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Measure for Measure and the Discourse of Husbandry

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Inspired by classical agricultural writings, early modern husbandry manuals provided the country gentleman or yeoman with detailed information on farming techniques and household management. More than just how-to books on planting and plowing, the manuals exhort their readers to lead pious, productive, and economical lives. Yet for all of their guidance on farming, marital relations, prayer, spending, and time management, husbandry manuals set their focus beyond the individual household: they frequently glorified the husbandman as the “master of the earth” who “maintained and upheld” the commonwealth by turning barrenness to fruitfulness.¹ Wendy Wall refers to Gervase Markham’s work as “national husbandry,” an identification with the land that formed the basis of a cultural identity, a set of distinctly English customs and practices; and Lorna Hutson calls husbandry “an art of existence” suitable for the well-educated nobleman to become “the most necessary member for the defence and maintenance of a commonweal.”²

Of course, this was not only an age that saw the rise of a culture of “nationhood”; it was also the age of the postfeudal, administrative state. According to the family/state analogy, the monarch managed the people the way the head of a family managed the household. The work of the “house father” described in husbandry tracts—maintaining an orderly reproduction of life (plants, animals, children, and money)—took place on a larger political scale as the paternalistic state took measures to control sexual and economic behavior. In addition to “national husbandry,” then, there existed something we might call “state husbandry,” the household

1. Gervase Markham, *The English Husbandman* (1613; repr., New York: Garland, 1982), A3r.

2. Wendy Wall, “Renaissance National Husbandry: Gervase Markham and the Publication of England,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 27 (1996): 767–85; Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer’s Daughter* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 41.

management of money, land, marital relations, and behavior that was crucial to the state's control of reproduction in its various forms.³

Forging subtle connections between biological, political, and economic forms of reproduction, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604) engages the rise of state husbandry. While much of the recent work on the historical context of the play has focused on the parallels between Duke Vincentio and James I, and on Protestant, especially Puritan, views of sex and marriage, criticism has barely touched on the discourse of husbandry. Vincentio's goal, too often conflated with Angelo's, is not to revive harsh punishments for sexual transgression per se.⁴ His goal is to establish the state as a household, and this entails a lot more than punishing fornicators and shutting down brothels. Vincentio's science of husbandry, an important part of his "science" of "government," brings state power to bear on pleasurable experiences that might otherwise escape rigorous "correction and instruction."⁵ As the duke learns to manage his people the way a good husband manages his household, individuals are increasingly enveloped in mechanical or impersonal reproductive processes. The duke wonders what "figure of us he [Angelo] will bear" as his substitute, and Angelo protests that his "mettle" should be tested before "so noble and so great a figure / Be stamped upon it" (1.1.52–53). Stamping thus captures the mechanical side

3. My idea of "state husbandry" is similar to what Foucault calls "governmentality." He uses this term to refer to the way "economy" operated "at the level of the entire state, which means exercising towards its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods" (Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller [University of Chicago Press, 1991], 92). See also his discussion of "governmentality" in the posthumous lectures collected in Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978*, ed. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave, 2007).

4. See, e.g., Deborah Shuger, *Political Theologies in Shakespeare's England* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); and N. W. Bawcutt, "'He who the sword of heaven will bear': The Duke versus Angelo in 'Measure for Measure,'" *Shakespeare Survey* 37 (1984): 89–97. Bawcutt contends, "If Angelo is to be called a Puritan, so too is the Duke" (91), noting, of course, that Vincentio's puritanical views are tempered by mercy and Angelo's undermined by hypocrisy. The duke, then, is said to support the statute's revival, but not Angelo's hypocritical implementation of it. There is no indication of this in the text. The duke is not focused on fornication per se; indeed, he never specifies that this particular law (as one of the "strict statutes") ought to be reinstated. More important, in the course of the play Angelo's puritanism is negated and absorbed by the duke's own plan for reform.

5. The duke uses this phrase to describe the reform Pompey the bawd should receive in prison. Quotations are from William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004). All other quotations from Shakespeare's plays are from *The Riverside Shakespeare*, 2nd ed., ed. G. Blakemore Evans and J. J. M. Tobin (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997).

of reproduction in the household, the sphere in which offspring are created, tillage is maintained, and finances managed.⁶

Yet Duke Vincentio's nature as a tactician suggests that his statecraft departs from the *oeconomia* we find in husbandry tracts, which, following classical precedent, balances profit with pleasure.⁷ When the political emphasis shifts from husbandry to state husbandry, from the individual household to the state qua household, reproduction and pleasure part company. In Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, sex is part of household management, the "science by which men can increase their estates" and the perpetuation of "the species of living creatures."⁸ In this highly influential work, as in many early modern advice books, love and pleasure are seen as part of a well-ordered household, even as the boundary between useful pleasure and surplus pleasure is carefully policed. But once procreation becomes a concern for the state as a household, as it does in *Measure for Measure*, the instrumental and authoritarian control advocated in husbandry manuals becomes more severe. While love and pleasure are not entirely excluded in husbandry manuals, with state husbandry sex begins to look like a joyless, even mindless process.

There is, however, a considerable amount of resistance to state husbandry scattered throughout the play, and this resistance is best represented by Lucio's utopian husbandry. Proffering a brief imaginative respite from the language of urban struggle, Lucio compares sexual intercourse and reproduction to farming, ascribing Juliet's "plenteous womb" to the "teeming foison" of "blossoming time" resulting from Claudio's expert "tilth and husbandry" (1.4.41–44). For Lucio, sex is embedded in the abundant fertility of nature; excess and play coexist within the work of procre-

6. Although I have chosen to emphasize different aspects of *Measure for Measure's* historical context, I am indebted to Shuger's analysis of Protestantism and the state in *Political Theologies*. I am also indebted to recent work on the family, the household, and the state in Shakespeare, in particular Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); Wendy Wall, *Staging Domesticity: Household Work and English Identity in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 2002); Linda Woodbridge, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001); and Lynda E. Boose, "The Taming of the Shrew, Good Husbandry, and Enclosure," in *Shakespeare Reread: The Texts in New Contexts*, ed. Russ McDonald (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 93–225.

7. For a more nuanced reading of the changing ethos of husbandry tracts, see Andrew McRae, *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500–1660* (Cambridge University Press, 1996). For more on the classical background of these manuals, see Joan Thirsk, "Making a Fresh Start: Sixteenth-Century Agriculture and the Classical Inspiration," in *Culture and Cultivation in Early Modern England: Writing and the Land*, ed. Michael Leslie and Timothy Raylor (Leicester University Press, 1994), 15–34.

8. Xenophon, *Oeconomicus*, trans. Sarah B. Pomeroy (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 135.

ation. This is the sphere of surplus pleasure—pleasure that overflows the boundaries of utility and economic calculation—that the Viennese state, insisting upon its strenuous effort to control reproduction, would eradicate if it could. In what follows I will argue that the play presents two competing models of husbandry, both of which depart from the more balanced ethos of husbandry tracts: a joyless economy and a pleasurable economy. The former supports the designs of the state while the latter challenges the norms for a well-managed, Christian household in its pursuit of pleasure.

I

When it is difficult to plow, Gervase Markham advises in *The English Husbandman* (1613), one should enlist “waste persons,” that is, the unproductive or unemployed, to engage in the “common work” of picking up the stones that hinder the growth of corn.⁹ Markham thus builds on the older term “waste ground” by shifting from the literal language for uncultivated or unproductive land to a metaphor for unproductive people. The *OED* records Thomas Nashe’s *Pierce Penniless* in 1592 as the first appearance of “waste” to mean “worthless people,”¹⁰ and, as Andrew McRae notes, this use of the word “transforms the poor from a problem of charity into an unexploited ‘productive resource’ within an expanding commonwealth.”¹¹ Markham’s goal is not only to assist his readers in making people and land more productive; he also sees good husbandry as “the great Nerve and Sinew which houldeth together all the joynts of a Monarchie.”¹² In other words, it ties all of England together in productive labor striving for the common good. Husbandry tracts may have also inspired writers to think of non-procreative sexual activity as “waste.” The first line of Shakespeare’s Sonnet 129, “The expense of spirit in a waste of shame,” offers one of several puns found primarily in the moralistic procreation sonnets (esp. 1 and 9), in which “waste” might mean uncultivated land, useless expenditure, destruction, consumption, decay, refuse, or surplus. *Measure for Measure* ties these behavioral and agricultural meanings of “waste” together as Duke Vincentio plots to reassert his control over the means of reproduction in Vienna.

In Shakespeare’s Vienna, sex is viewed as a matter of instrumental control, and private pleasure, especially nonproductive sex, is regarded as a form of “waste.”¹³ This treatment of sex is loosely based on actions taken in early

9. Markham, *English Husbandman*, D4r.

10. *OED Online*, <http://www.oed.com>, s.v. “waste,” n., def. 11b.

11. McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 168.

12. Markham, *English Husbandman*, A3v.

13. It is often argued that sex became “newly privatized” in this period, but if our definition of privacy is based on ideology rather than space, we find the opposite is true: sex was newly

modern England. In times of dearth or disease—and economic stress more generally—sexual regulation increased in scope and intensity as illicit sex of any kind was deemed a threat to an orderly “commonwealth.”¹⁴ Throughout the Tudor period, for example, pregnant single women such as *Measure for Measure*'s Juliet were lumped into a moral category that included vagabonds, beggars, and prostitutes. As Jonathan Dollimore points out, the “demonisation” of “deviant” sexual behavior in *Measure for Measure* and early modern England would seem to reflect “deeper fears” about disorder in general. But sexual transgression in the play is not, as Dollimore argues, merely an opportunity for the duke to increase his surveillance and authoritarian repression. The stitching together of disparate “sexual” sins is not simply a power grab; rather, it is a means of gaining control over wasteful, private pleasure, and fornication is the most glaring example of that.¹⁵ As the duke himself points out, he has neglected this role as head of the house-

public. On sex as “newly private,” see Mark Wigley, “Untitled: The Housing of Gender,” in *Sexuality and Space*, ed. Beatriz Colomina (Princeton University School of Architecture, 1992), 327–89. The contributors to the magisterial *A History of Private Life* discuss the expansion of private spaces and a sense of “intimacy” while also noting how state intervention in social space increased in the Renaissance. See Roger Chartier, ed., *A History of Private Life*, vol. 3, *Passions of the Renaissance*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). On the importance of the church in making marriage more “public” after the Reformation, see David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford University Press, 1997), 316–35. The classical approach to the public/private duality, which was highly influential, identified the private with the pursuit of self-interest. One of the reasons pleasure, especially sexual pleasure, came under heavy fire was that it was viewed as a threat to the “common good.” Although for some, sex may have taken place in a private space, i.e., a space physically removed from others, it would still be understood in relation to the public domain.

14. While illicit sexuality in the Tudor period came under harsh scrutiny from Protestant reformers, intervention also came increasingly from the center of power. Little changed, however, despite attempts at regulation. See Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570–1640* (Cambridge University Press, 1987); Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death*. On sex and law in *Measure for Measure*, see Tom Flanigan, “What to Do about Bawds and Fornicators: Sex and Law in *Measure for Measure* and Tudor/Stuart England,” *Journal of the Wooden O Symposium* 3 (2003): 36–48. Historians have shown that Puritanism was by no means the only force behind the increase in sexual regulation. On the distinction between religious concerns and socioeconomic ones, see Joan Kent, “Attitudes of Members of the House of Commons to the Regulation of ‘Personal Conduct’ in Late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England,” *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 46 (1973): 41–71.

15. Although I am generally sympathetic to Dollimore’s now classic, Foucauldian approach to sexuality in the play, I find his notion of “power” too abstract. Citing Foucault, he argues that sex “appears to be that which power is afraid of but in actuality is that which power works through” (Jonathan Dollimore, “Transgression and Surveillance in *Measure for Measure*,” in *Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism*, ed. Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield [Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985], 85).

hold: he has been like those “fond fathers” who merely threaten to use the rod but do not follow through. Now, ruling over his “children,” he wants to reestablish good husbandry.¹⁶

The antidote to private pleasure was, of course, the family, the site in which, as Jonathan Goldberg puts it, “the body is inscribed in a social system,” namely, the productivity of society as a whole.¹⁷ In its most extreme form, state husbandry expresses the utopian goals epitomized by Francis Bacon’s paean to James I’s husbandry,¹⁸ the *New Atlantis*, in which sexual pleasure that does not serve the state’s needs has been eradicated and there is no space whatsoever for private pleasure.¹⁹ In Bensalem, there are “no stews, no dissolute houses, no courtesans, nor any thing of that kind. Nay they wonder (with detestation) at you in Europe, which permit such things.”²⁰ Bacon’s utopia contains a celebration of regimented husbandry called the “Feast of the Family,” in which exceedingly fruitful patriarchs are honored by the state. All eros in the *New Atlantis* is channeled to the utilitarian reproduction of the patriarchal family or to the fecund “instruments” of Salomon’s House, a research center that specializes in husbandry techniques on a tremendous scale: trees bear fruit beyond their “natural course”; beasts procreate beyond natural means; new techniques improve the soil and enhance seeds; and new animals created by fertility experiments make existing species more fruitful. The prodigious productivity, health, and peace of the society depend on the destruction of the “pollution” and “foulness” of “unlawful concupiscence.”

16. Critics have explored the Duke Vincentio/King James connection, but to my knowledge no one has extensively covered the family/state analogy in *Measure for Measure* as it pertains to the political theory of King James. In his *Trewe Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598), James worked with the father/child analogy, which resonated with an absolutist ideology. Upon taking office in 1603 in England, he also used the husband/wife analogy that, as Constance Jordan points out, opened up greater ambiguity and a potential disruption of absolute monarchical power. For a detailed analysis of James’s family/state analogies, see Constance Jordan, “The Household and the State: Transformations in the Representation of an Analogy from Aristotle to James I,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 54 (1993): 307–26.

17. Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 87. “The family,” Susan Amussen points out, “was a social, public institution, not a private one that could be left to its own devices” (*An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* [New York: Blackwell, 1988], 36). For a nuanced and detailed history of the family/state analogy, see Michael McKeon, *The Secret History of Domesticity: Public, Private, and the Division of Knowledge* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

18. As king of Scotland, James VI celebrated good husbandry, and when he became England’s paterfamilias, he was believed to have linked the divine power of the state to the power of the family unit. The king’s “fruitful bed” (as Francis Bacon called it) became yet another symbol of his godlike power. On King James and the family unit, see Goldberg, *James I*.

19. Francis Bacon, *The New Atlantis*, in *The Works of Francis Bacon*, vol. 3, ed. James Spedding et al. (1857; facsimile repr., New York: Garrett, 1968), 52.

20. *Ibid.*, 152.

In *Measure for Measure*, as in the *New Atlantis*, the institutional control of procreation and private pleasure is crucial to the creation of an orderly society. The play begins with Duke Vincentio's disingenuous declaration that Escalus, his friend and advisor, is unequaled in his ability to "unfold" the "properties" of government with his "science," his knowledge of the "nature of our people, the city's institutions, and the terms/For common justice" (1.1.10–12). The duke, it turns out, is the one who truly knows how to unfold the history and nature of his people along with the properties of government. That can only happen if the state becomes better equipped to bring the private into the public, to insist that the subjects of Vienna stand and unfold themselves, as Claudio and Juliet are made to do. Angelo, the duke suspects, has something to hide, namely, a sexual appetite, and he wonders if it will appear in public once the man who "scarce confesses / That his blood flows" (1.4.51–52) becomes deputy. Earlier, however, he holds his cards close to his chest, making it seem like he just wants Angelo's virtues to be put to use for the public good: "There is a kind of character in thy life," the duke says to him, "That to th'observer doth thy history / Fully unfold" (1.1.28–30). The duke is the true observer here, as we soon learn, for he unfolds the history of this man who lacks self-knowledge, a "pattern in himself to know" (3.2.210). This science of government can remove pleasure from the darkness and stealth of private gratification.²¹

Duke Vincentio develops his public/private distinction as he positions himself as a manager of "waste," an advocate of good husbandry. He describes nature as a "thrifty goddess," a topos we know also from Banquo's joking dialogue with his son about the absence of the moon and the stars: "There's husbandry in heaven; Their candles are all out" (2.1.5). The "Duke of dark corners" (4.3.142), as Lucio calls him, may appear to be simply positioning Angelo as a public servant, a civic-minded leader, but he is also maneuvering to become something akin to an absolutist monarch who, in the patriarchal political tradition, owns his subjects.²²

21. On the concept of "privacy" in Renaissance drama, see Katharine Eisaman Maus, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance* (University of Chicago Press, 1995); and Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994). On privacy in *Measure for Measure*, see Stacy Magedanz, "Public Justice and Private Mercy in *Measure for Measure*," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 44 (2004): 317–32.

22. In her exploration of James's notion of property and its relevance to Shakespeare's last plays, especially *Pericles*, Constance Jordan quotes Thomas Bison's absolutist position, written in 1603, that "God hath allowed [monarchs] power over the goodes, lands, bodies and lives of their subjects" (Constance Jordan, "'Eating the Mother': Property and Propriety in *Pericles*," in *Creative Imitation: New Essays on Renaissance Literature in Honor of Thomas M. Greene*, ed. David Quint et al. [Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1992], 333). Analyzing James's similar position in *Trewe Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598), Jordan argues that his notion that "all property was finally the possession of the king—was grossly inconsistent with English

Thyself and thy belongings
 Are not thine own so proper as to waste
 Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee.
 Heaven doth with us as we with torches do,
 Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
 Did not go forth of us, twere all alike
 As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touched
 But to fine issues, nor Nature never lends
 The smallest scruple of her excellence
 But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
 Herself the glory of a creditor,
 Both thanks and use.

(1.1.30–41)

Since line 30 does not appear to be a hendiadys, “proper” modifies “thyself” and “thy belongings” (virtues) separately, which means that the etymological relation between “proper” and “property” is especially relevant. To say that his virtues are not his own “so proper” means that they must be more than intrinsic;²³ they must “go forth” into the world, like the servants’ money in the parable of the talents (or Jesus’s torches in Matt. 5:14–16). But what does it mean to say that Angelo’s self is not his own “so proper”? Given the lines that follow, the implication is that he is owned by someone or something else. In this case, the implicit analogy the duke creates between himself, heaven, and nature suggests that his subjects and their virtues are nature’s property and also the property of the duke. He describes himself and nature as “lenders”: he has lent Angelo his “terror” and nature has lent Angelo a “small scruple” of her “excellence.” The duke makes his power over Angelo parallel to heaven’s power over humans: both expect that “virtues” shall not be “wasted.” The topos of nature as a “lender” and “creditor” expecting “use” suggests that the duke is an owner of his resources—here “credit”—that he expects a return on. This is precisely the kind of instrumental relation between the duke and his subjects that the rest of the play develops (the *OED* also defines “property” as an “instrument” or “tool”).²⁴ In the play’s remarkable calculus of substitution and reproduction, the self is put to “use” within various forms of exchange; it is transformed from something wasteful to something generative and thrifty. The duke exerts his authority over the “proper” or private aspects of the

legal practice and the kind of monarchy it had sustained during the previous decades of the sixteenth century” (333). On ideas of property in patriarchal theory, see Gordon J. Schochet, *Patriarchalism in Political Thought: The Authoritarian Family and Political Speculation and Attitudes, Especially in Seventeenth-Century England* (New York: Basic, 1975). See also Alan Ryan’s discussion of Filmer’s *Patriarcha* (1680) in *Property and Political Theory* (New York: Blackwell, 1984).

23. *OED Online*, s.v. “proper,” def. 1a.

24. *Ibid.*, s.v. “property,” def. 6.

self, especially sexual appetite, but he also ensures that Angelo will not regard himself as private property.

Like the young man in Shakespeare's procreation sonnets, Angelo is being asked to pay his debt to usurious nature. But the sonnets enable us to contrast husbandry and state husbandry: the moralistic language urges the young man to "increase" his lineage and the human race; the goal is to protect the individual, aristocratic household. Warning the young man against wasting his procreative potential by "having traffic with thyself alone," the speaker incorporates financial and agricultural metaphors that describe sex in baldly instrumental terms: "For where is she so fair whose unearned womb / Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?"²⁵ When the duke compares human beings to torches he follows a similar logic, but he insists that Angelo's virtue must serve the state (rather than go unused as virtues that do not serve the public good). Angelo's virtue, we learn, is suspect in a number of ways that make him wasteful and in need of reform by the thrifty duke: he has avoided marriage to Mariana and, more important, the duke believes Angelo's desires may reveal themselves once he occupies a position of power (1.3.50–54). But the duke wants to do more than test or even entrap Angelo: he wants to expose and eliminate surplus pleasure through various kinds of confession and public display. Making Angelo's lust public is one of the duke's chief concerns; he wants to expose puritanical perversity to the world so that it might be reformed. The process of "unfolding" is essential here: the duke embodies thrifty nature and the "heavens" that casts a watchful eye on human behavior, exposing pleasure that serves private rather than public ends.

In Shakespeare's procreation sonnets, there is no political figure analogous to nature and the heavens. Interestingly, it is homosocial love that interrupts the sheer instrumentality of heterosexual husbandry, mixing the intimacy of the male friendship with the utilitarian goals ascribed to marriage.²⁶ *Measure for Measure's* state husbandry, however, involves a distant,

25. These quotations are from sonnets 1, 4, and 3, respectively, in William Shakespeare, *The Sonnets*, ed. Katherine Duncan Jones (London: Arden, 1997). For more on husbandry in the sonnets, see Thomas M. Greene, "Pitiful Thrivers: Failed Husbandry in the Sonnets," in *The Vulnerable Text: Essays on Renaissance Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986). On the economic language of the procreation sonnets, see Peter C. Herman, "What's the Use?," in *Shakespeare's Sonnets: Critical Essays*, ed. James Schiffer (New York: Garland, 1999), 263–84; and John B. Mischo, "'That use is not forbidden usury': Shakespeare's Procreation Sonnets and the Problem of Usury," in *Subjects on the World's Stage: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. David G. Allen and Robert A. White (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1995), 262–79.

26. For more on male friendship, homosexuality, and intimacy in the sonnets, see Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics* (University of Chicago Press, 1991), 225–70.

godlike duke with an aversion to pleasure, who appears to have banished love from his own household, or at least his “heart.” The duke adopts the role of a strict and economical patriarch in order to reconstruct the household, ensuring that private desires will not exist as such. Thus the language of husbandry in the sonnets—tillage, thrift, waste, expense, debt, and so forth—also appears in *Measure for Measure*, but in this theatrical context there is a more political, and less intimate, sense of urgency in exposing secrets and reforming pleasure. Obligations to nature, self, and society become part of the life of an obedient subject. As the bigger household subsumes the smaller, the language of surplus and dearth takes on a different tone.

Angelo’s sexuality is more hidden than Claudio’s natural lust and more dangerous, since it is not only bad for the individual household but, more important, threatens to undermine the state as a household. Sexual appetite metastasizes into murderous tyranny, a political vice associated by King James and others with “private affections and appetites” that can destroy the body politic.²⁷ The duke’s frugal sexual/political economy can be seen in his handling of Angelo’s surplus pleasure. It is certainly ironic, as critics have pointed out, that the duke, rather than Angelo, seems to end up possessing Isabella.²⁸ But Angelo has not been in control of his “sense,” his desire (2.2.147), while the duke is utterly in control of his own as he pursues good husbandry. Their differences can be seen in the fact that while they both want to “raze the sanctuary,” that is, bring down Isabella’s sacred virginity, they want to do it for totally different reasons. Angelo describes “light” women as “waste ground”: “Can it be / That modesty may more betray our sense / Than woman’s lightness? Having waste ground enough, / Shall we desire to raze the sanctuary / And pitch our evils there?” (2.2.175–79). “Sanctuary” (chaste women) would be in worse condition than “waste ground” (wanton women) because it would be “razed” and desecrated by Angelo’s “evils,” the semen pitched or discarded there.

“Waste” in Angelo’s soliloquy takes us back to the duke’s perspicuous insights about Angelo in the play’s opening. Angelo’s service to the state means that he and his virtues are being properly used. He will be forced (through the duke’s mercy) into marriage, his fallen “carrion” flesh resurrected so he might, as Lucio says of Pompey in chains, “turn good husband”

27. See James I, *Basilikon Doron*, in *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (New York: Russell & Russell, 1965), 18.

28. Marc Shell discusses Duke Vincentio’s desire for “sexual relations” with Isabella at length in *The End of Kinship: “Measure for Measure,” Incest, and the Ideal of Universal Siblinghood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995). For a more nuanced reading of the rivalry between the duke and Angelo, see Harry Berger Jr., “What Does the Duke Know and When Does He Know It? Carrying the Torch in *Measure for Measure*,” chap. 14 in *Making Trifles of Terrors: Redistributing Complicities in Shakespeare* (Stanford University Press, 1997), 335–428.

and better “keep the house.” The two appearances of the word “waste” are linked: they teach us that Angelo has flaws beyond his obvious sexual hypocrisy and bad political judgment. The duke makes sure the spotlight hits what he has recognized as Angelo’s latent perversity so that this undisciplined man will be forced to channel his pleasure in the proper direction—toward the fertile ground of marriage.

Angelo’s contrast of “waste ground” and “sanctuary” is also about the potential productivity of women. If we read “waste ground” in relation to “woman’s lightness,” it would suggest that “light” or wanton women are not vehicles for reproduction—they are for lust only, and thus, if we follow the earth/body topos, we see them as barren or uncultivated land. But the term is set up as an alternative to “sanctuary” as land that is still available for cultivation and profit. Why chase a novice of St. Clair when you can bring barren land to fruition? That meaning of “waste ground”—wild but potentially arable land—is common in husbandry tracts. Gervase Markham, for example, describes new husbandry techniques that turn “wast groundes” into “earthes of great profit.”²⁹ But for many people, waste ground was, along with pasturage, part of the commons and hardly went to “waste,” used as it was for items such as timber or stone. Such land, like women’s bodies in *Measure for Measure*, stirred up controversy over property and productivity.³⁰ The verb “raze” in “raze the sanctuary” is, of course, the opposite of “pitch,” and points to poor husbandry, the violation and destruction of physical space, including land and church property. What makes Angelo so perverse is the way he seeks sexual gratification not by razing the sanctuary and planting his seed, but rather by razing the sanctuary and “pitching his evils there.” “Pitch” suggests a productive aftermath to razing, yet that is negated by the word “evils,” usually glossed by editors as a privy.³¹

Angelo’s “waste ground” and “razed sanctuary” clash with the cultivated garden where he plans to deflower Isabella. All three spaces would involve private pleasure, but the garden is mapped out as an extraordinarily private space: in order to meet Angelo there, Mariana will need two keys to make it through a “planchèd gate” (4.1.27), and then a “little door” (4.1.29). Although Shakespeare does not tell us what kind of garden this is, we might infer, due to its brick wall, separation from the vineyard, and apparent proximity to the house, that it is what Charles Estienne calls a “‘garden-plot’ for

29. Gervase Markham, *The Second Book of the English Husbandman* (London, 1614), 77.

30. On “waste land” and controversies over enclosures, see Joan Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, vol. 4, 1500–1640 (Cambridge University Press, 1967), chap. 4; and L. A. Clarkson, *The Pre-industrial Economy in England, 1500–1750* (New York: Schocken, 1972), chaps. 3 and 6.

31. See the editors’ glosses in the Bedford/St. Martin’s edition of *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, p. 50, and in *Riverside Shakespeare*, p. 596.

pleasure,” an aesthetically pleasing space with proportional designs and various “figures” or geometrical shapes.³² In husbandry manuals, the growing of gardens, for pleasure and/or profit, serves an almost allegorical function as advice for the country gentleman or nobility. For example, Reginald Scot’s *Perfit Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* provides the “rules for the reformation of all abuses” in hop growing, but it seems equally devoted to reforming abuses like sloth, “private profit,” and unthriftiness. Scot wants hop growing to serve the larger collective good of the “commonwealth.”³³ Angelo is obviously not the sort of nobleman these writers have in mind; indeed, he seems committed to his own private pleasure in his private garden. His image of Isabella as a chaste and vital flower makes us think of her as unsanctioned fertile ground that he will defile. Whether the space is a “garden of pleasure,” or any other type of garden maintained by good husbandry, the site seems ill suited for the crime that will take place there. It is especially significant, then, that the duke takes control of this space by masterminding a plot that will replace the rape of Isabella with an act of good husbandry, the possible impregnation of Mariana, who by all rights should be Angelo’s wife (3.1.202–10).

The historical and formal relationships of plat and plot, a physical piece of land with a narrative plot, are evident here as the duke intervenes to transform Angelo’s private property into the image of the orderly commonwealth (the family/state analogy).³⁴ Vincentio has the ability to organize a plot in the intricate and productive way a husbandman might organize a plat for a proportionate and well-ordered ground of a garden. In the duke’s trick, the time and space of the encounter are carefully planned and it may well “acknowledge itself hereafter” in the form of a child for Mariana (3.1.231). Angelo’s walls and doors to his vineyard and garden thus become a spatial metaphor for the psychological territory the duke (via Mariana) will traverse. At the last minute, the duke’s bed trick transforms the space into a sanctioned and fertile (if still legally questionable) ground. The bed trick, then, shows the duke reinforcing the family/state metaphor by getting both parts of the analogy in order: placing Angelo and Claudio firmly

32. Charles Estienne, *Maison rustique, or The country farme*, trans. Richard Surfleet (London, 1616), 254. See bk. 2, chap. L on the proportions for the “garden of pleasure.”

33. Reginald Scot, *A Perfit Platforme of a Hoppe Garden* (London, 1574).

34. “Plot,” Henry S. Turner shows, was originally derived from “plat” in practical geometry, which referred to “schematic diagrams or working drawings used by the mason, surveyor, or carpenter” (*The English Renaissance Stage: Geometry, Poetics, and the Practical Spatial Arts, 1580–1630* [Oxford University Press, 2006], 21). “Plot” was originally a “schema of stage action” that was “posted in the backstage area to subdivide the narrative action of the play into the entrances and exits of the actors” (23). Duke Vincentio lays out a “schema” of this type with his “bed trick,” but this mastery of entrances and exits is even more obvious in the final act. I apply Turner’s work to the play in more detail below.

into their proper roles as heads of households and, in the process, strengthening his own position as head of the larger household that had been weakened by allowing private pleasure to run amok in Vienna.

Initially, Angelo appears to be a successful substitute for Vincentio; he is a master of state husbandry who not only punishes individuals by reenacting an old law, but, if we follow Pompey's language, also tries to reform behavior by altering the physical and moral landscape of the city.³⁵ Pompey says that the proclamation condemning Claudio to death also calls for the suburban bawdy houses to be "plucked . . . to the ground" while those within the city walls will survive (they "shall stand for seed") because a "wise burgher" intervenes (1.2.77, 79). Apparently, Angelo has tried to act as a kind of "improver," an urban husbandman converting waste ground, the brothels, into productive spaces. It turns out, however, that this is an act of displacement and hypocrisy that foreshadows the way Angelo punishes Claudio only to then fill in as his substitute in adultery. He, like the "wise burgher," is respectable in appearance, but is merely putting a new face on a crime others have been punished for. Angelo's austere control of urban space belies his own psychic fragmentation and thus, as Janet Adelman nicely puts it, he is not "psychically in control" of various spaces while the duke has a "more fluid psychic geography."³⁶ Angelo's collapse soon thereafter makes the duke's state husbandry all the more powerful by contrast. Vincentio, not Angelo, will be the one to properly "pluck" down brothels and "raze the sanctuary," but with a difference: his husbandry, marriage and procreation with Isabella, will be sanctioned by the state.

II

Reassuring Mariana that the bed trick will result in success—marriage to Angelo—the duke says, "Come, let us go. / Our corn's to reap, for yet our tithes to sow" (4.1.71–72). This dramatic topos serves two main functions: first, it creates a progression from the precontract to procreative sex. Sexual intercourse is like sowing grain; the marriage and childbirth are the reaping. The metaphor positions the couple in the cycles of nature (the unnatural Angelo has severed their initial commitment) but also under the control of household economy. Claudio and Juliet's sex hardly seems to be in a dif-

35. Pompey's description of the proclamation resonates with Elizabeth's royal proclamation in 1602, "Prohibiting Further Building or Subdividing of Houses in London," which orders a variety of buildings to be "plucked down" in order to avoid overcrowding, plague, and social disorder in general. The document has been reproduced in Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, eds., *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1969), 245–48.

36. See Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, "Hamlet" to "The Tempest"* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 99–100.

ferent legal category. Unlike their “mutual entertainment,” however, the bed trick is planned by the paternal, controlling figure of the duke. Second, the sowing/reaping metaphor reminds us that the duke reaps the harvest of his cunning plot, wresting control of justice from Angelo and inflicting considerable psychic pain on Isabella and Claudio (for dubious reasons) as a display of his prowess as manager of the state/household. As the narrative unfolds, state power grows steadily along the lines of an increase in agricultural productivity and the breeding of money. The elaborate switching of bodies and heads constitutes a plot that is advanced according to the duke’s carefully measured and calculated actions. As Isabella says in her surprisingly approving response to the duke’s proposed bed trick: “The image of it gives me content already, and I trust it will grow to a most prosperous perfection” (3.1.237–38).

The duke’s tillage metaphor connects his mastery of the plot to his control over sexual behavior, and thus his husbandry takes shape as a successful form of Machiavellian plotting.³⁷ Henry S. Turner has recently tied the Machiavel figure to what he calls “projective intelligence,” “a way of ‘thinking forward’ about human action through models and artificial inventions.” Unlike other Machiavels such as Barabas or Richard III, however, the duke is not an egoist; indeed, he uses what Turner calls “a cunning, deliberative and strategic mode of intelligence” to reorganize the society he has neglected, pushing it toward greater chastity and justice.³⁸ Bland in comparison with other Machiavels (and more truly Machiavellian than they), the duke mobilizes his “projective intelligence” to organize couples in marriage. Above all, the duke is a tactician, and, even if we grant he operates “like power divine,” his practical know-how is at least as important as his theology, and his praxis is at least as important as his gnosis. As with other Machiavels, his “craft” (as he calls it) associates him with military planning, engineering, and the spatial arts. Marlowe’s Barabas engineers an elaborate physical trap that can murder thousands; the duke engineers a marriage trap for Angelo, Isabella, and Lucio. He is a master of the spatial arts: the bed trick involves an elaborate ground plot for Mariana’s encoun-

37. Unlike other Machiavels, Vincentio is supposedly working for the collective good and his ultimate success with his plot makes him appear more godlike than villainous in any traditional sense. The duke has much in common with other stage Machiavels—he wears a disguise, he probes and then manipulates the psychic lives of other characters, he directs a clever “plot” no one else is aware of, and he is somewhat sadistic. Ivo Kamps points out that the Machiavellian qualities of the duke might not have been seen in a negative light, since subjects seeking law and reform might not only “tolerate their sovereign’s manipulation of his subjects” but may have even “expected him to manipulate them by ‘arts unknown to them’” (“Ruling Fantasies and the Fantasies of Rule: *The Phoenix* and *Measure for Measure*,” *Studies in Philology* 92 [1995]: 271).

38. Turner, *English Renaissance Stage*, 217.

ter with Angelo; he moves stealthily in the prisons gathering intelligence; and his reappearance in Vienna “by cold gradation and well-balanced form” (4.3.87) sets up the denouement with an elaborate planning of exits and entrances. His mastery of time, his narrative plot, is hard to separate from his mastery of spatial plot: he uses “haste” but also “leavened” preparation in his feigned exit from Vienna, and he has the kind of adaptability to unforeseen circumstances that resembles a military tactician in the field. Thus the duke’s statecraft, his “science” of government, greatly benefits from practical skills like thrift, surveying, time management, and adaptability that can be found in husbandry manuals and an assortment of other technical manuals. In short, he is a master of form—economic, spatial, and comic.

As the corn metaphor implies, the duke’s reform of sexual behavior is part of a larger plan to master necessity. Necessity’s sharp pinch is felt everywhere in the play: Pompey pleads that he is “a poor fellow that would live”; Overdone laments she is “custom-shrunk”; dowries have been lost; debt is pervasive. The duke’s “projective intelligence” gives him the ability to look out for the collective good by cultivating chaste subjects—“planting” and nurturing them, as Duncan says in *Macbeth* (1.4.28–32). What’s good for Angelo and Mariana (having children and getting married) is supposedly good for Vienna. It is hard to imagine they will be happy (as expected in the “companionate marriage” of many husbandry manuals), but, as the corn metaphor suggests, that is almost beside the point: the goal is to conquer necessity by getting the house in order. It is as if the main point, as Joan Thirsk says of Xenophon’s husbandry, is to make the household economy of Vienna work like a “smooth running machine.”³⁹ Corn was at the center of debates about social and economic policy that had been especially fierce in the decade before the play appeared, as England recovered from poor harvests. This choice of crop is especially significant in a play that equates illicit sex with gluttony—“to cram a maw” and to “surfeit” (3.2.18, 1.2.103). The *Book of Orders for the Relief of Dearth*, an example of what we’ve been calling “state husbandry,” provided a set of detailed guidelines (first put forth by the Privy Council in 1586) to control surplus, insuring that corn and other grains would be properly distributed to the poor and that prices would be controlled to make such food accessible to them. The duke exhibits the kind of political mastery that many sought from this kind of paternalistic social legislation.⁴⁰

39. Thirsk, “Making a Fresh Start,” 20.

40. See Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, chap. 4, and Clarkson, *Pre-industrial Economy*, chap. 3. On the *Book of Orders*, see R. B. Outhwaite, *Dearth, Public Policy and Social Disturbance in England, 1550–1800* (Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

In the discourse on husbandry, agrarian economics was frequently tied to behavioral reform, both at the level of the individual household and at the level of the nation as a household. In Fitzherbert's *Booke of Husbandry*, for example, the detailed section offering everything one needs to know about plows and plowing also talks about "diligence"—the need to "keep measure" and avoid "sport," "play," "taverne or alehouse," and every sort of "idle behavior."⁴¹ The act of measurement moves from plow making, planting, and so on to diet, consumption, and other forms of behavior. Other husbandry tracts lean more toward an acceptance of pleasure. In Robert Aylett's *Thrift's Equipage* we find a call for "temperance," which "moderateth all delights and pleasure, / Not that she us forbids all sports or play, / But makes us recreate ourselves with measure."⁴² The plow also held important practical and symbolic purposes for the nation-state. As Andrew McRae has shown, the plow tapped into different ideas about community and collective life: it was "an emblem of traditional structures of rural society" as well as the more individualistic "expansive energies of a farmer improving his land," and it could symbolize "an agrarian sense of national identity."⁴³

Good husbandry served a variety of interests across the social spectrum: noble lineage, religious morality, farming, and so on. Increasingly, however, these interests could be seen as working toward the larger collective goal of what the "Acte for the Maintenance of Husbandrie and Tillage" calls "the strengthe and flourishinge estate of this kingdome." Defenders of the bill argued that a renewed commitment to agriculture would combat depopulation, unemployment, and "lewd practices": "Whereas the Strengthe and flourishinge estate of this Kingdome hath bene allwayes and is greatly upheld and advaunced by the maintenaunce of the Ploughe & Tillage, beinge the Occacion of the increase and multiplyng of People both for service in the Warres and in tymes of Peace, beinge also a principall meane that People are sett on worke, and thereby withdrawen from Ydlenesse, Drunkenesse, unlawfull Games and all other lewde Practises and Conditions of Life."⁴⁴ The tillage act uses the plow to link several goals in a seamless fashion: feed the hungry, expand state power (more soldiers in war), and reform behavior. Population increase is tied to the transfer of pasture back to arable land (the reversal of enclosures) that, it was believed, would provide more farm jobs and an increase in the growth of crops. The wording of the bill, however, also puts the body/land topos into play, albeit in a

41. John Fitzherbert, *The Booke of Husbandry* (London, 1573), 7.

42. Robert Aylett, *Thrift's Equipage* (London, 1622), 3.

43. McRae, *God Speed the Plow*, 1, 8.

44. "Acte for the Maintenance of Husbandrie and Tillage," in *Tudor Economic Documents*, vol. 1, ed. R. H. Tawney and Eileen Powers (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963), 84. For more on the bill, see McRae, *God Speed the Plough*, 7–12.

subtle way: the statement that tillage is the “occacion of the increase and multiplyng of People” makes it sound like people will spring right out of the earth like a well-tended crop. To be sure, the goal is to improve living conditions for humans, but in the process humans come to look like a resource that will increase state power.

The bill’s fusion of moral and economic concerns is standard in the period, but we note how open-ended it is in the area of culture. Tillage is not just about getting people back to work—it is the panacea for bad behavior in general. If the state cannot find work for idle hands, the devil will. Casting a wide net with open-ended language, legislators hoped to gain the upper hand on pleasurable activities that might sap the economic strength of the nation. Whereas in the Tillage Act the reform of sexual behavior only comes as part of a causal chain set off by the initial intervention—reopening arable land—in *Measure for Measure* this chain would seem to be reversed: the reform of sexual behavior, it is hoped, is the first step leading to other kinds of reform.⁴⁵

Resistance to state husbandry comes from Lucio when he expresses a transgressive, utopian longing that counterbalances the state’s attempt to pluck sexual transgression up by its roots. Lucio provides a georgic fantasy of liberty that takes us from the urban nightmare of disease, dearth, and social control to the pleasures of the countryside. Unusual for its celebratory treatment of surplus pleasure, Lucio’s tillage metaphor best represents the model of husbandry that resists the Duke Vincentio’s power. Lucio defends the sexual activity of Claudio and Juliet by framing their behavior as blissfully natural rather than criminal:

Your brother and his lover have embraced.
 As those that feed grow full, as blossoming time
 That from the seedness the bare fallow brings
 To teeming foison, even so her plenteous womb
 Expresseth his full tilth and husbandry.

(1.4.40–44)

The agricultural metaphor challenges the severity of state husbandry. All of the human strife over sex and reproduction in *Measure for Measure* is missing here, as are the challenges of husbandry and tillage, the hardships inflicted by nature and society that could lead to periodic dearth and famine. Lucio

45. The link between fornication and other crimes is explicit throughout the play, and the idea that other reforms will follow sexual ones is implicit. The focus is on one law, a “strict statute” on fornication that has been dormant. Yet the duke refers to multiple, unspecified “statutes” and “laws.” At the start of act 4, scene 3, Pompey lists the crimes of prisoners who were “old customers” at Overdone’s house, suggesting that the brothel is at the heart of criminal activity and immorality in general.

does not see nature as the duke's "thrifty goddess"; he makes her look more like the goddess Ceres, the "bounteous lady" in *The Tempest* (4.1.60) or "great creating nature" in *The Winter's Tale* (4.4.88). Lucio's passage on husbandry turns the young couple's lovemaking into a sign that everything is right in the world. An internal rhyme—"your brother and his lover"—complements the word "embraced," and the phonic coupling contributes to our sense of their mutual love. The as/as construction in the second sentence sets up two metaphors that place Juliet's pregnancy in a world of natural abundance and bodily contentment. The duke, on the other hand, invokes feeding to show his disgust for prostitution and sexual appetite in general. How, he interrogates Pompey, can you "cram a maw or clothe a back / From such a filthy vice" (3.2.18–19). Lucio steers clear of moralistic language that expresses disgust and contempt for appetite. The repetition of "full" that describes Claudio's tith and husbandry further accentuates the couple's compatibility and the joyful plenitude that blurs the distinction between work and pleasure, labor and love. Although "bare fallow" reminds us of scarcity, it is merely part of the cycles of nature (or a technique frequently mentioned in husbandry manuals for improving fertility), and the balance weighs on the side of the opposing adjectives describing fecundity and beauty—"teeming foison," "blossoming time," and "plenteous womb."

Claudio, who has internalized the state's definition of illicit sex, describes Juliet's pregnancy in a radically different way: "The stealth of our most mutual entertainment / with character too gross is writ on Juliet" (1.3.127–28). In Lucio's view, the couple has nothing to hide. They ought to be thanked, he says, for being fruitful and multiplying. According to Claudio, it is the stealthy nature of the act that is "writ" on Juliet. The metaphor of legibility associates writing with power, the exposure of vice and the punishment by the law that will result. There is a world of difference between "character too gross" and "expresseth." The latter suggests a world of openness and joy, reminding us that the young couple's love will only thrive if it grows in the right socioeconomic context. Unlike Claudio, Lucio does not even feel compelled to debate the issue of spousals. By embedding procreative sex in nature, he tries to throw off the "bits and curbs," the new restrictive laws controlling sexual conduct.

For Lucio, Juliet's child is the result of a condition of surplus created by a harmonious relation between art and nature. The sense of abundance ("full," "teeming," "plenteous") gives the impression that surplus would be a permanent state, rather than something that would need to be carefully manipulated, as politicians suggested in debates about enclosures such as the one that took place when the tillage act was almost repealed.⁴⁶ In

46. See, for example, Cecil's suggestion for exporting surplus, as mentioned in Thirsk, *Agrarian History*, 231–32.

Lucio's passage, the hard labor of tillage is not pitted against nature; it works in tandem with it. Hovering somewhere between georgic and pastoral, these lines do not create the sense of ontological alienation so frequently found in depictions of the art/nature relation. Agricultural metaphors of reproduction often displace anxiety about the human separation from the goddess Earth or Mother Nature onto sexual relationships between humans. Lucio's passage departs from depictions of a harsh, instrumental relation between humans and nature found, for example, in Donne's "The Comparison" (lines 47–48) and "Sappho to Philaenis" (lines 35–38).⁴⁷ It also avoids the aggression often seen in agricultural metaphors, as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, for example, when Agrippa describes Caesar's impregnation of Cleopatra: "he ploughed her, and she cropped" (2.2.236). In Lucio's lines, play and mutual love soften the instrumental nature of tillage. Indeed, Juliet is a desiring subject, not merely an objectified body, a field to be "cropped." Moreover, Lucio's description of bestial oblivion, two creatures enmeshed in the cycles of nature, contrasts with the duke's nihilistic speech on human isolation ("Be absolute for death" [3.1.5–41]). Lucio's resistance to the regulation of sexual behavior continues to have power all the way through the end of the play, where we discover little joy in the marital unions shaped by the duke, Mariana's anticipation of her marriage to Angelo being an exception. The husbandry of the state hardly compares to the idyllic "mutual entertainment" and procreation of the two lovers prior to state intervention. Lucio's utopianism cannot be easily dismissed: his metaphor of blissful fecundity challenges the severity of state husbandry by giving us an alternative to the unpleasant realities of Vincentio's Vienna.

Unfortunately, the *promesse de bonheur* of Lucio's husbandry turns out to be the exception that proves the rule. Elsewhere he describes sex as "filling a bottle with a tundish" (3.2.138), and, more important, we find that Kate Keepdown, one of his sexual partners in what he calls the "game of tick-tack" (1.3.162), has been left to confront the reality principle in the form of poverty, fatherless children, and possibly disease (Lucio's syphilis). Lucio's checkered past does not quite negate his fleeting dream of human existence freed from the chains of necessity and social domination, but it does add more justification for authoritarian restraint. Once we learn that Lucio is a deadbeat dad we see that these libertine games have real consequences and the pleasure seems not only one sided but inherently abusive. Moreover, his fantasy of material abundance linked to sexual liberty appears out of character since it does celebrate good husbandry, but not the kind approved by church and state. What is striking, however, is the contrast

47. John Donne, *The Complete English Poems*, ed. A. J. Smith (New York: Penguin, 1971), 104, 128.

between his notion of husbandry in this passage and what we have been calling state husbandry. To some extent, Lucio is merely adapting ideas of pleasure we find in husbandry manuals. Thomas Tusser's *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie*, for example, schedules love making as "evening works," advising the wife to "provide for thy husband, to make him good cheere, / make merrie together, while time ye be here" and warns against making too much noise "for avoiding of shame."⁴⁸ Advice books for husbands and wives often use the language of the husbandry/farming manuals to emphasize the importance of joyful procreation and love.⁴⁹ But even here, Lucio's husbandry is transgressive in its utopian defiance of early modern marriage law.

Because Claudio and Juliet's procreative act was not intended to create a child, it fits into the category of "play." Claudio hints that there was, to adopt Gloucester's line, good sport at the child's making (1.2.102–5, 127). It was a joyful tillage that needed no external control. Lucio, who sees sex as play, challenges the work/play distinction of the classical earth/body metaphor that remained prominent in the Renaissance.⁵⁰ The Greek tradition had focused on the domestication of the woman as wife, removing sexual play from her existence entirely, and, in the Renaissance, the separation of work and play had remained a common feature of agricultural metaphors for human reproduction.⁵¹ In Erasmus's "Epistle to Persuade a Young Friend to Marriage," for example, the looming possibility of death (frequently a characteristic of this topos) turns surplus pleasure into a threat to nature and the household. Sexual pleasure is yoked to the economic demands that must be met for social and political order to be upheld. Eras-

48. Thomas Tusser, *Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandrie* (London, 1597), 135–36.

49. See, e.g., Patrick Hannay, *A Happy Husband* (London, 1619). For another example of the sexy marriage idea in nonagrarian household manuals, see Robert Boyle's *Counsel to the Husband: To the Wife Instruction* (London, 1608), which invokes the Song of Songs.

50. "Generally throughout Greek literature," Anne Carson observes, "the act of sexual intercourse that engenders or aims at engendering offspring is called 'work,' while all other varieties of erotic activity are 'play'" ("Putting Her in Her Place: Woman, Dirt, and Desire," in *Before Sexuality: The Construction of Erotic Experience in the Ancient Greek World*, ed. David Halperin, John J. Winkler, and Froma I. Zeitlin [Princeton University Press, 1990], 150). See also Helen King, "Sowing the Field: Greek and Roman Sexology," in *Sexual Knowledge, Sexual Science: The History of Attitudes to Sexuality*, ed. Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29–46. The metaphor of the woman's body as a field to be cultivated had been prominent in ancient, agrarian societies, and changed as social and economic conditions changed. On this history, see Page Dubois, *Sowing the Body: Psychoanalysis and Ancient Representations of Women* (University of Chicago Press, 1988).

51. As Carson's study shows, this tradition presented a "conceptual complex aimed at validating and perpetuating the civil institution of monogamous marriage and family life" ("Putting Her in Her Place," 144), in which play and work are carefully separated and play is pollution, marriage being a cleansing of bestial, nonprocreative desires (as seen in seduction or flirtation, for example).

mus ensures that pleasure is carefully contained; indeed, the pleasure of procreative sex is merely thrown out as a lure to bring the friend into the proper utilitarian framework: "If that man be punished who little heedeth the maintenance of his tillage (the which although it be never so well manured, yet it yieldeth nothing else but wheat, barley, beans, and peasen), what punishment is he worthy to suffer that refuseth to plough that land which being tilled yieldeth children? And for ploughing land, it is nothing else but painful toiling from time to time, but in getting children there is pleasure which, being ordained as a ready reward for painstaking, asketh a short travail for all the tillage."⁵² Although Erasmus's speaker often exhorts his friend with gentle arguments in favor of matrimony and procreation, he also bludgeons him with threats as he declares that all unmarried, childless men are enemies of God and nature. Procreation involves pleasurable orgasm, but that is only part of the "painstaking" or "short travail" necessary for reproduction. Procreative sex, Erasmus claims, may seem as natural as seeds dropping from the sky, beasts copulating in the fields, and plants germinating in the soil, but it is only in line with the law of God and nature when it occurs within holy matrimony (i.e., when it is not play).

Both Lucio and Erasmus position human beings in the cycles of nature, offering something akin to the affirmation of life and the prospects of immortality found in comedy. The major difference is that Lucio refuses to acknowledge the legitimacy of political and theological restraints on sexuality. In conceiving Lucio's lines, Shakespeare filtered out the severe, punitive warnings against sin we see in Erasmus's letter and in the husbandry/household manuals of his own day. Richard Surflet's dedication in his translation to Charles Estienne's *Maison rustique, or The countrey ferme*, a book compiled and revised in 1616 by Gervase Markham for English consumption, creates an erotic Mother Nature that Lucio might appreciate, a "goddess" who shows her "naturall kindness, by pressing out of her never dying breasts . . . millions of streames to feed (as with sweet milke) both the young and old fruit of her wombe." Those who "take paines" are compared to "fervent true lovers" with "affection . . . pricking them forward . . . to pluck off her stiffe, hard, and drie growne slough, that so she might receive as if it were a second birth, to the doubling of the thred of her lively and lustie dayes."⁵³ But this bawdy dedication ends with a harsh rebuke of those who "abuse" the "rich harvest" through leisure, sloth, and a general

52. Thomas Wilson placed the epistle in his *Art of Rhetoric*. See Thomas Wilson, *The Art of Rhetoric* (1560), ed. Peter E. Medine (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994), 92. According to Medine, Erasmus originally wrote it as a rhetorical exercise, for "amusement," and for the "profit" of his student William Blount. It was first published in 1518.

53. Estienne, *Maison rustique*, A1r, A2v.

“delight in sin.” While the duke and others go so far as to link sexual pleasure almost exclusively with dearth and disease, Lucio’s remarkable passage works with a pleasurable economy, the abundant and erotic Mother Nature, and goes so far as to exclude the harsher, moralistic aspects of the discourse on husbandry. Both approaches depart from the more balanced ethos found in husbandry manuals.

III

With the exception of Lucio’s passage on “foison,” *Measure for Measure*, unlike other comedies, refuses to provide the sense of abundance in nature found in husbandry manuals such as Heresbach’s *Four Bookes of Husbandry*, which, citing biblical and classical sources, describes God’s gifts of bounty and, singing his praises, asks him to “bless the gifts” he has already given and “through his bounteous liberalitie, to enriche the feeldes, and to prosper the Corne and the Grasse,” so that all might enjoy the “fruites of the Earth.”⁵⁴ There is a sense of confidence in Heresbach, as in Lucio’s passage, that humans can work harmoniously with nature, and thus Lucio’s lines on husbandry, rather than the play’s ending, are the closest the play comes to Hymen’s wedding song in *As You Like It* (5.4.141–46), the fairies’ blessings in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (5.1.391–422) or the “golden time” anticipated by Orsino in *Twelfth Night* (5.1.382). State husbandry, on the other hand, is often characterized by menacing figures of instrumental control over natural resources and human behavior. Lucio’s tillage metaphor is especially important because it raises questions about who controls the means of reproduction, both the procreative act itself and the bodies that are figured as tools. There is, however, further resistance in the play to the state’s instrumental control in the form of alternative figures of figuration that keep comedic pleasure from dissolving entirely. Even if we concede that the duke wields considerable legal control over reproductive action, we find that his control over the figures of reproduction is less impressive.

Angelo takes Vincentio’s model of husbandry, in which people are treated as resources to be manipulated, to an extreme that borders on parody when he compares biological reproduction to the mechanical process of coining. Putting “metal” in a means serves to drain it of the “saucy sweetness,” the eroticism, that tempts individuals like Claudio.

Ha? Fie, these filthy vices! It were as good
To pardon him that hath from nature stolen
A man already made, as to remit
Their saucy sweetness that do coin heaven’s image

54. Conrad Heresbach, *Four Bookes of Husbandry* (London, 1577), A3r.

In stamps that are forbid. 'Tis all as easy
 Falsely to take away a life true made
 As to put metal in restrainèd means
 To make a false one.

(2.4.42–49)

The point here that murder and bastardy deserve equal punishment is disturbing enough, but the syntactic parallel between murder and saucy sweetness is even more alarming. The passage places more emphasis on premarital sex than on the bastardy that results from it. “Restrained means” forbids the “saucy sweetness” involved in this particular stamping because the latter is an assault on the prohibitions of pleasure that shape collective economic life. The woman’s body is, of course, the “means,” and thus the production of children looks like *homo faber*, with the body as a tool that must be under the control of higher makers, from God, the original image maker, to the duke, whose figure we imagine (like Renaissance monarchs) being stamped on coins.⁵⁵ Angelo, like the duke, sees human reproductive behavior as tied to a set of obligations to God. But since the vehicle of Angelo’s metaphor—a machine stamping coins—is an imperfect form of human artifice even in the best of circumstances, the whole notion of figuration as a link of divine and worldly power looks suspect. Moreover, as Teresa Nugent points out, Angelo becomes a counterfeit himself immediately after delivering his speech on illegitimacy as a form of counterfeiting. Thus it would seem that the metaphor of coining was well chosen, pointing as it does to the unstable nature of figuration in the play and in the seventeenth century.⁵⁶

The duke/friar’s “Be absolute for death” speech has something important in common with Angelo’s soliloquy on stamping: in the process of eliminating fornication, both men seek to wield an excessive, instrumental

55. As Kamps and Raber point out about the play’s title, “the scales of commerce and the scales of justice are intimately related”: “Not only did the king’s hand intervene in the process of measuring but his image on the coins traded in markets and shops reminded their owners that without him, currency had no fixed exchange rate” (*Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, 12). See also Alan Powers, “*Measure for Measure* and Law Reform in 1604,” *Upstart Crow* 15 (1995): 35–47.

56. In addition to counterfeiting, the problems of clipping, coining, and debasing come to mind, not to mention the problem of determining value in an increasingly abstract marketplace. Teresa Nugent offers a clear treatment of usury and counterfeiting in the play, observing that their treatment matches the situation in early modern England, in which “the stigma traditionally attached to usury as a threat to economic and social welfare was transferred to counterfeiting” (“Usury and Counterfeiting in Wilson’s *The Three Ladies of London*, and *The Three Lords and Three Ladies of London*, and in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*,” in *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism*, ed. Linda Woodbridge [New York: Palgrave, 2003], 206).

control over pleasure, the means of reproduction. In the course of supposedly supporting marriage, they seem to drain husbandry of any joy whatsoever. Vincentio, like Angelo, takes his hostility to eros so far that he seems to undercut his own project of reform. Ultimately, we would expect the duke to reform Claudio by putting him in the proper position as a head of his own household with a desire to procreate and raise his own family (once the state and church has inserted its power to approve the marriage), yet that never happens, not even, most critics now agree, in the comic ending. The duke/friar's opening line advises Claudio that death and life will be "sweeter" once he embraces death. But the latter end of the speech forgets its beginning. It ends with "Yet in this life / Lie hid more thousand deaths; yet death we fear, / That makes these odds all even" (3.1.39–41). The logic is disturbingly paradoxical: life will be sweeter if we stop thinking of it as sweet. Indeed, it will be sweeter once we realize it is not sweet at all. The duke goes further than Angelo's aforementioned line on "saucy sweetness," however, by making pleasure of any kind appear transient or insubstantial, just one more instance of the futility built into the human condition. He describes the impossibility of any kind of presence—physical, mental, or spiritual. The fragile, mortal body is like a "breath" subject to constant change and affliction. As if that weren't bad enough, there is, according to his atomistic philosophy, no true "self" because our material nature will not allow it (3.1.19–21).

Desire, too, takes away happiness so that all people, young and old, lack presence (life is an "after dinner sleep"); indeed, children anticipate the absence of their parents as all social bonds between friends and family are ripped apart by greed or brute necessity.

Friend hast thou none,
For thine own bowels which do call thee sire,
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,
Do curse the gout, serpigo, and the rheum
For ending thee no sooner.

(3.1.28–32)

"Effusion of thy proper loins," stated with a grim seriousness, reduces procreation to joyless husbandry, yet it has something in common with Lucio's jocular description of sex as the trivial act of "filling a bottle with a tundish." Both refer to copulation instrumentally, as a means of pouring semen from one body to another; the woman, as in the metaphor of tillage, becomes a passive object worked by the tools of husbandry. Lucio's line disregards the need for a household entirely, and thus his libertinism is merely the obverse of the duke's household in disarray. "For thine own bowels" echoes a line from the Geneva Bible in which God responds to Abraham's request for offspring: "He [Eliezer] shal not be thine heire, but one that shal come out of

thine owne bowelles, he shalbe thine heire" (Gen. 15:4).⁵⁷ The echo is especially significant here because the duke's speech shows reproduction and patriarchy gone awry; indeed, family bonds are in crisis. Children, the "effusion" of the man they seem to respect as their "sire," actually yearn for his demise in order to obtain his property, thus severing the patriarchal bond that makes them belong to the father to begin with. The accumulation of wealth, the management of household finance, is a futile attempt to contain the affliction of noxious "skye influences" (3.1.9). Atomized on the social level (family) as well as on the existential level ("thou are not thyself"), life is dreamlike in its alienation. According to the duke, desire should be viewed strictly in terms of a failed husbandry in which life itself is a "thing" that one might as well not keep since, like all the other things of value accumulated, from ingots to ingrates, it can offer no pleasure or hope. The speech has its intended effect: it breaks Claudio down, putting him in a position in which, for the moment, he no longer "loves" life (3.1.43–45, 170–71). The duke/friar crushes his spirit, perhaps a high price to pay in reforming his behavior.⁵⁸

For Vincentio, sex is, or at least should be, a de-eroticized husbanding of resources in obedience to that "thrifty goddess" nature. The duke's good husbandry is one kind of "doing"—a controlled, carefully planned, economical behavior focused on the common good—that competes with another kind—the uncontrolled, private sexual pleasure of Mistress Overdone's forty clients (now in jail), described by Pompey as "doers," whose sins are linked, either directly or indirectly, to the brothel/alehouse. The brothel/alehouse is of course a place of business, but it is also the site of erotic, playful sexuality ("Froth," prunes, tick-tack, etc.).⁵⁹ The goal of the duke and his

57. *The Geneva Bible*, facsimile of the 1560 ed. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

58. The duke is ostensibly using a *contemptus mundi* philosophy as part of his role as friar. But, as critics frequently point out, the religious nature of this preparation for death is unorthodox. Robert Watson, in his compelling essay on what he calls "false immortality," relates the dismal pessimism of the "Be absolute for death" speech to the play's ending. The play's marriages, he shows, look like "a practical, worldly, even legalistic solution to the problem of maintaining the size of the Viennese population" (Robert Watson, "False Immortality in *Measure for Measure*: Comic Means, Tragic Ends," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 41 [1990]: 411). The failed husbandry of the duke's speech is not as out of place as it may seem, since, as Watson argues, the consolations of comedy are inoperative in a play that leaves us with the "suspicion" that "the aftermath of marriage and death alike is merely a biological process with no regard for human consciousness" (417).

59. The alehouse was what Peter Clark calls an "alternative society," a resource for the poor denounced as "nests of Satan" by authorities. See Peter Clark, "The Alehouse and the Alternative Society," in *Puritans and Revolutionaries: Essays in Seventeenth-Century History Presented to Christopher Hill*, ed. Donald Pennington and Keith Thomas (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), 47–72. On alehouses and *Measure for Measure*, see Martha Widmayer, "Mistress Overdone's House," in Allen and White, *Subjects on the World's Stage*, 181–99.

deputy is to contain this uncontrolled, sexual form of “doing” by absorbing it into the carefully managed Viennese household. The challenge to this project exists in the form of witty, alternative metaphors of figuration.

As we saw in his speech on Angelo’s “waste,” good husbandry for the duke includes the practice of usury. Pompey—a clown, tapster, and bawd rolled into one—offers further evidence of this policy shift as he attempts to re-eroticize sex by keeping it outside the duke’s husbandry: “’Twas never a merry world since, of two usuries, the merriest was put down, and the worsor allowed by order of law a furred gown to keep him warm” (3.2.5–8). In this jab at the arbitrariness and hypocrisy of the state, Pompey suggests that in merry old England the state cracked down on economic injustice, not lechery. Although part of the joke is that Pompey’s complaint is self-serving—he supports his own profit as a bawd (prostitution as “usury”)—there is still critical potential in it. He raises a legitimate question: What should count as an illicit activity? Why prostitution and not giving loans at interest? The joke relies upon an audience knowing that begetting was a common metaphor for usury—money begetting money.⁶⁰ Having been legalized, usury runs parallel to married, procreative sex: both are a state-sanctioned means of husbanding resources. Yet Pompey’s point about the “furred gown” calls usury’s contribution to the greater good into question, and there is no attempt to rebut this suggestion that usury is a form of husbandry that harms the poor.⁶¹ Although Pompey’s metaphor ties sex to necessity, his underground economic household—the brothel—maintains merriment as a counterpoint to the larger economic household run by the state, which tries to destroy all forms of pleasure.

In another protest, Pompey points to the limitations of instrumental control by comparing harsh sexual regulation to animal husbandry and insisting that fornication is as natural as reproduction itself: “Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?” (2.1.192–93). Unless the state has the kind of control a farmer exerts over his animals, sexual desire—and therefore fornication—will live on. In the context of the play’s

60. For an excellent analysis of this metaphor, see Marc Shell, “The Wether and the Ewe: Verbal Usury in *The Merchant of Venice*,” chap. 3 in *Money, Language, and Thought: Literary and Philosophical Economics from the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982), 47–83.

61. In calling legal usury the “worsor,” Pompey would seem to allude to the common complaint that usury had a harmful impact on many of the people who participated, especially the poor. The “furred gown” image, which Shakespeare would use again in *King Lear* (4.6.164–66) also raises the question of who profits from what sort of activity and why it is that justice always comes down harder on the little guy, leaving the great folk like Angelo unscathed. For more on the political implications of these lines and on “resistance” in the play, see Kiernan Ryan, “*Measure for Measure*: Marxism before Marx,” in *Marxist Shakespeares*, ed. Jean E. Howard and Scott Cutler Shershow (New York: Routledge, 2001).

joyless state husbandry, the humor becomes a kind of resistance to instrumental reason. This sense of humor about our “bestial” nature that allows for sin and human weakness in general, competes with the humorless way the duke, Angelo, and even Escalus try to wield control over the body and desire. In husbandry manuals, the occasional comparison of humans and beasts can be humorous. For example, Fitzherbert, in the midst of his otherwise serious and practical *Booke of Husbandry*, shifts to a satirical register when he explains that the “properties of a horse” include ten properties that can also be found in women, some of which are “broad buttockes,” “easy to leape on,” “good at a long journey,” and “busy with the mouth.”⁶² This is the kind of tavern humor we might expect to hear from Lucio, but it is not nearly as pernicious as what we find in the authorities. When they compare humans to beasts, they are dead serious, and their harsh view of sexuality shows how menacing such instrumental control of sexual and other types of behavior can be when husbandry moves from the farm to the state, from the individual household to the state as household.

When the concepts of stamping and figuration appear in the dialogue of the underworld characters in a series of puns and bawdy jokes in act 1, scene 2, they would seem to parody Vincentio’s own figuration. Lucio compares his friend to a “sanctimonious pirate” who “razed” or “scraped” the commandment “thou shalt not steal” out of the Ten Commandments. The subtext, of course, is that Angelo will turn out to be worse than the pirate, for the obvious reason that he is the play’s hypocrite par excellence. A joke about whether or not sexually transmitted diseases have been “figured” in the body of the first gentleman gives an alternative to state husbandry:

LUCIO	Behold, behold, where Madam Mitigation comes! I have purchased as many diseases under her roof as come to—
2ND GENT.	To what, I pray?
LUCIO	Judge.
2ND GENT.	To three thousand dolors a year.
1ST GENT.	Ay, and more.
LUCIO	A French crown more.
1ST GENT.	Thou art always figuring diseases in me, but thou art full of error. I am sound.
LUCIO	Nay, not, as one would say, healthy, but so sound as things that are hollow. Thy bones are hollow; impiety has made a feast of thee.

(1.2.34–44)

Its disturbing nature notwithstanding, this joking atmosphere is a world apart from the dour morality of the play’s authorities. In particular, we note

62. Fitzherbert, *Booke of Husbandry*, 37.

the scene's treatment of "figuring," falsehood (room for linguistic and arithmetic "error"), and sexual pleasure/pain. Three meanings of figuring stand out here: counting, representing, and metaphorizing. "Three thousand dolors," an excessive expenditure in postcoital sadness and syphilitic pain, makes the sexual accounting in the brothel look absurd even as it parodies the duke's husbandry. "Figuring diseases" reminds us that the duke's sense of justice involves a particular way of interpreting the external signs of his subject's inner moral condition (as in Angelo's "character") and counters the duke's search for moral certainty with a more equivocal and jocular moral judgment. Puns (sound, dolors, crown) leave us unsure whom to believe—the gentleman or Lucio—about the moral and physical "soundness" of the first gentleman.

Bound up with wanton behavior, the figuration of wanton words rather than the language of legal retribution or stamping expresses the negative aspects of sexual liberty. In this case, puns provide a space for verbal pleasure as compensation for painful social and sexual realities, including the state's attempt to extirpate fornicators, bawds, and adulterers. But if sex is merely negative pleasure ("mitigation"), like the scratch described in More's *Utopia*,⁶³ then it remains tied to the pain of necessity, the play's triangulation of desire, dearth, and disease. Surplus pleasure only belongs to the disease that "feasts" on the body; "French crowns" (coins, disease), another reminder of an economy of sexual pleasure, add one more justification for mechanical stamping, the state management of pleasure and profit.

It is hardly surprising that sex in a brothel is represented as the purchasing of diseases; nevertheless, the authorities tend to blur the line between the "evil" of fornication and sexual pleasure itself as they figure the latter as inherently diseased, filthy, or bestial.⁶⁴ In this respect, the regulation of sexuality in the play resonates with attempts to regulate behavior during times of dearth and plague. Paul Slack notes that, in London, "the threat of plague was used to justify the repression of brothels, taverns and poor tenements."⁶⁵ In its battle against the plague, the state figured diseases in peo-

63. Raphael Hythloday describes one type of Utopian pleasure as that which "happens when we eliminate some excess in the body as when we move our bowels, generate children, or relieve an itch somewhere by rubbing or scratching it" (Thomas More, *Utopia*, trans. Robert M. Adams [New York: Norton, 1992], 54).

64. Richard P. Wheeler lays out the argument for this reading in more detail: *Measure for Measure*, he writes, "makes the problem of illicit sexuality the focus for anxieties seemingly based on the whole of man's sexual nature" (*Shakespeare's Development and the Problem Comedies: Turn and Counterturn* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981], 104). Adelman makes a similar point on the duke's view of sex in *Suffocating Mothers*, 87.

65. Slack, *Impact of Plague*, 305. On disease in the play, including the overlap of plague and syphilis, see Catherine I. Cox, "'Lord Have Mercy Upon Us': The King, the Pestilence, and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*," *Exemplaria* 20 (2008): 430–57.

ple by linking their illnesses to “wasteful,” “idle,” and “lewd” behavior. Shakespeare’s competition over the language of reproduction addresses the paternalism of Tudor and Stuart reform.

Although Shakespeare’s other comedies also reinforce the social constraints of marriage and patriarchy, they do not put forth a dour, authoritarian control of the household as the potential solution to social ills and sexual “liberty.” Comedy, as Christopher Sly puts it in the *Taming of the Shrew*, is about “household stuff” or, more specifically, the human ability to wrest some pleasure—including what Lawrence Danson calls “the life-giving energy of sex”—from the work of husbandry.⁶⁶ In *Measure for Measure*, however, it is as if the failed husbandry described by Titania in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (2.1.81–117)—the futile travail of the ploughman and the ox, rampant plague, rotting corn, dead animals, marital strife—has become so severe that it requires state intervention. In such conditions, erotic pleasure, and especially sex, is perceived as private pleasure that comes at the expense of the public good.

Unlike other comedies, even the other “dark” ones, the content and form of *Measure for Measure* work in tandem such that the process of figuration and stamping that appears repeatedly in the content of the play is also registered in the twofold “shaping fantasy” of the form: Duke Vincentio’s control over the action or comic process and Shakespeare’s self-conscious design. State husbandry puts in an appearance in other comedies, but only to be overthrown. In *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, for example, Duke Theseus supports Egeus and the “Athenian Law” when he tells Hermia that she is “as a form in wax” that can be “imprinted” by her godlike father (1.1.47–51). Theseus withdraws the state’s support for this ideology, but the duke, despite his merciful treatment of offenders and overturning of Angelo’s verdict, hardly seems to relinquish his political power to stamp, figure, or even disfigure (as in Isabella’s case) his subjects. By the end of the play we realize that whereas the witty, alternative figures of reproduction provided by Pompey and Lucio reveal gaps in the duke’s power over his subjects’ hearts and minds, they can hardly compensate for the state’s stringent control of sexual pleasure. In other comedies, that is not the case: jokes on the inevitability of cuckoldry in *As You Like It* (4.2.10–18) or *The Merchant of Venice* (5.1.280–307), for example, suggest that an iron-fisted patriarchal control of sexual pleasure cannot really work. The cynicism of Lucio, Pompey, and the other lewd characters hearkens back in some respect to the playful banter about sex and marriage in earlier comedies, but when we reach the final act we see how uncomic this play really is: no one, except Mariana, expresses joy at the prospects of marriage and no one offers anything like the expres-

66. Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare’s Dramatic Genres* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

sion of procreative pleasure we saw in Lucio's lines from the first act. The eros of natural fertility, already mediated by patriarchal marriage, gives way to the more potent forms of human domination in state husbandry figured in Angelo's lines on coining and the duke's terrifying speech to Claudio.

Intractable social problems in the decade before Shakespeare wrote *Measure for Measure* (plague, dearth, bastardy) seem to have prompted a heightened realism in this work, moving the playwright toward a grim form of city comedy. When the play frames human reproduction in terms of a politicized discourse on husbandry, we find two competing views of sex: the duke's joyless economy emphasizing the powerful forces of dearth and disease (necessity crying out for mastery), and Lucio's pleasurable economy, which resists the ordering of state husbandry. A depressing and dispiriting imposition of social control is what we find when extreme pressure is applied to the "means" of human reproduction—as if a kind of desperation had spoiled the bucolic pleasures of husbandry.

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