



Early Modern Studies Journal

Volume 6: Women's Writing/Women's Work in Early Modernity/2014

English Department/University of Texas, Arlington

Words about Women's Work: The Case of Housewifery in Early Modern England¹

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Starch, needles, pins, cooking pots, kettles, frying pans, lace, soap, vinegar, stockings do not appear on their [male historians'] shopping lists, but they regularly appear on mine. They may ignore them, but could they and their families do without them?

--Joan Thirsk *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in early Modern England*.

. . . the question of *how* women worked and what their work meant—both to them and to a broader population—remained unresolved.

---Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama*.²

I. Where are the housewives in early modern studies?

What counts as history? What constitutes housewifery? Questions like these lie beneath these feminist interventions into the historiography of housework. Thirsk's answer to the first is obviously that housework counts as history, or it should. The second question generates others since housework is a recurring flashpoint in both feminist studies and economic history: for example, does a housewife produce or consume, how can such work be measured, remunerated?³ Although it may seem odd for this essay in a twenty-first century volume on "women's work and women's words" to begin with so quaint an epigraph as a 1970s shopping list (lace?), Thirsk's critique bears revisiting, especially now, as scholarship on early modern England takes a global turn. When we talk about overseas ventures, where are the housewives?⁴ They were certainly at home in kitchens, using imports like sugar and spices for confectionary and cookery, shaping English culture in their own right while participating in globalization and colonization. In particular, scholars account for early modern women writers and readers of recipe books and other domestic arts as part of the expanding world of trade.⁵ But in what other ways might we understand the relationship between traffic and housewifery? Indeed, women's domestic labor, family needs, and domesticity in general do *not* appear often enough in studies of early modern commercial expansion.⁶ Is this habitual omission a remnant of the so-called "the separation of the spheres," a paradigm that feminist scholars have inherited, challenged, historicized, and debunked because we all know that housewifery was (and still is) work?

Considering prominent paradigms for understanding housewifery in early modern studies, as I do in section II of the essay, leads us to explore further the "unresolved question" of what housewifery meant for early modern people. Section III analyzes a sample of contemporaneous popular representations of housewifery to find a paradox. In drama,

domestic conduct treatises, and other forms, wives both perform housewifery and yet require “maintenance” with men’s money. This paper concludes that English Renaissance business culture had a stake in defining housewifery as dependent upon business. Because of this, we do well to keep housewifery and business always together in our approaches to either site of early modern culture.

The traditionally gendered separate-spheres discourse for this period is perhaps most familiar to us by way of Edmund Tilney’s *The Flower of Friendship* (1578)⁷:

The office of the husbände is to bring in necessaries, of the wife, well to kepe them. The office of the husbände is to go abroad in matters of profite, of the wife, to tarry at home, and see all be well there. The office of the husbände is to provide money, of the wife, not to wasfully spend it. The office of the husbände is, to deale, and bargaine with all men, of the wife, to make or meddle with no man. The office of the husbände is, to give, or the wife, to keepe [T]he office of the husbände is, to maintain well his lyvlihood, and the office of the woman is, to governe well the houshold.⁸

When England’s commerce expanded in the decades after Tilney’s treatise was first published, taking husbands farther and longer away, then “matters of profite,” the provision of money, “deal[ing] and bargain[ing]” went with them. Home meant for them something other than a place where valued work happened; wives and housewifery could provide havens for or burdens on husbands. No watershed moment erupted into “the separation of the spheres” that demoted housewifery to second best after male business. Rather, a traditional hierarchy that privileged male skills eroded the ideological importance of housewifery, though women continued to do the actual work of keeping goods, stewarding goods, and governing the household.

This emerging gendered division of value linked men, productivity, and profit to business “abroad”; and women, consumption and leisure with “home” and domesticity. The division was more ideological than material, on the one hand, since women (and men) worked (and still do) in homes, producing unremunerated goods and services to support their household economies. As Merry Wiesner has shown, economic, ideological, and political changes affected the *cultural evaluations* of women’s work, even as the nature of that work did not change.⁹ In particular, economic developments that included overseas travel and a culture of business helped to disconnect the essentially unchanged nature and necessity of housewifery from its devaluation. On the other hand, from the perspective of business, men experienced “division” and “separation” from home (and families experienced that absence too). It is in sixteenth-century England when commercial obligations to travel began to foster both material and conceptual separations between husbands’ commercial activity and that of housewives. The fact that “the house became less the central institution of production” is reflected in the etymology of the word “business.”¹⁰ Beginning in sixteenth-century England, “business” signaled “serious” activities carried on outside the home (and, increasingly farther from the home), a history of specialization that damaged the evaluation of housewifery. Because “[c]onceptions of gender . . . shape our perception of what constitutes work, of who is working, and of the value of that labor,” a culture of business that was male privileged travel over home.¹¹ The expansion in commercial travel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries started the process that full-blown capitalism finished: the devaluing of women’s work at home. By granting the prejudice against housewifery, and its source in business culture, we can better assess the paradoxical representation of housewifery.

The meaning of “business” pivoted from the general condition of being busy, occupied, and “engaged *in anything*” to a new sense of professional occupation, task-fulfillment, and, specifically, trade: “a person's official or professional duties as a whole; one's regular, habitual, or stated profession, trade, or occupation.”¹² Over the period, this usage morphed further into “a particular occupation or means of earning a living; a trade, profession, or pursuit.” Whereas the first several entries in the *OED* are obsolete and range from “exertion and effort” (2) to “care and attention” (6) and the prying of a “busybody” (8), the first modern meaning for “business” encompassed the sense of “trade and all activity relating to it ... the world of trade and commerce,” along with the sense of employment more generally: “a serious occupation distinct from a pastime.”¹³ Our modern definition of “business” admits these dimensions, although an older, less familiar (to us), affective meaning yet obtained in the early seventeenth century: “anxiety, solicitude, care; distress, uneasiness;” this last definition suggests that “business” is opposed to “contentment,” ease, and pleasure.¹⁴ When commerce and exploration drew husbands away from their hearths in greater numbers and for longer periods, those “hearths” grew laden with ideological weight. Homes became imagined as havens or respites from care for men. With productivity equated with business abroad, housekeeping (and the keepers of the hearths) appeared as *not business*. In such a formulation, wives, it seemed needed to be “maintained”

II. Historiography and housewifery

A brief review of the paradoxical treatment of housewifery in modern scholarship will show what we gain from maintaining dialogic or relational accounts of housewifery and business, women’s work and men’s money. The starting point for any consideration of

women and work in pre-industrial England is Alice Clark's *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (1919). There are no housewives in Clark's study; no chapter appears on housewifery (the book covers women working as "Capitalists," in "Agriculture," "Textiles," "Crafts and Trades," and "Professions"). And although "home" bears an index entry, along with "household accounts," "housing," and "wife," "housewife" does not. Clark explains why she discounts as an economic category "the highest, most intense forms to which women's productive energy is directed":

the spiritual creation of the home and the physical creation of the child. Though essentially productive, such achievements of creative power transcend the limitations of economics and one instinctively feels that there would be something almost degrading in any attempt to weigh them in the balance with productions that are bought and sold in the market or even with professional services.¹⁵

Still, despite these immeasurable and theoretically extra-economic activities of homemaking and childbearing, Clark subsequently acknowledges "production for domestic purposes" or "all goods and services, either material or spiritual" produced for and consumed by the family not "for sale or exchange."¹⁶ She calls this "domestic industry," which she sees as a valued field of productivity for early modern English women. Further, she laments its loss for post-industrial women driven either to idleness in the newly privatized sphere of home or to wage labor outside the home, depending on their class status and income.¹⁷

"Domestic Industry, a system whereby men and women worked side by side in the home, had ceased." For Elizabethans, in Clark's golden-age view, "[t]here was little talk of men 'keeping' their wives; neither husband nor wife could prosper without the other's help."¹⁸ To restate: according to Clark, people did not "talk of men 'keeping' their wives" because work by both

sexes was needed and valued. Yet, Clark's two clauses are not mutually exclusive. Even though people *experienced* housewifery's equality with business, in supporting a household's survival and prosperity, that mutual interdependence did not prohibit a growing *perception* of housewifery's dependent position. There was "talk" of husbands providing for wives. It is the talk that interests me here.

Nearly a century after Clark, Keith Wrightson illustrates this this paradox of talk and fact. In *Earthly Necessities*, Wrightson acknowledges that "women's economic contribution was indispensable" even as he grants both the legal and customary constraints on women.¹⁹ Wrightson seems to have Alice Clark in mind when he challenges the "allegation" that husbands did not economically support their wives: "The notion that a woman was economically supported by her husband was not alien to early modern society, as its sometimes alleged. There are references enough to the husband's duty to 'provide for,' 'maintain' or 'keep' his wife, indicating a privileging of the male role in resource provision. But the practical reality, nonetheless, was of mutual interdependence in the joint endeavor of sustaining their family."²⁰

Wrightson and Clark agree that women's housework in pre-industrial times was valued as much as men's work; indeed, Wrightson goes on to summarize the many positive associations of housewifery in contemporary English discourse, whereas Clark had omitted housewifery from *Working Lives* altogether.²¹ The coincidence of statements in two major studies of work in early modern England reveals the enduring paradox in assessing the value of women's domestic labor. Both scholars emphasize the material versus discursive basis of the issue: did people *say* that husbands 'supported' wives, and did wives *say* they were 'kept,' even though everyone understood and appreciated the work of both partners? Comparing

Clark's assertion that "There was little talk of ..." and Wrightson's equally confident claim, "There are references enough to. . .," invites us to attend to "talk of" and "references" to women's housewifery in dialogue with men's business that was said to "support" their wives.

The apparent contradiction between the *discourse* (of the "kept" or "maintained" wives) and the *reality* that both women's and men's labor (paid and unpaid) vitally supported the family—the paradox has not been adequately explained. For example, theories conflict about when, how, and whether housewifery declined from an appreciated calling and skilled form of labor to a consumption-oriented "art" "subordinated" to men's profitable employment. For example, Susan Cahn in *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* asserts that women lost public positions and "found themselves newly enclosed in the private society of their families" in the period under study.²² Meanwhile, Margaret J.M. Ezell uses the same evidence to conclude differently: "There is no indication that [the English housewife's] function in the household is seen as less valuable than her husband's."²³ In an article that accounts for the "transformation" of middling-sort women' "From 'Goodwife' [or productive housewife] to 'Mistress' [or mere supervisor]," Margaret George sees bourgeois wives of the seventeenth century "confined" to their homes, performing housewifery that "free[d] men" from attending to apparently unimportant matters.²⁴ Ruth Kelso shows that the "minutiae" of household management belonged to the "lady of the Renaissance," while great matters were men's business.²⁵ Similarly, Roberta Hamilton describes this period as one when "the woman's environment—the home—shrank in size and scope, the man's world was expanding. For him it was a new world of business, politics, the professions, trade, land, the colonies."²⁶

These second-wave feminist accounts reflect in part the enduring hierarchal order that viewed housewifery as the “minutiae” that “freed” men to greatness and located importance primarily in men’s business. In addition to the gendered divides between great and small labors and free versus confined bodies, scholarly and popular discussions of the value of housework also cluster around the issues of gender and familial duties, wage versus unpaid labor, and location, “home versus abroad.”²⁷ For example, in *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* Marjorie McIntosh asserts: “By attending to the physical and emotional needs of their relatives, [women] contributed to a positive social environment and enabled men to pursue work outside the home.”²⁸ Broadly speaking, such accounts view either pessimistically or optimistically the changing status of women, all of whom were housewives.²⁹

More recently and with greater theoretical grounding than these earlier feminist studies, Wendy Wall casts the question of housewifery’s value in a different light, essentially asking whether housework was “beneath” or “beyond” men?³⁰ Demonstrating that housewifery was a calling for women at all social levels, signaling not primarily marital status, but “a vocation and a practice” with “task-based knowledge,” Wall’s magisterial study *Staging Domesticity* successfully “rescue[s] domesticity” from what she sees as un-historicized notions of “women’s place,” their powerlessness, and other “retrograde values” sometimes assumed by feminist scholars.³¹ Implicitly opposing such terminology as quoted above—for instance, that wives were “confined” and that men’s labor was “important” while women’s was “minute”—Wall asks, “How could women be ‘relegated’ to the household at a time in which it had not yet even superficially withdrawn from economic life or from some

yet unborn public sphere?"³² This provocative query upturns earlier assumptions that domesticity was a (if not "the") "private" sphere, as illustrated in the terms of Cahn's and others' studies. Wall offers a needed intervention into some long-held beliefs about "women's work" in feminist theory and economic theory generally, by showing that "industry," productive and skilled labor, formed the basis of the "newly popularized Post-reformation ideal" of femininity.³³

While indebted to Wall's paradigm for acknowledging the value, force, and power of housewifery in early modern England, my reading of the evidence offers a slightly different answer to her rhetorical question: how could women be "relegated" to the private sphere of the home? Specifically, I do not consider Wall's question rhetorical because many contemporary discourses *did* "relegate" women, devalue their work, and proclaim husbands' money the means to maintain them. Wall's shrewd historicizing and brilliant analyses of texts establishes the real material weight of domestic work and its symbolic power. When housewifery is viewed *in relation to* the developing commercial economy that called husbands away, then, we see the culture of business challenge that weight and power of women and domesticity.

Feminist interventions, like Wall's, into the material value of housewifery have vitally changed thinking on the topic; for example, feminists have critiqued the "blind spot" of housework in the writing of Marx and Engels, and historical studies such as Louise Tilly and Joan Scott's the path-blazing *Women, Work, and Family* and Susan Strasser's *Never Done* show clearly the economic import of housewifery³⁴ Yet, the "housework is work" approach—however vital it has been-- sidesteps important facts about the historical representations of

housewifery. Though *we* value housewifery and early modern people did too; nonetheless, housewifery was sometimes *perceived* and represented as a distraction from men's "real" work; and housewives became coded as consumers.

III. household stuff

How *did* "housewifery appear" (to paraphrase Pistol's farewell to Mistress Quickly in *Henry V*)?³⁵ It is true that housewifery was widely acknowledged in the period for contributing to the health and prosperity of families. But the "positive" spin was not uniform. Alongside the "equal partner" view put forth by Whately and echoed by Clark and Wrightson, housewifery was also seen as separate from and unequal to men's business abroad. One factor affecting the perception of women's work in this period was the way that mercantilism defined itself in contradistinction from homes and domesticity, and hence housewifery. Women were excluded from business, as Mary Poovey has argued: "in the process of formulating theoretical rules [for late sixteenth-century accounting practices], women were being scapegoated; the unlawfulness that was taken to be a natural characteristic of their minds was used to justify women's exclusion from the rule-governed aspects of business writing." In other words, the invention of the "market" made business "off limits" to women.³⁶ The same processes that "relegated" women to housewifery envisioned market transactions as beyond women's understanding. For example, the mercantilist tracts of the mid-seventeenth century by Thomas Mun, Edward Misselden, and others repeatedly underscore the "mystery" of commerce, implicitly excluding women and other "ignorant" people from the privileged discourse of trade.³⁷ These trends remind us that "the character of women's work was not only a function of economic factors" but defined by myriad cultural

assumptions, practices, and beliefs.³⁸ Emerging commercial requirements, demanding, for example, long and short-term travel, had the ancillary effect of lessening the perceived value of housewifery conducted by women at home. The material facts surrounding travel further advanced this devaluation simply because most women could neither leave their homes nor garner the capital needed to engage in long-distance trade.³⁹ Housewifery was thus defined, in part, by misogyny and biology as well as a changing culture of business, regardless of the work that women did or did not do.

One result of this construction is that, despite the business acumen that women possessed and that housewifery required, their skills were downplayed. I have demonstrated this elsewhere, using the case of the city craftsman's wife, Mistress Eyre, of narrative and stage.⁴⁰ In Thomas Dekker's play, *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, Margery offers sound advice about conserving the shop's capital, squandering it neither on bribes nor additional workers; yet her husband, the master craftsman Simon Eyre continually silences her by sending her off for "breakfast for my men" and insulting her with such culinary terms as "kitchen stuff" (7.48). Though Margery does seem to have a head for business, Simon relegates her to the kitchen and out of his workshop. Similarly, though in a tragic register, Alice Arden in *Arden of Faversham* (1592), displays intimate knowledge of *her* husband's holdings, not only inasmuch as she promises his property to her lover, but also as she engages in conversations with men about the legal terms of Arden's land ownership. While her husband conducts his business away from home, Alice proves a knowledgeable accountant and a potentially able administrator. She does "mismanages [the estate in a] profligate and sinister" manner to serve her own best interest, yet Alice possesses the requisite knowledge.⁴¹ For example, when a neighbor man comes to inquire about a real estate matter, he initially regrets that Alice's

“husband is from home / Whenas my purposed journey was to him,”⁴² but the man quickly assures himself: “Yet all my labor is not spent in vain, / For I suppose that you can full discourse / And flat resolve me of the thing I seek.”⁴³ Yet Arden, like comical Eyre, disregards his wife’s ability and uses his rare conjugal visits mostly to order her to prepare his meals.⁴⁴ These representations show men of business excluding and relegating housewives from what another domestic-tragedy merchant calls “great affairs.”⁴⁵ By recognizing the ways that the new requirements for business negatively impacted the home, we then may see one phase in a long historical process by which domesticity and women’s housewifery are devalued as not productive and less vital than men’s commercial affairs.

With men’s business increasingly physically separate from their homes, popular discourses, including drama, represent housewifery as trivial and non-productive, the home as a respite from labor for the husband, a place of settlement *after* business travel, even though it was definitely a place of work for wives and servants left behind.⁴⁶ For example, *Of Marriage and Wiving. An Excellent, pleasant, and Philosophicall controuersie* speaks of home as a “haven” for husbands, on the one hand, but also as emasculating, on the other.⁴⁷ As a debate, or “*controuersie*” set up as a pro/con exchange between two Tasso brothers about marriage and women, the dialogic form in part dictates this ambivalence. So, for example, Tofte’s translation of the Italian tract has the opposition (or “con”) voice pillory housewives who complain about everything, including *both* husbands who depart for “businessse abroad” *and* those who malingering at home:

if thou ridest about thy businessse abroad into the Countreys, shee then sayth, it is an excuse and devise onely to shunne and hie from her companie: and if thou stay not still spending thy time idley by her, as no wise man will or ought, except hee be out of

his wittes: . . . if thou keepeth within doores, shee imagines thou doest it to watch her as a spie: and if thou doest abroad, sheele thinke thou canst not abide her.⁴⁸

Granting the parodic device of this portion of the text, one may still detect disdain for men idling at home (such men are mad), a prejudice echoed in other cultural utterances, as when Othello dares: "Let housewives make a skillet of my helm."⁴⁹ Meanwhile, the "pro" side also extols the virtues of housekeeping (in both senses of the word), claiming that men wisely exchange the "hurliburlies" of court, trade, and "troublesome businesses" for home.⁵⁰ In these instances, "businessse" seems to transpire only "abroade" among men, and travel, productive activity, and movement are set in opposition to idleness, and the company of women "within doores." These examples suggest a business culture alternately idealizing homes and housewifery, for example as respite from trouble and "care;" but also devaluing the same as feminizing and demanding care. I see here, in nascent form, an ideological construction of home as recreational rather than productive.

The needs, duties, and desires proper to men's business and women's housewifery crowded the stages and the pages of popular literature, with the idle housewife (and sometimes the bad male provider) often the brunt of the joke. For instance, *The Bachelor's Banquet*, an English translation of a satiric misogynist text in French (1603) imagines the sitcom style hilarity ensuing when a housewife lolls in bed, refusing to entertain her husband's business companions. She locks up their stores, misdirects the servants, and even hides the beer spigot!⁵¹ The unwanted guests, whom she considers her spouse's "odd companions," are, to him, valued business associates: "such men as can either much further or much hinder me."⁵² Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* offers a similarly hilarious tidbit when the

merchant-husband returns home with his cronies to find himself and his would-be guests locked out of his house at dinnertime.⁵³

The popular dramatic form of citizen comedy similarly depicts anxious merchants, uneasy about their wives' occupations at home and in shops, such as the draper Quomodo's jealousy of his wife, Thomasine, in Middleton's *Michaelmas Term* (c. 1604-1606). Jonson's city satires likewise use plots that turn on the fear that "when the cat is away, the mice will play," to reveal tension between housewifery (conflated with sexuality) and business—and merchant-husbands' absence from home, in particular.⁵⁴ For example, Corvino in *Volpone* locks up his wife Celia like a precious commodity herself, while idle housewives, such as *Epiccoene's* Collegiate Ladies clash with husbands over the production and consumption of household resources.⁵⁵ In these literary and dramatic examples--of which there are many more—housewifery either actively undermines a husband's business, through locked doors, wasted resources, and "lost" beer spigots; or housewifery exposes husbands' dependency on their wives. The latter problem is articulated in how (or whether) the housewife understands and performs her duties; whether she obeys, neglects, or defies conventional expectations; and whether she "loves to be maintained well" or actively contributes to the household economy.⁵⁶

Another common representational strategy is to depict housewifery as a drain on or distraction from men's business. We see the former misattribution in popular pamphlets and in plays satirizing women for spending rather than making money. For example in the broadly comic poem, Samuel Rowlands's *A crew of kind gossips* (1609), "six honest

husbands" talk back to the wives' complaints. One, an accused miser, plays on the stereotype of the gadabout, spendthrift wife:

Give me some money, Money is her song

She loves to be a spending all day long.

Shal I *maintaine* an ydle huswife so?

There's not an honest man but will say no.⁵⁷

Beneath this ideological construction of the "ydle huswife," charged with perpetual spending, is her husband's resentment of "maintain[ing]" her. William Whately, in a more pro-marriage (and less funny) *A bride-bush or, A wedding sermon* advises a husband to

. . . [allow] her sufficient *maintenance*, agreeable to his place and ability . . . Hee must not thinke himself so absolutely Lord of all, but that shee must also have the free and plenteous use of all, according as his calling requires, and his sufficiency will beare . . . let her be made equall partner of that which her husband hath.⁵⁸

Despite the "equall partner" clause, Whately grounds the household economy firmly in the husband's occupation and income, referring to "his place and ability," "his calling," and "his sufficiency." Whately's rhetoric places the husband in the giving vein; he "allow[s]" and he "giveth his right" to his wife. In his other major marriage treatise, *A Care-cloth* Whately instructs a fretful bachelor on how a man's financial success and personal ease depends on good housewifery. The bachelor predicts his own economic demise if mated with a bad housewife: "What if my wife should prove carelesse, and unhuswifely, wanting forecast and skill to make the best of things, and so become an hindrance, rather than a helper to mine estate? . . . What if she be sluttish and uncleanly, and work loathing in mee by ill ordering of

those things that should give me most comfort?"⁵⁹ Such fantasies reveal anxious feelings about housewifery's power as either a help to or a hindrance of business.

Domestic tragedy is another dramatic subgenre that confronts anxiety about this sort of domestic dependence. Whereas housewifery made indispensable and immeasurable contributions to support a domestic economy, in plays where the home is under strain, housewifery is itself *in need of* financial support from husbands. For example, an early example of the genre, the anonymous *A Warning for Fair Women*, depicts the yet-faithful wife, Anne Sanders, and her neighbor agreeing on George Sanders' substantial breadwinning capacity, even though he has recently denied Anne money for household goods and personal items. The neighbor says, "He keeps you wel, who saies the contrary?"⁶⁰ Other such "tragic" husbands, the factor, or merchant's agent, in Middleton's *Women Beware Women*, and the gentleman/man of business in Heywood's *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, accuse their respective wives of straining resources and "lov[ing] to be maintained well."⁶¹ As Frankford accuses his adulterous wife, Anne:

Was it for want

Thou playedst the strumpet? Was thou not supplied

With every pleasure, fashion, and new toy—

Nay, even beyond my calling?⁶²

These husbands, often absent for business, also complain that their marital lives distract from their work. If not direct indictments of housewifery as such, such claims construct homes as potentially emasculating, and wives as consumption-driven. For instance, in *Woman Killed*, Frankford jests that his wife has lured him from other obligations: "How I neglect my business!"⁶³ (Frankford uses the term disingenuously in this case, since the

'business' he embarks upon at this moment in the play is that of catching his wife in bed with his houseguest.) Similar blame is directed at the wife, Bianca, in *Women Beware*. Her new husband Leantio—standing literally on the threshold between home and his business as a factor--rejects Bianca's call to stay home one more night on the grounds that she will cause his unemployment: "I shall not care which end goes forward."⁶⁴ In addition, all the husbands, engaged-- as they are-- in some form of commercial activity, report that they "must" leave home; a situation that I argue elsewhere is foundational to the genre of domestic tragedy.⁶⁵ Claims like this imply that commerce compels them and also that such compulsion is "needful" in order to support the homes they vacate. Although all historical research on women's work in general and housewifery in particular across Europe and in the New World documents women working in and out of wage-markets, making invaluable contributions to family and society, and so on; and though many texts themselves depict wives as capable and skilled in housewifery, this contrary sense that housewives are 'kept' persists.⁶⁶ For example, Leantio's judgment that Bianca "loves to maintained" just one day after her wedding stems more his projection than her thus far modest desires.

IV. wiving and thriving

The discursive commonplace in domestic drama and elsewhere that tropes wives as consumers "kept" by or distractions to husbands, contradicts not only material fact and the characterization of women characters but also corollary texts from the period. For example, cookery books and treatises on domestic conduct admirably enumerated the *English Housewife's* many skills and virtues, such as those included in the subtitle to Gervase Markham's popular book, *English Housewife: her skill in physick, cookery, banqueting-stuff, distillation, perfumes, wool, hemp, flax, dairies, brewing, baking, and all other things*

*belonging to a household.*⁶⁷ These defenses of housewifery abounded and amounted to what surely was widespread acknowledgment of and appreciation for housewifery as work. The briefest review of contemporary accounts of housewifery reveals a set of perceptions acknowledging the skills required of the work and granting its economic import. "To thrive, one must wive," Thomas Tusser reports baldly in *Five Hundred Points of Husbandry*, a text that "allowed women to conceive of their work in the same way as men."⁶⁸ Meanwhile, some contemporary household advice books recognize wives' unique value by warning men to defer to their wives and keep out of certain food production areas on their own estates in (most often the dairy). The humanist writer Juan Luis Vives' *The instruction of a Christen Woman* (1529) recognizes "certain things in the house . . . which the husband giveth over his right unto the woman," including supervision of female servants, making purchases for the household, and "see[ing] to those things that belong unto the kitchen."⁶⁹ A similar statement appears in William Whately's *A bride-bush: or, A wedding sermon* already quoted above, "let her be made equall partner of that which her husband hath" (fol. 33). This view of the positive and basic contributions of housewifery, essential to both profit and comfort, long persisted.⁷⁰

With the emergence of the class of men who accumulated wealth through trade came new organizations for household life.⁷¹ Re-organization is reflected in the spatial division of home from business, and the ideology that split commerce from housework, labor from leisure, production from consumption, men from women. As the prosperous classes of merchants and tradesmen grew, one story goes, the wives of these men experienced a reduction in their economic roles: they "became consumers rather than producers for their families and the marketplace."⁷² The idle woman engendered pride as well as bitterness in the

laboring man. Decades of feminist research have exposed the limitations in such assessments of housewifery as consumption. When we review the gendering of economic life in the age of commercial expansion, however, we see business culture indeed reframing housewifery. Despite lived experience, there was *talk of* a “separation of the spheres” far earlier than many histories admit. Although feminist scholars in particular have fruitfully discounted such a “separation” as false, by, for example, defending housework as work; nonetheless, the evidence I have reviewed shows a *perceived* division of labor (and a devaluation of housewifery) that is gendered and hierarchical, emergent and contested.

We can learn more about how domestic life and the largely female purveyors of its routines shaped business and its “culture” and were shaped by that culture in turn.⁷³ Though not yet “separate spheres,” housewifery and business became constructed as women’s work and men’s work respectively, and contemporary discourses document ambivalent representations of the value of housewifery.⁷⁴ Feminist scholars have helped us to recognize “the trope of the thrifty housewife,” the wide range of labors involved in housewifery, and the crucial role women played in obtaining and maintaining credit.⁷⁵ What I have shown, though, is that these ‘facts’ –that housewives contributed to household and nation—and in light of the positive contemporary words about “the good housewife,” nonetheless, there was “talk of” wives requiring maintenance. Husbands were sometimes said to “keep” their wives. Feminist scholars continue to challenge the lingering historiographical “separate spheres” that Thirsk and Wall observe by classifying housewifery as work, and by following Wiesner-Hanks in minding the gap between women’s work and words about it. I hope that I have

added to these interventions by attending closely to the often-contradictory discursive and dramatic representations of women's housewifery in relation to their husbands' business.

Like it or not, a "separate spheres" inheritance continues to haunt scholarship. We need a dialogic practice that keeps housewifery and business in the same conversation to begin to address a gap that Ania Loomba has described thus: "we still don't have an extended study of the early modern connections between the formation of the 'modern' family, the consolidation of the imperial state and Europe's global domination."⁷⁶ Housewifery—which I define as a vital a set of people, activities, skills, and resources—is one such bridge between family formation and the emergence of empire. But more than "add housewifery and stir," we must carefully attend to *how* the people, places and activities of housewifery were perceived and represented in the period, and how scholars reconsider them currently.

¹ I would like to thank Amy Tigner and the anonymous readers at *EMSJ* for their insights and assistance. I developed the seeds of this essay in papers given at conferences, whose organizations and panel organizers, along with my collaborators and co-presenters I cheerily acknowledge. I thank Lena Orlin, who invited me to present on "The Material World of Elizabethan Drama" at the Sixteenth-century Studies Conference (1997); Lori Newcomb, Naomi Liebler, Carol Neely, and Merry Wiesner-Hanks, who worked with me on the MLA Special Session Panel, "Valuing Women's Work in Early Modern English Studies" (1999); Wiesner-Hanks (again) and Michelle Dowd, who shared my roundtable, "Where is Women's Work In Studies of Early Modern Culture, Consumption and Credit?" at the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women" (2011); Newcomb, for our joint workshops, including "Alice Clark at 90" for the *Attending to Women in Early Modern Europe* (2009); Steve Deng who invited me to participate in his Seminar on "The Culture of Business" (S.A.A. 2013); and Frank Whigham and his graduate students for inviting me to speak at UT-Austin (2001). Michael Osborne helped me copyedit.

² Thirsk, Joan. 1978. *Economic policy and projects: the development of a consumer society in early modern England*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press), Wendy Wall, *Staging domesticity : household work and English identity in Early Modern drama*, Cambridge studies in Renaissance literature and culture. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 15.

³ Gerda Lerner and Heidi Hartmann, among many others, worked to unravel the historical "problem" of women's unremunerated domestic labor in capitalist systems. See Donald Treiman and Heidi Hartmann, eds., *Women, Work, and Wages: Equal Pay for Jobs of Equal Value* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1981) and Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986). Again, the anonymous EMSJ reviewers helped me to think harder about the role of consumption in housework.

⁴ The focus of the current essay does not allow fuller consideration of the role of domestic (in both senses of the word) consumption in the "demand" for international imports. Kim F. Hall's analysis of Englishwomen, slavery, and the sugar industry incorporates feminist, materialist and race studies and exemplifies what I consider best practices in accounting for housewives as productive consumers. See "Culinary Spaces, Colonial Spaces: The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century," in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects*, ed. Valerie Traub, M. Lindsay Kaplan, and Dymphna Callaghan (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996), and *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and Gender in Early Modern England*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

⁵ See Wall, *Staging domesticity*. Another excellent example of this kind of scholarship is Susan Frye, *Pens and needles: women's textualities in early modern England*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

⁶ Margaret Hunt addresses the connection between women's work and the English Empire: "In war and peace-time both, sailors' lengthy absences from home, high mortality rate, and erratic loyalties had long provided especially strong incentives for women to develop independent sources of income," among them "intermittent and low-paid waged work, petty sales, taking in laundry, keeping lodgers, sewing, and, for women who had capital, running a victualing house or similar enterprise." Such women also held "legal and moral authority" by virtue of their male kin's absence and relative lack of freedom (on board ships or in the navy). Margaret R. Hunt, "Women and the Fiscal-Imperial State in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," in *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 31. She notes further that the naval and legal records from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century are full of petitioning and otherwise visible and audible women, voicing demands "loudly and pointedly" in the public sphere and suggests that earlier maritime wives were likely just as active (Personal correspondence, June 2011). In a related vein, Mary Fuller demonstrates that "the presence of women and of families reproducing themselves" was a basic "requirement for *recognizing* settlement, landedness, plantation" in the early days of England's colonial enterprises (original italics). Fuller supports her point with the oft-quoted remark by Royal Navy captain, Francis Wheeler in 1684: "'soe longe as there comes no women [to the English settlement in Newfoundland] they are not fixed," and a similar statement by the Earl of Southampton: "'the Plantation can never flourish till families be planted and the respect of wives and children fix the people on the soyle'" (quoted in Fuller 150-151). The verb repeated in both pronouncements, "fix," meant to fasten, make firm or stable in position; to place, attach, or insert and secure against displacement (OED 1. a.) and suggests to me an association with housewifery. Women's presence makes the outpost a home, thereby "fixing" the English there. Fuller also discusses poetry written to wives, sweethearts, and widows back in England by early governors of Newfoundland. For Fuller, such poems "disconnect women from the colony,

mapping a romance of loss or longing across the distance between England and Newfoundland." Mary C. Fuller, *Remembering the Early Modern Voyage: English Narratives in the Age of Expansion* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 150-51.

⁷ For a useful summary of scholarly debates about and a provocative commentary on early modern prescriptive literature, see Michael Roberts, "'To bridle the falsehood of unconscionable workmen, and for her own satisfaction': What the Jacobean housewife needed to know about men's work, and why," *Labour History Review* 63.1 (Spring 1998): 4-30.

⁸ Edmund Tilney, Tilney, Edmund. *The flower of friendship: a Renaissance dialogue contesting marriage* (1578) ed. Valerie Wayne and Introduction (Ithaca, N.Y. : Cornell University Press, 1992), 120-21.

⁹ Merry Wiesner. "Spinning Out Capital: Women's Work in Preindustrial Europe, 1350-1750," in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Susan Mosher Stuard and Merry E. Wiesner. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), 224. Italics added.

¹⁰ Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 245.

¹¹ Jeanne Boydston in *Home and Work: Housework, Wages, and the Ideology of Labor in the Early Republic*, New York: (Oxford University Press, Incorporated Jan. 1994), xviii.

¹² Print OED I. 1a, emphasis added; OED online 13a.

¹³ II 9 a

¹⁴ OED, I 1

¹⁵ Alice Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. Amy Louise Erickson (London: Routledge, 1992), 4.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 294, 304, 306. Amy Louise Erickson was, I believe, the first to label Clark's thesis in terms of "optimistic" and "pessimistic" feminist interpretations of the data. For Erickson, Clark argued that capitalism made things worse for women by curtailing their involvement in economic life. Amy Louise Erickson, introduction to Alice Clark, *The Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Routledge, 1992), xiii-xv.

¹⁸ Clark, *Working Life*, 302.

¹⁹ Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 44.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 45.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 44-48.

²² Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1660* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 4.

²³ Margaret J. M. Ezell, *The patriarch's wife: literary evidence and the history of the family*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 56.

²⁴ Margaret George, "[From "Goodwife" to "Mistress": The Transformation of the Female in Bourgeois Culture](#)" *Science & Society* 37, no. 2 (Summer, 1973), pp. 167.

²⁵ Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the lady of the Renaissance*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), 111.

²⁶ Frances Dolan explains the law of coverture in similar language: the wife's legal status shrank to half or less than half, while "[h]er husband, in turn, became an enlarged person with broadened powers." Frances E. Dolan, *Marriage and Violence: The Early Modern Legacy*

(Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 76. Margaret Hunt argues that while husbands were at large and, in many cases, in captivity, wives and children actively engaged with Parliament, the navy board, and big trading companies, such as the East India Company, seeking the support due them by virtue of the service of their sons, apprentices, husbands, fathers, and brothers. As Hunt astutely notes: such people “were on the front line of empire, though most of them never left England’s shores.” Hunt, “Women and fiscal,” 47, 50.

²⁷ I have consulted the following historical studies of housework, women’s work in general, and the separate spheres: Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Susan Strasser, *Never Done: A History of American Housework* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), Ann Oakley, *Woman's Work: The Housewife, Past and Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); Janet Thomas, “Women and Capitalism: Oppression or Emancipation? A Review Article,” *Society for Comparative Study of Society and History* 30, no.3 (1988): 534-49; Sonya O. Rose, “Proto-Industry, Women’s Work and the Household Economy in the Transition to Industrial Capitalism,” *Journal of Family History* 13, no. 2 (1988): 181-93; Rosalind Coward, “The Concept of the Family in Marxist Theory,” in *Patriarchal Precedents: Sexuality and Social Relations* (Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 130-62; Nancy M. Hartstock, “The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism,” in *Money, Sex, And Power* (New York: Longman, 1983), 231-51; Maxine Berg, “Women’s Work, Mechanization and the Early Phases of Industrialization in England,” in *On Work: Historical, Comparative and Theoretical Approaches*, ed. R.E. Pahl (New York: Blackwell, 1988), 61-94; Linda K. Kerber, “Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History,” *Journal of American History* 75, no.1 (1988): 9-39; Susan M. Reverby and Dorothy O. Helly, “Converging on History,” introduction to *Gendered Domains: Rethinking Public and Private in Women's History: Essays from the Seventh Berkshire Conference on the History of Women*, edited by Susan M. Reverby and Dorothy O. Helly (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 1-24; Louise A. Tilly, “Women’s History and Family History: Fruitful Collaboration or Missed Connection?,” *Journal of Family History* 12 nos,1-3 (1987): 303-15; Barbara A. Hanawalt et al., eds., “Women’s History in the New Millennium: Women, Work, and Family after Two Decades,” *The Journal of Women’s History* 11, no. 3 (Autumn 1999); Louise Tilly and Joan Wallach Scott, *Women, Work, and Family*; Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996); Judith M. Bennett, *History Matters: Patriarchy and the Challenge of Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006); Michelle M. Dowd, *Women's Work in Early Modern English Literature and Culture*, 1st ed., Early modern cultural studies (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); and Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

²⁸ Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 3.

²⁹ For more recent installments in these debates, see Phyllis Rackin, *Shakespeare and Women*, Oxford Shakespeare Topics (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) and Dymphna Callaghan, ed., *A Feminist Companion to Shakespeare*, Blackwell Companions to Literature and Culture (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000).

³⁰ Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 32-33. Wall observes a pattern of convoluted acknowledgements within male-authored housewifery manuals, where writers have to lay claim to “knowing” about something out of their masculine domain. In this analysis of the gendered bases of knowledge and writing, Wall implicitly entertains the question of whether housewifery is ‘beneath’ or ‘beyond’ men. Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 29-36, 230n35.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 173.

³² *Ibid.*, 9.

³³ *Ibid.*, 22.

³⁴ See, for example, Roberta Hamilton and Michèle Barrett, eds., *The Politics of Diversity: Feminism, Marxism, and Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1986).

³⁵ Shakespeare, William, *Henry V* in Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, Katharine Eisaman Maus, and Andrew Gurr. *The Norton Shakespeare*. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2008), 2.3.52).

³⁶ Mary Poovey, “Accommodating Merchants: Accounting, Civility, and the Natural Laws of Gender,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 8.3 (1996): 6.

³⁷ See, for example, Thomas Mun, *A discourse of trade, from England vnto the East-Indies answering to diuerse obiections which are vsually made against the same. The second impression corrected and amended.* By T.M. (London: Printed by Nicholas Okes for Iohn Pyper, 1621),

http://ezproxy.lib.uh.edu/login?url=http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_val_fmt=&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:13298. Also see Richard Helgerson’s chapter, “The Voyages of a Nation” in *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994).

³⁸ Merry E. Wiesner, *Gender, Church, and State in early modern Germany: Essays, Women and Men in History Series* (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998), 131.

³⁹ Wiesner, “Spinning Out Capital,” 236.

⁴⁰ See Ann Christensen, “Merchant wives, agency, and ambivalence in early modern studies.” Forum I, “The Rise of the Mercantile Economy and Early Modern Women.” *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 3 (2008): 21-223, and “Being Mistress Eyre in Dekker’s *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* and Deloney’s *The Gentle Craft*.” *Comparative Drama*. 42.3 (2008): 451-480.

⁴¹ Garrett A. Sullivan, Jr. "'Arden Lay Murdered in That Plot of Ground': Surveying, Land, and Arden of Faversham." *ELH*. 61, no. 2 (1994): 244.

⁴² Martin White, ed., *Arden of Faversham*, Second edition, with revised introduction, New Mermaids (London: Methuen Drama, 2007), ll.451-52.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, I.452-55, I.465-68. Though her argument differs from mine, Belsey notes Alice’s use of the language of business and credit as she speaks of love. Catherine Belsey, *The Subject of Tragedy: Identity and Difference in Renaissance Drama* (London: Methuen, 1985), 133-34

⁴⁴ White, *Arden*, xx.

⁴⁵ George Sanders in *A Warning for Fair Women* asserts, “my great affaires / Must not be hindred by such trifling wares” by which he means his wife’s housewifery. *A Warning for Fair Women*, ed. Charles Dale Cannon, (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), ll. 577-9.

⁴⁶ See Swapan Chakravorty on the same passage. *Society and Politics in the Plays of Thomas Middleton* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 130.

⁴⁷ R.T[ofte], *Of Marriage and Wiving. An Excellent, pleasant, and Philosophicall controuersie, betweene the two famous Tassi now living, the one Hercules the Philosopher, the other, Torquato the Poet. Done into English by R.T[ofte], Gentleman.* (N.p.: n.p., 1599).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, D4.

⁴⁹ William Shakespeare, *Othello* in Stephen Greenblatt, et al, eds. (1.3.271). For related discussions of gender and work in the play, see "Skillets or Helms: Devaluing the Domestic in Renaissance drama" in Dympna Callaghan, *Woman and Gender in Renaissance Tragedy : A Study of King Lear, Othello, The Duchess of Malfi, and The White Devil*, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989), 166; and Lena Cowen Orlin, "Desdemona's Disposition," in *Shakespearean Tragedy and Gender*, eds. Shirley Nelson Garner and Madelon Sprengnether (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1996), 171-92

⁵⁰ R.T[ofte], *Of Marriage*, L. In this section of the dialogue called "Defence or Answer unto the foresaid Declamation... That it is good to take a Wife, and that Marriage is both Honourable and necessarie" (H), the speaker credits the institution of marriage with initiating the civilizing process: "Thou [marriage] first didst bring mankind to dwell in a house, enclosing him within a wall, causing him to build Citties and Townes to inhabit in, where before men like savage beasts in the woods and desarts, dispersed one from another. ...Thou first diddest alter darke Caves into delightfull chambers..." (J 3). At the same time, however, he claims that marriage also inaugurated the need for travel (presumably so the Trojans could retrieve Helen): "Thou taughtest others to assemble and gather together their friends, their kinsfolkes and subjects, filling the seas with sailes and armed navies, and to fight many years in forren coastes, to recover their wives whom they had lost" (K4). So, while marriage domesticates savage nomads, the preservation of marriage likewise requires travel.

⁵¹ Faith Gildehuys, ed. *The Bachelor's Banquet: Publications of the Barnabe Riche Society* (Ottawa, Canada: Dovehouse Editions, 1993), 93.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵³ William Shakespeare, *The Comedy of Errors* in Greenblatt, et al. (3.1).

⁵⁴ Middleton, Thomas, and Gail Kern Paster. *Michaelmas term*. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000). A point for further development is how the trope of the thriftless housewife is complicated by a profligate husband character, such as Merrythought in *The knight of the burning pestle*. He is unable to support his family and they are forced into homelessness. See Francis Beaumont and Michael Hattaway. 1969. *The knight of the burning pestle*. London: A. & C. Black.

⁵⁵ Ben Jonson and R. B. Parker. *Volpone, or The fox*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) and *The silent woman or Epicoene*. London: Methuen Drama, 1989).

⁵⁶ I invite the reader to consider the "good housewife" within the framework of what Kathryn Schwarz calls willfully compliant women. See *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). On another note, I am ever mindful that housewifery was not performed only by housewives, but also by male and female servants. As Wall shows in another context, "the home is not simply the purview of women." Wall, *Staging Domesticity*, 154.

⁵⁷ Samuel Rowlands, *A crevv of kind gossips, all met to be merrie complayning of their husbands, with their husbands ansvveres in their owne defence*. 1609. Rpt. *The Complete Works of Samuel Rowlands*. (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1880). 22, italics added.

⁵⁸ William Whately, *A bride-bush : or, A wedding sermon*, *The English experience : its record in early printed books published in facsimile*. fol. 32-33, italics added.

⁵⁹ William Whately, *A care-cloth : or, The cumbers and troubles of marriage*, *The English experience, its record in early printed books published in facsimil*, 47.

⁶⁰ *A Warning for Fair Women*, ed. Charles Dale Cannon, (The Hague: Mouton, 1975), 1.708.

⁶¹ Thomas Middleton, *Women Beware Women*, *New Mermaids Series*, ed. William C. Carroll (New York: W.W. Norton, 1994). Leantio nearly threatens his new bride, when he attempts to leave for work after their wedding night:

. . . as you love
to be maintained well, do not call me again,
For then I shall not care which end goes forward.
Again, farewell to thee. (1.3.54-57)

⁶² Thomas Heywood, *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, *The New Mermaids*, ed. Brian W. M. Scobie (New York: Norton, 1985), 13.106-09.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 11.52.

⁶⁴ Middleton, *Women Beware*, 1.3.56.

⁶⁵ Ann Christensen, *Absent Husbands in Early Modern English Domestic Drama*. In progress.

⁶⁶ Some of the many excellent studies include: Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Working Women in Renaissance Germany* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1986); Allyson M. Poska, *Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Margaret Hunt, *Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1996); and Michael Roberts, "'Words they are Women, and deeds they are Men': Images of Work and Gender in Early Modern England" in *Women and Work in Pre-Industrial England*, eds. Lindsey Charles and Lorna Duffin (Dover, N.H.: Croom Helm, 1985), 122-79.

⁶⁷ Gervase Markham, *The English Housewife*, ed. Michael R. Best (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986).

⁶⁸ This book, originally published in 1570, saw eleven editions before 1600. See Roberts, "Bridle" 14, 15.

⁶⁹ *The Office and Duty of a Husband* 1529, trans. 1555 rpt. Joan Larsen Klein, *Daughters, wives, and widows : writings by men about women and marriage in England, 1500-1640*. (Urbana: U. of Illinois P, 1992), 132. There are many examples of this sentiment in Gervase Markham, Gouge, and others.

⁷⁰ Frances Dolan exposes the illogic in the conceptions of marriage as both a partnership and a patriarchal hierarchy. See *Marriage and violence: the early modern legacy*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

⁷¹ On the implication of capitalism in domestic life, see Roberta Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism*, *Controversies in Sociology* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1978).

⁷² Laura Brown, "The Defenseless Woman and the Development of English Tragedy," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 22.3 (1982): 438. Alice Clark famously argued that capitalism

had a negative effect on women's economic roles. See Chaytor and Lewis 'Introduction' to Alice Clark, ix-xliii.

⁷³ See the Introduction to Henry Turner, ed., *The Culture of Capital: Property, Cities, and Knowledge in Early Modern England* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

⁷⁴ *The Oxford Book of Work* offers an interesting case in point with its front cover a large close-up photograph of a dirtied male face (a miner?) sweating and its back cover a photograph (about one eighth of the size of the cover image) a female secretary, circa 1950. Keith Thomas, ed. (1999).

⁷⁵ Beverly Lemure, et al. eds., introduction to *Women and Credit: Researching the Past, Refiguring the Future* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 5.

⁷⁶ Ania Loomba, "Shakespeare and Cultural Difference" in *Alternative Shakespeares, II*, 164-191. (London, England: Routledge, 1996), 166.