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The Awkward Years: The Transition from Adolescence to Manhood in Early Modern England

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**The Awkward Years:
The Transition from Adolescence to Manhood in Early Modern England**

An Honors Thesis
Presented by
Galen Byrne

To
The Department of History
In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
Honors in the Major Field

Connecticut College
New London, Connecticut
May 3, 2012

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis began as an exploration of male youth groups, their rites of passage, and their performance of “quasi-legal” shame punishments in early modern England. Martin Ingram’s article, “Ridings, Rough Music And the ‘Reform Of Popular Culture’ in Early Modern England,” (1984) influenced my initial research and hypothesis regarding the role of youth groups and their function within a patriarchal society. However, a focus solely on the physical acts of adolescent males proved to be too narrow for a deeper understanding of the overarching themes of the transition of men into adulthood and marriage. Early modern communities took special care in preparing adolescent males for the responsibilities of adulthood. Parents and community members relied on advice literature and conduct manuals to guide adolescents during their transition from dutiful youth to responsible adult, especially among the educated and literate population.

After analyzing both primary and secondary sources, this study is a series of linked arguments about youth, popular culture, masculinity, and patriarchy in early modern England. By examining prescriptive advice literature, it is apparent that fathers and advice authors advised young men to find a balance among all aspects of life to achieve success. During the maturing process, boys grew up, developed masculine traits, and learned to fit into the existing patriarchal system. While maneuvering through the transitional time between youth and adulthood, adolescent males embraced opportunities, such as conducting shame punishments, to prove their masculinity and carve their own place within the patriarchy. Even after males matured into adulthood and married, they continued to struggle with the complexities and develop as young men within the patriarchal hierarchy and in relation to ideas about masculinity. The transition from youth to manhood illustrates that masculinity did not always coincide with patriarchy in

early modern England, and youth, women, servants, and men in dependent states continually contested the established patriarchal hierarchy.

The first chapter, “Youth,” addresses the role of advice literature within society and outlines how certain authors utilized the desire for conduct manuals as a way to promote themes of religion and hierarchy. Authors of advice literature synthesized societal values, including religion, patriarchy, and hierarchy, to produce texts that would ensure the continuation of societal norms. Specifically, the ideal of balance played a crucial role in early modern England. Early modern people believed both individuals and communities required balance in order to be productive and functional. Authors and parents focused especially on molding their sons to embody masculinity. By examining how contemporary authors identified and taught tenets of masculinity, my research contributes to the ongoing conversation about gender roles, manhood, and patriarchy in early modern England.

Besides utilizing examples of early modern advice literature and letters from fathers to sons, manuscripts of legal records from the seventeenth century allow for analysis of how communities responded to violations of societal norms. These primary sources illuminate the overarching presence of patriarchy within families and communities as well as how families and local leaders saw the transitional time of adolescence as the crucial time to shape young men. By examining the themes and messages from a selection of advice literature and comparing them to actual examples of communal transgressions, it is apparent that young men had to navigate through conflicting definitions of manhood as they matured.

Although the role of advice literature cannot be ignored, tensions between its prescriptive style and reality permeated early modern communities. The language of these prescriptive, or theoretical, texts concerning gender roles, patriarchy, and masculinity did not necessarily

coincide with the practices and demands of everyday life. The transition into manhood for adolescent boys was a difficult time during which these boys had to figure out their patriarchal responsibilities, their economic position, and familial duties. The ideals outlined in prescriptive literature perpetuated patriarchal and hierarchical values, which appealed to early modern men. However, the differences between an idealized patriarchal society based on ideas of masculinity and how real communities functioned led to a reliance on shame punishments to maintain those who held lower rank in the patriarchal hierarchy. Shame punishments, such as charivaris and skimmingtons, corrected illicit or discouraged behaviors of men and women who questioned patriarchy and who acted outside of prescribed gender roles.

The second chapter, “The Transition,” deals with the changing relationship between adolescents and their community. Adolescents were too old to be treated like children, but early modern communities could not treat them as adults either. In response to this situation, adolescent males created settings to display their masculine power and their future role in the patriarchal hierarchy. Adolescent males relied on alternative demonstrations of masculinity and power in a number of ways because they could not yet acquire traditional patriarchal authority. On a functional level, youth monitored how the town members behaved and reacted appropriately to inappropriate situations. These responses helped to maintain existing patriarchal power in the community, but it also prepared the adolescents for their future role in society as grown men. Young men reminded both men and women what their appropriate behavior was and that their neighbors were monitoring their actions. These semi-legal punishments, such as charivaris, skimmingtons, and the life, also provided the stage for young men to make sure communities recognized their growing presence. In addition to creating a platform for adolescents to display masculinity, men who never achieved high patriarchal standing and

remained in a state of semi-dependence relied on charivaris and alternative expressions of masculinity as a way to uphold a sense of societal purpose and worth.

While examining how young men developed their masculinity and their place within the existing patriarchal structure, the relationship between alternative expressions of masculinity, such as charivaris, and the role of the traditional patriarchal hierarchy connects to the changing definitions of masculinity. Those who held patriarchal authority generally accepted acts of youthful transgression, such as shaming punishments and charivaris, as a functional way to maintain proper social order and gender power relations. Despite the fact that these transgressions often incorporated illegal behaviors, community leaders usually tolerated and even embraced shame punishments and charivaris. Charivaris, or skimmingtons, served an array of functional purposes for a society. They drew attention to inappropriate gender behaviors and demanded that the perpetrators return to the traditional power relationship. These activities reinforced male dominance in both the home and the community while quelling dissenters.

The adolescent culture surrounding charivaris suggests a lack of distinction between public and private life in early modern England. Neighbors, youths, and peers were encouraged to supervise community members, especially young women, newlyweds, widows, domineering women, and weak men. Allegedly, these populations had the potential to damage societal structure the most. Essentially, early modern communities relied on neighbors and friends to hold others accountable for upholding patriarchal standards, as well as other social rules. This implies that private life was not truly private. The eyes of the community were constantly watching personal and family conduct.

By embracing youth violence as functional and relying on a system of informants, patriarchal leaders in English communities acknowledged that they could never truly achieve

their desired level of power and domination over women, children, servants, and men of lower hierarchical standing. Patriarchal powers could never bridge the gap between reality and prescriptive literature, ideals, and conduct, so they relied on youthful transgressions to condemn domineering women and passive men.

The third and final section, “Marriage,” responds to how adolescents transitioned into manhood through marriage and the unique set of complications and potential problems marriage presented to maintaining masculine dominance. While it is tempting to think of marriage solely as a declaration of love, men in early modern England thought marriage was synonymous with achieving independence and masculine standing within society. Men worked diligently to protect their sense of personal credit or worth by safeguarding their reputation and their family’s reputation. In the event that a peer criticized or questioned a man’s worth as an honorable husband, father, or community member, his reputation was shattered and his patriarchal authority nullified.

In an attempt to maintain their reputations, men relied on the content of advice literature for structuring marriages, households, and families. Early modern authors, such as William Gouge, who wrote about the proper methods of raising sons, also detailed the relationship between husband and wife. Adolescent males frequently conducted charivaris on newlywed couples that did not reproduce immediately because the adolescents believed these men were not upholding their responsibilities. These community reactions demonstrate that men engaged with the complexities and ambiguities of patriarchy and masculinity in all stages of life. Again, tensions between ideal marriages and actual marriages caused communities to rely on youth transgressions to guarantee the continuation of the patriarchal hierarchy and male honor.

Analyzing the rites of passage of adolescent males in early modern England as they transitioned from childhood to adulthood contributes to the ongoing conversation about gender roles and the effects of patriarchal structures. The tensions between prescriptive literature and reality, as well as between private and public life, highlight that communities organized by patriarchy acknowledged and feared the deterioration of patriarchal power. The definition and purposes of masculine behavior adapted to fit a variety of needs in early modern England with the overarching intention of molding future generations of men to current patriarchal standards. Men in all social and economic situations, whether patriarchal or not, relied on the tenets of masculinity as a way to demonstrate their power and autonomy. Men knew that gender alone did not guarantee patriarchal power or desired hierarchal power. Although the patriarchal hierarchy dictated the proper behaviors for men as well as women, men of all ages and reputations embraced aspects of masculinity to highlight their place in society regardless of whether, as individuals, they would ever achieve true patriarchal authority.

Historiography

The study of the relationship among popular culture, patriarchy, and gender is relatively recent among historians of early modern Europe. Each historian has adapted and changed elements of previous historical analysis to further his study. The study of popular culture during this period begins with a study by Peter Burke. Burke's text, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, defined the field of popular culture for many years after its publication in 1978 primarily because it was the first text to address popular culture from 1500 through 1800. Burke began the discussion of popular culture and its relation to society, religion, and politics for historians and scholars. In an attempt to discover the significance popular culture played in daily life in early

modern Europe historians continue to study, question, and change Burke's argument. Essentially, Burke argues that as the early modern era progressed, members of elite society removed themselves from acts of popular culture in an attempt to reform the profanity of lower classes. Among many other aspects of popular culture, Burke traces the removal of elite society from youth culture and festivals during the early modern period. In addition to emphasizing the divide between elite and popular culture, Burke introduces the topic of youth misrule and ritual acts of violence to discuss how communities maintained order. He suggests that charivaris served as instrumental ways for young men to demonstrate their masculinity within a community upholding prescribed societal standards.

In order to fully understand the role in society of a charivari, or shame punishment, it is imperative to accurately define the event. Edward Muir's book, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (2005), details the significance of rituals and rites of passage in early modern communities. Although Muir published this text almost thirty years after Burke introduced his thesis on popular culture, Muir continues Burke's analysis of popular culture. Muir specifically focuses his research on ritualized rites of passage, such as charivaris. He defines a charivari to be:

a form of ritual judgment typically administered by young men against alleged violations of community standards for proper sexual or marital behavior. Usually involving mocking songs and making noise, those subjected to *charivari* would sometimes be dragged from their homes and subjected to ritual humiliations and even assault.¹

While this definition is lengthy, it provides not only the reasons for charivari, but it identifies the primary group responsible for their occurrence: young men.

In addition to Burke's understanding of youth rites of passage and rituals, Muir supports French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep's theory about rites of passage. van Gennep argued in

¹ Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 277.

his text, *Les Rites de Passage* (1909), that three phases of rituals comprise a rite of passage. These three phases include the rite of separation (preliminary), the rite of transition (liminary), and the rite of incorporation (postliminary).² Muir utilizes van Gennep's theory to state that the liminal stage "is a 'pivoting of the sacred,' whereby the participant, ritually and often physically separated from others, sees the rest of society from the outside, as if society itself were sacred and thus prohibited."³ By applying van Gennep's theory, Muir argues that the young men who perform charivaris are in fact participating in a rite of passage, essentially transitioning from adolescence to adulthood. Adolescents are in a transitional, or liminary, phase of life, in which they are too old to be a child and too young to be independent adults. As a response to this phase, these young men took on a surveillance role in society and police alleged acts of immorality.

In the first section of *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, Burke chronicles the rediscovery of popular culture or folk traditions and rituals. He describes the structures of popular culture and concludes his text with the analysis of the shifts in popular culture. Burke argues that during this time period, the elite withdrew from popular culture in an attempt to separate the sacred from the profane and to distinguish the elite as socially superior. Burke argues that both the upper and lower classes had varying relationships with popular culture. The upper class and the lower class originally jointly partook in the "little tradition," which included festivals, folk tales, and other aspects of daily life. However, the lower class was excluded from the "great tradition," which included events designed solely for wealthy and elite families, such as university education.⁴ Popular culture consumed the lives of the lower or common class, but

² Muir, *Ritual*, 19.

³ Muir, *Ritual*, 19.

⁴ Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. (Farnham, England: Ashgate, 2009), 28.

the upper class's access to the "great tradition" highlights the gap between the elite and the common, which motivated the elite to abjure activities of popular culture.

The concept of the "little tradition" demonstrates how initially all members of social classes partook in activities of popular culture, regardless of societal standing. According to Burke, as time progressed, the educated elite and the clergy sought to reform the values and practices of the lower class and the "little tradition." They did this in an attempt to clean up popular culture to get rid of undesirable or profane traditions.⁵ Burke specifically argues that the elite sought to reform festivals, such as Carnival, because they believed they contained traces of Pagan traditions.⁶ Burke also includes how the reformers, especially Protestants, also desired to educate the masses about religion, so they published the Bible into the vernacular to teach about the sacred.

While Peter Burke set the stage for scholarship on popular culture for future historians, his text includes an array of research not limited to youth in the early modern era. Historian Natalie Zemon Davis narrowed Burke's lens of study by focusing her research on the roles of Abbeys of Misrule, a youth group in early modern France. In her article, "Reasons of Misrule: Youth Groups and Charivaris in Sixteenth-Century France," (1971), Davis used youth, gender, masculinity, and surveillance as categories to echo Muir's description of youth groups, or abbeys, for male adolescents in between the time of childhood and marriage. Unlike Burke, Davis emphasizes the hierarchal role of gender instead of economics. During the early modern period, marriage ages rose, which meant that males remained economically dependant on their families for longer period of time. Adolescent males who had not yet achieved adult status joined youth groups, called the Abbey of Misrule, in an attempt to demonstrate their masculinity and

⁵ Burke, *Popular Culture*, 207.

⁶ Burke, *Popular Culture*, 209.

patriarchal standing. These groups were similar to today's youth groups because they served as a way to teach males the tenets of masculinity. According to Davis, the Abbeyes provided the youths with "rituals to help control their sexual instincts and also to allow themselves some limited sphere of jurisdiction or 'autonomy' in the interval before they were married."⁷ They provided a way for male adolescents to practice their masculinity, keep social order intact, and patrol the happenings of their towns. Davis's argument here mirrors that of Muir, as she similarly argues that the Abbeyes reacted to social realities of their communities unofficially and had jurisdiction over those who violated patriarchal norms.

The Abbeyes of Misrule had a greater influence in rural areas, where the legal structures were not as strong as in cities. They had jurisdiction over their peers, marriageable girls, young strangers, newlyweds, adulterers, and remarried couples.⁸ The members of the Abbeyes were traditionally concerned with the behavior of both unmarried and married women in the towns for men, allegedly, needed to monitor the behaviors of women within the community. They sought to continue the male assertion of masculinity and the maintenance of patriarchal order. The Abbeyes frequently performed charivaris on women who they considered to be acting immorally or on men who were being cuckolded. Davis describes that "[r]eal people were mocked by the Abbeyes in clamorous charivaris and parades for their real everyday behavior: husbands beaten by their wives were led by a noisy, masked, and costumed throng through the down facing backwards on an ass..."⁹ The only way for the victims of charivaris to stop the harassment was to pay a monetary sum to the Abbey. This behavior demonstrates how young men unofficially controlled community happenings while displaying their growing patriarchal power and worth.

⁷ Natalie Davis, "The Reasons Of Misrule: Youth Groups And Charivaris In Sixteenth-Century France." *Past and Present* 50.1 (1971), 108.

⁸ Davis, "Misrule," 105.

⁹ Davis, "Misrule," 100.

There are many connections between Burke and Davis's argument. Burke's text is broad, for he attempts to cover every aspect of popular culture in an entire era. Davis takes certain themes from Burke, such as gender roles, carnivalesque behaviors, and aspects of "little tradition" to focus on youth groups and patriarchal order in early modern France. The Abbeys served as a way for adolescent boys to act out their future roles of husband and father in society before actually attaining that status. They maintained order, kept the peace among neighbors, and channeled frustration in this transitional time for adolescent males.

Like Davis, Martin Ingram wrote, "Ridings, Rough Music And The 'Reform Of Popular Culture,'" (1984), as a response to Peter Burke's text, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. Ingram challenged Burke's thesis of the "reform of popular culture" by arguing that the strict separation or withdrawal of the elite from popular culture oversimplifies the relationship between the two in Early modern Europe. Ingram approaches the alleged split between elite and popular culture through a detailed examination of the English practice of charivaris. Like Muir, Ingram defines a charivari to be, "a set of popular customs, variants of which have existed in many parts of Europe over many centuries, which characteristically involved a noisy, mocking demonstration usually occasioned by some anomalous social situation or infraction of community norms."¹⁰ Both Ingram and Muir draw attention to the popular, or unofficial, aspects of these shame punishments and do not stress the economic status of the participants.

Ingram draws on a variety of sources for his article, including court records, chronicles, diaries, letters, newspapers, and images to support his thesis. He identifies the trademark characteristics of charivaris as, "mocking laughter, sometimes mild and goodhearted, but often

¹⁰ Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music And The 'Reform Of Popular Culture' In Early Modern England." *Past and Present* 105.1 (1984), 81.

taking the form of hostile derision” from these primary sources.¹¹ Ridings and rough music took place during charivaris to call attention to and to humiliate men whose masculinity was in question or women who acted outside of expected gender behaviors. Ingram provides illustrations to show how the charivari victims were forced ride backwards on a horse to be mocked throughout the village.¹² The prevalence of woodcuts depicting shame punishments highlights their dominance and centrality in early modern England. Neighborly surveillance was crucial to charivaris, ridings, and rough music. Communities expected neighbors to ensure that patriarchal hierarchies remained unthreatened, by monitoring their neighbors. However, a man could be held responsible if his neighbors failed to uphold patriarchal hierarchies. Participants assumed the rights of the populace to control the happenings in the community. The responsibilities of the neighbor in early modern England allude to the minimal respect for private life and the dominance of public scrutiny within a community. Fitting with the role of neighborly surveillance, Ingram, like Davis, asserts that charivaris were often in response to domestic situations, particularly a wife beating her husband and could also be parts of festivals and politics.

While there were two prevalent forms of charivaris, penal and festive, Ingram argues that all were about behavior, power, and festivals. Both categories of charivaris were independent of the legal system, and there was not one cause for charivaris in early modern England. Charivaris highlighted that the assumed “natural” order of a community was organic and that anything else was absurd and needed to be stopped accordingly.¹³ Participants in charivaris utilized the concept “world turned upside-down” to show that inversions of power, such as female physical

¹¹ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 82.

¹² Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 87.

¹³ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 96.

dominance, were ridiculous and ineffective. Ingram asserts that charivaris reinforced the necessity of the patriarchal hierarchy. Men performed charivaris to retain patriarchal authority, even though being male did not necessarily equate to having power. Even so, young men performed charivaris to insure the survival of patriarchy and the oppression of women. Males perceived that it was their societal role to condemn atypical behavior within their community to prevent personal and societal failure. The fear of becoming a charivari victim motivated men in villages to control their wives and families and to act in accordance to patriarchal expectations.

Ingram states that dichotomies dominated charivaris. Charivaris illuminated the tensions between order and disorder, masculinity and femininity, man and beast, purity and filth, dominance and subjugation.¹⁴ Participants in charivaris relied on the juxtaposition of two opposites to enforce the superiority of a patriarchal society. For example, if a wife beat her husband, the resulting charivari would highlight gender tension and the absurdity of a man not defending his masculinity. The charivari illustrated a current state of disorder and the return to patriarchal order. Ingram also emphasizes that there was a dangerous side of charivaris, which included damages such as property damage, physical assault, and shame.¹⁵ He suggests that these rituals, on occasion, could also serve as a cloak for malicious motives, violence or an excuse for disorder, alehouses, and neighborhood mobs.¹⁶ The functional aspect of charivaris had the potential to become unnecessarily violent. Ingram writes that charivaris took place in the gap between an idealized life and a reality filled with threats to the patriarchy.¹⁷ However, Ingram disagrees with Burke's fundamental thesis, in which Burke states that members of elite society removed themselves from acts of popular culture as a way to condemn its inherent profanity.

¹⁴ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 98.

¹⁵ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 102-3.

¹⁶ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 103.

¹⁷ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 112.

Ingram, on the other hand, argues there was no decisive split between popular and elite culture. Men of all social and economic classes were united in the protection of the patriarchy and the survival of masculinity.

Ingram focused his research specifically on the study of popular culture and charivaris, and like Davis, he argues that Burke oversimplified the study of popular culture. However, Davis suggests that instances of charivaris could serve as a way to highlight the disruptive behaviors of women and encourage further attacks on the patriarchal hierarchy. Ingram disagrees with this interpretation, arguing that Davis is too liberal in her analysis. Ingram firmly argues that charivaris, ridings, and rough music enforced the patriarchal order and re-established what proper social norms were. He condemns Davis's interpretation that misrule provided women with the stage to display female power and refuse assumed male superiority. Ingram believes that charivaris "reflected an awareness that women could never be dominated to the degree implied in the patriarchal ideal."¹⁸ Ingram concludes his article by reminding his readers that charivaris "made conceptual, moral and social sense to the majority of contemporaries of whatever social rank, and hence were unlikely to come under severe attack."¹⁹ Communities in early modern England saw charivaris as a way to maintain the desired order without the presence of officials.

Historian Alexandra Shepard furthers the study of youth culture in early modern England. She expands on Burke's, Davis's, and Ingram's theses to study the role of masculinity and its changing definition in early modern communities and its relationship to patriarchy in *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (2003). Shepard focused her research to the period 1560-1640, using parenting advice books, conduct manuals, admonition records, court records, and sermons from the period to support her argument. In her text, Shepard argues emphatically that

¹⁸ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 97.

¹⁹ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 112.

manhood and patriarchal norms are not the same and cannot be equated in the studies of manhood and masculinity. She also suggests that feminist theorists who believe patriarchy only oppressed women have too narrowly defined patriarchy to only affect women. Shepard asserts that patriarchal restrictions also affected lives of men in very real and serious ways.²⁰ According to Shepard, the patriarchal structure was based on a hierarchy formed from gender, age, social status, marital status, and power in early modern England. To further explain this hierarchy, she provides three examples to illustrate the hierarchy of the patriarchal system: husbands had power over wives; masters over servants; and parents over children.²¹

Shepard dedicates a significant amount of her text arguing that manhood does not equal patriarchal power. Men who did not achieve high patriarchal status had to demonstrate their manhood in other respects. To support this point, she details university students' demonstrations of manhood. In her chapter, "Youthful Excess and Fraternal Bonding," Shepard connects the events at university to the understanding of the patriarchy and manhood for young men. She introduces this concept with the story of Agnes Haull, a tavern maid who attempted to keep a group of rowdy and disguised university students out of her tavern in 1593. The young men were dressed in fake beards and scarves while gallivanting around the University of Cambridge. Agnes refused the young men's call for beer, which enraged the men. Shepard writes that they finally "obtained some drink [when], 'one of them drew out a shillinge & woulde have had the sayed Anges kisse yt & when shee refused soe to doe he dreewe out his rapier & sayed he wooulde thrust her throughe yf shee woulde not kisse yt.'"²² The masked men further demonstrated their rage when they pushed the tavern owner's wife down the stairs and verbally

²⁰ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1.

²¹ Shepard, *Manhood*, 2-3.

²² Shepard, *Manhood*, 94.

accosted the owner.²³ Shepard utilizes this story at the start of her chapter because it demonstrates how young men's university rituals showed bravado in an attempt to prove male dominance.²⁴ She addresses how rituals of misrule and fraternal bonding were in fact demonstrations of manhood even though these unmarried male students did not have high patriarchal status. Their treatment of Agnes Haull highlights that these men found outlets for their power and masculinity outside of the dominant patriarchal hierarchy.

The story of Agnes Haull illustrates the role violence played in the assertion of patriarchal power over men and women. Shepard argues, "violence served to reinforce men's claims to dominance and worth."²⁵ She, like Ingram, studies the acts of young male scholars at university to gain understanding of how youth groups acted in public and how hierarchies were constructed. Both historians study youth misrule, specifically instances of charivari, to understand their functions in society and for the individual participant. While Ingram focuses on how charivaris helped to maintain this patriarchal norm, Shepard writes about how the patriarchal hierarchy controlled males and the definition of masculinity. The two authors utilized similar sources to create a study of gender in society. Shepard's text broadens Ingram's study to incorporate analysis on the changing definition of manhood, not just how young men acted. Although men had more freedoms than women, Shepard asserts that men still compared their worth to other men, so they had to maintain a level of honesty and integrity to rank among their peers. A successful marriage and a successful career clearly separated the men from the boys in terms of manhood, patriarchal status, and individual worth in early modern England. This

²³ Shepard, *Manhood*, 94.

²⁴ Shepard, *Manhood*, 94.

²⁵ Shepard, *Manhood*, 151.

suggests men hoped to marry well and be successful not only for the sake of personal happiness but for personal power.

Shepard stresses the importance of the ideal of balance in life in early modern England, which is prevalent in many primary sources. By balancing family, personal patriarchal, communal, and religious virtues men would become successful. Shepard writes, “[b]alance...was the precondition of manhood and, as such, was primarily conceptualized in terms of discretion, control, and containment.”²⁶ It served as a way for young men to combat their out of control bodies and minds. Shepard references two parenting advice texts, one written for boys and one for girls, to demonstrate the early modern search for balance. In the parenting advice book, *Keepe within Compasse: or, The worthy Legacy of a wise Father to his boeloved Sonne; teaching him how to live richly in this world and eternally happy in the world to come*, the author, John Trundle, sets up four categories of advice for all young men. Trundle wrote that young men should, “Pray in thy chamber, Converse with good men, Suite thine own callings, and Eate thine owne labours.”²⁷ There is a corresponding letter of advice written by a mother that instructed young women, which outlines suitable behaviors for females. While the manual for young men stressed the importance of virtue, the manual for young women stresses the importance of modesty.²⁸ These parenting manuals and advice pamphlets helped to teach children, both boys and girls, their place among men in the patriarchy and their quests for balance.

Shepard also stresses the contradictions within manhood and family hierarchies in the early modern period. Conduct authors wrote that young men should find obedient wives, but they

²⁶ Shepard, *Manhood*, 30-31.

²⁷ Shepard, *Manhood*, 31.

²⁸ Shepard, *Manhood*, 32.

should not act tyrannical. Husbands were supposed to remain dominant but to remember that wife beating was “common.”²⁹ These examples suggest that Shepard argues that young men navigated between different definitions of manhood to attain and keep a dominant position in the patriarchal system. Young men constantly worked to achieve balance between the theoretical definitions of masculinity and its actual practice. Again, these contradictions highlight the role balance played in the late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries in England.

Shepard studies manhood, or “a man’s estate” to understand the relationship between masculinity and patriarchy and the quest for ideal balance.³⁰ She concludes that a man’s “estate” was defined by age, marital status, and social status, and it was at its peak generally during the ages of thirty and fifty. This illustrates that the patriarchal hierarchy favored particular groups of men and excluded others. Men were always ranked over women, but the hierarchical structure ultimately benefited middle-aged men who adequately and independently supported themselves and their families.³¹ Shepard continues to support her analysis by writing, “strength, thrift, industry, self-sufficiency, honesty, authority, autonomy, self-government, moderation, reason, wisdom, and wit were all claimed for patriarchal manhood, either as the duties expected of men occupying patriarchal positions or as the justification for their associated privileges.”³²

While Shepard emphasizes that certain characteristics were linked to patriarchal hierarchy, there were less dignified ways to demonstrate masculinity. She writes that expressions of youthful misrule illustrate how young men participated in activities such as “nightwalking, violent disruption, immoderate drinking, and the rampant pursuit of illicit sex” in an attempt to display their masculinity within the confines of the patriarchal society. Shepard

²⁹ Shepard, *Manhood*, 247.

³⁰ Shepard, *Manhood*, 246.

³¹ Shepard, *Manhood*, 246.

³² Shepard, *Manhood*, 247.

argues that these alternative displays of manhood “illustrate not only the degree of explicitly anti-patriarchal resistance performed by men, but also the levels of conflict between different meanings of manhood.”³³ While it is tempting to think of manhood as having one definition, Shepard’s nuanced analysis of the patriarchal hierarchy suggests that not all men exhibited the same type of power. Patriarchal status in society and in family determined a “man’s estate.” This meant men in the lower classes or without families found substitute outlets to explore and display their estates. Shepard speculates that rituals, night walking, and charivaris were prime venues for such displays, because not only could show their dominance over women but also hopefully earn their place in the patriarchal hierarchy.

Acts of youthful misrule described by Burke, Muir, Davis, Ingram, and Shepard served to define another form of manhood within the existing patriarchy. Ultimately, Shepard’s text serves as a new approach to historical studies of gender by connecting masculinity, patriarchy, gender, and class. She does not accept the standard feminist theory of patriarchy as persuasive, because Shepard claims that patriarchy oppressed both men and women. She stresses that gender did not solely define patriarchal rights and status, but age, marital, and social status played crucial roles in determining patriarchal power. Her thesis on manhood builds off of ideas from Ingram and Davis’s articles, but Shepard creates a more nuanced understanding of gender studies of early modern England to contribute to the ongoing historical dialogue, in which not all men achieved the status of patriarchs. The constantly changing and developing definitions of masculinity and their relationship to patriarchal authority imply that young men acted to maneuver the challenges of existing social and gender structures.

³³ Shepard, *Manhood*, 248.

CHAPTER I: YOUTH

The Age of Advice Literature

According to Alexandra Shepard a distinct phase of life between the ages of thirty and fifty defined manhood in early modern England.³⁴ Youth and old age sandwiched the challenging, but glorious, period of adulthood, during which a man hoped to build his reputation, his respectability, and his independence. However, before young men could adopt desired roles as powerful patriarchs in their communities, they had to successfully navigate through their youth. For males, youth was a dangerous time of extremes. During the time between ages fourteen and twenty-eight, a male's entire future was at stake; "although it was the time when he was 'most sensible, full of strength, courage and activeness', without sufficient direction and constant vigilance he would be 'easily drawne to libertie, pleasure, and licentiousnes.'"³⁵ Essentially, parents and authors from early modern England accepted the notion that adolescent males had little control over their minds and bodies and needed to be molded to societal standards.

In response to this unruly phase of youth, successful patriarchs wrote advice literature for parents on how to raise young men as well as conduct manuals for young boys themselves. Many of these authors incorporated religious values and imagery into their texts, which reflected contemporary community values. Puritans dominated the field of advice literature for youth and parenting texts during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁶ Two of the most popular were *Keepe within Compasse; or, The Worthy Legacy of a Wise Father to his Beloved Sonne* (1619), by John Trundle, and *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), by William Gouge. In addition to

³⁴ Shepard, *Meanings*, 10.

³⁵ Shepard, *Meanings*, 24.

³⁶ Shepard, *Meanings*, 22.

contemporary piece of advice literature, families depended on ancient texts, such as Plutarch's *De Education Puerorum*. English families also relied on parenting guides and advice literature for young girls. Trundle's advice text had a partner text written for daughters entitled, *The Mothers Counsell; or, Live within Compasse. Being the Last Will and Testament to her Dearest Daughter* (1630). All of these works helped to guide parents and children through the uncertain and unstable period of youth, with the intent of passing along societal and religious standards of living. Shepard argues that in between the inferior stages of youth and old age, a variety of types of manhood were present in communities throughout early modern England. Parents in towns and cities relied on advice literature in an attempt to successfully pass the age of "troublesome extremes" in which "the young could not control their unruly impulses; and the old had none to control."³⁷

During the seventeenth century in England, many different conduct manuals and parenting advice letters were published in the hope of guiding male adolescences during the transition from youth to adulthood. John Trundle wrote *Keepe within Compasse; or, The Worthy Legacy of a Wise Father to his Beloved Sonne*, in London, in 1619, as a way to preserve his advice to young men for achieving a balanced and well-rounded life. The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines balance in a number of ways, but the following two definitions relate to Trundle's understanding of the term; they include a "[g]eneral harmony between the parts of anything, springing from the observance of just proportion and relation; esp. in the Arts of Design" and the "[s]tability or steadiness due to the equilibrium prevailing between all the forces

³⁷ Shepard, *Meanings*, 45.

of any system.³⁸ Trundle's parenting letter emphasizes the importance of moderation and respect for limits in all aspects of life. The contents of his letter support Shepard's analysis of balance and manhood to secure patriarchal status. Shepard, as quoted earlier, argues, "[b]alance...was the precondition of manhood and, as such, was primarily conceptualized in terms of discretion, control, and containment."³⁹ In the early seventeenth century, Trundle emphasized the imperativeness of balance in both his text and his illustrations, such as the text's cover image. The cover image of Trundle's text portrays a robed man with the word, "Vertue" surrounding him. The artist of this woodcut placed the virtuous man within a compass, which displays the necessary combination of virtues in the seventeenth century. One of the main themes throughout this text is to live a virtuous, temperate life under God's word. The man within the compass has successfully navigated through the rough waters of adolescence and achieved a balanced and moderate adult life. According to this image, the robed man adhered to Trundle's four main principles of masculinity to acquire patriarchal success and to become an honorable member of society.

Above the image of the virtuous man, Trundle wrote that his letter was, "[m]eete for all sorts of people whatsoever."⁴⁰ This suggests that Trundle wanted all young men to learn to live and act virtuously regardless of social standing. In order for a community to continue to function smoothly, Trundle believed that all men, even those without high standing, needed to adhere to the same behaviors and works towards similar goals. Men needed to rely on their relationships

³⁸ "balance, n.1". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/14789?rskey=9FLUZB&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed April 15, 2012).

³⁹ Shepard, *Manhood*, 30-31.

⁴⁰ Trundle, *Keepe within Compass*, Cover Image.

with one and other to teach young men masculine traits and to protect the future of patriarchal authority within early modern English families and communities.



Figure 1. *Keepe within Compass* Cover Image⁴¹

⁴¹ Trundle, *Keepe within Compass*, Cover Image. (Note: There are no page numbers in Trundle's work, so I have noted the corresponding section titles of letter for each quotation).

The circle cover image for Trundle's text contains four subsections that pertain to the four chapters addressed in the text. They include religion, conversation, diet, and apparel. Surrounding each one of these themes are short quotes that summarize Trundle's arguments for each chapter and desired male virtues. For example, when discussing diet he advocates that men should "[e]ate thine owne Labours," and avoid gluttony, as it contradicts God's word.⁴² If a young man were to become gluttonous, ignore moderation, and ignore God's word, then he would be outside of the compass and would not be leading a good virtuous life. Trundle provides the subsections of each of the four divisions to detail the counterexamples of proper behavior for his son to emulate. While Trundle wrote this text in a very theoretical, even poetic, manner, it contains many examples of practical advice for a son. He expresses genuine concern for his son's future throughout the letter. He works to bridge the gap between theoretical and practical advice for males with the ultimate goal of creating honorable men who will act to firmly uphold patriarchal hierarchies.

Trundle began his text with the section, "In Religion." Religion is arguably the most predominant theme throughout the text because in the sections about conversation, diet, and apparel each topic connects back to God's word and the ideal virtuous man. Trundle connects all aspects of life and decisions to God's word and living with religious values always in mind. Trundle introduces his advice on religion by writing, "[f]irst, my sonne, understand, that Religion is a justice of men towards GOD, or a divine honouring of him in the perfect and true knowledge of his LORD; peculiar onely to men: It is the ground of all other virtues..."⁴³ Trundle argues that religion serves as a foundational base for all parts of life and is directly connected to man's virtue. There is no way to separate religion from life, conversation, diet, and apparel.

⁴² Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, Cover Image.

⁴³ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, "In Religion."

Trundle asserts, “[t]o be doubtfull in Religion, is to be certaine of the greatest punishment.”⁴⁴

Trundle asserts that religion should penetrate into all aspects of life, and it consequently dictates how virtuous and honorable a man is.

As seen in the cover print, Trundle focuses on the connection between virtue and teaching his son how to “live richly in this world, and eternally happy *in the world to come*.”⁴⁵ Trundle communicates to his readers that their choices in this life will directly impact their next life with God. Trundle suggests, “...[r]eligion will make thee know well and doe well: and they are the onely two points belonging to virtue.”⁴⁶ The emphasis on virtue leads the reader to believe that Trundle implored his readers to achieve balance in their lives because his concept of a compass emphasizes this idea. Young men should understand moral, religious behavior and act accordingly. There are certain rules by which young men should live, and the compass serves a guide for transitioning from youth to adulthood.

Continuing with his metaphor of a compass, Trundle includes ample examples of behavior that deviates from the compass’s directional guide. Trundle suggests that by incorporating daily praise of God into daily life, young men will avoid living as atheists. In this section, “Out of Compasse in Religion, is Atheisme,” Trundle likens those who doubt God as being “infidel.” He demands that his son, and all other readers, must never stray from virtuous lives. For example, they must never act on feelings of vice or lust, for Trundle connects them both to eternal damnation. He writes, “[v]ice is the habitude of sinne, sinne the act of habitude, but want of Religion ground of both. Lust bringeth short life, prodigalitie wretched life, but want

⁴⁴ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Religion.”

⁴⁵ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, Cover Image.

⁴⁶ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Religion.”

of Religion assured and eternall damnation.”⁴⁷ By explaining different sins, Trundle acknowledges his fears of what would happen if young men stray from the guide of the compass. Trundle implies with these examples of how not to act that young men must learn to always think about the consequences of their actions and how they relate directly to eternal salvation.

Trundle concludes his first section, “On Religion,” by relying on the compass metaphor and the idea of remaining inside the compass’s circle or following the compass’s direction.

Trundle writes:

[i]f thou wilt backe into thy Compasse get, These fix faire rules neere to thy conscience set:

Beat downe the evill: raise the just:
 Learne best thy selfe to know
 Hold holy writ: and counsell keepe:
 Be patient in thy woe.⁴⁸

This conclusion crystallizes Trundle’s main point and his reliance on a compass for visual aid. His letter regarding male conduct demonstrates importance of balance in seventeenth century England. Trundle implores his readers to take his prescriptive advice on religion and apply it to practical, real life situations. There were constant efforts to maintain balance within the individual, within the family, within the community, and within one’s relationship with God. By assessing the role of balance in a young adolescent male’s life, Trundle suggests that young males will eventually be responsible for teaching and maintaining that balance in society.

Trundle continues with the overarching theme of balance in the section “Keepe in Compasse in Conversation.” The OED defines conversation as, “[t]he action of living or having

⁴⁷ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “Out of Compasse in Religion.”

⁴⁸ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “Out of Compasse in Religion.”

one's being *in* a place or *among* persons. Also *fig.* of one's spiritual being. *Obs.*,”⁴⁹ and as “to converse, talk, engage in conversation.”⁵⁰ These definitions of conversation imply that the word is connected to both the physical activity of conversing with another person and one’s physical and spiritual place in the world. This definition mirrors the one presented by Trundle, who links conversation to honesty, relationships, and good men. He suggests that young men should “[l]et thy conversation carry a perfect content of all things appertaining as well unto God as man, with benevolence and charity.”⁵¹ Trundle interprets conversation as a way for young men to talk about religion, good deeds, and their societal roles with peers. Like his contemporary authors, he emphasizes that young men should build strong relationships with other men to develop their masculinity and to understand their future roles as some sort of patriarchs.

Continuing from the theme of conversation, Trundle emphasizes the importance of relationships among young men in early modern England. According to authors such as Martin Ingram, young men performed a variety of societal functions in groups. They acted as a sort of unofficial arbitrators of social standards in an effort to maintain order and balance within a community. Young men relied on their interpersonal relationships and communication to successfully uphold patriarchal values and masculine identity. Trundle calls every young man to strive for quality relationships with other young men, for:

[t]he love of men to women in a thing common and of course: but the friendship of man to man infinite and immortall. The fellowship and conversation of a true friend in misery is alwayes sweet, and his counsels in prosperity are ever

⁴⁹ "conversation, n.". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40748?rskey=TtXtvI&result=1&isAdvanced=false> (accessed April 03, 2012).

⁵⁰ "conver'sation, v.". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/40749?rskey=SZmeTb&result=2&isAdvanced=false> (accessed April 03, 2012).

⁵¹ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, "In Conversation."

fortunate. Let thy conversation with friendship have a threefold lustre: the first in neighbourhood: the second in hospitality: and the last in thy particular love.⁵²

Trundle romanticizes the benefits of male friendships in his text as a way to remain within the compass and on the right path to success, both in this world and with God. Wisdom and virtue serve as defining characteristics of good conversation among friends, and these good friendships lead to stability and strong order.⁵³ Along this line, according to Trundle, young men should chose and respect a friend for his “goodnesse before his greatnesse.”⁵⁴ This concept relates to the block quote above because the author stresses the saving effect a good friend can have; a good friend can provide infinite counsel and guidance for young men.

Trundle highlighted the connection between having good, quality friends with whom to converse and learning to act morally in an effort to encourage young men to act virtuously. In this section, Trundle implores his young readers to make smart choices in daily life, such as staying away from “harlots,” “lenders,” “slander,” and “drunkards.”⁵⁵ Trundle writes that young men who associate with morally remiss men and women will learn, “povertie shall be their portion; and the keeper shall be clothed with rages.”⁵⁶ He discourages his readers and his son from indulging in a life of luxury and straying from one of temperance and virtue. Trundle fears how a young man’s choices in this life will affect him when he enters God’s kingdom. He implores young men to be strong and brave in order to have good reason and never to be fearful or cowardly.⁵⁷ Trundle claims that all of his advice will eventually lead to young men being rewarded.

⁵² Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

⁵³ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

⁵⁴ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

⁵⁵ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

⁵⁶ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

⁵⁷ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation is Luxurie.”

Trundle furthers his advice for his young readers by urging young men to live lives of temperance. The OED defines temperance as, “[t]he practice or habit of restraining oneself in provocation, passion, desire, etc.; rational self-restraint. (One of the four cardinal virtues.)”⁵⁸ Temperance includes acting according to “self-restraint and moderation in action of any kind, in the expression of opinion, etc.; suppression of any tendency to passionate action; in early use, esp. self-control, restraint, or forbearance, when provoked to anger or impatience.”⁵⁹ He advocates for young adolescents to learn to “[l]et the furniture and ornaments of they person be fit and sutable for thy place and honour.”⁶⁰ Trundle wanted adolescent males to lead responsible and moderate lives. He writes, “[t]here is nothing in the world better than moderation... Temperance hath eight handmaids, Modestie, [], Abstinence, Continencie, Honestie, Moderation, Sparing, and Sobrietie.”⁶¹ These eight handmaids serve as guides for young men to stay within the parameters of the compass and live temperately.

Trundle warns against acting “Out of Compasse in Apparell” and living a prodigality driven life. He proclaims that men should not attempt to dress above their social station. This implies that men, not just women, needed to respect the boundaries of the patriarchal hierarchy and not attempt to falsely or inappropriately elevate their social status or worth. Trundle defines the relationship between apparel and prodigality as, “to spend much without getting, to lay out all without reckoning, and to give all without considering, are the true effects of prodigalitie.”⁶²

⁵⁸ "temperance, n.". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.
<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/198885?redirectedFrom=temperance> (accessed September 16, 2011).

⁵⁹ "temperance, n.". OED Online.

⁶⁰ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation is Luxurie.”

⁶¹ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation is Luxurie.”

⁶² Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Apparell.”

In turn, prodigality, gaming, and dice are all connected to devil and his vices.⁶³ In this section, similar to the previous two, Trundle provides a warning to his son, and all male adolescents, if they act outside of the compass and act corruptly and greedily, they stray from the underlying message of his prescriptive literature: virtue.

In his last section, “Keepe within Compasse in Dyet,” Trundle continues to encourage his readers to live temperately and virtuously through diet. By diet, Trundle includes every substance that is put into the body: food, drink, and faith. In an attempt to maintain the body, Trundle asserts that men must “[h]aunt not Taverns, Brothels or Ale houses: but beware the danger and expense, the bane of body, soule, and substance.”⁶⁴ By stepping outside of the compass, a man would enter a state of disorder and no longer be virtuous or temperate.⁶⁵ If a young man were to overthrow the order of his compass with excess food or drink, his relationship with God would become endangered. Men must “[r]emember as meat and drinke is food to preserve the body, so is Gods Works the nourishment of they Soule.”⁶⁶ Food and drink sustain the body, while God’s word sustains the soul.

Food and drink should not be life’s driving force; God’s word and religion should always govern a man within his individual compass. By stepping out of the compass a young man embraces gluttony, the enemy of temperance.⁶⁷ For Trundle, the word gluttony includes more than just overindulgence in food and drink. It includes, “lust, anger, and love in extremitie, extinguisheth understanding, opinion, and memory.”⁶⁸ Because Trundle asserts there is a connection between emotion and diet, he demands that his readers, “[t]ake no pleasure to feede

⁶³ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Apparell.”

⁶⁴ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Dyet.”

⁶⁵ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Dyet.”

⁶⁶ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Dyet.”

⁶⁷ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “Out of Compasse in Apparell is Prodigalitie.”

⁶⁸ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “Out of Compasse in Apparell is Prodigalitie.”

on thine enemies afflictions: for he that sitteth surest, may in a moment be overthrowne...A wise man out not to be puffed by with pleasure, for it is the food of filthiennesse: it killeth the body, weakneth the judgement, and takes away understanding.”⁶⁹ According to Trundle, diet is not merely about food and drink, but it involves nourishing mind, body, and soul. A healthy diet demands that readers should not revel in another’s pain or misfortune, and they should not be rash or presumptuous.

While the four aspects of Trundle’s compass, religion, conversation, apparel, and diet, appear simple, they serve as jumping off points for an entire life. He implores young men to heed the advice of their fathers who can pass down tips to leading a temperate and virtuous life. Trundle combines his theoretical parenting advice with practical advice for his son. Trundle guides his readers to a life of balance within a compass; he acknowledges that each man might structure his life slightly differently within Trundle’s guidelines. This outcome alludes to the idea that Trundle recognizes that young men also had to find a balance between prescriptive literature and practical living. Like his contemporary authors, Trundle navigates his way through parenting youth through awkward transition from adolescence to manhood while maintaining an emphasis on religious principles. However, Trundle proposes that young men should rely on his advice for achieving masculinity and patriarchal power, but he is cognizant that his readers will have to make adjustments to suit everyday life. Trundle provides prescriptive literature for his readers, but he is aware of how men will have to practically adopt his advice to fit the demands of real life.

Shepard’s analysis of the phase of youth can be connected to Trundle’s advice letter, because Trundle’s main emphasis relates to balance and a compass of manhood. Trundle

⁶⁹ Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “Out of Compasse in Apparell is Prodigalitie.”

provides his readers with exactly how to navigate the compass and remain balanced during a time of tremendous instability and unknown. Trundle feared that male youths could make the wrong choices without the assistance of fathers to steer them away from alcohol and other inappropriate pastimes. Shepard writes, “[a]lthough domestic advice dwelt extensively on men’s mastery of others, it also emphasized that this was predicated on their mastery of themselves.”⁷⁰ By utilizing the information in Trundle’s text, young men would learn the necessary skill of mastering themselves.

William Gouge: Advice Author of an Age

While Trundle’s letter, *Keepe within Compasse*, focused solely on the development of young men, William Gouge, a contemporary of Trundle and the author of *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), detailed the proper societal conduct for all family members in England during the seventeenth century. His popular and well-read conduct manual outlined how husbands, wives, children, and parents should behave to best live by God’s word. Like Trundle, Gouge’s text provided readers with both theoretical and practical conduct advice.

While Gouge’s text initially appears to be a list of proper attitudes and behaviors for different factions of society, it is imperative to analyze Gouge’s personal experiences and how they relate to his final text. Gouge was a minister at St. Ann Blackfriars, a London church that eventually became a Puritan base in the city, for the majority of his adult life. He married Elizabeth Calton, a minister’s ward, an atypical marriage choice for a man of his social station, and the couple had thirteen children together. Gouge had numerous familial connections with the Puritan movement. While Gouge emphasizes in his text a partnership between man and wife, his

⁷⁰ Shepard, *Meanings*, 77-78.

personal history illustrates that he believed in the obedience of a wife to her husband. Gouge's personal life centered on family, religion, and strict gender roles, which helped shape his argument. For example, Gouge does not provide extensive information of how unmarried women or spinsters should support themselves. Instead, he argues for marriage and even arranged marriages to maintain family and religious values. *Of Domesticall Duties*, although clearly influenced by Gouge's point-of-view, was incredibly prevalent throughout England after its wide spread publication in 1622, and it helped to inform men, women, parents, and children of their duties to their family and society.

In his article, "Men's Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England 1560-1660," (1994), Anthony Fletcher references reactions to Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* from the 1620s in an attempt to understand why men constantly redefined masculinity to maintain their patriarchal standing. One contemporary reader of Gouge's text, Nehemiah Wallington, wrote a diary entry after reading Gouge's conduct literature. After getting married, he purchased a copy of the book. Wallington felt, "[e]very one of us...may learn and know our duties and honour God every one in his place where God has sent them'.⁷¹ After reading the book, he drew up a household contract and had his wife and servants sign it, which signaled that they would live under his patriarchal authority. He only felt a sense of security about his authoritarian role within his family after he put a formal contract in place. Wallington, like other readers, deduced that "the general message of the conduct book was a reassuring one for men who had any doubts about how far they should play a stern and authoritative role in their households."⁷²

⁷¹ Anthony Fletcher, "Men's Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England 1560-1660," *Royal Historical Journal* 4 (1994): 73.

⁷² Fletcher, "Men's Dilemma," 74.

Fletcher includes a brief episode in Gouge's personal history, where he faced trouble at his St. Ann Blackfairs congregation. Local city dames contested Gouge's enthusiasm for patriarchy; "he was in trouble with some of them for expecting formal rituals of reverence and obeisance by wives to husbands and for his demand for them to show complete submission, in a humble and cheerful manner, even when a husbandly reproof was manifestly unjust."⁷³ This female reaction suggests that Gouge's prescriptive literature was idealistic and completely out of touch with reality. He preferably wanted women to adopt a completely subordinate role in their household, which was not practical. This instance demonstrates that the contestation between prescriptive and realistic literature flourished in early modern England. When writing *Of Domesticall Duties*, Gouge could only hope that his ideals would resonate with his readers on some level and could be applied to everyday life as accurately as possible.

With this background in mind, Gouge's advice for children continues along the same path as Trundle's. Gouge writes, "[t]he obedience of children doth most prove the authoritie of parents, and is the surest evidence of the honour a childe giveth to his parent... Reverence without obedience is a mere mockage, nothing at all acceptable."⁷⁴ Gouge asserts that children must obey the wishes of their parents and follow their advice, like the advice found in Trundle's letter. By following parental advice, children will learn excepted societal behavior for a generally patriarchal community.

As seen in Trundle's letter, religion and piety guide the content of Gouge's conduct manual. He provides numerous Biblical stories to support his claims and advice for his readers. Gouge writes that the apostles "reckoneth disobedient children among the lewdest person that

⁷³ Fletcher, "Men's Dilemma," 74.

⁷⁴ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 441.

be...untamed, head-strong beasts, that will not be brought under the yoke...”⁷⁵ By emphasizing the connection between daily patriarchal behaviors and the Bible, Gouge hoped to maintain societal and patriarchal norms in his prescriptive literature. He advocates for children to follow every type of advice for keeping family power dynamics intact. According to Gouge, children should be seen as “goods” of their parents and should remain under parental power.⁷⁶ By suggesting that children should be understood as under their parents’ control, almost like property, Gouge identifies who holds the power and who is controlled. Gouge’s setup of a parent/child relationship requires that sons must heed fatherly advice to lead a successful and productive life in God’s image.

Gouge argues that parents, particularly fathers, have the right to make their children’s decisions. Allegedly, fathers have superior knowledge regarding proper gender roles, demonstrations of masculinity, and patriarchal structure to teach both their sons and daughters. Gouge asserts, “[e]quitie requireth that parents should have an hand in placing forth their children, because they brought them forth into the world, and brought them up with much care, paines, and charge, while they were young, and till they were fit for calling.”⁷⁷ He implies children are not fit to make decisions without the guidance of fathers. Authors of advice literature and Protestant ministers “gave strong expression to the idea that young people were particularly prone to sin and to indulgence in immoral activities, especially sins of the flesh.”⁷⁸ Adults considered youth to be “brutish and devilish” and a threat to strong, patriarchal

⁷⁵ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 441.

⁷⁶ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 442.

⁷⁷ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 443.

⁷⁸ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1994), 13.

communities.⁷⁹ Historian of early modern adolescents, Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, argues, “[h]istorians of Puritanism and of the family have long been aware of these negative portrayals of youth found in early modern literature.”⁸⁰ These negative representations are evident in both Gouge’s and Trundle’s advice literature, for neither author has tremendous faith in early modern youth. It is evident that in Gouge’s opinion, as in Trundle’s, it is a father’s duty to instill good values to his children and it is a child’s duty to obey these values. A child is not capable of making moral decisions without paternal assistance. Gouge refers to the Bible to substantiate this point; “[a]nd ye Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians Early Modern 6.4.).”⁸¹

In England, fathers shared common responsibilities, which included teaching nature, civility, and piety to their children and instilling the Lord’s values in their sons and daughters.⁸² References to these traits can be found in Trundle’s compass and Gouge’s canon. Both Gouge and Trundle agreed on molding children to be religious and civil. Gouge argues, “[p]ietie is the best thing that a parent can teach his childe: for as reason maketh a man differ from a beast; and as learning and civilitie maketh a wife and sober man differ from savages and swaggerers.”⁸³ Religion and piety distinguished man from animals. According to Gouge, children are not born Christians, so they do not inherently know how to live like God. They rely on their parents, specifically fathers, to instill the wisdom of the Lord. Gouge furthers his argument by suggesting, “[c]hildren are most properly Gods: *borne to God*: he is the most proper parent of them: in comparison of God, fathers and mothers of the flesh are but nurses. They must therefore

⁷⁹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 13.

⁸⁰ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 14.

⁸¹ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 497.

⁸² Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 498.

⁸³ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 537.

nurture them in *the admonition of the Lord*.”⁸⁴ This statement not only emphasizes the strong guiding role of religion in early modern England, but it also further cements accepted gender roles. Women are nurturers, while fathers are responsible for controlling their families. By writing in a prescriptive manner, Gouge wrote with the intention for parents and families to function as he saw suitable. This means that while Gouge acknowledged that there should be some gender balance in families, husbands and fathers should ideally have control and govern their families under Christianity.

The role of advice literature in early modern England was constantly changing. Authors such as Trundle and Gouge often had to follow their own advice and work to achieve literary balance. Authors had to find the appropriate balance between prescriptive literature and practical advice. They had to quell their desires to write about an ideal patriarchal community in order for their texts to have a pertinent role in society. Advice authors wrote to future generations of young men with the intention of maintaining their patriarchal society for generations to come. Although armed with knowledge from advice literature and their fathers about masculinity and patriarchy, many young men looked for alternative ways to prove their autonomy before they achieved patriarchal power. The promise of power and control tempted adolescent males to make their presence in their communities known.

⁸⁴ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 538.

CHAPTER II: THE TRANSITION

The Quemerford Skimmington: An Introduction to Charivaris and Shame Punishments

On June 1, 1618 Thomas Mills de Iwemerford and his wife, Agnes, fell victim to a skimmington. The party, which consisted of young men and boys, began to arrive on May 27th to conduct the skimmington. The number of men attending the skimmington quickly grew, as the record notes that by noon:

three or fower hundred men, some like soldiers, armed wth pieces and other weapons, & a man riding upon a horse, haveinge a white cap upon his head, two shininge hornes hanging by his eares, & counterfayte beard upon his chine made of a deares tayle, a smocke upon the top of his garments, & he rode upon a red horse wth a paire of potts under him & in them some quatitye of bruinge graines, wch he used to cast upon ye presse of people, rushing over thicke upon him in ye way as he passed.⁸⁵

Young men playing horns and ringing bells charged towards Thomas Mills's home holding forks and a varied of hand made weapons.

In an attempt to keep out the intruders, Mills locked his doors and windows. He also locked his wife into his room while he tried to determine whether they would be able to flee from their home without meeting the crowds. However, Mills and his wife were not able to find a safe escape route, for the crowd of men surrounded their home, rushed inside, broke down the door to his room, and pulled his wife outside by the heels.⁸⁶ During this chaotic scene, the court records indicate that the crowds trampled over Agnes:

they threw her down into it [a wet hole] & trod upon hir & beried her filthy with dirt, & did beate hir blacke & blewe in many places wth an inten, as these examinants have credibly heard, to have had her viz, Agnes, out of their howse to ye horseman & to have sett hir up behind him to carry hir to Callne & there washe

⁸⁵ B. Howard Cunnington, *Records of the County of Wilts, Being Extracts from the Quarter Sessions Great Rolls of the Seventeenth Century*. []: Devizes, G. Simpson & Co., (1932): 65.

⁸⁶ Cunnington, *Records*, 66.

hir in the cuckinge stoole, & if she would not be still & sitt quietly, then to stuffe hir mouth wth greines.⁸⁷

Eventually, Wills's landlord, Raphe Welsted, arrived to the scene in the attempt to save the home and stop the skimmington, but the crowd beat both Welsted and Wills for their attempt at peace.

One way in which to better understand the role masculinity and violence played in society is to analyze court records from the early seventeenth century. The editor of the text, *Records of the County of Wilts; Being Extracts from the Quarter Sessions Great Rolls of the Seventeenth Century*, B. Howard Cunnington compiled a variety of court records to understand "local conditions of the life of the people of Wiltshire."⁸⁸ These records emphasize the role of action, local response, and consequence in early modern England. Each record indicates what the crime or action was, how the community responded, and the consequence for the offender.

Cunnington included a number of local cases involving skimmingtons or charivaris in his collection. These sources highlight the relationship between manhood and patriarchy in early modern England. Cunnington defines a skimmington as examples of local justice in a situation when a man was "'henpecked' or a husband or wife [was] unfaithful."⁸⁹ These acts of local justice served as a "popular ceremony for punishing a man who allows himself to be beaten by his wife."⁹⁰ However, Cunnington argues this definition oversimplifies the significance of skimmingtons in early modern England. He asserts that a more detailed explanation is required to understand the full affect of these ceremonies. Typically, they included:

a serenade of rough music to express disapproval in cases of great scandal and immorality. The orthodox procedure in North Wilts was as follows: -- The party

⁸⁷ Cunnington, *Records*, 66.

⁸⁸ Cunnington, *Records*, xvi.

⁸⁹ Cunnington, *Records*, 64.

⁹⁰ Cunnington, *Records*, 64.

assembles before the houses of the offenders armed with pots and pans, and performs a serenade for three successive nights. Then an interval of the same duration, and a second repetition of the rough music for three nights – nine nights in all. On the last night the effigies of the offenders are burnt.⁹¹

However, there were some cases in which the party incorporated the actual offender into the ceremony. One popular way this was done was to have a “hen-pecked” husband ride “behind a woman on a horse with his face to the horse’s tail. He held a distaff in his hand, and the woman beat him about the head with a ladle.”⁹²

Cunnington suggests that the Quemerford Skimmington of 1618 demonstrated local reactions to ignored gender norms and responsibilities. The event serves as a way to examine how villagers reacted when man and wife did not conduct themselves properly and brought instability to a village.

Shame Punishments: A Functional Tool for Teaching about Patriarchy

During their journey through the awkward years of adolescence, young men had to rely on alternative ways separate from marriage and high patriarchal standing to demonstrate their masculinity and power in society. Even though men in their late teens and early twenties were still financially dependent on their parents and often considered by society to be out of control, their acts of youthful transgression served a crucial role in early modern English society. Whether young men participated in charivaris, community violence, or protests, these misbehaviors actually provided young men a way to support in the patriarchal system. Behaviors from this intermediate stage of life served as ways for young men to learn about their future roles as patriarchs while expressing their developing masculinity. Although these activities were

⁹¹ Cunnington, *Records*, 64.

⁹² Cunnington, *Records*, 64.

usually violent transgressions of accepted behavior, they brought elements of masculinity to light. However, for some men these actions served a different purpose. Certain populations of men were never destined to become patriarchal powers due to limited economic opportunities. They relied on violent acts of transgression to demonstrate that although they did not have patriarchal power, they had masculine presence. The changing definitions of masculinity and the various ways to prove them overlapped these two seemingly opposite male populations. Youthful transgressions, such as shame punishments, reinforced male domination and highlight the blurred distinctions between private and public behaviors.



1. "Hudibras Encounters the Skimmington" by William Hogarth: Samuel Butler, *Hudibras* (London, 1726 edn.), plate 12.
By permission of the Trustees of the British Museum

*Figure 2. Hudibras Encounters a Skimmington*⁹³

Although the woodcut, "Hudibras Encounters a Skimmington," by William Hogarth (1726) does not portray the events of the Quemerford Skimmington, Hogarth captures an environment similar to what occurred at Quemerford. As Mills described, there were allegedly hundred of men present to participate in the shaming punishment with a variety of weapons and

⁹³ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 83.

noisemakers. Hogarth includes a scene of chaos, noise, and violence surrounding a skimmington to illustrate how participants surrounded the victim and acted with the intent to shame him or her for behavioral failures. What prompted the particular skimmington in the image is unknown, but the goal of the action is the same as at Quemerford; the participants hoped to restore the patriarchal balance within a community and to physically demonstrate male status and authority.

Violence in early modern Europe was a way to demonstrate status among men. The threat of violence alone served as a way for men to communicate superior status.⁹⁴ However, when men utilized injury, assault, or defamation to prove status, they entered into territory of unacceptable behavior.⁹⁵ Shepard argues, “[v]iolence therefore conferred manhood in ways which both overlapped with and diverged from patriarchal concepts of order, often serving alternative masculinities according to the age, status, and context of its perpetrators.”⁹⁶ With this in mind, those who committed violence utilized aspects of masculinity, such as power and control, to demonstrate their worth or credit in a way that did not necessarily coincide with the traditional expressions of manhood in a patriarchal society.

Shame punishments, such as ridings, rough music, and charivaris, “were widely administered in early modern England in ways which served to discredit deviations from, and alternatives to, patriarchal principles in both men and women.”⁹⁷ The most popular forms of punishment included the stocks, caging, ducking stool, and whipping.⁹⁸ Not only did “[c]orporeal punishment from ear-boxing to whipping reminded unruly subordinates of their place, through humiliating them and denying them autonomy over their bodies or the right of self-defense,” but

⁹⁴ Shepard, *Meanings*, 130-131.

⁹⁵ Shepard, *Meanings*, 131.

⁹⁶ Shepard, *Meanings*, 132.

⁹⁷ Shepard, *Meanings*, 133.

⁹⁸ Shepard, *Meanings*, 133.

they also reinforced proper patriarchal behavior.⁹⁹ These shaming punishments enforced a community's male hierarchy based on gender, age, status, and wealth. Shaming punishments, both at home and in university settings, were also common in households and as a way to "correct young men" and women.¹⁰⁰ A common example of a shame punishment in early modern England would be whipping an unwed mother of an illegitimate child and the suspected father. Both mother and father acted immorally, and neither held any patriarchal standing to lessen the severity of their punishments. Shepard asserts that violence "used to uphold hierarchies of age, gender, and rank...was deemed not only acceptable but necessary, with no connotations of violation unless it became excessive."¹⁰¹ She insinuates that, on the whole, violence committed by men was acceptable in early modern England permitting it did not become inappropriate; there needed to be a cause to justify a violent response. Causes generally included any violation to the patriarchal hierarchy or any illegal actions. Violence included both physical and verbal insults that threatened the status of the recipient.

Although violence itself did not merit legal action, "lost honor and debased status" motivated many men to respond with litigation in early modern England.¹⁰² On the whole, Shepard suggests that the majority of legal cases resulting from violence were in response to issues of humiliation or "foul play," not the physical act of violence itself.¹⁰³ This meant communities knew that men expressed status and authority competitively and violently, but these actions were expected and tolerated. For example, men commonly committed acts of beard-pulling to illustrate their superiority over another man. Humiliating a man by belittling his status

⁹⁹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 139.

¹⁰⁰ Shepard, *Meanings*, 134.

¹⁰¹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 139.

¹⁰² Shepard, *Meanings*, 143.

¹⁰³ Shepard, *Meanings*, 147.

in public caused more embarrassment and damage than physical violence to the victim. Perpetrators of beard-pulling intended to “belittle, disgrace, and affront their victims” by insinuating that they possessed greater manhood in comparison to other men.¹⁰⁴ According to Shepard, “[v]iolence was intrinsic to the expression of a range of male identities encompassing attributes of fairness, honesty, order, control, autonomy, strength, forcefulness, bravado, resilience, and defiance,” which supports the motivation behind beard-pulling.¹⁰⁵

Anthony Fletcher cites historian, E. P. Thompson’s book, *Customs in Common*, in which Thompson “argued that rough music of this kind actually attached to the victim a lasting stigma” and was ‘a public naming of what has been named before only in private.’”¹⁰⁶ By referencing this argument, Fletcher reinforces Shepard’s argument that shame punishments caused greater damage to a man’s reputation than body. Private household problems of the time, such as domineering women and disobedient children, became conflicts that required community interference. Like Thompson suggests, the distinction between private life and public life blurred as communities relied on male youths and their peers to maintain a successful patriarchal hierarchy.

The majority of these transgressions occurred in the streets and fields, which served as advantageous locations for violence or shame punishments. These were “fluid” locations, meaning the distinct hierarchy of the patriarchal system was blurred in a less defined space because no one owned the space of the streets.¹⁰⁷ It was harder to enforce patriarchal hierarchy in a less official area. Violence was central to manhood in acts of individual violence and in group combat. Young men created a platform to make their voices and opinions heard through

¹⁰⁴ Shepard, *Meanings*, 147.

¹⁰⁵ Shepard, *Meanings*, 149.

¹⁰⁶ Fletcher, “Men’s Dilemma,” 78.

¹⁰⁷ Shepard, *Meanings*, 148-149.

violence. It was a way for an individual to demonstrate his worth and for a group of men to display their changing role in the patriarchal hierarchy. Shepard argues that defending male honor and masculinity was directly linked to defending territory, which could also explain why violent transgressions occurred in streets and fields.¹⁰⁸ Like with modern gang, groups of early modern young men equated territory with power and authority. Violence in groups was competitive, and it challenged social, economic, and political boundaries. It did not quietly and submissively adhere to the restrictions of the patriarchy. The role of violence in early modern England was incredibly complex, for it served multiple purposes. Either violence threatened the patriarchal status quo or it provided young men with the means to express their developing power and manhood. Violence could be both functional and threatening to traditional male authority. Shepard's argument can be condensed to read, "[v]iolence informed alternative meanings of manhood."¹⁰⁹

Crucial to Shepard's argument is the fact that the patriarchal hierarchy excluded many men. She writes, "[m]any men were excluded from the kinds of status conferred by the control of resources and participation in credit networks...fears and anxieties concerning economic dependency were ubiquitous."¹¹⁰ Due to the fact that only a minority of men achieved householding status and the security that came with it, only a small population of men became financially independent and thus able to attain true patriarchal standing and respect. Established men within a community perceived dependent men as threats to their personal financial independence and power. In response to these limitations, those who did not have traditional

¹⁰⁸ Shepard, *Meanings*, 150.

¹⁰⁹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 151.

¹¹⁰ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 96.

male worth and security found other ways, such as through violence, to demonstrate their manhood.

In a similar style of analysis to Shepard, Fletcher argues that gender and patriarchy dominated early modern England, but they were constantly changing and adjusting to fit current needs. Fletcher asserts in his article, “Men’s Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England 1560-1660,” (1994), men “have been remaking patriarchy for hundreds of years,” and women have continued to challenge it.¹¹¹ This statement suggests that there will always be threats to the patriarchal system and that it will never be able to completely control its community. In response to these constant adjustments, Fletcher suggests, like Shepard, that there is not one definition of masculinity. Shepard argues that men expressed masculinity in a variety of ways because different groups of men occupied different places in the patriarchal hierarchy. Both Fletcher and Shepard agree that masculinity cannot be easily defined. Fletcher attempts to resolve why men felt necessary to prove their masculinity by asserting, “[m]an’s dilemma then was that in various ways a good many of them felt threatened by women. They were acutely sensitive to assertive female behavior, whether it was real or imagined.”¹¹² This fear of women attaining power motivated men to maintain their society standing, household authority, and financial autonomy.

In an effort to connect skimmingtons and charivaris in English history to the transitional time of adolescence and its role in society, it is necessary to analyze the work of historian, Natalie Zemon Davis. Although Davis wrote about misrule in sixteenth century France, aspects of her thesis are applicable to understanding youthful transgressions in early modern England. She was one of the first historians to expand the study of popular culture to emphasize fraternal youth organizations. Davis recognized that misrule can have many purposes; primarily it can

¹¹¹ Fletcher, “Men’s Dilemma,” 62.

¹¹² Fletcher, “Men’s Dilemma,” 73.

“perpetuate certain values of the community...[or]...criticize political order.”¹¹³ To understand the role of misrule in early modern France, Davis focuses her research on youth groups, particularly the Abbeys of Misrule.

Davis echoes Burke and Muir, who argued that youth groups acted like unofficial courts in their communities. In France the most prominent youth groups were called the Abbeys of Misrule, which were fairly structured in comparison to the informal groups of adolescent males in early modern England. Davis lists similar causes of charivaris, to Shepard, such as woman beating her husband with kitchen objects. In addition to a woman hitting her husband with a frying pan, Davis emphasizes that deceiving husbands, remarrying widows or widowers, and men who beat their wives were all potential victims of youthful justice.¹¹⁴ Like Muir, Davis references anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, who identified this transitional time as “liminal.” As discussed in the introduction, van Gennep outlines rites of passage as having three steps: preliminary, liminary, and postliminary. The Abbeys of Misrule’s activities make up the liminal stage of a rite of passage: the transition into manhood. During this rite of transition, young men created platforms to act out their autonomy before marriage and independent careers. Although the members of these Abbeys were in an undefined time of transition, they still claimed jurisdiction over their communities in regards to certain areas. Davis asserts, it “was very much in the service of the village community, clarifying the responsibilities that the youth would have when they were married men and fathers, helping to maintain proper order within marriage, and to sustain the biological continuity of the village.”¹¹⁵ Davis perceived the Abbey to be a rehearsal for young men to practice what their duties would be upon becoming patriarchal powers. Davis

¹¹³ Davis, “Misrule,” 41.

¹¹⁴ Davis, “Misrule,” 45.

¹¹⁵ Davis, “Misrule,” 54.

adopts a functional interpretation of the Abbeys of Misrule, for she argues that the Abbeys served a functional and utilitarian purpose within their communities.

Davis expands her argument to examine the differences in the Abbeys in cities and those in the countryside to understand the changing definition of masculinity. She argues that in each region, the roles and functions of the youth groups varied. The Abbeys and their acts of misrule remained more important in the countryside than the city. Davis suggests that urban fathers encouraged their sons to prepare for married life and advantageous as opposed to indulging in youthful misbehavior.¹¹⁶ She continues to write that urban adolescents joined groups that were appropriate for their economic standing, family profession, and neighborhood associations.¹¹⁷ While Davis's research pertains to sixteenth century France, these overarching trends extend to early modern England.

Davis also investigates is the relationship between religion and youthful misrule. As seen in the advice literature by Trundle and Gouge, there was a direct connection between advice literature and religious values. Davis examines how different religious groups in France responded to the Abbeys and their actions. Initially, the Catholic Church forbade the Abbeys from committing transgressions about the Church or on church property.¹¹⁸ However, as the Catholic Church began to recognize the power of these youth groups they saw the groups as vehicles to uphold Catholic ideology and propaganda.¹¹⁹ The Protestants responded oppositely. They attempted to end the Abbeys and what the Protestants perceived were inappropriate exhibitions of misrule. Protestant religious officials feared that Abbeys would forget that God should be the guiding light in life as opposed to fear of the Abbeys. Judging from the message

¹¹⁶ Davis, "Misrule," 63.

¹¹⁷ Davis, "Misrule," 63.

¹¹⁸ Davis, "Misrule," 70.

¹¹⁹ Davis, "Misrule," 73.

from advice literature, youthful transgressions did not correlate with the values of Trundle's compass and his emphasis on religious tenets. However, acts of misrule fittingly emphasized strong masculine power in early modern England.

Martin Ingram furthered the field of study of youthful misrule and charivaris in his article, "Ridings, Rough Music and the 'Reform of Popular Culture' in Early Modern England" (1984). Ingram responds to Peter Burke's argument surrounding popular culture in Europe and Natalie Zemon Davis's analysis of youth movements in early modern France. Ingram states that the purpose of his article, like Davis's, is to interpret and analyze the formation and functions charivaris and acts of misrule among early English communities. However, Ingram furthers his analysis by considering "reactions to [charivaris] with a view to understanding the degree of cultural differentiation and change which occurred during that period."¹²⁰ By seeking to address the cultural changes in early modern England, Ingram challenges Burke's original thesis, in which he argued that a reform of popular culture took place within the early modern period in Europe. Ingram suggests that one of the main flaws of Burke's argument is that there is no easy separation between "popular" and "elite" culture.¹²¹

Ingram's interpretation of a charivari's events is consistent with Burke, Muir, Davis, and Shepard. However, he fundamentally disagrees with Davis's analysis that charivaris or events of misrule could have served as motivation for women to take power over their oppressive male leaders. Ingram argues that Davis's thesis stating that "charivaris sometimes involved an element of rejoicing at, even encouragement of, female insurrection," did not fit with the social and political structure of the time.¹²² Ingram, instead, suggests that charivaris "reflected an awareness

¹²⁰ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 81.

¹²¹ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 79.

¹²² Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 97.

that women could never be dominated to the degree implied in the patriarchal ideal.”¹²³ This interpretation relates to the emphasis on patriarchal values from contemporary advice literature. Adult males took great care to pass down values rooted in patriarchal domination within families and communities. By outlining every desirable male trait and characteristic, Trundle and Gouge acknowledged that men had to formally do everything possible to maintain power. These examples of conduct manuals serve as an acknowledgment that men felt threatened by their female counterparts. The formal literature served as a concrete source for men to utilize to prove that they should pass down roles of power and authority based on gender.

Although Ingram notes that there were two broad categories of shame punishments, penal and festive, he argues that charivaris placed all events into one main framework.¹²⁴ Ultimately, charivaris and youth misrule highlighted the “contrast between order and disorder, which representations of the institutions of political power and the authoritarian motif of the horse and rider demonstrated that order was to be conceived in terms of dominance and subjection.”¹²⁵ Ingram examines the roles charivaris played in expressing anarchy and dichotomies in the early modern era. The relationship between order and disorder within a family expanded to include influence the entire community. This meant that the line between private and public life disintegrated, and the events of a couple or household became community events.

Ingram directly challenges Burke’s classist interpretation of charivaris and youth groups in early modern England by addressing the participants in events of misrule. Ingram writes, “the performance of charivaris was always a predominantly plebian affair...again, throughout the whole period, more substantial members of the community often encouraged the demonstrators

¹²³ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 97.

¹²⁴ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 98.

¹²⁵ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 98.

and sometimes took active part; or, at the least, were prepared to remain neutral.”¹²⁶ By including a brief mention regarding the participants, Ingram dismisses the notion that events of misrule only affected one economic class or that charivaris were conducted only by the lower classes. The variety of participants illustrates that the preservation of male autonomy and domination concerned all classes of men. Although not every man would become incredibly powerful within the patriarchal hierarchy, it was still imperative that men maintained united front against female power. In addition, by arguing that participation was not based on class lines, Ingram suggests that “hostility towards charivaris appeared to have been infrequent or muted; and it does seem plain that they were at least one form of popular custom, and an impressive one, which escaped any really serious attempt at repression.”¹²⁷

This is consistent with the findings of Cunningham, for in his collection of court records there were few examples of charivaris that required official legal intervention. The combination of Ingram’s thesis and Cunningham’s research alludes to the fact that communities saw charivaris and shame punishments as effective ways to maintain societal order and to educate young men on their future hierarchical roles. When these populations of young men performed charivaris and ridings, they sought to lessen the gap between the ideal patriarchal community and the chaos of reality. The power and preservation of the patriarchal hierarchy was a common goal of all members of the male population, meaning that shame punishments, charivaris, and youth transgressions served as “important points of cultural contact between rich and poor, rulers and ruled.”¹²⁸ Ingram notes, “[o]f course the fact that charivaris involved the assumption of quasi-judicial powers by the populace could arouse some disquiet. Yet in practice, in a legal system

¹²⁶ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 104.

¹²⁷ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 110.

¹²⁸ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 113.

which relied heavily on local co-operation and which delegated considerable policing powers to non-professional parish officers, such arrogation of authority could be regarded with tolerance.”¹²⁹ However, he argues consistently that these “quasi-legal” punishments were functional for the maintenance of a community and for the practical education of adolescent males.

In an attempt to understand the role of male youth groups in early modern England, Mary Ann Clawson analyzes “fraternalism” and its relationship to patriarchy. In her article, “Early Modern Fraternalism and the Patriarchal Family,” (1980), Clawson argues that she “takes the position that the leading forms of kinship within this period were patriarchalism within the household and fraternalism without.”¹³⁰ Her thesis further expands on Davis’s and Ingram’s analysis on the functional purposes of fraternal organizations. Clawson defines patriarchalism as the power relation that maintained order in society and production within the home.¹³¹ Outside of the home, members of fraternal groups “use[d] kinship as a model relationship defining themselves as brothers and accepting that definition to create and sustain relationships among biologically unrelated individuals.”¹³² Men relied on alliance formations with other males both inside and outside of the home. Like Shepard, Clawson notes that fraternal relations among men in early modern England were not equal or simple; there were hierarchal power relations.¹³³ Power relations arose within male groups regardless of blood relation. Males, particularly members of youth groups, acted in unison to maintain the structure of male domination. However, Clawson asserts that fraternalism and patriarchal hierarchy were not limited to small

¹²⁹ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music,” 111.

¹³⁰ Mary Ann Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism and the Patriarchal Family,” *Feminist Studies*, Inc. 6 (1980): 371.

¹³¹ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 368.

¹³² Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 368.

¹³³ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 371.

communities and families. She emphasizes that they served “as an overarching metaphor that explained and justified other forms of authority, including that of the king over his people.”¹³⁴ Clawson’s analysis expands on that of Davis, Ingram, and Shepard, for Clawson connects the unofficial structure of community justice to the ruling system of the nation.

Clawson writes about the role Abbeys of Misrule and youth groups played within their communities. She argues that these groups often orchestrated charivaris and skimmingtons and the “continued to play a kin-like role, for they claimed the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the family as the extended family might have done in another environment.”¹³⁵ Fraternal organization created a family-like bond in an attempt to strengthen patriarchal identity within the community. Clawson asserts, “the primary activity of these youth abbeys was to regulate courtship and especially, ‘to exercise tight control over the eligible females in their village...even influencing the choice of mates.’”¹³⁶ By controlling marriageable women in their communities, youth groups practiced their patriarchal responsibilities. Clawson writes:

[y]oung men were only temporarily dependent and subordinate; unlike women, they could look forward to the time when they would be head of a household which was both family and productive unit. Fraternal youth institutions can be seen as an attempt to make this distinction between young men and young women, to express the fact of eventual male authority.¹³⁷

The youth groups monitored the actions of young women, children, widows, and servants in the same way fathers monitored their families. Youth abbeys served as “an attempt to invoke authority that is specifically male, even before its participants had attained either the control over material resources or the position of adult householder which typically legitimated authority.”¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 373.

¹³⁵ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 374.

¹³⁶ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 382.

¹³⁷ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 381.

¹³⁸ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 383.

This aspect of Clawson's argument echoes Davis's because both historians recognize that youth groups acted in preparation for their future patriarchal roles.

There are many similarities between Clawson's research and Davis's, but Clawson continues her analysis of men's roles in patriarchal communities and families to suggest that men served as "emissaries" to the outside world for their families. Clawson states that a man would return to his family "carrying with him something of the moral and political force of the entire society."¹³⁹ She argues that because men had access to different social networks than women did, women could never achieve a similar authoritarian role. If men in families acted as "emissaries," they had the opportunity to constantly maintain power their households by influencing how their families interacted with their community.

Clawson emphasizes the differences between rural and urban youth abbeys. She upholds that "rural youth abbeys represent attempts by young men to detach themselves from their subordinate position within the family."¹⁴⁰ By doing so, young men had the opportunity to form their own male relationships, which offered a feeling of independence and superiority over females.¹⁴¹ They wanted to be seen as independent from their subordinate familial roles as children. They desired to have individuals in their communities recognize their masculine authority and developing status. According to Clawson, urban youth groups served as a way to express "popular discontent, at the same time as they supported a given order within the family. The charivaris often attacked the court, the king's officials and even the ruler himself."¹⁴² From these excerpts, it appears that Clawson implies that urban youth groups commented more frequently on the political affairs affecting their communities rather than the moral behaviors of

¹³⁹ Clawson, "Early Modern Fraternalism," 384.

¹⁴⁰ Clawson, "Early Modern Fraternalism," 384.

¹⁴¹ Clawson, "Early Modern Fraternalism," 384.

¹⁴² Clawson, "Early Modern Fraternalism," 386.

their neighbors. Clawson concludes her argument by restating that youth groups during the early modern era took many different forms, but they all had one commonality regardless of participants and locations; they excluded women.¹⁴³ Youth groups fostered male relationship and fraternal bonds among young men during their transition from youth to marriage and patriarchal power.

In 1619 the combined powers of the patriarchal hierarchy and fraternal organizations acted together as the unofficial arbiters of justice in the town of Burton. The men of Burton banded together and performed a charivari on William and Margaret Cripple. Local townspeople punished the Cripples for “incontinency,” which is defined as “cohabitating and having sexual relations without benefits of marriage.”¹⁴⁴ Typical to charivaris, the participants took the Cripples from their bed and dragged them out of their home. In their court complaint, the Cripples claimed, “a number of inhabitants, allegedly ‘armed with long pikes, staves, daggers, swords, pitchforks, halberts and other engine and weapons’ surrounded their home and forced entry.”¹⁴⁵ The sheer numbers of weapons made the Cripples believe a riot was taking place outside of their home. Although these aspects of “rough music” and charivari fit with the traditional definitions of charivari, the local residents took the humiliation past accepted norms. The participants, hidden by masks and costumes, placed the Cripples into the local stocks and reportedly shouted, “a whore, a whore, and a theefe, a knave and a theefe in the stocks.”¹⁴⁶

In her essay, “‘Folk Justice’ and Royal Justice in Early Seventeenth-Century England: A ‘Charivari’ in the Midlands” (1983), Joan R. Kent studied the events surrounding the 1619

¹⁴³ Clawson, “Early Modern Fraternalism,” 388.

¹⁴⁴ Joan R. Kent, “‘Folk Justice’ and Royal Justice in Early Seventeenth-Century England: A ‘Charivari’ in the Midlands,” *Midland History*, vol. 8 (1983): 72.

¹⁴⁵ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 72.

¹⁴⁶ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 73.

Burton charivari. She details the actions surrounding both folk and royal justice, which culminated in both violent and brutal actions. In many towns and villages, the need for royal or official justice diminished because of folk justice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Kent stresses that in England, participants in folk justice, such as charivari and “rough music,” acted as unofficial police of morality, but performers of folk justice had more control over community behavior than royal officials did. Participants in folk justice acted “not only to humiliate those who defied accepted social conventions but also to punish moral offences which were proscribed by law and subject to trial in the courts of the land.”¹⁴⁷ Kent furthers her analysis by drawing connections between folk justice and royal justice based on records of court complaints and personal stories.

Kent analyzes the different aspects of folk justice to understand why they were effective in early modern England. As seen in Burton, masks and costumes were common components in charivaris. They acted to “reinforce the communal nature of the censure, to try to eliminate any suggestion that the punishment was a product of private quarrels, and at the same time designed to protect those who acted as the voice of the community from retaliatory action by the offenders.”¹⁴⁸ Disguises served as a way to enforce the communal aspect of folk justice and local punishment because they had the potential to unify the participants. In the case of the Cripples, the charivari participants sought to keep the focus of the event solely on the couple’s immoral behavior, not any personal vendettas.

The goal of charivaris and folk justice was to punish the offenders and to remind participants and community members to continually exhibit proper moral behavior; “public humiliation was intended both to impress upon offenders the evils of their ways and to remind

¹⁴⁷ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 70.

¹⁴⁸ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 74.

other inhabitants of their moral duties; the ultimate goal of such censure...was the reestablishment of communal harmony.”¹⁴⁹ However, the Cripple case was not typical because the participants were not completely certain what moral behavior the Cripples violated. The Cripple couple lied to their community, but their relationship remained unknown during the folk justice. Their community could not determine if the Cripples were married, living in sin, or incestuous siblings. Kent emphasizes that as the locals became more invested in the folk justice and the court case, they learned that in other towns, the Cripples claimed to be siblings. This couple exhibited “incontinency” because they either were having incestuous sexual relations, or they were having sexual relations out of wedlock. At this time, Puritan ideology greatly influenced England and in Burton, “the participants may have shared such religious beliefs. In any case, Puritan concerns about personal conduct and moral reform probably contributed significantly to the general climate of opinion within the town; and would help to explain the inhabitants’” readiness to censure the Cripples.”¹⁵⁰ Religious ideology permeated into the lives of Burton’s residents in a similar style to Trundle and Gouge’s advice literature. Trundle and Gouge both wrote conduct manuals laced with religious imagery and Puritan ideology for individual improvement and guidance, which would condemn the couple’s conduct.

Under normal circumstances, a charivari would have sufficed as punishment; however, Kent argues that the Cripples should have had an official trial for their illegal behavior. The combination of their crime, their poor socio-economic standing, and their unknown history in the town of Burton made the Cripples dangerous. These factors could have intensified the violence and brutality of the folk justice, moving it past the realm of humiliation.¹⁵¹ She asserts that the

¹⁴⁹ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 74.

¹⁵⁰ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 80.

¹⁵¹ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 75.

local royal official, Edward Lambe, did not act like a constable; instead he “not only had condoned the unofficial action of his fellow inhabitants but had led them in carrying out the public censure and punishment of the Cripples.”¹⁵² This analysis relates to one of Kent’s main objectives, which was to question the relationship between folk and royal justice. The events surrounding the Cripple case suggest that the distinction between the two forms of justice did not always remain clear. This local official failed to bring official justice to Burton, so the local community acted as arbiters of justice. Lambe’s “susceptibility to neighbourly influence suggests how unreliable such officers might be, as agents of the central government, if they were called upon to implement policies which ran counter to local interests.”¹⁵³

In response to the “unreliable” royal official, the Cripples faced a huge number of powerful townspeople in their charivari. Kent notes that “not only was their official leadership in this instance of popular justice, but the other participants appear to have come from established and prominent families in town.”¹⁵⁴ However, unlike other historians of charivaris, Kent notes that the participants in this instance were “adults rather than young, unmarried men.”¹⁵⁵ While this appears contradictory to Davis’s, Ingram’s, and Shepard’s analyses of charivaris, this case surpassed the typical occurrences of a charivari. Kent argues that the Cripples were dangerous to the town and their stranger status meant that community initially attempted to get the local royal official, Lambe, to control the situation. However, in such small communities, the distinction between official and folk justice often was unclear. In this instance, the unofficial folk punishment proved to be more successful. These participants in the charivari acted to ensure the status quo and stability of a religiously oriented moral code of conduct in a patriarchal society.

¹⁵² Kent, “Folk Justice,” 78.

¹⁵³ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 81.

¹⁵⁴ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 79.

¹⁵⁵ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 80.

Kent concludes her argument by paraphrasing historian E. P. Thompson to note that this case “reveals that in the 17th century ‘rough music’ was used not only to mock deviant behaviour but also to punish more serious moral offenders; and in such instances leading members of the community, not just youths, played a part in administering folk justice.”¹⁵⁶ Kent, like Thompson, expands Davis and Ingram’s understandings of early modern charivaris. She acknowledges that youths traditionally performed charivaris and episodes of folk justice, but in cases, such as this, where the crime entered the territory of serious moral offences, official government needed to become involved. Kent concludes that this progression failed in Burton and, in fact, folk justice served as a better way to punish the Cripples because Lambe could not navigate his role as a member of the Burton community and as a royal official.¹⁵⁷

Kent’s examination into the purposes of folk justice contributes to the research on masculinity in early modern England. Although the events surrounding the Cripples were more serious than those of a typical charivari, they support Ingram’s, Davis’s, and Shepard’s analysis of young men’s journey through adolescence. Kent upholds Davis’s theory that men, particularly young men, identified wrong doings in their community and effectively acted as unofficial arbiters of justice.

The events in Quemerford and Burton substantiate the claim that men outside of traditional patriarchal avenues of power found alternative ways to prove their worth. Although neither Trundle nor Gouge expressly advocated for young men to participate in charivaris and skimmingtons, these activities correlate with the acceptable behaviors for young men. The goal of charivaris and skimmingtons was to return a community to a state of harmonious balance. Achieving a balanced state was also the goal for young men in their personal lives. By

¹⁵⁶ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 81.

¹⁵⁷ Kent, “Folk Justice,” 81.

demonstrating their growing authority in folk justice, young men contributed to the patriarchal order of society. By partaking in these transgressions, young men exhibited their masculinity and potential for male credit upon maturity.

The popularity of shaming punishments, such as skimmingtons and charivaris, in early modern England transcended official court records and diaries to become subjects of poems and plays. In Jonathan Swift's poem, "A Quiet Life and a Good Name: To a Friend who Married a Shrew" (1719), he satirizes the marriage of Dick and Nell. The title and the dedication alone imply the plot of the poem. Dick and Nell are a married couple, however Nell incessantly abuses Dick and humiliates him with constant harassment. Dick's friend, Will, frequently spends time with the couple and witnesses Dick passively accepting Nell's abuse. In response, Will cries out, "why Dick! The devil's in they Nell/ Quoth Will; 'thy house is worse than hell.'"¹⁵⁸ Will suggests that Dick should "slit her tongue" or "break her limbs" to make the shrew silent and obedient. Dick refuses to take action and responds with silence and patience.

The local townspeople decide to take action against Dick for being subordinate to his wife. Swift chronicles this riding or charivari at the end of his poem:

And what he thought the hardest case,
The parish jeered him to his face:
Those men who wore breeches least,
Called him a cuckold, fool and beast.
At home he was pursued with noise;
Abroad, was pestered by the boys.
Within his wife would break his bones,
Without, they pelted him with stones:
The prentices procured a riding
To act his patience and her chiding.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸ Jonathan Swift, (1719), "A Quiet Life and a Good Name", in *Jonathan Swift, The Complete Poems*, edited by Pat Rogers, 188-189. (New Haven : Yale University Press, 1983): lines 9-10.

¹⁵⁹ Swift, "A Quiet Life," lines 46-54.

The events described in this poem contain typical aspects of charivaris from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The marriage between Dick and Nell is abnormal for the time, for it challenges patriarchal authority. Consequently, the couple's relationship angers their community. Will and his peers see the couple as inappropriate, which is why they take action against Dick for accepting his wife's punishment.

While the contents of this poem can be read strictly as a story of a hen-pecking wife, the majority of Swift's literary work is laced with satirical critiques. Although Swift's personal interpretation of this poem is unknown, there are several ways to approach its meaning. As he details the events of Dick's brutal and humiliating marriage and charivari, Swift could be suggesting that Dick was a double victim. Nell verbally and physically abused Dick and humiliated him in front of his peers, while the community assaulted Dick outside of his home. There was no place of refuge for Dick because his home and community were not safe for him. Swift could have also been satirizing society's emphasis or obsession with masculinity and male dominance within a family and community. The fact that Swift would even write a piece about shaming rituals and masculinity from decades previous suggests that the stories and messages about masculinity and patriarchy in early modern England remained prevalent.

Apprenticeship: A Stage of Semi-Dependence

Apprenticeship was another avenue for adolescent males to demonstrate their masculinity before achieving patriarchal standing. In her text, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England*, Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos argues, like Shepard, "[m]arriage...involved the formation of a separate household which performed a multiplicity of social and economic roles – it was a

locus of male authority and rule, a unit of procreation, consumption, and production.”¹⁶⁰ With this definition in mind, marriage was not a singular act in a young person’s life; marriage was considered to be the culmination of the transition for childhood to adulthood. The transitional period for adolescent males could last as long as twelve years.¹⁶¹ During this period, young men often worked outside of the house and learned to manage their own affairs.

One common way young men gained experience was through apprenticeship. Ben-Amos argues that for some young men their relationship with their master was quite volatile.¹⁶² Youth often felt unappreciated and overworked by their masters. She writes, “hardship and a measure of exploitation were likely to occur in all of these forms of labour relationship.”¹⁶³ With age, many apprentices and servants “became more defiant: insolence, pride, impudence, and contempt for authority and the master’s rule were the characteristic attitudes” of underappreciated workers.¹⁶⁴ While the hierarchical relationship between master and servant was natural, some workers felt the need to respond to their master’s brutal and unfair treatment. By becoming more defiant, young men expressed their anger with the patriarchal system and their current discontentment over feeling trapped in a worthless role.

In response to these emotions, apprentices sometimes retaliated against their masters; “[n]umerous opportunities to cheat masters existed; and shoplifting, pilfering, embezzlement or carelessness in taking care of horses or sheep caused continuous worries to masters.”¹⁶⁵ Ben-Amos substantiates her argument by including numerous examples of young men who would sneak back into their master’s workrooms to steal supplies for themselves or to sell to another

¹⁶⁰ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 208.

¹⁶¹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 237.

¹⁶² Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 211.

¹⁶³ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 211.

¹⁶⁴ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 211.

¹⁶⁵ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 212.

local craftsman. The tension between master and apprentice implies that simply being a male did not guarantee a position of power or respect.

Other apprentices responded to tense working environments by simply leaving their place of employment. Ben-Amos argues, “the single most effective means youths had at their disposal was to leave and find another master.”¹⁶⁶ Some apprentices would often leave at the end of a year or near the end of their work contract, but sometimes youths would simply leave unexpectedly. This not only left their former master without a worker, but it also served as a way to highlight a master’s poor treatment of his workers.

According to Ben-Amos, men often marry between the ages of twenty-seven and twenty-nine in the hope of achieving the necessary amount of financial security. Ben-Amos outlines reasons why young men postponed matrimony, which included a general apprehension about the demands of married life, a lack of resources, the enjoyment of adult freedom, insecurity over economic affairs, and the need to pay off outstanding debts.¹⁶⁷ As discussed in Gouge’s work, men and women each had different roles within the household upon matrimony. Ben-Amos asserts, “[g]ender-related roles diverged quite dramatically: while men became heads of households and owners of shops and land, women entered matrimony in a subservient status, and legally lost whatever financial independence they had attained... Women entered marriage as ‘true help-meets... both inwardly and outwardly.’”¹⁶⁸ This outline of specific relationship tasks alludes to the concept that marriage was not necessarily comprised of a loving relationship, but was rooted in economic choices for many couples.

¹⁶⁶ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 213.

¹⁶⁷ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 230.

¹⁶⁸ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 233.

Ben-Amos asserts that the transition from adolescence to manhood in early modern England was “modern,” for it was a long and complex transition that could last around twelve years. There was no single rite of passage that marked a boy’s entrance into manhood. The ways in which manhood and masculinity could be demonstrated were countless.¹⁶⁹ The complex juxtaposition of submitting to parents and attempting to foster individual independence made the transition very ambiguous.¹⁷⁰ While adolescent males navigated through this transition, society remained fearful of youth. Communities often thought of youth, especially males, as being, unruly, disorderly, vagrants, unemployed, and rebellious.¹⁷¹ These traits had the potential to threaten the patriarchal norm and the stability of a society. Shepard similarly argues that adolescent males were out of control and potential sources for instability within families and communities. In reality, there was no simple way to classify youth transitioning from childhood to adulthood. This time of maturing was not a simple transition, but one that took many years and required young men to make many challenging decisions.

Alternative Expressions of Manhood for Permanently Dependent Men

Young, unmarried wage laborers comprised a population of young men who created alternative platforms to express their masculinity and power. These men were not independent members of their communities; they frequently remained in states of dependency connected to their families because they did not have important stations in the patriarchal hierarchy. Although these young men often broke the law, they could escape the jurisdiction of the court system “as a result of their dependent status [because] they could not legitimately trade in their own

¹⁶⁹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 237.

¹⁷⁰ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 238.

¹⁷¹ Ben-Amos, *Adolescence*, 239.

names.”¹⁷² Young men had not earned official patriarchal standing, which meant that they were not independent and defined members of society. When males were in the process of transitioning into manhood, they could often avoid official punishment for their actions because they remained semi-dependent on parents or masters. Young men remained in this semi-dependent state for a relatively long period of time because of a labor surplus throughout Europe. This labor surplus in early modern England “denied such an easy maturation process into an economically autonomous manhood,” and left a greater number of men in lower patriarchal positions.¹⁷³ The labor surplus created clogged paths to career advancement and male autonomy, which meant that men needed to find a substitute expression of masculinity. For example, the traditionally fluid transition from a laborer to becoming a master craftsman fell apart at the end of the sixteenth century, which led to an increase in the number of wage laborers. A consequence of being a wage laborer was that this population often did not have the option to get married because they could not be financially independent to support a house, wife, and family.¹⁷⁴ Members of early modern communities interpreted this group of men to lack masculinity and credit; their peers saw them essentially as not being true men. However, these wage laborers turned to outlets such as protesting, for ways to prove their inherent masculinity and their personal worth.

This state of dependency and financial stagnation meant that men found alternatives, such as charivaris and skimmingtons, to demonstrate their manliness. Other ways in which men attempted to prove their manliness included “drinking bouts, collective misrule and daring

¹⁷² Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 97

¹⁷³ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 98.

¹⁷⁴ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 99.

spectacles, and carefully calculated displays of violence, excess and disorder.”¹⁷⁵ Although these activities were traditionally parts of youth culture, Shepard suggests that men of all ages who could not achieve traditional patriarchal power partook to these activities.

John Walter expands on Shepard’s study of alternative methods manhood by examining societal protests in early modern England in his article, “Faces in the Crowd: Gender and Age in the Early Modern English Crowd” (2007). Walter connects riots in cities and towns to “modernisation, capitalist agriculture, industrialisation, and the growth of the state.”¹⁷⁶ Walter analyzed how this change in society altered understanding of masculinity and gender roles. Walter argues male protest may have been in response to “‘anxious masculinity’, by otherwise unexpressed fears about the threats posed to the full attainment of patriarchal manhood.”¹⁷⁷ Like Shepard, Walter stresses the nuances in the study of gender roles and masculinity in early modern England. Both authors recognize that manhood does not always lead to patriarchy and that patriarchy does not equal manhood.

In Walter’s study of early modern riots, he suggests that male members of communities protested in response to poverty, the poor economy, and threats against their family’s well being.¹⁷⁸ He contrasts the behavior of protesting men to behavior manuals and argues that men participated in riots because violence was an acceptable way to defend male honor and masculinity.¹⁷⁹ Walter asserts, “[w]hatever the conduct books might advocate, violence is an essential aspect of masculinity and of the need for males to be willing to use this to defend their

¹⁷⁵ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 102.

¹⁷⁶ John Walter, “Faces in the Crowd: Gender and Age in the Early Modern English Crowd,” in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. Helen Berry et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), 96.

¹⁷⁷ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 99.

¹⁷⁸ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 99.

¹⁷⁹ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 100.

‘honour.’ Those who failed to join the crowd faced being labeled cowards.”¹⁸⁰ This argument relates to the one Shepard presents, for both authors assert that men attempted to prove their manhood to their peers by exhibiting their masculinity and strength. Protests offered young men the ability to prove their manhood and also defend their community. Males who protested “had yet to achieve manhood mak[ing] it ... possible to see how claims to masculinity directly informed men’s participation in protest.”¹⁸¹

Walter supports Shepard’s analysis of manhood, that state there was tension between how young men proved their manhood and how authorities, or members of the patriarchal hierarchy, interpreted their actions. Authorities responded to the large number of youthful male protestors by deeming them to be out of control and at a “slippery age, fully of passion, rashness, willfulness.”¹⁸² Shepard describes this age as being uncontrollable, which serves as an explanation for the popularity of advice literature. Trundle and Gouge encouraged their readers to maintain balance and live well within the boundaries of the compass and adolescent man easily strayed from the virtuous compass. Living within the compass meant that young men would live within the prescribed norms of a patriarchal society and not attempt to demonstrate their manhood in an alternative way. While Shepard and Walter study the motivations behind alternative expressions of manhood, Trundle and Gouge encouraged the traditional demonstrations of masculinity: marriage and financial independence.

The history of protests in early modern England correlates to Muir’s study of rites of passage. Muir would analyze male participation in protests as a rite of passage in which “young males were encouraged to act as the community’s enforcers of its values and, paradoxically,

¹⁸⁰ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 101.

¹⁸¹ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 103.

¹⁸² Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 104.

instructed in at least some of those values by being permitted to transgress them, at least temporarily, within the confines of the ritualised time of festive culture.”¹⁸³ Like charivaris, protests were a platform for men to voice concerns about the injustice or immorality of a community. Ultimately, protestors rioted “to emphasize a “more positive construction of their identity...young men with courage...all to defend their rights.”¹⁸⁴ Both charivaris and protests were examples of male rights of passage that emphasized male strength, superiority, and voice within the early modern patriarchal community. As mentioned in the introduction these activities were “liminal,” according to anthropologist van Gennep. They are literally part of the transitional phase of rites of passage into manhood.

In comparison to charivaris and riots Terence R. Murphy examines the most extreme adolescent reactions to patriarchal oppression in his essay “‘Woful Child of Parents Rage’: Suicide of Children and Adolescents in Early Modern England, 1507-1710” (1986).¹⁸⁵ He focuses primarily on the reasons behind youth suicide between the ages of seven and twenty-one. While there were numerous causes for youths to revolt, suicide was not a common response to feelings of oppression and rage. Murphy argues, “childhood suicide represented an attempt to retaliate against parents and masters in the social context of customary discipline and the sending of children out from the home into service.”¹⁸⁶ While suicide was a severe and permanent way for youths to protest their patriarchal oppression, it had the potential to make a tremendous impact on a community. Cases of adolescent suicide support Shepard’s claim that the patriarchy had the potential to affect and oppress men as well as women. Suicide was considered to be a

¹⁸³ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 106.

¹⁸⁴ Walter, “Faces in the Crowd,” 125.

¹⁸⁵ Terence R. Murphy, “‘Woful Childe of Parents Rage’: Suicide of Children and Adolescents in Early Modern England, 1507-1710,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17 (1986): 259.

¹⁸⁶ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 260.

mortal sin, which meant that a person who attempted to commit suicide was essentially attempting to commit a felony and alienating Christian values. However, some adolescents thought suicide provided an opportunity for youth to rebel against their community's hierarchical structure.

Murphy notes that one of the conventional ways communities explained youth suicide was that the guilty youths did “not hav[e] the fear of God before one's eyes, but [were] moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil.”¹⁸⁷ While Murphy recognizes the large role religion played in early modern England, he argues that “aggression, hostility, revenge, and spite” were common motives for youth suicides.¹⁸⁸ He even suggests that the “fear of, and the impulsive attempt to escape from, parental or magisterial correction” caused suicidal actions.¹⁸⁹ Religious influence and ideology did not prove to be sufficient reasons from some adolescents to not commit suicide. Murphy bolsters his argument by providing the example of Daniel Rose, a seven-year-old boy, who in 1695 committed suicide. He was “an apprentice weaver of Strowd in Gloucestershire, [and] was upset about his employment and complained to friends. He left his friends' house that evening, and on the following morning it was found that he had hanged himself in his master's garden.”¹⁹⁰ While this was an extreme reaction to his discontent, Rose's actions can be interpreted as an escape from feelings of entrapment in a damaging and ubiquitous patriarchal system. Murphy examines the role isolation played in childhood society by suggesting, a “young person was alone and trapped in a situation from which there could be no real escape.”¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁷ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 264.

¹⁸⁸ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 265.

¹⁸⁹ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 265.

¹⁹⁰ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 266.

¹⁹¹ Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 268.

In an attempt to understand the accounts of suicide in English communities, Murphy outlines what he describes as the “three principal ways of posthumous retaliation.” For example, youth who committed suicide often felt they were depriving their masters of an obedient servant. If a master’s servant committed suicide, he would bring the master shame and accuse him of mistreatment. The master could even become somewhat of a community spectacle.¹⁹² Both of these motives are applicable to Daniel Rose’s tragic decision. Daniel Rose’s suicide was not a conventional reaction to a frustrating employment situation, but Murphy’s research suggests that there was a small trend of youth suicide in early modern England that should be examined. The lack of psychological analysis from the time makes it challenging to determine whether there were any medical reasons driving youth suicide. Murphy’s study suggests that although there were different definitions of and ways to express masculinity, there was no way to ignore the effects of the dominating patriarchal hierarchy.

These examples of youth transgressions and misrule illustrate their functional role within society. Youth who participated in these activities participated in early modern rites of passage. Male youth groups were functional because they assured the continuation of patriarchal standards and hierarchies. Youth groups also served as a space for young men to learn about their future roles as patriarchs within society and their future families. Even adolescents and young men who never hoped to gain society notoriety utilized aspects of the youth groups’ activities for personal benefits. Many men fated to inferior patriarchal roles channeled their frustration by partaking in charivaris, protests, and other acts of misrule to demonstrate their valid power and masculinity. While these activities had the potential become violent and out of

¹⁹² Murphy, “Suicide of Children,” 269.

control, historians agree that alternative expressions of manhood and masculinity were not inherently anti-patriarchal.¹⁹³

¹⁹³ Shepard, *Meanings*, 249.

CHAPTER III: MARRIAGE

Marriage: A Declaration of Financial Independence and Male Credit

Young men came up with a variety of alternative ways to express their masculinity and autonomy. The most traditional method of demonstrating patriarchal power was through marriage and achieving independent householding status generally between the ages of thirty and fifty. Alexandra Shepard suggests marriage showed a young man's movement in "social and political maturity from a state of dependency."¹⁹⁴ Shepard continues to analyze the role of manhood in early modern England in her article, "Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c. 1580-1640." In this text, Shepard expands the notion of gender study by arguing that gender study cannot simply define men and women as being in the public and private spheres, respectively. Her article explains the "principles of *male* honour and reputation underpinning early modern patriarchal ideology and social practice."¹⁹⁵ Shepard defines reputation, or "male credit," as "a composite of social and economic appraisal, incorporating a wide spectrum of definitions of honesty ranging from chastity to plain-dealing."¹⁹⁶ She writes that the purpose of her research is to explore "the implication of patriarchal expectations of self-sufficient economic mastery for the achievement of manhood in Early Modern England."¹⁹⁷

In an attempt to demonstrate her thesis that a man's estate or worth did not necessarily stem from patriarchal power, she outlines the traditional understanding of gender roles during the early modern era. Typically, historians understand men to have active and public roles in society,

¹⁹⁴ Shepard, *Meanings*, 75.

¹⁹⁵ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 77.

¹⁹⁶ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 77.

¹⁹⁷ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 78.

while women serve a defensive role to ensure the preservation of the home.¹⁹⁸ Shepard writes that a family man was responsible for providing for his family by “‘getting money’ through ‘intermeddling’ with other men – and on a wife’s duty to protect such provision and her own honour, thereby safeguarding the welfare and good name of the household.”¹⁹⁹ Like in her book, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, Shepard relies on advice or conduct literatures including texts by Aristotle, Plutarch, and Xenophon to substantiate her interpretations of gender roles and to question traditional historical interpretations of early modern England.

In order to combat what she believes is the over simplification of masculinity and femininity by historians, Shepard suggests that the changing economic markets and trends in the late sixteenth century caused a shift in gender roles in England; they were no longer rooted completely in the “traditional” division of labor. She delves into her research to find “the degree to which associations of male credit with exchange, honest-dealing and provision informed meanings of manhood.”²⁰⁰ Shepard does not immediately connect masculinity with patriarchy and societal power. She asserts that achieving manhood, or a man’s estate, in early modern England was incredibly challenging and limited to a small population of men. Shepard maintains, “the links between masculinity and economic roles were highly complex, and for many men they were far from given...men also experienced antagonistic relationship with patriarchal imperatives, and many adopted quite different codes of behavior when asserting their manhood.”²⁰¹ In order to achieve patriarchal standing and autonomy young men had to become financially independent, set up a home, and marry well. It was impossible for all workers to become successful masters and for all gentlemen’s sons to become professionals. This issue of

¹⁹⁸ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 75.

¹⁹⁹ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 75.

²⁰⁰ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 79.

²⁰¹ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 79.

overpopulation meant many men never attained power within their communities and ultimately remained in a semi-dependent state.

To demonstrate the connection between a man's behavior, his personal estate, and his financial success, Shepard analyzed legal records. These records indicate how seriously men, and even women, defended their estates and reputation in an attempt to gain status and prestige within a patriarchal society. Shepard found that the number of litigious suits throughout England increased during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries; on average there was one suit per household.²⁰² This increase suggests that men and women universally feared the besmirching of their personal reputations and aggressively fought to defend honor. Witness statements from these litigations, particularly debt litigations, provide modern readers with a window to understand what made a man's credit and how manhood, patriarchy, and economic status defined one and other.

In order for a man to be worthy of respect from his peers and build value to his personal "estate," he needed to establish his personal credit. Typically, patriarchal standing and credit tied directly to a man's householding ability. Shepard writes, "[t]he economic success of a household was dependent upon the thrift and labour of all, but the gendered division of this labour was judged according to principles of 'husbandry' or 'oeconomy', which particularly emphasized male provisions."²⁰³ Men built strong and successful homes to demonstrate their ability to lead in a patriarchal setting. Men "appealed to notions of provision, industry and vocation in order to demonstrate their worth and honesty."²⁰⁴ Shepard asserts that if a man were worth nothing, he

²⁰² Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 80.

²⁰³ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 83.

²⁰⁴ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 86.

was “economically impotent and by implication less than a man.”²⁰⁵ Ultimately, a man needed to provide for his home in an honest and respectable way to achieve personal credit and respect within his community.

Shepard provides numerous examples to illustrate how a man’s estate depended on how his community perceived him. Slandering a man’s name was a way to permanently ruin his estate and integrity. A man without worth was equivalent to a type of leper in early modern England; no one wanted to be in his company socially, economically, or politically. Shepard continues her argument by stating, “worthless” men were dangers to other productive, honest, and independent men in society because these men did not want their male credit to decrease with non-advantageous acquaintances. Shepard paraphrases an example of a legal response to slander from 1587 when John Newman sued Agnes Wilson after she claimed that Newman did not properly take care of his wife. Shepard quotes Wilson’s accusations; “you goe abroade to the Bowles & at yor pleasure, but you had more need to tarye at hom & to bestowe that: uppon yor wyef whoe is sickley, and weake, for she is lost for wante of good kepeinge & for lacke of good attendaunce & good lokeing toe.”²⁰⁶ Shepard suggests that Newman responded to Wilson’s accusation in a typical manner for the time because he fought to protect his reputation and honor in his society. In the eyes of his peers, traits such as dishonesty, idleness, and neglect eliminated Newman’s worth and patriarchal status. If his peers saw him as a worthless man, Newman would figuratively be crippled in his community and unable to achieve success or standing.

Continuing her description of the importance of a man’s honor or estate, Shepard retells the story of Margaret Cotton. In 1603, Cotton accused her neighbor, Ralph Hyde, of neglecting to care for his wife properly and being a cuckold. In response, Hyde filed a lawsuit against

²⁰⁵ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 86.

²⁰⁶ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 84.

Cotton under the pretense that she slandered his good name and diminished his estate and that Cotton, herself, was actually a thief and should be prosecuted for stealing goods from his home.²⁰⁷ Enraged, Cotton claimed:

wooe worthe the, woe worth the that ever I knewe thee, thowe comest nowe to me as Judas did come to Christe to betraye hime, thowe haste brought my name in question, and searched by house...thowe hast taken awaye mye good name[.] And he that taketh awaye his neighbors good name b the word of god is a blode sucker, and a man slayer, And thowe arte a greate church goer, but by thy doeinges thowe shewest thye selfe to be a hipocrite.²⁰⁸

Cotton condemns the way in which Hyde asserts his patriarchal power and manhood within his home. The events of this story also allude to the fact that men could never control women as completely as they would have hoped to. In addition, the happenings within a man's private home were subject to public scrutiny by his community. As seen with charivaris and shame punishments, there was little difference between private and public life. Cotton spoke out against what she perceived to be an injustice towards Ralph Hyde's wife. Cotton targeted Hyde's male reputation, which if tainted would weaken his community standing significantly. By claiming that Hyde was dishonorable at home, his peers would change their treatment of Hyde and could react by excluding him from business and social relationships.

The constant threat of litigation mean that a "man's worth was neither fixed nor secure, but spread over a series of unpredictable networks beyond his control."²⁰⁹ This idea connects to Shepard's earlier point that youth and old age were times when males were out of control and threatened existing patriarchy. However, here she suggests that manhood itself was not a stable time because a man's worth was constantly being evaluated by peers. A man's life always contained elements of instability rooted in his changing relationship to the definition of

²⁰⁷ Shepard, *Meanings*, 152.

²⁰⁸ Shepard, *Meanings*, 152.

²⁰⁹ Shepard, "Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy," 87.

masculinity. She writes that men were on edge about their perceived worth and estate, so they were constantly calculating their own worth, in addition to “simultaneously calculating the economic standing of other men, and indicators of credit were closely observed.”²¹⁰ In an attempt to understand what qualities were most worthy and how to emulate them, men consulted advice literature and conduct manuals.

As demonstrated in the lawsuit between John Newman and Agnes Wilson, litigations served as one way for men, and occasionally women, to legally and formally regain their public sense of worth. Men filed the majority of debt litigations, which Shepard argues was because they controlled their household finances independently from their wives. Based on a selection of court records, Shepard determines that the majority of women determined their personal worth from their husband’s masculine credit and community standing. However, Shepard complicates her argument by stating, “married women made many varied contributions to a household’s commercial life.”²¹¹ Some women even had economic roles outside of the home to contribute to the economic independence of their household. As there was a small population of married women involved in trade, “they also claimed credit in terms of honest-dealing and provision.”²¹² Shepard suggests that the establishment of credit was strongly connected to economic independence than gender.²¹³ Women contributed to the economy by creating trade relations for necessities such as clothing and household goods, which is why they, too, wanted to create worthy reputations. However, men had greater opportunities to achieve independence, which led to having a greater role within their community. Shepard suggests although the patriarchal hierarchy dominated society, the success of a family or household was a mutual concern for a

²¹⁰ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 87.

²¹¹ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 91.

²¹² Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 92.

²¹³ Shepard, “Manhood, Credit, and Patriarchy,” 92.

married couple and responsibilities could not be easily divided by gender, as suggested by authors like Gouge.

In an attempt to broaden her study of male credit and attempt to understand the differing expressions of manhood in English communities, Shepard analyzed *Of Domesticall Duties*, by William Gouge. She emphasizes one particular aspect of Gouge's argument regarding infidelity. Shepard paraphrases Gouge's argument; "adultery in men was far worse than in women because of 'how much the more it appertaineth to them to excell in virtue, and to governe their wives by example.'"²¹⁴ Gouge insinuates that men who commit adultery would loose their virtue, and men who had no virtue were in no position to govern their wives by example. By demanding that men lead honest lives as a way to improve moral character and their communal reputation, Gouge outlines how men could bolster their patriarchal standing substantially.

Early modern English societies remained very protective of the privileges connected to age and marital status. In Cunnington's collection of court records from Wiltshire, he included a legal case surround Anthony Spering's business ventures. A jury met on January 9, 1611 to address the issue surrounding Anthony Spering "for Keping Shope contrary to the Statute in not bein of adge nether married."²¹⁵ The local reaction to this crime was to bring Spering to trial, which supports Shepard's concept of a patriarchal hierarchy that controlled men's actions as well as women's. Spering broke both the requirements of age and marital statues required to own and operate a business. This assertion of power and alleged disregard for local rules and customs undermined the status quo and stability of the town of Wilton. Whether this man acted with the intent to disrupt the patriarchal hierarchy, to support himself financially, or increase his own

²¹⁴ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 22.

²¹⁵ Cunnington, *Records*, 33.

sense of male worth or credit is unknown, but this case demonstrates how age and marriage helped to define economic independence and business success.

The Duties of Husband and Wife

In Shepard's analysis of male credit and marriage responsibilities, she identifies the disconnect between ideal household gender roles and actual householding responsibilities. Even though the successes of a household and marriage concerned both husbands and wives, authors of advice literature espoused patriarchal beliefs in their texts. William Gouge begins *Of Domesticall Duties* with lists of ideal behaviors for husbands and wives and "aberrations" for each group. Upon entering into marriage, men and women needed to embrace their new duties. Those who did not perform their duties admirably adopted aberrations, which included "deviations or departures from what is normal, usual, or expected, typically an unwelcome one."²¹⁶ According to Gouge, these aberrations threatened the contemporary social and patriarchal norms. Gouge suggests that "ambition [is] the general ground of the aberrations of wives" because an ambitious woman disrespected the patriarchal structure of family and society and sought to undermine masculinity.²¹⁷ He lists the twelve most offensive aberrations committed by women, including, "a conceit that wives are their husbands equals...an inward despising of her husband...unreverend behavior towards her husband, manifested by lightnesse, sullenness, scornfulness, and vanitie in her attire."²¹⁸ While Gouge provides further detail for this list in other sections of the text, the general theme of "Aberrations of Wives from their

²¹⁶ "aberration, n.". OED Online. March 2012. Oxford University Press.

<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/251?redirectedFrom=aberration> (accessed April 03, 2012).

²¹⁷ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Treat. III.

²¹⁸ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Treat. III.

Particular Duties” can be inferred from these excerpts. Gouge’s interpretation of proper conduct for women is centered on husbands and home life. Any woman who exhibits signs of ambition, distain, or discontent threatens to upset an entire patriarchal system that Gouge hopes to defend and preserve.

Gouge’s canon on conduct and behavior is crucial to understanding rituals and rites of passages described by Muir and Burke, such as charivaris or ridings, in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Gouge’s list of duties for a good and obedient wife particularly demonstrates his interpretation of expected behavior to uphold the social order of the time period. *Of Domesticall Duties* serves as a useful way to juxtapose proper behavior with perceived attacks on patriarchal power. In order to perform a charivari or ridings, there needed to be a cause, or a violation to one of Gouge’s duties or societal norms. According to Shepard, the characteristics of, “[s]trength, thrift, industry, self-sufficiency, honesty, authority, autonomy, self-government, moderation, reason, wisdom, and wit were all claimed for patriarchal manhood, either as the duties expected of men occupying patriarchal positions or as the justification for their associated privileges.”²¹⁹ She summarizes the defining traits that Gouge attributes to men, and both authors agree that violating one of these traits could lead to a shaming ritual.

The list of “Aberrations of Husbands from their Particular Duties” contrasts in comparison to the “Aberrations of Wives.” Gouge writes that the great aberration for a husband to have is a “[w]ant of wisdom and love.”²²⁰ He advocates for a balance between husband and wife, however, this relationship balance is not the same as in the twenty-first century. Gouge emphasizes that a wife must not want to “stand on her owne will,” and her husband must never

²¹⁹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 247.

²²⁰ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Treat. IV.

“lose his authoritie.”²²¹ Gouge’s understanding of balance between man and wife relates to Shepard’s study of masculinity and patriarchy in early modern England. While manhood and patriarchy were not synonymous in early modern England, they were intertwined. When addressing the topic of manhood and family hierarchy, Shepard argues that husbands and young men achieved balanced power by negotiating between being dominant and being tyrannical.²²² This analysis supports Gouge’s conduct manual because Shepard recognizes that in sixteenth and seventeenth century England, achieving balance meant meeting exactly at terms established by the patriarchal hierarchy. Gouge’s analysis of male/female relationships suggests there was an exact point that defined a successful relationship and that there was not any potential to deviate from it.

While the participants in these charivaris hoped to restore patriarchal order, *Of Domesticall Duties* served as an outline for proper behavior that would not cause a disturbance in society. Gouge’s list of duties suggests that there should be a balance between man and wife, but this balance should be acceptable for sixteenth century patriarchal societies. While there are more oppressive constraints placed on women and wives, Gouge argues that men should also show proper respect to their wives. He writes it is the duty of a husband to show “a good esteeme of his owne wife to be the best for him, and worth of love on his part.”²²³ The fact that Gouge includes duties for husbands that benefit wives illustrates that Gouge perhaps believed in some form of partnership between spouses. However, Gouge emphasizes more duties for women than men. While he advocated for balanced marriages, he clearly believed men needed to firstly uphold patriarchal values. For example, Gouge wrote that men should choose “a wife

²²¹ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Treat. IV.

²²² Shepard, *Meanings*, 247.

²²³ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, Treat. IV.

maintaining his authoritie, and forbearing to exact all that is his power.” He stresses that a husband needed to have a wife who will enforce and respect his authority, while a remaining obedient.

Gouge begins his chapter on wifely duties by writing, “[t]he first law that ever was given to woman since her fall, laid upon her this dutie of *Obedience* to her husband, in these words, *Thy desire shall be to thine husband, and he shall rule over thee*. How can an husband rule over a wife, if she obey not him?”²²⁴ In this excerpt, Gouge insinuates that women should behave in a certain manner within the contemporary patriarchal system and submit herself to her husband as her master. He is adamant that a wife must show obedience to her husband and be subject to his will. Gouge encourages the maintenance of the balance between husband and wife, or the dominant and the obedient. Gouge states:

The subjection which is required of a wife to her husband implieth two things.

1. That she acknowledge her husband to be her superior.
2. That she respect him as her superior.

That acknowledgment of the husbands seperiortie is twofold,

1. Generall of any husband.
2. Particular of her owne husband.²²⁵

Gouge instructs women to acknowledge their inferiority to males and to live according to that relationship.²²⁶

William Whately, a seventeenth century author, advocated for a similar patriarchal structure as William Gouge. Both authors crafted conduct manuals with the intent to shape individuals and communities around Puritan and patriarchal values. Whately, a Puritan preacher

²²⁴ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 286.

²²⁵ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 269.

²²⁶ The physical lay out of the text is also important, because he sets up each chapter in multicolumn format and actually lists out duties for husbands, wives, parents, and children. While the physical layout may appear to be of secondary importance to the actual text, the accessible and easy to read set up suggests that Gouge formatted his text with the intention that many people would consult it and live by his prescribed duties.

from the early seventeenth century, wrote “A Bride-Bush” in 1617 to address the proper and expected behaviors of married couples. Whately studied at both Oxford and Cambridge prior to becoming a preacher and author of conduct literature.²²⁷ Editor Lloyd Davis compiled a collection of primary sources from early modern England pertaining to gender norms, sexuality, and family and community structure in his text, *Sexuality and Gender in the English Renaissance: An Annotated Edition of Contemporary Documents*. Davis addressed a variety of topics including marriage, midwifery, sermons, homilies, and witchcraft. By including Whately’s text, Davis emphasizes the prevalence of conduct literature among families and communities.

Davis argues that Whately was even more popular and well read than Gouge in the seventeenth century. Both authors made similar arguments, essentially asserting that disciplined families created ordered society.²²⁸ However, Lloyd suggests that Gouge addressed the tension between his conduct manual and everyday life when in later editions of his text he “admitted that this ideas on female subservience, though supported with Biblical authority, might not reflect people’s everyday lives and opinions.”²²⁹

Whately, like Gouge, stresses the importance of hierarchy within the early modern family. Whately writes, “the husband’s special duties are all fitly referred to two heads: he must govern his wife and maintain her; and, as our Lord Jesus is to his Church...so must he be to his wife a head and savior. As for government, two things also be required of him: one, that he keep his authority; the other, that he do use it.”²³⁰ Whately directly connects the hierarchical organization of Christianity to the desired organization of a family. He advises men to celebrate

²²⁷ William Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” (1617), in *Sexuality and Gender in the English Renaissance: An Annotated Edition of Contemporary Documents*, edited by Lloyd Davis, (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1998): 246.

²²⁸ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 245.

²²⁹ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 246.

²³⁰ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 247.

their authoritarian duties and mimic the relationship between Christ and his followers. Not only does this advice highlight the value of patriarchal authority to males in early modern communities, but it also demonstrates how religious ideals penetrated into all aspects of family and society.

A man needed to be constantly thinking about demonstrating authority over his wife, family, and responsibilities. If he were to lose power within his family, a man could not be relied on to be a societal authority figure. In response to questions surrounding men who lost control of their wives, Whately answers, “most men do falsely cast the blame (of losing their authority) upon their wives, when in very truth it is wholly and only due unto themselves.”²³¹ Whately asserts that if a man loses control it is entirely his fault. He cannot blame a domineering or manipulative wife. A husband must enforce his masculine superiority and ensure the patriarchal hierarchy through skill. Whately suggests, “know ye therefore, all ye husbands, that the way to maintain authority in this society is not to use violence but skill.”²³² He does not encourage violence as the best method for men to show their authority. By relying on skills, such as conversation, men uphold their authority both inside and outside of the home. Whately writes, “as in general we prescribe a good conversation for the best preserver and maintainer of a man’s authority in the family.”²³³ With this code of conduct in mind, Whately demands that his male readers must avoid disgraceful and evil behaviors such as, bitterness, wastefulness, and lightness with their wives if, as husbands, they hope to remain in control.²³⁴

Although advice authors like Gouge and Whately allude to a partnership between man and wife, a man’s principle responsibilities: “[h]e must neither weaken his own estate, nor

²³¹ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 247.

²³² Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 248.

²³³ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 249.

²³⁴ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 249-50.

discredit his own name, nor give offence to other, nor suffer her to pull reproach upon herself and misery upon her family...”²³⁵ Women are partners in maintaining a man’s personal estate and reputation. According to Whately, the “wife’s special duty may fitly be referred to two heads. First, she must acknowledge her inferior tie. Secondly, she must carry herself as an inferior...she is not her husband’s equal.”²³⁶ By acknowledging her inferiority, a wife builds her husband’s patriarchal authority within the household. A husband’s successful control over his wife, family, and servants extends beyond the home due the general disregard for the distinction between public and private life in early modern England. A man’s peers know his success or failure as a husband immediately. Not only must men maintain authority, embody patriarchal and masculine characteristics, and financially support a home and family, men must prevent failure at any of these ventures at all costs. Whately encourages men to inspire an element of fear in their wives by quoting Ephesians chapter five, verse thirty three from the Bible, which reads, “[l]et the wife see that she fear her husband.”²³⁷ Once again, authors of advice literature heavily rely on the messages from the Bible as a way to support the patriarchal hierarchy and the tenets of masculinity.

In the conclusion of “A Bride-Bush,” Whately encourages his young readers to know and understand the responsibilities that will come with maturity. At the same time, he warns his readers not to rush into marriage and householding responsibilities at a young age. Whately writes, “this [text] ministers a good instruction to young and unmarried people, that they do not unadvisedly rush into this estate. A thing of such difficulty should not be lightly undertaken.”²³⁸ To create a success marriage, men and women must know what their duties will be beforehand.

²³⁵ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 254-55.

²³⁶ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 258.

²³⁷ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 260.

²³⁸ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 272.

Whately personally advises “all married persons to grow acquainted with these duties and to mark their failings in the same. But mistake me not. I would that the wife should hers, the husband his, and both the common duties.”²³⁹ Both men and women must be responsible for their own behaviors to uphold gender norms and patriarchal authority.

While not every man supported Whately and Gouge’s theory of female obedience, this concept can be traced through out the early modern era in numerous primary and secondary sources. As discussed earlier, the ideal of female obedience is a baseline with which to compare disrespectful behavior of wives and unmarried women that led to acts of charivari. This “ideal” provided both the motivation and justification for youth groups to perform charivaris on women or hen-pecked husbands.

These acts of justice were performed and often recorded for posterity in diaries and court records, but they also were the subjects of illustrations and wood cuts of the time. These art pieces allow modern scholars a window into how artists understood and portrayed these events to their societies. For example, both Figures 3 and 4 portray women beating their respective husband. According to Martin Ingram, this was a common action that instigated a charivari among a local community. Gouge asserts wives beating husbands were prime examples of “aberrations” because these women acted as if they were equals to their husbands and challenged the status quo of male superiority.

Figure 3, entitled *Halfe a Dozen Good Wives: All for a Penny* (1635), exemplifies the consequences of a woman beating her husband. The right hand side of the print shows many women beating one man, while the left hand side portrays a henpecked husband riding away, backwards, on a horse or donkey. The content of this image illustrates Cunningham’s descriptions

²³⁹ Whately, “A Bride-Bush,” 272.

of skimmingtons in his compilation of Wiltshire court records. Ingram argues that men who were beat by their wives were often also cuckolds, or victims of adultery.²⁴⁰ While being paraded throughout town during a riding or charivari, Ingram asserts that the rider “might be pelted with filth and could end up by being ducked.”²⁴¹ However, Ingram notes that frequently substitutes, such as neighbors were the victims of ridings. This was primarily because in early modern England’s patriarchal towns, neighbors were supposed to ensure that the patriarchy remained dominant. If a woman beat her husband regularly and the neighbor did not council the beaten husband, the neighbor became guilty by association.²⁴² Ensuring the strong survival of the patriarchal hierarchy within a home was the community’s responsibility. The behaviors outlined in *Of Domesticall Duties* and the events of shaming punishments support this thesis.



4. A henpecked husband and his punishment: *Halfe a Dozen Good Wives: All for a Penny* (London, ?1635), in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. W. Chappell and J. W. Ebsworth, 9 vols. (London and Hertford, 1869-99), i, p. 451.

Figure 3. *Halfe a Dozen Good Wives: All for a Penny*²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music”, 87.

²⁴¹ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music”, 86.

²⁴² Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music”, 86.

²⁴³ Ingram, “Ridings, Rough Music”, 89.

Based on his research, Ingram speculates that the majority of charivaris or ridings were caused by domestic situations. Modern historians can analyze the woodcuts from the time by utilizing the information outlined in Gouge's text. Young men could consult with Gouge's text to see if anyone in their town violated any of their respective duties. In this image, a group of women surround a man whose wife is striking her husband with a stick. This woodcut illustrates a domineering woman ignoring her husband's alleged superiority in the patriarchal hierarchy. The husband's punishment is also included in the image; he is on the back of a donkey facing its behind being paraded through the community. This image upholds the fact that private events in a home often had public consequences. In addition, charivaris and shame punishments served as real-life enactments of the consequences for men and women who failed to meet the requirements of prescriptive literature.



2. A wife beats her husband: detail from an early seventeenth-century plasterwork panel in the Great Hall, Montacute House, Somerset.
Photo: B. S. Evans

*Figure 4. A Wife Beats her Husband*²⁴⁴

²⁴⁴ Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music," 84.

As an author, Gouge constantly balances his writing between theory and practice. *Of Domesticall Duties* has a theoretical or prescriptive approach because he intended for it to be used as advice literature, so Gouge recorded his ideal image of gendered behavior in society. This guide outlines Gouge's personal perspective of how the ideal husband, wife, parent, and child should behave in order to perpetuate the workings of Early Modern England's patriarchal society. However idealized this guide appears, there is also a very practical aspect to it. Gouge hoped families and communities would adopt this text as a way to literally structure their lives. Gouge negotiates between the ideals of theory and the necessity of practice to find commonalities between the two to create a useful conduct manual.²⁴⁵

According to Gouge's canon, procreation was one of the main purposes of marriage, which maintained societal balance and order. Neither impotent men nor barren women should deceive their respective partners by committing to a marriage under God. Gouge encourages his female readers to look for physical signs of impotency in order to avoid a dishonorable union. He addresses men who hide their impotency by writing, "[c]ontrarie to this manifestation of Gods will doe they sinne, who conceale their impotencie and joyne themselves in marriage, whereby they frustrate one maine end of marriage, which is procreation of children; and doe that wrong to the partie whome they marie, as sufficient satisfaction can never be made."²⁴⁶ While it was considered the antithesis of masculinity to not be able to reproduce, it was an even great sin to hide this information and enter into a marriage.

²⁴⁵ Gouge created an incredibly useful index, which provides his readers with convenient access to desired information. This choice in set up assists his readers in learning to act in accordance to patriarchal and religious values.

²⁴⁶ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 182.

Couples who could not reproduce were constant victims of charivaris, for neither the husband nor wife fulfilled their expected marital responsibilities. Gouge emphasizes the importance of being honest with a partner about impotence or barrenness. He argues:

Impotencie is incurable: but barrennesse is not simply so. Many after they have beene a long while barren have become fruitfull: and not only e an extraordinary work of God above the course of nature (ex: Sarah and Elizabeth in the Old Testament) but also by such a blessing as might stand with the course of nature, being obtained by praier.²⁴⁷

Gouge continues to draw on Biblical stories to support his argument, which alludes to his focus of living within the word of Christianity. In his advice to reproductively challenged couples, he attributes couples having children as the result of prayer and the blessing of God.

Another factor that motivated young men to conduct a riding on a community member was if an older man attempted to remarry a young lady significantly younger in age than himself. This upset young eligible bachelors because it meant that there was one less potential wife in a town. Gouge believed that spouses should be of equal age. He writes, “[f]or *Age*, as the partie that seeketh a mate must be of ripe yeeres, fit to give consent, and able to performe marriage duties, so the mate which is taken must be somewhat answerable in age: if one young, both young: if one of middle age, both so: if one growne to yeeres, the other also.”²⁴⁸ However, Gouge amends his statement to say that there are exceptions; there may be an “approved” age gap between a husband and his wife. This is primarily because Gouge recognized an alleged difference in “strength and vigor” in men and women.²⁴⁹ Practically, a man could be older than his wife because he

²⁴⁷ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 182.

²⁴⁸ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 188.

²⁴⁹ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 189.

would still be strong and able to protect her. He also cites Biblical examples to support the notion of older men marrying younger women, such as Abraham's marriage to Sarah. Again, he informs his readers of general male superiority within family life, particularly between man and wife, and its connection to Christianity.

Fittingly, Gouge argues that the most important consideration for men and women when deciding to marry is piety. He writes, [h]appie is that family where both the governours therof husband and wife are mutuall members of Chirsts bodie: there will the house be made Gods Church, as the house of Aquila and Priscilla...²⁵⁰ A balance in piety is more important than age or wealth gaps, because a strong religious connection between spouses assists in maintaining a balanced relationship between man and wife and raising a reputable family. By creating a religion and moral household, both spouses are able to fulfill their respective gender and societal duties in the name of God. Like for Trundle, religion serves as an overarching theme in the transition from youth to adulthood for men in early modern England.

Neglecting the Marriage Contract

While achieving a well-balanced and religious marriage was the pinnacle of masculine success, according to Gouge there were certain situations that permit the abuse or neglect of the marriage contract. Gouge defines marriage as a contract between man and wife, which should be honored with the utmost respect.²⁵¹ However he sites factors that could result in the nullification of the marriage contract. The most common reason was a man finding out that his future wife was not actually a virgin. Gouge writes:

²⁵⁰ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 196.

²⁵¹ Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 200-1.

[y]ea many take libertie after a contract to know their spouse, as if they were married: an unwarrantable and dishonest practice. *Lots* daughters were contracted to husbands, and yet they are said to have knowne no man. They law stileth her is contracted a maid, to shew that she out to keep her selfe a virgin till the marriage be consummate. Therefore *Mary* is thus described, *a virgin espoused*.²⁵²

This excerpt illustrates that honesty between a couple was necessary before marriage, not in order to create a lasting relationship, but in an attempt for men to assure that they will not weaken their reputation with their marriage alliance.

Similar to Gouge, Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster address the importance of procreation, both socially and culturally, for men in early modern England in their essay (2007), “Childless Men in Early Modern England.” They analyze the connections between becoming a father and gender identification or the “role of patriarchs.”²⁵³ The authors examine “evidence for early modern medico-legal understanding of male infertility, social attitudes towards childless men, and their experiences,” by utilizing religious, medical, legal, and personal literature.²⁵⁴ Although the potential of being infertile haunted many men, Berry and Foyster argue, “it was a failure to produce a male heir rather than children *per se*, that was particularly disruptive for these families [particularly the upper class] in the context of male primogeniture.”²⁵⁵ The authors reference King Henry VIII’s infamous quest for a male heir in England as a prime example of how the inability to produce a male heir had the potential to cause great trouble for a man.

Berry and Foyster note religion’s emphasis on child bearing and traditionally blaming infertility on the female. They write, “[t]he three monotheistic world religions have been remarkably consistent in stigmatizing women for barrenness. In Judaism, Islam and pre-Reform

²⁵² Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 202.

²⁵³ Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, “Childless Men in Early Modern England,” in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. Helen Berry et al. (New York: Cambridge UP, 2007), 159.

²⁵⁴ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 160.

²⁵⁵ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 161.

Catholicism, there was no difference in that the professed main aim of marriage was the procreation of children.”²⁵⁶ By emphasizing the relationship between childbearing, masculinity, and religion, Berry and Foyster connect with authors of advice literature, Trundle and Gouge, who connected religion directly to living a good life. In the late sixteenth century, Puritans even believed that barrenness was a sign of divine punishment.²⁵⁷ Although this belief eventually fell by the wayside, it illustrates how being an infertile man in early modern England threatened a man’s standing in his community. His peers would see he had no children and potentially judge him as not being worthy of his estate or male credit; “[a] childless man’s reputation could be damaged among his peers, ‘Whereby he shameth to accompany with men, as seeming himselfe to be lesse then a man.’”²⁵⁸

Advice manuals from this period tackled the issue of infertility by frequently providing advice for conception and tips for curing infertility.²⁵⁹ However, Berry and Foyster stress that “beyond the exclusive circles of the royalty and nobility, prevailing social, moral and religious attitudes suggested that having children in Early Modern England was regarded as desirable in moderation.”²⁶⁰ Couples were encouraged to live moderately, similarly to how Trundle and Gouge encouraged young men to always remain balanced. If men lived within Trundle’s compass, he argued they would reap the rewards of the patriarchal system. According to advice literature, there were four ways in which men could be held accountable for a couple’s infertility. They included: impotence; “absolute impotence, which “was the belief that a man’s penis could be in some way ‘deficient;’” the “inability to produce semen;” and an incompatibility between

²⁵⁶ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 164.

²⁵⁷ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 165.

²⁵⁸ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 165.

²⁵⁹ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 169.

²⁶⁰ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 168.

husband and wife. For example, infertility could be caused by “a want of love in a man and wife.”²⁶¹

Like in Shepard’s argument, masculinity was equivalent to control. Being infertile or childless meant that a man was out of control, which was contradictory to manhood and shameful in society.²⁶² Youth and the elderly were out of control and adult males managed their families and communities. As a result of this desire for control, Berry and Foyster reference Samuel Pepys’s diary in reference to curing infertility. In his diary, he wrote “the timing and positioning of intercourse, diet, and clothing,” could all be contributing factors to reproductive challenges?²⁶³ Berry and Foyster summarize Pepys’s advice by writing, “[s]ince ‘fulness of seed and plenty of wind’ was thought necessary to achieve an erection, men were encouraged to eat plenty of food that would make them flatulent, including pulses, beans, and peas.”²⁶⁴

Berry and Foyster bolster their thesis with court records, which suggest that many men relied on this type of advice to cure infertility immediately based on public humiliation. For example, Stephen Seager and his wife, Grace, were childless for six years, and when she became pregnant, the town speculated that Seager’s apprentice was the baby’s father.²⁶⁵ Seager was not a proper man because “[p]roper men were those who got their wives pregnant soon after marriage, and with little apparent effort.”²⁶⁶ Instead, Seager’s peers marked him as being “dependent” and unworthy of credit and respect.

In their conclusion, Berry and Foyster disagree with Shepard. They concede that, in the early modern period, fatherhood connected directly to masculinity, success, and fertility.

²⁶¹ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 170-172.

²⁶² Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 173.

²⁶³ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 174-175.

²⁶⁴ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 175.

²⁶⁵ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 177.

²⁶⁶ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 177.

However, Berry and Foyster assert that childless men did not necessarily prove manhood outside of the patriarchal norm, as suggested by Shepard in her text, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*. This essay conceptualizes the idea that childless men demonstrated their patriarchal role outside of their immediate family through roles as godfathers, guardians, or philanthropists.²⁶⁷ Although other men frequently questioned the reputation of childless men, there was the possibility that a childless man could achieve patriarchal status in early modern England.

Attaining patriarchal standing within a community through a successful marriage and householding status was the most common way adolescent males transitioned into manhood. However, by marrying men did not simply graduate into a position of guaranteed power and authority. The constant fears of shaming punishments, infertility, unfaithfulness, community standing, and economic stability made married life a period of true uncertainty with the potential of failure. Ironically, “[m]arriage marked a rite of passage into householding maturity for men, yet paradoxically it posed as much of a threat to manhood as the guarantee of its achievement.”²⁶⁸

Male Friendships and Homosexuality

A study of young men in early modern England and their maturing process into adulthood would be remiss if it did not include an analysis of the roles and perceptions of homosexuality. Godbeer addresses the issues surrounding male friendship in the Early American Republic in his book, *The Overflowing of Friendship: Love Between Men and the Creation of the*

²⁶⁷ Berry and Foyster, “Childless Men,” 182.

²⁶⁸ Shepard, *Meanings*, 88.

American Republic (2009). While he writes about American men, the questions he asks are applicable to the study of masculinity in early modern England. As discussed in Gouge's text, the bonds of male friendship were crucial in helping young men successfully maneuver through the time between childhood and manhood. Godbeer prompts his readers to think about the different ways to classify male friendships and what they meant to "personal and social identities."²⁶⁹ He asks, "[i]n what ways, if at all, did male friends express physically or even sexually their feelings for one another? ... How did loving friendships between men fit within contemporary models of manhood?"²⁷⁰

Godbeer argues, "North American colonists did not think about their sexual impulses in terms of distinct sexuality that oriented men and women toward members of the same or opposite sex. Instead they understood erotic desires and acts as an expression of social or moral standing."²⁷¹ In order to understand the role of male friendship and sexual relationships, twenty-first century historians cannot apply contemporary vocabulary to the past. In their conduct texts, Gouge and Trundle both implored their readers to cultivate friendships with other young men under the eyes of God. They understood close male friendships to serve many purposes for young men that could not be found in relationships with women. For example, all young men felt the weighing importance of preserving manhood and masculinity in early modern England while they transitioned to manhood. According to Godbeer, friendship combined a "practical collaboration and emotional connection."²⁷² The ideal male friendship found the perfect balance between practicality and emotions.

²⁶⁹ Richard Godbeer, *The Overflowing of Friendship: Love between Men and the Creation of the American Republic*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009): 2.

²⁷⁰ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 2.

²⁷¹ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 3.

²⁷² Godbeer, *Friendship*, 10.

Traditionally, close and emotional relationships were associated with females. There was normally a strict divide between what is masculine and what is feminine. Godbeer addresses this dichotomy by stating, “[t]hey clearly associated certain attributes and roles with masculinity and others with femininity, but they did not assume that these roles were or should be attached only to one sex or the other: men and women could embody both masculine and feminine attributes in appropriate contexts.”²⁷³ This approach connects to Trundle’s emphasis on balance in his conduct manual. There were “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics to each person and relationship. Finding the appropriate balance between the two proved to be the challenge when forging close male friendships. However, Godbeer writes, certain “scholars of early modern England argue that by the seventeenth century the emotional intimacy associated with friendship did become competitive with the love and affection that ideally blossomed within marriage.”²⁷⁴ By suggesting that many friendships included loving aspects and deep emotional connections, Godbeer acknowledges the presence of male-male relationships and homosexual behavior within early modern communities.

As opposed to Godbeer who emphasizes the importance of strong male friendships, Shepard argues that there were “early modern fears about unconstrained male intimacy.”²⁷⁵ The line between extremely close friendship and homosexual intimacy was often blurred, which was considered to be very dangerous. While close emotional, intellectual, and even physical relationships were appropriate, these relationships could quickly become threatening to patriarchal order. Shepard argues that close male friendships were completely natural because

²⁷³ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 4.

²⁷⁴ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 9.

²⁷⁵ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 115.

the world in which young men lived before marriage was “homosocial.”²⁷⁶ Young men primarily spent time with other men, so depending on close friendships was natural. However, in certain cases, men who never married and achieved traditional patriarchal standings could have lived as homosexuals. Historian Alan Bray reiterates that homosexuality was not a category with which men could identify. He suggests that, instead, there was a combined spectrum of “male sexuality” and “unrestrained lust [was considered] as an effeminate loss of control.”²⁷⁷

Shepard briefly addresses the role of homosexuality in *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*. She writes that there are very few remaining court records involving homosexual relations.²⁷⁸ Although authors of advice literature emphasized the importance of close male friendship, Shepard does not suggest that early modern communities accepted homosexual behaviors. In her analysis of homosexuality in early modern England, Shepard references a complaint made by three students at Trinity College about Robert Hutton, a fellow at the college.²⁷⁹ In response to these claims, Hutton sued three of his students in response to their claims that he “committed buggery.”²⁸⁰ Hutton feared how these three accusations of buggery would affect his reputation as a fellow at Trinity College. Although questions remain as to whether there was any sexual contact between Hutton and the male students, this historical episode illustrates how early modern individuals and communities feared the presence of homosexuality and saw it as a way to defame others. Shepard concludes her analysis on the topic by writing:

[h]omosexuality certainly seemed to have held more serious implications than the illicit heterosexual activities which the university regularly tried to

²⁷⁶ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 116.

²⁷⁷ Godbeer, *Friendship*, 116.

²⁷⁸ Shepard, *Meanings*, 116.

²⁷⁹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 118.

²⁸⁰ Shepard, *Meanings*, 118.

squash... Whether habitually practiced or not, same-sex relations was a type of intimacy between men which ultimately courted danger and discredit; however unacknowledged on a routine basis, it could too easily be construed as illegitimate and unsafe.²⁸¹

Displays of homosexuality or any physical acts between men beyond those of close friendship were illegal, condemned, and feared in early modern England.

As described in the first chapter, Trundle advocated for young men to foster close male friendships and to embrace opportunities for true conversation between one and other. Trundle advises his adolescent readers to “[l]et thy conversation carry a perfect content of all things appertaining as well unto God as man, with benevolence and charity.”²⁸² By building meaningful relationships, young men developed their masculinity and learn about the responsibilities of manhood in groups. Close male friendships prepared boys for their future patriarchal roles within the hierarchal structure. While elements of close male relationships may appear to contain aspects of homosexual behaviors to a twenty-first century reader, it is impossible to apply a modern day vocabulary to early modern England. The issues surrounding homosexuality within early modern communities are challenging and nuanced to understand, especially due to the lack of existing documents on the topic. However, it is safe to suggest that English men and women in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries condemned homosexuality and believed it threatened the existing patriarchal structure.

²⁸¹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 122.

²⁸² Trundle, *Keepe within Compasse*, “In Conversation.”

CONCLUSION

After examining a variety of primary and secondary sources for this paper, it is appropriate to argue that young men needed to carefully maneuver through a time of instability known as adolescence in early modern England. These awkward years that could last well into a young man's mid-twenties presented males with an array of responsibilities. During this time, male youths learned socially accepted behaviors of masculinity and developed their evolving relationship with the early modern patriarchy. To successfully transition adolescent males into a mature state of adulthood families and individuals depended on advice literature and conduct manuals. While the educated and literate members of the population relied on these texts more so than the lower classes, males in all social and economic classes sought to preserve the existing patriarchal system.

This thesis connects existing arguments about youth, popular culture, patriarchy, and masculinity in early modern families and communities. Acts of youthful transgression and misrule, such as charivaris, protests, and even suicide, illustrate how adolescent males found outlets to display their masculine power and authority within the rigid confines of patriarchy. Even though adolescent males did not yet have official patriarchal authority and independent status, they performed functional and appreciated tasks within early modern communities to maintain the patriarchal structure and masculine authority. Patriarchal powers accepted and even relied on unofficial folk punishments because they reinforced male authority in an organic way. Patriarchal authorities did not have to utilize time and resources to control unruly women, servants, and role breakers. The relationship among patriarchal authorities, adolescent males, and the rest of society highlight the tensions between prescriptive ideals and realistic life.

These acts of youthful misrule also demonstrate that the distinction between private life and public life was absent in early modern England. Community members surveyed their neighbors to ensure that patriarchal values permeated into every home and that men fulfilled their responsibilities to society. Communities perceived unmarried women, newlyweds, widows, domineering women, and weak men to be the greatest threats to the patriarchal hierarchy. The lack of truly private time and the reliance on neighborly surveillance suggest that patriarchal powers constantly feared their downfall. Patriarchs could never fully achieve dominance within their communities and families. Acts of misrule, such as charivaris, highlight this fear and lack of complete control.

During the challenging transition into manhood adolescent boys had to figure out their patriarchal responsibilities, their economic goals, and familial duties. By displaying masculine behaviors, young men crafted ways to demonstrate their developing sense of societal worth and personal male credit. These transitional acts of misrule show how young men actively worked to figure out their relationship to the changing definitions of masculinity and their uncertain patriarchal futures. All adolescent males wanted to be well respected by their peers, so they utilized the opportunities of youthful transgressions to practice their future responsibilities. Adolescents practiced maintaining order within their communities because they wanted to be able to maintain order later in life as patriarchs and family leaders. They wanted to enforce masculine behaviors to prevent becoming charivari victims. Groups of men acted to bridge the gap between prescriptive literature and reality in an effort to demonstrate their patriarchal and masculine dominance.

After achieving financial independence, men usually chose to get married and set up their own households. However, marriage presented its own peculiar set of challenges for men.

Marriage, however, did not guarantee financial security or patriarchal success for early modern men. Just because a man graduated to married status it did not mean that he would achieve patriarchal power. Masculinity and patriarchy were not synonyms in early modern England, and men often felt limited and oppressed by the patriarchal hierarchy. These challenges motivated men to constantly maintain and improve their personal sense of masculine worth and personal reputation. Men relied on advice literature and close personal friendships to become patriarchal authorities within their families and communities.

The analysis of the transition from youth to manhood in early modern England strengthens the relationship between masculinity and gender studies. Although the patriarchal structure had the potential to oppress men in early modern England, men of all social and economic stations relied on it to maintain male authority both inside and outside of the home. The rites of passage during the transitional phase for males of maturing from youth to adults connect a variety of early modern issues ranging from demonstrations of popular culture to family structure. Both authors of primary and secondary sources emphasize that early modern English men recognized that not all men would gain full and dominant patriarchal status. Men in states of semi-dependence acted outside of the official patriarchal hierarchy to display their masculine identity, yet these unofficial acts enforced male dominance and, in fact, aided the preservation of the patriarchal system in early modern England.

The transition from youth to adulthood for boys was really a quest to discover individual identity and to learn about how the masculine self related to his family and community. The evolving definitions of masculinity and patriarchy made this process complex. Even though patriarchy and masculinity were often contested within families and communities, patriarchy and masculinity remained dominant in early modern England.

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