabella further into this enclosure between the worlds of Overdone and Francisca. This surfaces in her treatment of Mariana.

Isabella desires to save her brother and also maintain her virginity so that she may proceed with her original plan to join the convent and live a life of devotion and contemplation. However in order to do so, she must first inhabit Overdone's line of work and partake in what one could call the prostitution of Mariana for the purpose of exposing Angelo for the monster that he is. The overlap in the opposing spheres is further evidenced by the fact that Isabella perceives this bed-trick as a plan formulated by a man of God since the duke is still disguised as a friar. Though it is evident that Mariana readily consents to partaking in the bed-trick, it does not excuse the fact that Isabella uses another woman's virginity in order to secure her own freedom and make an appeal for justice.[80] Furthermore, it is the combined actions of Claudio and Angelo that leads Isabella into the duke's sphere of influence. As upsetting as Angelo's actions are, it is actually the duke's proposal of marriage that poses the greatest threat to the life that Isabella' desires.

In summation, it is evident that Isabella's purity, the very thing that was meant to protect her from social ruin, was then distorted and made to be the characteristic that made her a target for violence. Her virginity was viewed as a mitigation for an outrageous sexual appetite instead of the marker of purity and devotion that she intended it to be. Due to the chaotic events that unfolded in *Measure's* Vienna, Isabella has been in close company with the duke and is now forced to entertain a proposal of marriage though she does not desire it. The play ends with Isabella's silence, but one can only hope that she pursues a life of devotion if that is what she truly feels called to.

[80] Emily Gerstell, "All's [Not] Well: Female Service and 'Vendible' Virginity in Shakespeare's Problem Play," *Journal of Early Modern Studies*, no. 4 (2015): 187. Gerstell makes the argument that women who persuade others to partake in bedtricks are complicit in perpetuating the idea of virginity (and women's bodies) as a commodity with buying value in the marriage market. Her argument is based on Helen's character in *All's Well That Ends Well*, but it has merit in the context of *Measure* as well.

CHAPTER THREE
Nothing Less than Blackamoor

A significant portion of the scholarship treating *The Merchant of Venice* addresses the issue of "otherness" as it pertains to the treatment of the Jewish minority in Elizabethan England. Even as the scholarship explores race and gender, it still prioritizes these facets as they relate to the discussion of Jewish identity and anti-Semitism during the period.[81] There is valid reason for this distribution in the literature, as the play's most memorable character is a Jewish usurer and the plot centers on his utter demise in a Christian Venice. In order to paint him as the perfect villain, the play borrows on popular, (negative) early modern stereotypes of Jews, and positions the audience's sympathies with the Christian "victims" of Shylock's cruelty and unabashed vengeance. The goal of this chapter, however, is to reconfigure, even if for only a moment, the reader's sympathies in order include yet another "other." This other that I wish to discuss is the Negro maid who is briefly mentioned in *Merchant's* third act (3.5.29-40).[82] This moment in the text alludes to the views concerning the presence and function of blacks, specifically black women, in the wider context of early modern England. As this chapter will make clear, the degradation of the Negro maid surpasses even that of her female counterparts who are rejected by English society, particularly prostitutes (such as *Measure's* Kate Keepdown) and other ethnic and/or religious minorities (Portia and Jessica). I argue that the harsh treatment of the Negro maid can also be explained in terms of 'enclosure," and I will approach this usage in a variety of ways.

[81] James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (Columbia University Press, 1996). This book is one of the most comprehensive and authoritative works on the domestic relations of the English and the Jews.
[82] Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice."

Firstly, dark skin is represented through the metaphor of "shadowed livery".[83] This description requires readers and viewers to think of skin as an outer covering or envelope, which is the entry given by the *OED* for the term enclosure.[84] This portrayal of skin as being something capricious is perplexing because while complexion may in fact darken through repeated exposure to the sun, the change is not as dramatic, nor is it reversible, as the term "livery" seems to suggest. This portrayal does, however, remind readers that blackface would have been required in order to portray a black character on stage, and this vivid shift in complexion would certainly warrant the usage of the term livery.

Blackface is a performance tool that would have allowed white or fair skinned actors to invade a cultural space that was not their own; however, this tactic is further complicated by the fact that blackface had been used to depict evil characters on stage long before it was used to portray characters of African descent. And since those of African descent are not able to alter their complexions, this history of having one's complexion likened to spiritual darkness had grave ramifications, as will be seen in the case of the Negro maid in this chapter. Lastly, the nature of the maid's presence relates back to the idea of textual enclosure because while the other social outcasts and/or minorities are enclosed within the text, the maid is textually marginalized to the same degree that she is socially. Therefore, the permanent enclosure of dark skin is the characteristic which threatens, and is thereby used to justify the dehumanization and marginalization of the Negro woman in early modern England.

[83] Ibid. I am referencing 2.1.1-3 where the Prince of Morocco likens his complexion to shadowed livery. This has many layers of significance: it depicts the skin as an outer casing, but it also suggests that his skin is working attire, as livery also references the particular uniform required for one's given occupation.
[84] "Enclosure, N."

The attack on the Negro maid's character occurs in act three when Lorenzo attempts to defend the honor of his fiancée from Lancelot's hypocrisy. The exchange between the two men is as follows:

> Jessica: Nay, you need not fear us, Lorenzo: Lancelot and I are out. He tells me flatly, there is no mercy for me in heaven, because I am a Jew's daughter: and he says, you are no good member of the commonwealth, for in converting Jews to Christians, you raise the price of pork.
> Lorenzo: I shall answer that better to the commonwealth than you can the getting up of the Negro's belly: the Moor is with child by you, Lancelot.
> Lancelot: It is much that the Moor should be more than reason: but if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for. (3.5.29-40)

To defend his fiancée, Lorenzo highlights the fact that Lancelot has impregnated a Negro maid living in his household, asserting that he can supply better reason for marrying Jessica, the Jew, than Lancelot can for making sexual contact with a Moor. This statement reinforces the idea of the maid's inferiority because Lorenzo is in effect saying that being with a Jew is not nearly as abominable as what Lancelot has done. This is most likely owing to the fact that the Negro's blackness is permanent, while Jessica's religious affiliation may change if she marries a Christian (3.5.17-8).

Lancelot, however, makes no effort to defend the maid; instead, he follows Lorenzo's line of thinking and further injures her honor. First, he says that "it is much that the Moor should be more than reason," meaning that he is perplexed by the idea of the maid being pregnant. The reason for the confusion and concern surfaces in his subsequent statement: "if she be less than an honest woman, she is indeed more than I took her for." While Bevington's commentary stops short by saying that Lancelot is surprised by the pregnancy, I will go a step further and argue that the reason for Lancelot's surprise, as expressed in his comment, is that he believed the Moor to be less than human, or, at the very least, not entirely a woman. This conclusion may seem excessive

at first reading, but it is substantiated when juxtaposed with other similar statements made within this play as well as those made in *Taming and Measure.*

The first introduction to attitudes concerning skin complexion emerges in act one as Nerisa and Portia summarize the encounters with the suitors that have shown interest in pursuing Portia's hand. There are a total of nine men, including Bassanio, and there seems to be a hierarchical arrangement of the bachelors. The first set of suitors hails from northern Europe, while there are three suitors that originate from areas within or surrounding the European south. R.W Desai notes that of all the suitors (besides Bassanio) only the Englishman and Frenchman are given proper names in the text. This is significant because it expresses a higher esteem for the men that originate from the European North.[85] Portia even admits that the English suitor is "a proper man's picture," but she laments the fact that he cannot converse in any foreign languages including her own mother tongue, Italian (1.2.64-71). It is interesting that the Englishman would be the standard for what the proper appearance is for a man. This is especially important when considering the attitude that Portia directs towards the appearance of suitors that represent the cultural south. In regards to the Prince of Morocco whom she has not yet met, and the play describes as "tawny," Portia says,

> If he have the condition of a saint and the complexion of a devil, I had rather he should shrive me than wive me. (1.2.127-9)[86]

Portia expresses ardent disdain for the Moroccan prince solely on the basis that he must be of darker complexion due to his country of origin. It would be easy to excuse this comment as just another insult, since Portia seems to be dismissive of all of the suitors that have approached her up to this point—including all of the fair skinned northern European men. One would almost

[85] R. W. Desai, "Mislike Me Not For My Complexion," in *The Merchant of Venice New Critical Essays*, 2002, 305–23.

[86] Shakespeare, "The Merchant of Venice," 189. Portia uses the term "shrive" to indicate that she would rather be excluded from Morocco's pursuit. ; See "Shrive, V.," *OED Online*

immediately argue that Portia shows no interest in anyone, and so her attack of the Moroccan prince is no different than the others. Nevertheless, Desai interjects with a compelling point, arguing that "though [Portia] dismisses each of her European suitors disdainfully while discussing with Nerissa their national traits, ironically they have already rejected her, not regarding either her beauty or her wealth as sufficient inducements to offset the risk of being doomed to celibacy should their choice of the right casket miscarry."[87]

When the Moroccan Prince does finally arrive, he entreats Portia to not be offended by his complexion:

> Mislike me not for my complexion
> The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
> To whom I am a neighbor and near bred
> Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
> Where Phoebus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
> And let us make incision for your love. (2.1.1-6)

This passage is important because it exposes the striking difference in perception between the Moroccan prince and that of his northern European counterparts. Unlike the northerners, he excuses what may be identified as his weakness (a dark complexion). Though proud of his skin, he claims that he would still be tempted to "change [his] hue" if it increased his chances of being matched with Portia (2.1.11). He is also the only suitor up to this point to speak for himself—his lines are self-deprecating and this is juxtaposed with praises of Portia's own fairness and beauty. Portia, when directly conversing with the prince, claims that she is not deterred by his complexion, but when he chooses the wrong casket, she says:

> A gentle riddance. Draw the curtains, go.
> Let all of his complexion choose me so. (2.7.78-9).

[87] Desai, "Mislike Me Not For My Complexion," 306.

Portia's next southern suitor hails from Aragon. Another man who would be of a darker complexion, though not nearly as dark as the Moroccan, as the play wishes for us to believe. Notice that this suitor does not feel the need to make any reference to his complexion, to compare himself to northerners, nor to sing Portia's praises to the extent that the Moroccan prince does. He takes his oath to comply with the stipulations of the contract off stage, and after a very short exchange with Portia, he makes his choice simply hoping for a fortune in favor of "[his] heart's hope" (2.9.19-20).

The last southern suitor to approach Portia is, of course, Bassanio, who is Portia's cultural equal. He is not southern in comparison to Portia, as are the gentleman of Morocco and Aragon. As I said before, my focus is on the intersection of race and gender, and so my purpose for highlighting the identity of the men is to explain Portia's placement in the social hierarchy. The fair skinned Europeans dismiss her while the darker complexioned men of the southern region laud her. The northerners view Portia as a dark skinned Italian, while the Moroccan categorizes her as a fair skinned northerner. Desai further comments on this distinction claiming that the northerners are not willing to submit to the authority of Portia's father, but the southerners readily risk their romantic futures for a chance at Portia's hand. This portion of the plot also serves as an example of the widespread belief during the period that Italians were racially inferior.[88]

This digression addresses Portia more directly than it does the Negro maid, but the maid does not speak, and may not even be present on stage. Because of this, the reader must rely on this description of the social hierarchy that exists between Portia and her suitors in order to begin understanding the implications behind Lancelot's statement about the maid and why I assert that he perceives her as less than human. As just explained, Portia, an Italian, is perceived as inferior

[88] Ibid., 309.

by the suitors who originate from the European north, which includes England. While she is placed at the lower end of this hierarchy, she also bears prejudices of her own, as she likens the Moroccan prince to a devil without having met him due to his is expected dark complexion. Some may argue that she also likens the German, a northern European, to a beast, but it is important to remember that Portia says this in relation to his drunkenness. Even in this, she claims that at his worst "he is little better than a beast" (1.2.87). This statement is still preferable to the description of the Moroccan because the German's flaw is based on character, and even with this flaw, though by a narrow margin, Portia still gives him the satisfaction of being better than a beast. On the other hand, even if the Moroccan has "the condition of a saint," or is of pristine moral character, he is automatically a devil due to the hue of his skin. Thus, it is evident that Lancelot, who is depicted as an Italian in the play while bearing an English name, may have perceived the Negro maid as less than human due to her complexion alone.

In regards to this, I would still like to emphasize that the Prince of Morroco is tawny, while the maid is a Negro, or black. He is also royalty, and he comes dressed in all white. This may be the reason why he is able to speak and personally address his unfavorable color. He also claims that his skin is the result of his climate, which may also be his attempt at suggesting that he was not always tawny but became so over time.[89] Therefore, in terms of complexion, the maid is still inferior to the dark complexioned man that Portia likens to a devil.

One must also acknowledge the fact that Lancelot's slander against the maid begins with the claim of her being less than an honest woman, so it is important to explore the meaning of the

[89] See Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2003). Floyd-Wilson relies on geohumoral theory and other works from early modern science to address the idea of cultural difference as it was understood during the period. She emphasizes that those hailing from the south were perceived as cool-tempered and wise, while northers were hot-tempered and unruly. This geohumoral theory holds within *Merchant* because it is the northern European suitors that have the character flaws. However, this does not change the fact that blackness was unsightly, and it was dismissed without any consideration of character and temperament. This is evidenced in Portia's treatment of the Moroccan prince.

statement. For this, I will hearken back to *Measure for Measure* and compare the treatment of the maid with that of the women who received a similar label.

If you recall from the discussion of *Measure for Measure* in the previous chapter, when Mariana goes before the duke to testify against Angelo, it is revealed that she is "neither maid, widow, nor wife," which provokes the duke to identify her as being "nothing." Lucio supplements this label by saying that she may be a "punk," or a whore (5.1.175-86).[90] This statement suggests that prostitutes may be perceived as nothing in this society. Furthermore it distinguishes between women who society perceives as honest, and those who are not honest, or prostitutes. Honest may refer to a woman who is virginal or chaste.[91] In this case, the maid is virginal, while chaste goes beyond virginity to also signify virtuous character, which may include widows and wives. While Mariana's status is clarified and light shed on her relationship to Angelo, her circumstances bring attention to Kate Keepdown, a prostitute. Like the Negro maid, Kate Keepdown is marginalized, and she is not given any speaking parts in the play. However, like Mariana, Kate Keepdown receives justices, as the duke forces Lucio to take her hand in marriage and provide for the child that he had abandoned her with. For, as Marilyn Williamson writes, "this marriage is entirely one of the Duke's will to provide for Lucio's bastard, for the invisible, voiceless Kate Keepdown is never present to ask for marriage."[92] Therefore Mariana, a perceived prostitute, and Kate, an actual prostitute, are both made honest women by the end of the play, but when they were less than honest, they were perceived and treated as nothing.

[90] Shakespeare, "Measure for Measure."
[91] "Honest, Adj. 3b," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press), accessed May 9, 2018, http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/88149.
[92] Marilyn L. Williamson, *The Patriarchy of Shakespeare's Comedies* (Wayne State University Press, 1986), 103 as cited in, Michael D. Friedman, "' O, Let Him Marry Her!': Matrimony and Recompense in Measure for Measure," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 46, no. 4 (1995): 455.

Lancelot, however, states that if this Negro is *less* than an honest woman, then she is still more than what he had considered her to be. So Lancelot is confessing that he did not even give the Negro maid the benefit of being a prostitute, since this would still acknowledge her as being in possession of some human quality. This woman is denied justice: a justice that Isabella is able to demand and even Kate Keepdown is able to achieve. Furthermore, she is not even given the chance to address the slander that is directed towards her in the way that Jessica and Mariana are able to do. Bear in mind also that her grievances may even exceed the crime of slander. If one considers the fact that Lancelot views her as less than nothing coupled with her lack of agency in the text, Lancelot may have raped her without any consequence, and she would not have been given the "opportunity" to refuse his advances as Isabella did with Angelo.[93] Furthermore, the Negro maid is not provided with a companion who is her social equal to make amends for the disrespect that she endures in the way that Portia is given Bassanio. So in comparing the treatment of other women as well as the dark complexioned man in these works, the Negro maid stands at a loss.

The comparison of the Negro maid with the other characters presents the enclosure of dark skin as a characteristic that makes a woman a target for violence and slander. The comparisons have evidenced that the black maid is treated more egregiously than white prostitutes and dark complexioned men, but it is equally important to understand why she is made to endure such treatment. In *Black Face, Maligned Race,* Anthony Barthelemy provides a thorough history of the perceptions of blacks in England, and he juxtaposes the way that these perceptions were

[93] I use the term 'opportunity' lightly, as I realize that Isabella's refusal would come at the expense of her brother's life, which is abhorrent. However, we must still keep in mind that Isabella was still given a "choice", and she chose to go to the jail and prepare Claudio for death.

characterized on stage with the ways in which they were activated in daily life.[94] The book is prefaced with an explanation of the terminology that was utilized to describe black people during the period. As you may have noticed even in the body of this work, the terms *Negro* and *Moor* were used interchangeably. The term *Blackamoor* is also present throughout the literature.[95] Barthelemy reminds us that while Moor was a term used to describe black people, not all Moors were black people. Instead, Moor was an all-encompassing term used to classify a number of distinct "others," specifically, anyone who did not identify as Christian, European, or Jewish.[96] From this, Barthelemy raises a startling, yet insightful point: namely that "Englishmen had witnessed black characters on stage long before they saw real black men."[97] The misconceptions of the stage were not abandoned once the English actually became acquainted with real blacks and their respective cultures and customs; instead, the newly acquired knowledge of real Africans was fused with the presumptions and stereotypes encapsulated in stage culture up until that point, a concoction which produced some of the most popular examples of Moors that exist in Renaissance drama such as *Othello*.[98]

Considering this idea that black characters on stage were a precursor to the physical presence of black people in English society, one may be curious about the function of blackness on stage before the age of exploration. Barthelemy does not permit curiosity to linger, explaining

[94] Anthony Gerard Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne* (LSU Press, 1999).
[95] Michael Neill, "'Mulattos,'" Blacks," and" Indian Moors": Othello and Early Modern Constructions of Human Difference," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 49, no. 4 (1998): 364. Neill addresses the indeterminacy of the term Moor, explaining that it was used to describe a variety of different people groups. In one regard, it could be used to describe North Africans (in relation to Islam), but then it was expanded to include all Africans. There are instances when texts indicate Moors that are white, black, or tawny, so this shows just how loose the term was. Then, after the discovery of the New World, there was discussion of Indian Moors, which signified Native Americans.
[96] Barthelemy, *Black Face, Maligned Race: The Representation of Blacks in English Drama from Shakespeare to Southerne*, x.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid.

that there was an extensive tradition of using blackface and dark clothing to portray evil characters on stage. Black was the color used to identify the damned in Christian tradition both in literature and on stage. It was also the color used to embody evil. Therefore, marginalizing blacks could be seen as a noble enterprise in Elizabethan England, since it could be taken for resisting evil and upholding virtue. Barthelemy also hearkens back to Winthrop Jordan's famous commentary on the practice of labeling Africans as *bestial* and *beastly,* which suggested sexual deviations in this group, a belief that has trickled down well into the twenty-first century.[99] And so, another reason for portraying the Negro maid as inferior is that while her white counterparts may be viewed as promiscuous, her own sexuality, at the very best is viewed as animalistic. Barthelemy's work serves as a great starting place for the exploration of *Merchant's* Negro maid, because it introduces the combinative effect of the problematic methods of performing blackness on stage, the misappropriation of Christian doctrine, and the gross distortion of black women's sexuality in so far as each of these factors contributed to her marginalization both social and textual. I will explore each of these facets in greater depth.

The Prince of Morroco's reference to his skin as "shadowed livery" is the best starting place for a discourse on performance tactics in portraying racial difference on the Elizabethan stage. While the usage of blackface has already been mentioned, it is also important to remember that black textiles were used in conjunction with pomades in order to represent dark skin tones. Ian Smith describes this usage of textiles as the formation of the "prosthetic black body," because it not only allowed English men to characterize themselves as a racial other, but it also, and more importantly, violated the humanity of the black individual whilst also creating a platform for future

[99] Ibid., 2; See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (UNC Press Books, 2013)

"colonial objectification."[100] Pomades and textiles were ordered and used in various shades in order to depict varying degrees of blackness and otherness. For example, pomades existed in shades such as "Spanish brown," a hue that was used to depict characters who were more favorably characterized as tawny, such as Othello and the Prince of Morocco, instead of the stark black complexion that was achieved through the usage of burnt-cork and reserved solely for the depiction of Negro slaves.[101]

This distinction is clearly marked out in *Merchant* because the Prince of Morocco has a much different status than other, specifically darker, blacks such as the Negro maid. Although he is unsightly from Portia's perspective, he still maintains a royal status within his own culture, and he is still granted the opportunity to attempt the riddle in pursuit of Portia's hand. The Negro maid, however, is precisely that—Negro. She is not present on the stage and her color disqualifies her from speaking. Since I argue that this Negro woman receives even poorer treatment than that of the white prostitute, one could retort that Kate Keepdown is also unseen and unheard. To this, I would respond that Kate Keepdown has a social companion that seeks justice on her behalf. Mistress Overdone, a female brothel owner, Kate's senior in the trade, brings her case before Escalus, arguing that Lucio had abandoned her with child and that Overdone herself, had been looking over the child since Lucio broke his promise to marry Kate.[102] Morocco would be the social companion of the blackamoor maid. Both classified as "Moors" from the English perspective, and both bearing complexions other than "white," they both represent a cultural other that is marked by color rather than religion. Overdone uses her privileged position (over Kate that

[100] Ian Smith, "The Textile Black Body," in *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare and Embodiment: Gender, Sexuality, and Race*, ed. Valerie Traub (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 170–71.
[101] Leman Thomas Rede, *The Road to the Stage* (London, 1836), 34 as cited in; Smith, "The Textile Black Body," 171.
[102] Shakespeare, "Measure for Measure"3.2.193-8.

is) in order to bring attention to Lucio's transgressions and secure a marriage for Kate by *Measure's* closing act. There is no such reprieve for the Negro maid. Morocco's privileged position is one that is instead used to pursue a romantic union with the "fair Portia" (2.7.43). Furthermore, Morocco also suggests that he is dismissing the attentions of the best women of his homeland in addition to claiming that he would be willing to dissociate from his hue if it meant earning Portia's favor:

> …By my love I swear,
> The best-regarded virgins of our clime
> Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
> Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.
> (2.1.9-12)

This excerpt, then reinforces the idea of whiteness being fairer to the complexion that Morocco describes as "shadowed." For while he claims to be so enamored with his own skin, he is willing to do away with it, and he has no desire to pursue any woman, regardless of her virtue, who is colored in a similar fashion. Lastly, Morocco's description of the women of his land as the "best-regarded virgins of his clime," serves to imply that the women bear his same complexion without requiring him to explicitly say it. He refuses to identify himself as "tawny" or 'black," and instead relies on figurative language to describe his otherness. It is also important to note that "best-regarded" is not remotely close to signifying desire, especially when one juxtaposes this half-hearted comment with Morocco's promotion of Portia to the status of "queen," which is indeed what she would be if she married him. She would be sovereign over the best-regarded virgins of Morocco.

The likening of black skin to livery reminds *Merchant's* audience that black textiles are being used for the production of the play, and Smith writes that these textiles were produced from

the most elaborate and expensive fabrics.[103] Therefore, these textiles on their own denote large expense and wealth, which fits into *Merchant's* larger theme of economy. However, using these expensive fabrics to represent black skin then creates a liaison between dark complexion and monetary value. Or as Smith himself states, the theatre creates "an image of blacks as dehumanized commodity objects whose textile ontology bears the transactional origins of manufacture and merchandise."[104] Livery is also, by definition a mark that may distinguish a person as belonging to a particular group, which is precisely how Morocco invokes the term.[105] However, livery is also the term used to describe the clothing worn by servants in order to distinguish them as workers for a certain household.[106] This latter definition is appropriate for the Negro maid. Where Morocco's tawny skin marks him as belonging to a particular people group, the maid's burnt-cork enclosure marks her as belonging to a class of blacks that the English would associate with slavery. Hence, her hue is one that resonates with themes of property and ownership.

Kim Hall also concedes that the maid represents the intersection between economy and race in both the play and early modern England as a whole.[107] Referencing Elizabeth I's expulsion edicts, Hall claims that the mentioning of a pregnant black woman works within the stereotypical framework of the black woman consuming resources that were already limited, thus creating additional anxiety for the state.[108] Hall further writes that *Merchant* toys with the anxiety surrounding resources by depicting a society in which the women possess all of the wealth and

[103] Smith, "The Textile Black Body," 173–74.
[104] Ibid., 174.
[105] "Livery, n. 2d," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press); Smith, "The Textile Black Body," 181.
[106] "Livery, n. 3b," *OED Online* (Oxford University Press).
[107] Kim F. Hall, "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? Colonization and Miscegenation in" The Merchant of Venice"," *Renaissance Drama* 23 (1992): 89.
[108] Ibid., 92.

each of the prominent Christian male figures is facing bankruptcy.[109] Where Portia and Jessica bear monetary wealth, the blackamoor maid also produces a fortune, but not one of her own. Hall writes that Morocco's loss in his pursuit of Portia was also a denial of his sexuality.[110] And as the contract stipulates, Morocco is required to remain celibate. This, Hall writes, then ends the possibility of Morocco carrying on his bloodline while also giving Lancelot "license to replace him as the Moor's cultural partner and to appropriate her body."[111] The idea of appropriating the maid's body reinforces the idea of her being owned. Since she is regarded as the property of her master, the wealth of her womb belongs to the household instead of herself.

The Negro maid's color has made her undesirable to Morocco, and it also opened her up to appropriation by Lancelot. Therefore, the maid is not only denied the possibility of becoming a queen, but her position as a slave is reinforced. Finally, the prince's forced celibacy now prevents all the women of Morocco from obtaining queenly status, and it also ensures that there are no more heirs to the Moroccan throne. That being said, the play marginalizes not only the "unheard, unnamed, unseen black woman" as Hall calls her, but I argue that it also disenfranchises the "best-regarded virgins" of Morocco, the fertile black women who are now unable to bring further wealth to the prince as outlined by Portia's dead father.[112]

Another reason for omitting the black woman from the stage is that the intersection of femininity and blackness also poses a greater disturbance to the English social order than that created by the black man.[113] Lynda Boose states that the union of the black male and the white female is most frequently used as the exemplary type when depicting relationships that transgress

[109] Ibid., 99.
[110] Ibid., 98.
[111] Ibid.
[112] Ibid., 89.
[113] Lynda E. Boose, "'The Getting of a Lawful Race': Racial Discourse in Early Modern England and the Unrepresentable Black Woman," in *Women, 'Race' and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (Routledge, 1994), 41.

the cultural norms of early modern England.[114] The realization that whiteness is swallowed whole or at least subordinate to the "dominance of dark pigmentation," is precisely why the black woman could not be represented on the stage.[115] In the event of a black father and white mother, the offspring would inherit the complexion of the father. Though this union would still be unsettling in the context of early modern England, this result still upholds the values of a patriarchal system, which views women as subordinate men, and necessary only as far as they can perpetuate the male lineage.[116] The Negro woman, however, offers a far more egregious social transgression because she as a female would possess genetic dominance over the white male, giving birth to a child that would inevitably inherit a darker complexion. As a result, black motherhood threatens to negate white patriarchalism, by presenting a female, who through her genetic makeup, has the capacity to physically mark her children as her own.[117] That being said,

> the black man is representable. But within Europe's symbolic order of dominance and desire, the black woman destroys the system, essentially swallowing it up within the signification of her body.[118]

Therefore, the "shadowed" enclosure of the Negro maid is one that threatens the social structure of Elizabethan England. By forcing her into the margins, the play only requires its readers and viewers to imagine her, which further reinforces Lancelot's characterization of her. Both textual and theatrical marginalization assists audiences in dehumanizing her. In the case of readers,

[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid., 44.
[116] Ibid., 45.
[117] Ibid., 46.
[118] Ibid., 47; See also M. Lindsay Kaplan, "Jessica's Mother: Medieval Constructions of Jewish Race and Gender in The Merchant of Venice," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2007): 1–30 In 3.5 1-24 Lancelot criticizes Jessica for being born to a Jewish father, arguing that she should hope that she is a bastard. The interesting part of his argument is that it fully ignores Jessica's mother's contribution to her existence. Kaplan addresses this dismissal of Jessica's mother claiming that the text insinuates that having a Christian father is all that is required to make one a Christian. Though Kaplan also writes that Europeans were known for depicting Jews with strong somatic differences (such as dark skin), the fact remains that Jessica's child could hide under the name of a Christian father and pass for English. This would be highly unlikely for Negro maid's unborn child.

it is easier to read Lancelot's characterization of her as simply a play on words without pausing to consider her existence and the significance of her condition. And as it pertains to viewers, particularly those of the early modern period, it would have been much easier to imagine a fiendish or beastly woman of a deviant sexual nature.

Merchant's visible-invisible Negro maid's 'presence' perfectly characterizes the existence of blacks in early modern England.[119] During Elizabeth I's reign, great lengths were taken to subdue any documentation that might serve as evidence for the presence of blacks in the realm.[120] This political move was motivated by the government's desire to deflect attention away from England's engagement in the slave trade, which was steadily increasing, as this knowledge might have tainted the nation's image.[121] Tamara Lewis writes that archival evidence indicates the presence of blacks in England as early as 1500 though the nation's participation in the slave trade is only officially recognized in 1677.[122] While England did not acknowledge slavery until the aforementioned time, the nation certainly bore discriminatory sentiments towards blacks. In fact, this newly Protestant government borrowed heavily on theological explanations of blackness that were propagated by the Roman Catholic Church—explanations that regarded the dark pigmentation of Africans' skin as a signifier of sinfulness.[123] The play, though written at the tail end of the sixteenth century, reveals the nature of slavery within the realm:

> What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?

[119] Peter Erickson, "Invisibility Speaks: Servants and Portraits in Early Modern Visual Culture," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 9, no. 1 (2009): 23–61. Erickson assesses the concept of the visibly invisible black individual through an analysis of art from the sixteenth century into the twentieth century. What he finds is that blacks went from being literally invisible in art to being visually portrayed as socially invisible. He also argues that blackness and whiteness are mutually invisible: blacks are socially invisible while whites are invisible due to the establishment of whiteness as the cultural norm. He particularly traces the evolution of the Negro servant in art over time since that was the earliest and most enduring portrayal of blacks.

[120] Tamara E. Lewis, "'Like Devils out of Hell': Reassessing the African Presence in Early Modern England," *Black Theology* 14, no. 2 (2016): 108.

[121] Ibid. Lewis writes that the nation's image was particularly important to maintain due to England's ongoing conflict with European Catholic powers.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

You have among you many a purchased slave,
Which like your asses and your dogs and mules,
You use in abject and in slavish parts,
Because you bought them. Shall I say to you,
"Let them be free, marry them to your heirs!
Why sweat they under your burdens? Let their beds
Be made as soft as yours, and let their palates
Be seasoned with such viands"? You will answer
"The slaves are ours."

(4.1.89-98)

This statement by Shylock is made in the scene that immediately succeeds the introduction of the Negro maid. He makes it quite clear that the slaves present in the realm are treated like animals. Therefore, while the Prince of Morocco is likened to a devil for his complexion, the Negro maid, who bears an even deeper complexion is ignored at best and treated like an animal at worst. This is reflected in the way that Lancelot characterizes her, which fuels my belief that the maid's pregnancy is the result of a sexual assault.

Lewis cleverly juxtaposes the words of Sir Thomas More (1501) with those used in Elizabeth's expulsion edict of 1601: where the former likens the Africans arriving with Catherine Aragon as "hunchbacked, tattered, barefooted, pigmy Ethiopians, like devils out of Hell," the latter wishes to expel "Negares and Blackamoors" seeing as they are "infidels, having no understanding of Christ or his Gospel."[124] Lewis argues that More's association of blackness with evil and Hell is one that augured the "racist conceptual universe" and has, therefore, been imbedded into the modern world.[125] Moreover, Elizabeth's words, which follow a century later, serve Lewis's argument that the realization of the slave trade and England's increased participation in it, facilitated the ongoing social decline of blacks in the nation.[126]

[124] Sir Thomas More and Elizabeth Frances Rogers, *The Correspondence of Sir Thomas More* (University Press, 1947), 4 and Frederic A. Youngs, *The Proclamations of the Tudor Queens* (CUP Archive, 1976), 10 as cited in Lewis, "'Like Devils out of Hell,'" 115, 118.
[125] Lewis, "'Like Devils out of Hell,'" 118.
[126] Ibid., 112.

This continuity between Catholicism and Protestantism concerning the interpretation of blackness is quite intriguing. As Lewis notes, the language used at the time by both religious authorities and the queen herself attempted to disqualify blacks from the Christian faith and participation in its sacraments due to their "nature."[127] By doing so, the nation justified the awful treatment of these "others" because there was now a distinct, unchanging bodily marker for those presumed to be unchristian. I would particularly like to highlight the fact that this discourse successfully tainted the general perception of black femininity, crafting a view of the black female's body as an object that was simultaneously admirable and repulsive, which is again necessary to subdue the power of her fertility and the threat it poses to English patriarchy.

The practice of always coupling any desirable features present in the black woman with unsightly characteristics was commonplace. Jennifer Morgan traces this practice in imperial travelogues which document sightings of black women in both Africa and the Caribbean.[128] Her analysis reveals that by the time English male travelers reached their destinations, they possessed preconceived ideas about how to depict the black woman in the literature, which typically resulted in an "imagined native" rather than the woman actually seen.[129] As an example, Morgan cites the travel narrative of Richard Ligon, who upon first sighting a Negro woman in Barbados describes her as both beautiful and majestic, exceeding even the grace of Queen Anne, but who later in his journey characterizes a group of black women of having such sagging breasts that give them the appearance of six legs as they bend to do their field work.[130] Morgan argues that this type of narrative, in which Ligon obviously participates, distorts the familiar aspect of femininity to

[127] Ibid., 113, 115.
[128] Jennifer L. Morgan, "'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder': Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 167–192.
[129] Ibid., 168.
[130] Richard Ligon, "A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados," 1657, 12, 13, 51 as cited in Morgan, " Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder," 167–68.

transform the black woman into an entity that is grossly unfamiliar. As a result "beauty became beastliness and mothers became monstrous," and this prevented the black woman from "[embodying] 'proper' female space."

This idea of the black female body being disqualified from representing a proper female space vividly encapsulates my notion of enclosure. This skin which is meant to be a protective covering for the Negro instead operates to her detriment, since it signifies to outsiders that her body is not fully female. She is instead presented as the antithesis to the ideal of the beautiful, "compliant," white female, and is only portrayed as perfect when characterized as a creature from Hell.[131]

In retrospect, the Negro maid is subject to the most egregious forms of violence because the skin that encloses her black, female body is transformed into a weapon that fights against her. The skin that is intended to be a protective barrier is instead a permanent imprisonment within a discriminatory Elizabethan England. *Merchant's* major players make her lowly status quite clear. The enclosure of dark skin bears the complexion of the devil, so the Negro maid does not deserve to be beside the fair Portia. The enclosure of dark skin is the antithesis of white, fair, and queenly, so the Negro maid cannot rouse the affections of the Prince of Morocco. The enclosure of dark skin is beastly, so the Negro maid is treated like "asses, dogs, and mules." The enclosure of dark skin is naturally predisposed to be an enemy of the Gospel, so the Negro maid cannot be saved by a Christian marriage. The enclosure of dark skin does not signify a proper female space, so if the

[131] Imtiaz Habib, "'Hel's Perfect Character'; or The Blackamoor Maid in Early Modern English Drama: The Postcolonial Cultural History of a Dramatic Type," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 11, no. 3 (2000): 277–304. Habib draws on the description of the blackamoor maid as "Hel's perfect character" in *The Knight of Malta* (see 4.1.65) further identifying this character as "culturally blackened" and "textually marginalized." Habib argues that this character type of the silenced Negro maid only surfaces at the moment of her persecution in the texts and even then, she is only then depicted against "compliant" white womanhood.

Negro maid be only less than an honest woman, she is indeed still more than anyone ever took her for.

CONCLUSION
Rebuilding Broken Boundaries

The Taming of the Shrew, *Measure for Measure*, and *The Merchant of Venice* have masterfully illustrated the issue of gendered violence in early modern England. The juxtaposition of these plays has illuminated a set of characteristics that makes women targets for violence. My goal in writing this thesis was to use 'enclosure' as a means for both reflection and projection. The stories of Kate, Isabella, and the Negro maid, have certainly facilitated the process of looking back, permitting modern readers and viewers to glance into the daily lives of women during the reign of the Tudors and Stuarts.

My purpose for organizing this thesis in terms of characteristics that place women in danger was not to blame these women for the things that happened to them. As it stands, Kate kept to herself and desired to stay home and remain unmarried. Isabella had intentions of living a life of celibacy and joining the convent in total devotion to God. And in the case of the Negro maid, one can only surmise that she wanted to be in the story so that she could tell us what she wanted. When read in isolation, these women appear to just have experienced isolated injustices; however, by reading them side by side, it becomes impossible to diminish their experiences.

Instead, the juxtaposed readings have communicated that females are harmed when male anxiety is provoked. However, the plays also reveal that provoking this anxiety does not truly require any action from the female. Kate was silent when Hortensio and Gremio began to insult her. And Petruchio did not have to "tame" Kate. He could have simply married another rich woman elsewhere in fruitful Padua. Isabella merely had a conversation with Angelo. The Negro maid was just there.

The problem is not the women. Rather, there is something flawed about the way that the men are socialized. This triad depicted male anxieties about emasculation, rejection, disinheritance, and, ultimately, loss of control. When the men in the plays felt threatened in either of these areas they began to attack. Instead of being introspective and addressing the root of their anxieties, they each projected onto the women around them, dehumanizing them in order to justify their violence.

These three stories are still relevant for our current social climate. Right now, the status-quo of gender relations is crumbling beneath a wave of feminism that is demanding society to acknowledge the reality of domestic violence and sexual misconduct and their embeddedness in the infrastructure of our culture. Institutions and organizations are beginning to really take a stand against gendered violence in schools and in the workplace, training students and employees alike to be both proactive in prevention and consistent in reporting. The visceral narratives of suffering women are being ushered into the conversation. Women are stepping forward and disclosing their painful experiences of having their boundaries broken. These stories have disoriented our culture, and people are trying to discern how we can move forward to rebuild boundaries and keep them intact.

Through the stories of Kate, Isabella, and the Negro woman, it has become clear that an integral step in rebuilding these boundaries is to acknowledge the humanity and inherent value of all women instead of treating them like objects. Additionally, in order to keep these boundaries intact, young boys need to be taught and encouraged to process their anxiety in healthy ways, so that when they mature, they do not feel provoked to project onto a woman nearby. This is not the feminization of men, which seems to be the argument of some. This is the re-humanization of

men. Instead of being reduced to their wealth, sexual prowess, and bravado, they can reaffirm their manhood in ways that do not require them to objectify the women in their lives.

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