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Women, Household Stuff and the Making of a Gentleman in John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*

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In her study of the domestic economies in Shakespeare's plays, Natasha Korda explores women's relationship with household moveables and argues that the rise of capitalism and development of commodity form increasingly defined female subjectivity as a mode of self-discipline. According to her, because of the market economy's infiltration of the home, it became more economical for the early modern housewife to purchase what her medieval counterparts had produced. As a result, "both the material form and the cultural function of housework were profoundly transformed" as the housewife gradually undertook "increasing managerial control over the things that entered and . . . exited the home."[1] Due to her focus on women's property relations, Korda tends to perceive household goods as immutable, unrelated items of property for accumulation. While she highlights the form of keeping that has to do with the ability "not only to keep or hold goods, but to deal out, distribute and dispense them,"[2] she fails to take account of the "other forms of 'keeping'"[3] that involve old-fashioned housewifery tasks such as cleaning, mending, or scrubbing. Although the latter are indispensable to the preservation of household goods, they were no longer perceived as suitable activities for the upper- and middle-class women and gradually shifted to the predominantly female paid laborers.[4] In this light, the housewife's managerial role was actually limited to the privileged few who could afford to purchase not just things but also labor in order to keep those things in good

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1 Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 33, 49.

2 *Ibid*., p. 27.

3 Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 46.

4 Susan Cahn, *Industry of Devotion: The Transformation of Women's Work in England, 1500-1600* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 100.

shape. The female subjectivity that Korda suggests was grounded as much on the elite housewife's managerial control over lower-class women as on her discipline of herself.

Like Korda, most critics of John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, in their eagerness to exploit its supposedly proto-feminist vision, ignore that the triumph of its upper-class heroine is as contingent on her alliance with other women, particularly those inferior in economic and social powers, as on her subjection of and distinction from them. Identified as a sequel to *The Taming of the Shrew*, Fletcher's play reverses the plot of Shakespeare's comedy by turning the tamer into a "shrew" that needs to be tamed. In his reworking of the taming story, Petruchio marries for a second time and is tamed by his wife Maria in a reversal of roles that has echoes of the sex-strike in Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. Although he is finally forced to sign a contract guaranteeing her certain rights, Maria still refuses to consummate the marriage until she has "done [her] worst" and gained her "end."[5] Given the play's seemingly overt anti-patriarchal theme, it is perhaps not surprising that few critics question the play's "proto-feminist" view.[6] Most emphasize its transgression of and challenge to the social and cultural assumptions about women.[7] While some critics in their celebration of

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5 John Fletcher, *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*, ed. George B. Ferguson (London: Mouton, 1966), 5.4.44, hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.

6 Jochen Petzold is the few, if not the only, critics who disagree. Petzold, "Subverting the Master Discourse? The Power of Women's Words in Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* and Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*," *Arbeiten aus Anglistik und Amerikanistik* 31 (2006): 157-70.

7 Molly Easo Smith highlights the ways in which the play "comments, rewrites, and undermines" Shakespeare's "ideological assumptions" of gender in "John Fletcher's Response to the Gender Debate: *The Woman's Prize* and *The Taming of the Shew*," *Papers on Language and Literature* 31:1 (1995): 39. Relating the play to the tradition of *Querelle des Femmes*, David M. Bergeron argues that it adopts "a feminist view" by transgressing "customary (male) expectations about the place and role of women in society." Bergeron, "Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize*, Transgression, and *Querelle des Femmes*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 8 (1996): 146-48. Similarly, Margaret Maurer explores the ways in which the play's appropriation of classical texts contributes to the "feminist imagination" that inspires the women's rebellion in the play. Maurer, "Constering Bianca: *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 14 (2001): 198. Meg Powers Livingston's reading likewise praises the play's powerful representation of female rebelliousness that could not be fully restrained even by contemporary censorship. Livingston, "Herbert's Censorship of Female Power in Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 13 (2001): 214. The editors of the 2006 edition of the play not only dub Fletcher as a feminist ahead of his time but also endow his feminist vision with such an everlasting influence that it endures even in our present day. Celia R. Daileader and Gary Taylor, "Introduction," in *The Tamer Tamed; Or, The Woman's Prize*, ed. Celia R. Daileader and Gary Taylor (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 1-41.

female solidarity conflate Maria's personal triumph with that of her female supporters,[8] others differentiate her from them — much to the detriment of the latter — by dismissing their carnivalesque protest as "farcical,"[9] and their resort to overt physical attack as less subversive than Maria's "rhetorical" approach[10] or less ingenious than her "intellectual" resistance.[11] Either way, the feminist view that the critics embrace, far from empowering all women, endorses a class ideology that, if only implicitly, privileges the elite.

In a sense, the critics' response perhaps diverges not far from what Fletcher expected. If he "anticipated an audience much more receptive to strong female characters than those found in Shakespeare's play,"[12] first performed in the Whitefriars Theatre, a fashionable indoor playing space, the play from the very beginning catered to the interest of a "relatively well-educated, well-to-do audience"[13] as well. Thus, although Maria aligns herself with other women through their identification with "utensils . . . for daily or ordinarie service for [the] house," her switch to "ornaments . . . for pomp or delicacie"[14] serves not just to re-install the class distinction lifted temporarily for female solidarity, but also to transform Petruchio into an ideal gentleman that befits a gentlewoman like her. Nevertheless, in order to signify social distinction, mere possession of luxury goods is hardly enough. As Mary Douglas

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[8] Bergeron, for instance, declares that "[t]he woman, particularly Maria, have triumphed pure and simple." Bergeron, "Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize*," p. 162.

[9] Smith, "John Fletcher's Response," p.46.

[10] Livingston, "Herbert's Censorship," pp.228-29.

[11] Maurer, "Constering Bianca," p. 197.

[12] Todd Lidh, "John Fletcher's Taming of Shakespeare: *The Tamer Tam'd*," *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 4 (2004): 67. See also Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1984), p. 250.

[13] Daileader and Taylor, "Introduction," pp. 25-31.

[14] Henry Swinburne, *A Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills* (London, 1611), fol. 314r. There has been a growing scholarship on early modern material culture that explores the role material objects played in the fashioning of subjectivity. As Maureen Quilligan writes in her introduction to a collection of articles on "Renaissance Materialities," the focus on objects is to challenge the identification of Renaissance with the emergence of the modern subject as a free-standing, rights-bearing individual and "to see the subjects they encompassed in far more historical particularity." Quilligan "Renaissance Materialities: Introduction," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32:3 (2002): 428-29. Similarly insisting that the object be taken into account, the anthology *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* tries to elicit new relations between subject and object so that not only are the former no longer assumed to be prior to and independent of the latter, but they reciprocally take and make each other over. See Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan, and Peter Stallybras, "Introduction," in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-13.

argues, rather than being intrinsic, every thing's value depends on "its place in a series of complementary other objects" and can only be captured in "the whole meaning space" in which, once purchased, it is used.[15] By attending to the space and activity that each household good is used, Lorna Weatherill further distinguishes the "social roles" of objects associated with "front stage" activities from those used in the "back stage."[16] Whereas the former are associated with activities such as eating, drinking, and leisure that enable households to foster particular impressions on others, the latter are related to tasks that, although essential to the enactment of "fronstage" performances, are usually done outside the main living area and are often out of sight.[17] Just as Petruchio relies on Maria's housewifery to put on a civil performance that defines him as a gentleman, so Maria needs the assistance of other lower-class women to enact the kind of housewifery vital to the fashioning of her gentle identity. The different household objects that she evokes during the two phases of her taming of Petruchio therefore mirror not just the different aspects of housewifery that she identifies with but also her changing relationships with women of different status.

Here I find helpful the distinction Peter Stallybrass makes between the early modern conceptualization of woman in terms of gender and that in terms of class:

> To emphasize gender is to construct women-as-the-same: women are constituted as a single category, set over against the category of men. To emphasize class is to differentiate *between* women, driving them into distinct social groups.[18]

The emphasis on gender and the emphasis on class correspond to two phases of the relationship between Petruchio and Maria. As the play opens, Petruchio is a wealthy widower in London who, renowned for his terrible temper and absolute control of his ex-wife, has just married to a young gentlewoman Maria. After the wedding, however, the previously docile Maria locks herself within their bedchamber, vowing to desist from consummating the marriage until he signs a contract guaranteeing her certain rights. The news of Maria's rebellion soon ripples through the country with women everywhere flooding into the city to support her "cause," transforming quotidian household objects into weapons as they rise against men. Emphasizing the commonality of women, these everyday objects allow women to form a cross-class coalition in support of Maria, but they jar her gentle identity. As soon as she succeeds in forcing Petruchio to sign the contract, she obliges him to supply her

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15 Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, "Introduction," in *The World of Goods: Toward an Anthropology of Consumption* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. xxii.

16 Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 9.

17 Weatherill, p. 145.

18 Peter Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories: The Body Enclosed," in *Rewriting the Renaissance: The Discourse of Sexual Difference in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Margaret W. Ferguson, Maureen Quilligan, and Nancy J. Vickers (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986), p.133. Stallybrass's emphasis.

with status goods. Just as the quotidian objects are replaced by those goods, so her female supporters willingly return to their respective places in the social hierarchy, and she readily recedes behind Petruchio once he becomes a husband who befits a gentlewoman like her. Since the household is characterized as Petruchio's "little England" (5.4.61), since Maria's protest against him is characterized as "Insurrection" (2.1.53), the domestic conflict between husband and wife takes on epic proportions when it is inflated into a national crisis, a political confrontation between the king and his subjects. Since the women she enlists for help are described collectively as "Rebels" (1.3.211, 1.4.16), Petruchio and the men who come to his rescue are conceived as defenders of the kingdom, and the political confrontation is cast as one between men as the governing class and women as the governed.

As each phase involves the way Maria relates to other women, her relationship to them is oriented by the changing needs of her changing relationship to her husband. To emphasize gender, as Stallybrass suggests, is to construct women "as a single category, set over against the category of men."[19] When the husband is pitted against the wife, and men against women, when it is necessary for women to form a united front against men, Maria is willing to establish an egalitarian relationship with other women, a relationship mediated by and materialized as their common access to everyday household objects. As students of material culture in early modern England have demonstrated, women across classes were particularly attached to quotidian household objects such as pewter dishes, cooking utensils, and household linens despite their humble origin and monetary value.[20] Unlike status objects that differentiate upper-class women's lived experience from that of the others, these everyday objects represent women's common experience as housewives. While the employment of the former highlights the class distinction between women, the use of the latter stresses the commonality of their gender experience.

As a triumphant conclusion to the first phase of their relationship, the contract Marian forces Petruchio to sign signals the extension of egalitarianism, which characterizes the alliance of women, to the gender relationship between husband and wife, men and women. Signaling also a new phase of the gender relationship, the

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19 Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories," p. 133.

20 See Garthine Walker, "Women, Theft and the World of Stolen Goods," in *Women, Crime and the Court in Early Modern England*, ed. Jenny Kermode and Carthine Walker (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p.89. See Amanda Vickery, "Women and the World of Goods: a Lancashire Consumer and Her Possessions, 1751-81," in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 274-301. See also Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.75-77, 162-63. Sara Pennell similarly suggests that, despite their importance as "social capital," "most kitchen goods were of negligible value." Pennell, "'Pots and Pans History': the Material Culture of the Kitchen in Early Modern England," *Journal of Design History* 11:3 (1998): p.211.

contract dispenses with the alliance formed against men. Just as women resume their daily lives and activities, returning to where they belong, so the quotidian objects retire to the background and resume their proper "social roles" as "backstage" objects, yielding their place to the status objects. Just as female solidarity is mediated by and materialized as women's common access to quotidian objects, so the class distinction between women is materialized as the distinction between their access to prestige objects and their lack of access to them. While initiating a new phase of the gender relationship, the contract also brings about a renewed emphasis on Maria's gentle status and thus on the class difference between women. By the end of the play, the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife reasserts itself too when Maria reverts to her old self as "the gentle tame Maria" by becoming her husband's "servant" (5.4.45). As we shall see, the reemphasis on the class difference between women is a function of the restored hierarchical order of the household.

I

Although the dramatis personae refers to Petruchio as a "Gent.," he hardly acts like one when he becomes a violent husband. Far from taming his first wife for good as Shakespeare implies, his triumph is short-lived. She soon reverts to "her most abundant stubbornes" when "her daily hue and cries upon him" turn "his temper" and force "him [to] blow as high as she" (1.1.17-20). Petruchio becomes so violent that even his friend Tranio sees him as a "Dragon" (1.1.7) and feels sorry for his second wife Maria, the "poore Gentlewoman" (1.1.8). Although Petruchio prides himself on being a "wel known man of war" (2.6.19), his friend's sympathy for Maria suggests that such a reputation may no longer be valuable or acceptable to the community. Despite contemporary law's unwillingness to penalize men for domestic violence, the cultural meaning of such violence had changed. By emphasizing the notion of "civility," contemporary wife-beating reformers recast violence as "weak and, at the same time, brutal."[21] Likewise, Petruchio's violent domestication of Katherina is achieved at the expense of his self-control. At the mere thought of her, he will "start in's sleep, and very often / Cry out for Cudels, Colstaves, anything; / Hiding his Breeches, out of feare her Ghost / Should walk, and were 'em yet" (1.1.33-36). As Tranio laments, "He is no more the still *Petruchio* / Then I am *Babylon*" (1.1.37-38). Petruchio's inability to remain "still" associates him with a violent outlaw and threatens to put both his manhood and gentility in jeopardy.

If Petruchio thinks that he has found a wife that would not be "a Rebell" (1.1.19) like Katherina, he has miscalculated. Despite her previous docility, Maria

[21] Emily Detmer, "Civilizing Subordination: Domestic Violence and *The Taming of the Shrew*," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 48:3 (1997): 277-8.

at the persuasion of her cousin Byanca immediately declares that she is "no more the gentle tame *Maria*" and bids "farewell" to "all poorer thoughts" (1.2.71, 69). To transform Petruchio from a "monster" into a "man" (1.2.104), she first tries to control his body by denying him food and sex when she barricades herself in their bedchamber. As Petruchio forbad his ex-wife to "eate, / Drink . . . / Unlesse he bid her" (1.1.45-47), so Maria subjects him to the regimen of sexual "fasting" (1.2.95) till she has her will. Being an "old sport" who needs aphrodisiacs to perform on his wedding night (1.1.52-3, 1.3.15), Petruchio has already depended on female provisioning labor to boost up his masculinity. Maria's decision to "keepe fasting" her "valiant Bridegroome" (1.2.95-96) further subjects him to her power. If her enclosed body recalls that of "the bad mother, who refuses to yield to the infant's needs and to be pliant to his wishes,"[22] she is also determined to "mold him / Into a babe again" (1.2.173-4). Since in early modern England "the child was seen as the embodiment of a lawless, 'natural' condition which had to be transformed into the 'civil' by discipline and education,"[23] Petruchio becomes a fit subject of education whom any "aged women, / Wanting both teeth & spleen, may Master" (1.2.174-75).

Although Maria takes strict control of Petruchio's body, she takes full liberty with her own. Whereas Katherina could neither "say her prayers / Louder then men talk treason" nor "say sir how do ye, make her ready, pisse, / Unless he bid her" (1.1.41-42, 46-47), Maria's body, protected by the chamber walls, is spitting aggressive words and filthy matter with vengeance. The "door" is "lock'd, and guarded" by "desperate tongues" behind it; "[i]n every window Pewter cannons mounted"; and "all the lower works lin'd sure with small shot" (1.3.52-4, 89, 92). The chamber metamorphoses into a leaky body that threatens to have "a pretty scowring" (1.3.73) of whoever dares to approach. Far from protecting "the often tenuous borderline between abject and genteel states of being,"[24] Maria's perversion of housewifery jeopardizes both her husband's body and the household. Unable to enter the chamber unless he tries to "drop through the Chimney," "force a breach i'th windows," or "untile the / House" (1.3.39-41), Petruchio cannot regain control of his house without simultaneously admitting its vulnerability and even destroying its integrity. In early modern England, it was the husband who formally and publicly represented and embodied his household.[25] Made porous and permeable, however, the house now becomes a "*naturally* grotesque"[26] female body that eludes the husband's control.

Despite Maria's initial success, Petruchio and his friends know that although

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22 Diana Purkiss, *The Witch in History: Early Modern and Twentieth-century Representations* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 127.

23 Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 72.

24 Wall, p. 47.

25 Walker, p. 34.

26 Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories," p. 126.

"victual'd for this moneth," she cannot remain "fortified forever" (1.3.48, 70) without any outside support. Although her sister Livia also smuggles food to her, it is "the good women of the Towne" (1.3.279) that these men worry about. As soon as Petruchio summons his friends to "beleaguer" Maria and her accomplices, Petronius volunteers to "see all passages stopt, but those about 'em" (1.3.277-8), and Jaques is "sent to lay / An imposition upon Sowse and Puddings, / Pasties, and Penny Custards, that the women / May not releeve yon Rebels" (1.4.13-16). The women they try to forestall are the poor women, particularly those in London's "housewife trades" who sold pennyworth foodstuff on the streets.[27] True to their apprehension, "all the women" in the kingdom "swarm like waspes" (2.4.34-5) toward the city to support Maria. They are led by a "Tanners wife" (2.4.42), whose physical blackness embodies "an 'ob-scene,' or offstage, fantasy of a black tribade penetrating the female city of London."[28] She is accompanied by a female bear-ward and a hostess of "Two Ale-houses of ease," who threaten to undermine both civil and religious order (2.4.69-71, 73-8). Socially and economically marginal, these women nonetheless are willing to march into town in rescue of this "poore Gentlewoman" (1.1.9) and take her "brave cause" (1.2.125) as their own.

Whereas the men in the play see these lower-class women as a threat, Maria identifies with them for self-empowerment. She not only assumes "a new soule" inconsistent with the old "gentle tame Maria" (1.2.71-2) but, by taking up those quotidian objects, identifies her with the aspects of housewifery unsuitable for a gentlewoman like her. As her lower-class supporters "heave ye stoole on stoole, and fling main Potlids / Like masie rocks, dart ladles, tossing Irons, / And tongs like Thunderbolt" (2.4.56-58),[29] so she fights off attempted intruders by emptying chamber pots on their heads even though such a task was usually the responsibility of lower serving maids. When she tries to test Livia's loyalty, she also invokes the "Keyes" of cupboards and the spinning "distaffe" as the symbol of power to "all women" (2.2.105-6, 104). Used in the course of "backstage" activities such as spinning, cleaning, and food preservation, these household goods tended to vary less between social groups than luxury goods;[30] essential to the basic comfort of everyday life,

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27 Fiona McNeill points out that "good women" is "a common appellation for poor women," who often worked in the "housewife trades" in early modern London. McNeill, "Gynocentric London Spaces: (Re)Locating Masterless Women in Early Stuart Drama," *Renaissance Drama* 28 (1997): 219.

28 McNeill, "Gynocentric London Spaces," pp.220-2, 241 n.99.

29 Pennell points out that "it was the beating of kitchen pots and pans, 'the harmony of tinging kettles and frying pans' . . . which accompanied downtrodden spouses and errant wives during skimmingtons," and these events could be viewed as "instances of communal female recognition of the importance of their cultivation of the hearth" as "it was women and wives who happily lent and played their utensils for such purses." Pennell, "'Pots and Pans History,'" p. 213.

30 Weatherill, p. 145.

they constituted the basic necessities in most households. Although usually "'silent,' invisible objects,"[31] they speak the language that all women — including those who could afford to purchase them in the market and leave them to the care of maids and servants — can understand and identify with.

Behind this facade of female "Common-weal" (2.6.49), however, hides a rift between women of different classes. Despite the noise that Maria's lower-class supporters make with their pots and pans, despite the overwhelming threat they pose to Petruchio and his friends, they remain off-stage and voiceless. In the final negotiation with men, they further step down from the frontline and become part of the "Auxiliary Regiments" headed by the "two grand Capitanos" (2.6.37-8), the City Wife and the Country Wife. With their "Velvet-hood" and "three pil'd" velvet (2.6.76, 80), the two women are at once distinguished from their soldiers in their clothing. Although the Country Wife invokes the "Distaffe" as the symbol of her defiance and the "eternall Trophee of [her] conquests" (2.6.97-8), it is not among the objects that she and her city comrade value most. The City Wife swears that should she fails to defeat men, she would willingly surrender her "silke Stockings," her "petticotes of Armes," and her "Bodkins" (2.6.106-9); the Country Wife likewise vows to let the "Laces" on their "Plackets" hang and "returne againe / Into [their] former titles, Dayry maids" (2.6.112-3). If these intimate belongings are meant to highlight their cultural significance to all women, they are hardly class neutral. However empowering traditional housewifery tools mean to the two captains, they can hardly compare with those luxury goods that signify their owners' success in upward mobility and differentiate them from their lower-class followers. To lose them means nothing but humiliation and degradation.

Similarly, although Maria succeeds in redeeming her "Countrey" (1.2.68) through "back stage" household goods, it is the luxury goods for "front stage" activities that she seeks to secure in her "treaty" (2.5.117):

> Liberty and clothes,
> When, and in what way she wil: continuall moneys,
> Company, and all the house at her dispose;
> No tongue to say, why is this? Or whether wil it;
> New Coaches, and some buildings, she appoints here;
> Hangings, and hunting-horses: and for Plate
> And Jewels for her private use, I take it,
> Two twousand pound in present: then for Musick,
> And women to read French. (2.5.135-44)

Unlike the kitchen utensils (3.2.2) that the women beat before them as they retreat, none of the objects Maria demands, including the plate for her private use, are necessities. They are all luxury goods for display. Beyond the reach to her lower-class

[31] Pennell, "'Pots and Pans History,'" p. 213.

supporters, these objects highlight Maria's distinction from them. Her change of taste may embarrass critics such as Molly Easo Smith who wants to see her as an advocate for gender "equality,"[32] but these status goods are more suitable for the "gentle tame Maria" (1.2.71) than those everyday objects. After all, as she implies in the beginning of her rebellion, what distinguishes her as a "free Haggard" from those "tamed hearted Eyasses" is her ability to tell common "Lure" from the "golden ones" (1.2.150, 148, 159, 157).[33] The "individuality and value"[34] that Maria reiterates here is constructed not so much in opposition to Petruchio as in differentiation from other women. Despite her contempt of those "tamed hearted Eyasses," she can neither subject her "foundred keeper" to her power (1.2.156) nor "march off with conditions / Noble, and worth her selfe" (2.6.93-4) without their help.

II

No sooner has Maria seized control over the household consumption than her taming of Petruchio enters a new phase. Having subdued the "monster" in Petruchio through her misuse of quotidian objects, she then tries to change him from a "babe" into a new "man" through her manipulation of status goods.[35] To grasp the implications of this change of Maria's taming strategy, we must first situate women's relationship with the world of goods in the early modern context of civility. First performed between December 1609 and April 1610, Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize* was regularly performed until it vanished from the stage in the nineteenth century.[36] The two centuries during its performance witnessed the rise of nascent market economy and a new world crowded with consumer goods.[37] Although the idea of civility focused

32 Smith, "John Fletcher's Response," p. 46 n. 9.

33 Petzold suggests that, far from reversing gender structures and giving the woman the position of a human being and man that of an animal, Maria "looks for the weakness in her attacker's discourse and uses his linguistic energy (as it were) to defeat him." Petzold, "Subverting the Master Discourse," p. 165.

34 Smith, "John Fletcher's Response," p.50.

35 Petruchio may be a "wealthy" (1.1.14) "Italian Gentleman" (personae), but as Maria later points out — not without disdain — he is socially inferior to her: "The stock I come of . . . is whorshipfull . . . . / My Grandsire was a Knight. . . . A souldier, / Which none of all thy Family e're heard off, / But one conductor of thy name, a Grasier / That ran away with pay" (4.2. 81, 83-86). His own speech in 4.5.3-5 also reveals his humble origin. In other words, he may have the means and the bare name of a "gentleman," but not the taste and the social skills to live like one.

36 Daileader and Taylor, "Introduction," pp.25-31.

37 See Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in*

primarily on the refinement of behaviors, it impacted on people's consumption as well. As Korda suggests, "[t]he refinement of material objects does not simply offer an occasion for the exercise of civilized manners; rather, it is the objects themselves that bring this bodily civility into being."[38] The growing emphasis on civility hence went in tandem with the production of an increasingly large array of equipments designed to assist the performance of genteel rituals and codes of behavior.[39] As the number of things, especially status goods, grew within the house, more work was created for their keeping. Given the ideological redefinition of the husband and housewife as the getter and keeper respectively, a man needed not just the ability to acquire goods but also a responsible wife in order to present a civilized image to the public.

For Petruchio, more is at stake as far as his class identity is concerned. Although identified as a "wealthy" (1.1.14) "Italian Gent." (personae), he is "far from reason, / From common understanding, and all Gentry" (5.4.24-5) not simply because of his violent temperament, but because of his humble background. As he implies that he used to make his living by farming and lived on "leek-porridge" (4.5.5), so Maria also insinuates that his ancestor was "a Grasier / That ran away with pay" (4.2.85-6). On the contrary, albeit "poore" (1.1.9),[40] Maria comes with a "right worshipfull" (4.2.82) background and thus is more familiar with the upper-class protocol than he. If conspicuous consumption functioned as a necessary means to elite status for the upward mobile population, Petruchio must depend on his gentle wife both for her "molding" and "stampe" (3.3.110-1) upon him and her housekeeping skills in order to secure his far from stable identity. Ostensibly, when Maria lavishes money on the re-furnishing of her self and the house, she aims to suit her material conditions to her status. Nevertheless, by surrounding Petruchio with status goods, her conspicuous consumption simultaneously works to refine his state of being so that he can exercise better control over himself and behave in more refined manners.

Although conspicuous consumption is essential to Maria's self-definition and her domestication of Petruchio, it only marks the starting point of the process. As soon as the commodities are acquired and entered the household, more housework — much

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Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987); Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and J. H. Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 9-194.

38 Korda, p. 24.

39 Woodruff D. Smith, *Consumption and the Making of Respectability, 1600-1800* (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 40.

40 Petronius's eagerness to marry both daughters to wealthy men, disregarding their feelings, says something about his financial state. In this light, when Tranio in the beginning says, "I pity the poore Gentlewoman" (1.1.5-8), the adjective "poore" signifies her destitute condition as well as his pity for her unfortunate situation.

of it involving embodied labor — is needed for their keeping in order to maintain their significance as signs of social distinction. In early modern England, however, not all forms of keeping were considered suitable for all women. As Cahn points out, "increasingly, traditional housewifery tasks were perceived as 'beneath the dignity' of prosperous women of yeoman status, much less of gentry."[41] The bourgeois and elite women hence needed paid laborers to relieve themselves from having to do the more arduous tasks themselves. Only then could they engage in the leisure forms of housewifery such as the making of banqueting stuff and enjoy the opportunity of self-expression and self-fashioning.[42] This need for domestic helpers was partly met by the growing commodification of housewifery skills.[43] Although no less relying on the market to provide household needs than their social superiors, women from the lower strata could hardly turn away from the drudgery of traditional housewifery. Increasingly excluded from trades and crafts, they were compelled to make a meager living by taking on those domestic tasks.[44] Since it was generally the mistress of the house who took charge of the hiring, training, and care of domestic female servants,[45] housework was divided differentially between women of different status and economic power.

With the class division of domestic labor, women in a middle- or upper-class home were divided in their relations to household goods. In *The Ten Pleasures of Marriage* (1682), for example, a clear distinction emerges between the young mistress and her servants. In preparation for her lying-in and gossips' feast, the mistress engages primarily in the purchase not just of "a Groaning stool, a Screen, and a Cradle-with what belongs to it," but also "new Hangings, a Down-bed a Christening-cloath, silver candle sticks, a Caudle-cup, &c. that of necessity must be bought and used at the lying-in, & Gossips feast."[46] In contrast, her servants are responsible "for the making clean the house from top to bottom; and for the pressing of some curtains, Vallains and Hangings; the rubbing of Stools, Chairs and Cupboard; the scouring of the Warming-

41 Cahn, p. 100.

42 Kim F. Hall, "The Gendering of Sugar in the Seventeenth Century," in *Feminist Readings of Early Modern Culture: Emerging Subjects* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.168-90. See also Cahn, pp. 53-56.

43 Especially in urban areas, the demand for servants was so high that it outstripped supply. See McIntosh, p. 59. See also Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, Neighborhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 133.

44 See Cahn, pp. 50-55. See also Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 45-59, 121-22. Ilana krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 140-44.

45 Capp, pp. 132, 156.

46 A. Marsh, *The Ten Pleasures of Marriage* (London: 1682), p.111.

pan and Chamber-pot."[47] As a "Gentlewoman,"[48] the mistress defines the notion of necessities according to the expectation of gentile lifestyle. These things are as "needfull in house-keeping"[49] as many others that she bought before if the couple are to be seen as belonging to the gentry and if she is to present herself as a competent housewife to the "many busie bodies that with their glouring eyes are peeping into every hole and corner"[50] during their visit. But the acquisition, keeping, and use of those objects only mean more work for the servants, whose contributions, however indispensable, hardly reflect on themselves. Instead, they are more likely associated with the utensils or tools employed for the cleaning of those luxuries.

Just as a successful presentation of "front stage" objects is related to effective uses of "back stage" tools, so the proper self-expression of an elite housewife is contingent on her managerial control over the labor of her servants. Although *Xenophons Treatise of Householde* (1534), like other contemporary household manuals, emphasizes the importance of "gendered division of labor, in which the husband's duty . . . became that of *getting*, and the wife's that of *keeping*, household stuff,"[51] the wife is hardly expected to do all the "keeping" on her own. Instead, she is exhorted, on the one hand, to "shew [servants] the place [of all the instruments that they must daily use], where they shoulde put them again, and than delivered them, . . . and kept them safe," and on the other, to hire "a womanne" to be the "keeper of [the] store house" of "suche thynges" for special occasions.[52] Addressing specifically to women of the elite circle, Hannah Woolley similarly suggests in *The Gentlewomans Companion* (1675) that a gentle housewife should perform housework vicariously through her servants. According to Woolley, the "Ladies" must familiarize themselves with their servants' "duties in their respective places and what qualifications they ought to have."[53] While she should ensure the duly execution of the "daily work" appointed to them, she must also "look narrowly to them, that they waste or lavish nothing."[54] Should she fail to do so, she risks impairing not just her role as a keeper of household resources but also her "estate" and her "repute of a careful and discreet Woman."[55]

Although Maria appears to be all by herself after Petruchio signs the contract, and her supporters retreat from the house, it is hardly true. On the contrary, the economic autonomy secured by the contract enables her not just to indulge

47 Marsh, p. 112.

48 Marsh, p. 15.

49 Marsh, pp. 40-41.

50 Marsh, p. 112.

51 Korda, p. 26.

52 *Xenophons Treatise of Householde* (London, 1537), fol. 32v.

53 Hannah Woolley, *The Gentlewoman's Companion or, a Guide to the Female Sex, the Complete Text of 1675*, ed. Caterina Albano (Devon: Prospect Books, 2001), p.211.

54 Woolley, p. 138.

55 *bid*.

in conspicuous consumption of fashionable objects but also to substantiate her housewifery with hired labor for the maintenance of those things. Behind the glamorous appearance of the gentlewoman thus stands an army of anonymous female paid laborers who, far from transgressing any class or gender boundaries, are obliged to stay in their proper place in the domestic hierarchy and to work silently and obediently behind the scene.

III

In the beginning, Petruchio is appalled by Maria's conspicuous consumption, fearing that her "prodigality" would "begger's both" (3.3.47, 48), but he is even more shocked when she takes them away from him. Claiming that he is infected with "the sicknesse" (3.5.26) or the plague, Maria locks him in the house. Although she ensures that he wants neither "meat nor money . . . nor prayer" (3. 5. 33-4), she deprives him of all "*household stuff & truncks*" (3.5.s.d.) — including not just the "hangings," "linnen," "chests of plate," "wardrobe," and her "Casket," but also "the Armour" (3.5.14-16, 19), which is supposed to represent his gentle background. Many of the things she takes away were "extremely valuable commodities in early modern society,"[56] and she is responsible for the acquisition of them. While their missing could render the house ""incomplete, not 'perfect,' or 'defaced,'"[57] it simultaneously deprives Petruchio of the means or props to perform his role as a gentleman. Left with nothing to "trim the house up" (4.2.10), he is alienated not only from the space that he used to call home but also from his identity as a member of the gentry.[58]

As a common practice with regard to plague-infected households, the removal of household stuff also symbolically expels Petruchio from the city. Since plague was perceived as part of the threat that the "poorer sort" presented to the respectable sections of English society,[59] Petruchio is supposed to be immune to it. Nevertheless, people also believed that "disorder of any kind," including anger, "weakened a man's defences against plague."[60] When Petruchio "raves extreamly" (3.5.29), his loss of

56 Walker, pp. 163, 165.

57 Lena Cowen Orlin, "Things with Little Social Life (Henslowe's Theatrical Properties and Elizabethan Household Fitting)," in *Staged Properties in Early Modern English Drama*, ed. Janathan Gill Harris and Natasha Korda (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 109, 111.

58 For household goods as male self-extension, see *Xenophons Treaties Hovholde*, fol. 34r. See also Walker, p. 82.

59 Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), p. 306.

60 *Ibid*., pp.28-29.

temper affects him so that his body also appears indistinguishable from that ravaged by "a pestilent feaver" (3.5.61). When he, like the plague victims who "refused to be shut up, or broke out of their houses,"[61] threatens to "beat the wals down" (3.5.69) and to "shoot, and presently, chain-bullets; / And under foure . . . will not kill" (3.5.100-1), his behavior further confirms that he is infected indeed. Whether Maria has seen "tokens" (3.5.72) of plague on his body hardly matters. As his "foolish sickness" (4.2.152) makes him dangerous to the health of the civic body, so his violent behavior conflates him with the "disorderly sick," who were treated by the Plague Act of 1604 as "vagrants" and expelled from the city and into the fields where pesthouses and sheds were located.[62]

Once Maria succeeds in isolating Petruchio from the social arena, she next seeks to usurp his authority in the home by calling his competency of housekeeping into question. Although she was the one who sent "all the plate, / And all the houshold-stuffe" to "heaven knows whether" (4.2.59-60), she now claims that he was responsible for it. If heading a household means to have "mastery not only of a man's self, but of his subordinates and his resources,"[63] Petruchio's supposed willful alienation of property at once undermines his reliability and authority as a household head. Despite his accusation of Maria as "a Quartern-ague, that shall shake / All his estate to nothing" (3.5.116-7), he now becomes responsible for his own dispossession, which allows her, already "ordain'd" by "all lawes / Of heaven and Nations" to be "his second" (4.2.28-9), to step in. Indeed, had she not "crost" the "unkinde dealing" (4.2.59, 60) of his, he would have had his "substance bezel'd" (4.2.135) — not by her, but by himself. Echoing her earlier assertion that no man can leave anything good behind without a woman's "molding" and "stampe" (3.3.110-1), she is hence empowered to assume the role of a keeper and to undertake the responsibility for his preservation.

As soon as Maria takes over the duty as a keeper, she tries to coerce Petruchio into the role of a getter by forcing him "o'th Kingdom" (4.5.200). Paradoxically, only then does his "Reformation" (4.5.227) begin to take place. As Alexandra Shepard argues, "[t]hat householders and married men should be providers was as important a tenet of patriarchal ideology as the expectation of chastity in women."[64] By forcing Petruchio to embark on a journey to distant countries such as "the Indies, or Cataya" (4.5.194), Maria imposes on their marriage a gendered division of labor as well. While she will keep his "house" and "what [he leaves] behinde" (4.5.188-9) like a "glad *Penelope*" (4.5.173), he is to have his "wel-doing" and "profit" (4.5.192) abroad. If the separation helps to build up her own "credit" (4.5.215), it simultaneously adds to Petruchio's by turning him into a provider for the family. At the same time, since his

61 *Ibid*., p.298.

62 *Ibid*., p.306.

63 Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 70.

64 *Ibid*., p. 186.

unruliness was due to “those flying fames” of his “follies” and his “gambols” and to the “ill breeding of [his] youth” (4.5.216-7), the journey also functions to wean him of those disorderly deeds and to ripen his “knowledge, conversation, / The full ability, and strength of judgement” (4.5.150-1). Only then can he change “from a sot into a Signour, / Or neere from a lade into a courser” (4.5.170-1) and be ready to return home again as “a new man” (4.5.139) acceptable to the “Gentry” (5.4.25).

Before making his way back to society as “a new man,” however, Petruchio needs to go through a ritual of initiation so that he can officially die to his old life and be reborn to the new. To put Maria once more “to the test” (4.5.230), he feigns death before embarking for the sea. Surrounded by his friends at the funeral, she is under considerable pressure to repent for her “stubborn, and unworthy way” (5.4.3) and to “[d]o something yet” in order to “move compassion” (5.4.8, 11). Rather than caving in to those men’s demand, she launches into a tirade against Petruchio’s “poore unmanly wretched foolish life” (5.4.20), lamenting “how simple, / How far below a man, how far from reason, / From common understanding, and all Gentry, / While he was living here he walkt amongst us” (5.4.23-6). Enraged by her seeming lack of remorse, Petruchio “*rises out of the coffin*” (5.4.s.d.) and is “born again” (5.4.60) — not as a vulnerable, deprived “babe,” but as a sovereign who rules his “little *England*” (5.4.61). If he was unable to control himself without female “admonitions” (3.2.3), now he is converted to such a new “faith” that “[n]o cause shall give occasion” to any of Maria’s “old tricks” (5.4.52-4). Transformed from a wild “Dragon” (1.1.7) into a man of reason and self-control, Petruchio is finally “tam’d” (5.4.45).

Although Maria initially rose up against Petruchio for a “brave cause” (1.2.125), the cause seems to have lost on her way to her triumph. No sooner has Petruchio been “tam’d” (5.4.45) than she reverts to “the gentle tame *Maria*” (1.2.71) and vows to be his “servant” (5.4.45), dedicated “in service to [his] pleasure” (5.4.57). She will not be able to find any “cause” for her “old tricks” not so much because he is “tam’d” as because he can find no excuse to interfere with her business in the home. The gender relation is less subverted than redefined. At the same time, if Maria’s behavior echoes with Korda’s definition of early modern female subjectivity as a mode of “self-discipline” or rather an internalization of male discipline,[65] her self-discipline is predicated simultaneously on her subjection of other less privileged women or their voluntary subordination to her. Although she eliminates class boundaries and forms a cross-class alliance with all women by emphasizing their common experience with personal and quotidian objects, she turns her attention to the consumption of luxuries while relegating things “too base for [her] use” (3.3.57) to the background once her “liberty” is secured. As the hierarchy of things is re-established, so the class differentiation of their female users is restored. Not only are Maria’s lower-class supporters rendered effectively invisible once they are no longer needed, but

[65] Korda, p. 40.

her servants remain nameless and faceless throughout the play. If the differentiation of women, as Stallybrass writes, "simultaneously establishes or reinforces the differentiation of men,"[66] it is to differentiate Petruchio not from other men, but from his base, monstrous old self. But for Maria, the re-installation of the class boundaries is to fence her in as her husband's property when she becomes a "colt" (5.4.88) of his, the very kind of woman she condemned as "a beast, / Created for his use, not fellowship" (1.2.139-40). But to be of proper "use" to her gentle husband, Maria can only become a "colt" in spirit while leaving the actual deeds to the female domestic helpers under her control. As such, the gender hierarchy is once again reinforced by the class differentiation of women.

[66] Stallybrass, "Patriarchal Territories," p. 133.

約翰・佛列裘之《女人的獎賞》一劇中女人、傢俱物品、與男性階級身份之建構

李慧玲

本文探討約翰・佛烈裘之《女人的獎賞》(*The Woman's Prize*)一劇如何透過階級秩序的維持以建立女性主體性、重新定義性別關係、進而鞏固男性的階級身份。儘管大多數的批評家認爲該劇中女主角瑪麗亞 (Maria) 透過與其他女人的團結顛覆了既有男尊女卑的關係，然而當我們檢視劇中各種日常傢俱用品在其協商過程中所扮演的角色，我們可以發現瑪麗亞認同其來自低下階級的女性支持者的舉動，並非完全是爲了爲女性發聲，而是爲了確保其階級優勢的策略性手段。當夫妻對立、男女對峙，當女人需要聯合起來對抗男人時，瑪麗亞自然願意與其他低下階級的女人建立平等互惠的關係。如果這樣的關係是建立在女性共同的家事經驗與對日常家用物品的認同感之上，當瑪麗亞迫使派楚奇歐 (Petruchio) 簽下停戰協定，她卻馬上以各種高級昂貴的傢俱用品取代了先前的那些普通物件，而間接強調了她和其他女人之間的階級差異。當她的女性支持者隨著那些日常用品的消失而各自回到她們原來的階級所在，取而代之的是另一群隱身幕後的女性僕人；她們在默默分攤那些較爲粗鄙的家事之餘，也爲女主人完成馴夫的任務並維護上流社會的形象。最後，當派楚奇歐從一個脾氣、行爲粗暴的俗夫變成一位言行自律且足以匹配像瑪麗亞這樣一位貴婦的紳仕，甚至她也乖乖地變回原來那個「溫順馴服的瑪麗亞」，自願以其丈夫的「僕人」自居。換言之，之前彷彿已遭顛覆的性別階級也隨著階級秩序的恢復而得以重建。

關鍵字：傢俱物品　家事　階級　性別　勞動分工

Women, Household Stuff and the Making of a Gentleman in John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed*

Huey-ling LEE

Focusing on John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize*, this essay explores the ways in which the ordering of class relations among household members contributes to the construction of female subjectivity, the redefinition of gender relations, and ultimately the making of a gentleman. Most critics see the play as a proto-feminist reversal of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. However, when viewed in the context of early modern material culture, Maria's cross-class alliance with her female supporters aims not so much to address gender inequalities as to recuperate class privileges for both her husband and herself. When pitted against her husband, Maria is willing to establish an egalitarian relationship with women of different status, a relationship mediated by and materialized as their common access to everyday household objects. As soon as she succeeds in forcing Petruchio to sign the contract, she replaces those ordinary goods with luxury goods, which brings about a renewed emphasis on Maria's gentlewoman status and thus on the class difference between women. Although her female supporters willingly return to their respective places in the social hierarchy, she is privileged to secure another group of predominantly female laborers, who silently work behind the scene for the preservation of those status goods essential both to her taming of Petruchio and the maintenance of her upper-class image. By the end of the play, the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife reasserts itself too when Maria reverts to her old self as "the gentle tame Maria" by becoming her husband's "servant." As we shall see, the reemphasis on the class difference between women is a function of the restored hierarchical order of the household.

Keywords: Household stuff housework class gender division of labor

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