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## Sensuality, Spirit, and Society in *The Dutch Courtesan* and Lording Barry's *The Family of Love* (1608)

*This essay stages a dialogue between The Dutch Courtesan and the comparatively neglected The Family of Love by Lording Barry, discussing the differing ways Marston and Barry deploy the Familist fellowship that had recently come under fire from England's reigning monarch. I juxtapose the dramatists' representation of sensuality and spirituality across a broad range of characters. By attending to their shared pre-occupation with the humoural, excretory body, the essay shows how these comedies leave us with divergent social visions.*

Facets of *The Dutch Courtesan* and *The Family of Love* suggest that the plays not only share a common context of Jacobethan comedy, but also were written in dialogue with one another. Both plays share proximate dates of composition, performance by London boy companies, and interest in the religious fellowship stigmatized by King James I as 'that vile sect ... called the Familie of loue'.<sup>1</sup> Each animates the humoural, excretory body with a flamboyance typical of boy companies' youthful actors. In other respects, the plays offer contrasting perspectives. While John Marston's plot requires the expulsion of the Dutch courtesan and the erotic disappointment of the Familist Mistress Mulligrub, in Lording Barry's comedy the sole woman upbraided in the dénouement is the doctor's wife, Mistress Glistler, whose flaws consist of anger at her husband's disloyalty and a fixation on cleanliness.

The reading that follows rests on the hypothesis that Barry and Marston wrote their comedies within less than two years of each other, between 'late summer or autumn of 1604' and the end of 1606.<sup>2</sup> This conjecture makes sense of the plays' rich intertextual and intertheatrical relationship. Assuredly, the influence runs one-way; *The Family of Love* emulates and pastiches Marston's play at many points. The playwrights' dramatic use of Familism is one element leading

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Charles Cathcart to propose that *The Family of Love* is 'a play partly composed by Marston'.<sup>3</sup> But while *The Dutch Courtesan* inhabits *The Family of Love* to an uncanny degree, this coexistence occurs not because Marston had a hand in the writing, but because Barry was a consummate 'sampler' of Elizabethan drama.<sup>4</sup>

This essay explores the comedies' representation of Familism concentrated in their citizen women. It next considers women as commodities in both texts, comparing the varieties of female wit each playwright stages. Linking with these discussions, I focus on the authors' portrayals of the earthy, sensual body. Finally, by analyzing the plays' strikingly different endings, I propose that Marston and Barry leave their audiences with divergent social visions; to paraphrase Montaigne on marriage and 'amorous' love, 'Indeed these [plays] have affinitie; but therewithall great difference'.<sup>5</sup>

The Family of Love was a mystical religious fellowship founded by Dutch merchant Hendrik Niclaes in the early 1540s. It took root in England in the mid-1570s via printed translations of Niclaes's writings by Christopher Vittels, an itinerant, bilingual spiritual teacher. English Familism developed as 'a series of micro-networks', bound together by 'kinship, intermarriage, trading interests, the use of coded phrases, household meetings and book-reading'. Familists denied Christ's divinity, believed in late baptism, and held that when divinely illuminated, or "godded with God" [they could] live without fear of the Last Judgement since this experience made them inheritors of Christ's eternal kingdom'.<sup>6</sup> In reality an undogmatic group, Familists preferred outward conformity to proselytizing or martyrdom. Through attacks by the Family's 'clerical antagonists' under Elizabeth I, however, a stereotype of the Familists emerged as licentious, subversive, and hypocritical. Niclaes's welcoming of novices into a 'holie Communialtie ... of Love' led to the perception by dramatists and the populace alike of this spiritual 'love' as a form of libertinism or sexual sharing.<sup>7</sup> Both *The Dutch Courtesan* and Barry's *Family of Love* build on the popular misperception of Familists as living in brothels. This sensationalized view of the Family flourished in inverse proportion to the group's decreasing cultural visibility as the seventeenth century wore on.<sup>8</sup>

*The Family of Love* charts a successful love intrigue between the impecunious Gerardine and Maria, the closely confined niece of the mercenary, promiscuous Doctor Glistler. Their romance plays out against the backdrop of two citizen households, the Glisters and the Purges. Mistress Purge attends Familist meetings independently, arousing her husband's suspicions about her marital fidelity. The libertines Lipsalve and Gudgeon hunt after sex and solubility (freedom from constipation), receiving more than they bargain for from Glistler with respect to

the latter. An intriguing alliance between the gentle Gerardine and the 'precise' merchant Dryfat ensures the lovers' victory over Glistler.<sup>9</sup>

From the vantage-point of plot, the Familist fellowship is central to Barry's comedy but incidental to Marston's. Barry's play involves two Familist meetings attended by three characters and infiltrated by three more. Differing accounts of what transpired in one meeting are crucial to the dénouement. Marston invokes the Family of Love in the context of the brothel run by Mary Faugh and the Familist household of the vintner Mulligrub. His characters use the full name 'the Family of Love' as if signalling the audience each time they invoke the scandalous group. This single note differs markedly from the casual, pervasive resonances of 'the Family', 'Familists', and their meetings in Barry's play.<sup>10</sup> *The Family of Love*, moreover, has its characters discuss Familist spiritual beliefs and practices not just with mockery and alarm, but with genuine interest. Informed by older critical assumptions, Margot Heinemann nonetheless made a valuable point when she wrote that 'both in realism and moral tone (if one can call it that) [Barry] is much closer to what he is describing'.<sup>11</sup>

Both *The Dutch Courtesan* and *The Family of Love* feature citizen women who partner their husbands in trade: Mistress Mulligrub, wife to Mulligrub the tavern host, and Mistress Purge, wife to Purge the apothecary. Like city wives in contemporaneous comedies such as Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho* (1604), Jonson's *Epicene* (1609), and Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl* (1611), both women have husbands who perceive them as 'gadding' outside the home.<sup>12</sup> Each of them is the subject of unwitting sexual innuendo; each, to varying degrees, succumbs to the temptation of extra-marital sex. In common with Chapman's Florilla in *A Humorous Day's Mirth* (1597), whom the author represents as a puritan, both female Familists are characterized as broadly hypocritical. But where Florilla's religion is a solitary pursuit, the faith of Mistress Mulligrub and Mistress Purge is striking for its sociability, a characteristic that bears out Christopher Marsh's stress on the importance of 'patterns of sociability' to English Familism and Lollardism.<sup>13</sup>

As well as their work ethic and greed, Marston emphasizes the Mulligrub couple's aspiration to infiltrate the upper ranks of society. Mistress Mulligrub lends money to some of the 'squires, gentlemen, and knights' who 'diet at [her] table', probably at a high rate of interest. She further boasts of her intellectual authority over her husband: 'tis I that must bear a brain for all' (3.3.34–5).<sup>14</sup> This same scene mocks her pretence to superior intelligence when she unwittingly hands over to a disguised Cocledemoy the expensive standing-cup Mulligrub bought from Master Garnish, the goldsmith, to replace the 'nest of goblets'

Cocledemoy stole from their tavern at the play's outset (1.1.7). While she bears the name that conveys her husband's weakness, expressing both the fits of depression and stomach ache that were known as the 'mulligrubs', Mistress Mulligrub has more equanimity than the vintner.<sup>15</sup> Marston shows her predisposition to chat at the start of the scene in which the Garnishes' servant Lionel delivers the replacement cup. An entreaty to Lionel to 'Stay and drink' shows the generosity of a woman used to playing the host. Enquiring after his mistress, with whom she has been 'inward' (3.3.3), Mistress Mulligrub segues into a reminiscence of her youthful intimacy with Lionel's master, who, she says, 'knew me before I was married' (6). This steering of the discourse toward the subject of sex culminates in Mistress Mulligrub's extolling of a handsome wife's erotic power as a magnet for customers: 'In troth, a fine-faced wife in a wainscot-carved seat is a worthy ornament to a tradesman's shop, and an attractive, I warrant. Her husband shall find it in the custom of his ware' (11–15). The monologue creates a strong feeling of the older woman exploiting the younger male servant's sense of obligation; the impression that Mistress Mulligrub is coming on to him is borne out by the fact that Lionel does not reply.

As well as hinting at Sapphic relations, Mistress Mulligrub's reference to being 'inward' with the socially superior goldsmith's wife shows that *The Dutch Courtesan* 'is surprisingly attuned to Familist vocabulary'.<sup>16</sup> As Cathcart points out, 'inward' embraces devotional and sexual senses; the anonymous comedy *Club Law* (1600), which influenced *The Family of Love*, uses the word thus.<sup>17</sup> The quarto list of characters in *The Dutch Courtesan* refers to the goldsmith as 'Master Burnish', but otherwise in the text he is called 'Master Garnish'. In Vittels's translations of Niclaes's texts the word 'garnish' evokes an embellished quality of spiritual beauty, consequent on believers' confessing their sins and embracing Christ's mercy. In his *Epistolae* (1575), Niclaes urges his readers (or listeners) to 'laye open the Inwardness of your heartes; and bring forth right fruits of Repentance ... suffer yourselves to be washed with the pure and safe-making Water of the Love ... receaved into the holy Comunialtiee of Love, to be fellow-members of the Bodye of Jesu Christ, and understanding in holy Garnishing'.<sup>18</sup> Once entered into this spiritual space, Niclaes implies, believers will be adorned but also armed with Christ's mercy.<sup>19</sup> Thus the quarto of *The Dutch Courtesan* encourages us to view the Mulligrubs and the Garnishes as a Familist cell bound by trading interests and coded language.

While Marston represents the Mulligrub household and Mary Faugh's brothel as Familist-affiliated spaces, Barry concentrates his Familism within the Purge domicile, identifying only one marital partner — Mistress Purge — as a devotee.

Yet her religion radiates outwards in a distinctive, sociable manner. The first act of *The Family of Love* ends with a supper party at the Purges, at which Gerardine's will is sealed prior to his (apparently) going to sea. Master Purge is Gerardine's cousin. The other guests are the Glisters and Maria; the gallants Lipsalve and Gudgeon; and Dryfat, who urges Glisters to favour Maria's marriage to his friend Gerardine. The group forms a close-knit community, bonded by kinship, friendship, and profession. As co-host and recipient of a legacy, Mistress Purge occupies a prominent role in the scene. Furthermore, she challenges the gallants who arrive direct from the playhouse: 'This playing is not lawful, for *I cannot find* that either plays or players were allowed in the prime church of Ephesus by the elders' (1.3.97–8, emphasis mine). In the context of a puritan sect, 'elders' would have taken a leading role in the management of church affairs, often acting in concert with the minister. Mistress Purge's remark has a parallel in *The Dutch Courtesan* where Mistress Mulligrub cites a personal conversation with 'one of our elders [who] assured me ... tobacco was not used in the congregation of the family of love' (3.4.4–6). The key difference between the passages is that Mistress Purge does her own research and speaks for herself, as indicated by the phrase 'I cannot find'. Her initiative squares with the quarto's designation of her in the list of characters as 'an elder in the Family'.<sup>20</sup> The fact that Mistress Purge takes her book with her to meetings further illustrates her active intelligence (3.2.79–80).

Both Barry and Marston depict Familism as a barometer by which these citizen women live their daily lives. Whereas Marston scapegoats his Familists, however, *The Family of Love* gives greater scope to discussion and questioning of the group's beliefs. Barry uses the lower-status figure of Club, the Purges' apprentice, to mediate popular notions of Familism, such as their promiscuity. After he delivers the trunk in which Gerardine is concealed to the doctor's, Mistress Glisters asks Club, 'I prithee ... what kind of creatures are these Familists? Thou art conversant with them' (2.4.59–60). More interesting than Club's reply, on this occasion, is Mistress Glisters's curiosity about her neighbour's religion. She expresses concern that Mistress Purge may be trying to convert Glisters: 'But tell me, doth she not endeavour to bring my doctor of her side and fraternity?' (71–2). Club takes advantage of Glisters's entrance to deflect the question: 'Let him resolve that himself' (73). During his farewell feast, Gerardine had strategically warned Mistress Glisters of her husband's adultery with Mistress Purge: 'Let me tell you in private that the doctor cuckolds Purge oftener than he visits one of his patients; what 'a spares from you, 'a spends lavishly on her' (1.3.143–5). The questions Mistress Glisters puts to Club derive not solely from her desire for more knowledge

about Familism; they also constitute discreet digging around the possibility that Mistress Purge has seduced her husband.

In comparison with Marston, Barry is relaxed about his citizen wife's immorality; Mistress Purge *is* having an affair with Doctor Glister, but this adultery is not the focus of the comedy's interest. In fact, the mock trial in act 5 vindicates Mistress Purge from a charge of concupiscence brought against her by her husband, not referring to Glister but to an incident Purge engineers to make his wife appear guilty. In the view of the attorney 'Poppin the proctor', a role played at the trial by Dryfat, the wider social threat represented by 'loose-bodied' Familists such as Mistress Purge is that men's 'wives, the only ornaments of their houses and of all their wares, goods, and chattels the chief movables, will be made common' (5.2.163, 169–71). In this passage, the sexual commonality practiced by the Family of Love poses a direct threat to the position of women as commodities to be exchanged between men. But Barry's innovative treatment of the ring motif in Purge's plot against his wife exposes the anxiety voiced by Poppin for exactly the catastrophizing it is. In this way, Barry's comedy exposes masculinist ideology more pointedly than does Marston's.

In Marston's play, the ring that gets passed sequentially from Beatrice to Freevill to Malheureux to Franceschina and back again to Freevill, now disguised as the pander Don Dubon, symbolizes *The Dutch Courtesan's* 'challenge to the idea of woman as commodity'.<sup>21</sup> Franceschina's desire for the ring drives the 'intensely humorous interaction' in which she asks Malheureux to kill Freevill, requesting the love token gifted him by Beatrice as proof of his death.<sup>22</sup> The voluptuous desire aroused in Malheureux by the courtesan's toying with him fuses with Franceschina's pitch of sensual passion, uttered aside and marking the separation of their goals as well as their staged bodies. Malheureux ponders his task while Franceschina voices her anger to the audience:

Now does my heart swell high, for my revenge  
Has birth and form. First, friend sall kill his friend;  
He dat survives, I'll hang; besides de chaste  
Beatrice I'll vex. Only de ring! (2.2.221–4)

Franceschina's coveting of Freevill's ring calibrates her desire for revenge, rendering her a figure of passion, bloodlust, and devilishness. The ferocity with which she longs for the ring is patent. Nothing in *The Family of Love* resembles this tone of authentic menace.

Refreshingly, Barry puts a new spin on a ring as a symbol of wifely chastity in the subplot of *The Family of Love* concerning the efforts of the libertines Gudgeon

and Lipsalve to seduce Mistress Purge. To this end, they disguise themselves as Familists and infiltrate a meeting of the fellowship. They are foiled by the jealous Purge who, himself disguised and 'the candle out' (4.4.7), takes the wedding ring from his wife's finger as testimony of her infidelity. The action involving the ring in Barry's play inverts the dynamic of the bed tricks familiar to us from comic plots where a woman deceives a man by substituting herself for another in his bed. So Angelo is deceived when he takes Mariana for Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, and Alsemero in *The Changeling* when he has sex with Diaphanta rather than Beatrice.<sup>23</sup> At the trial of his wife, Purge insinuates a coupling took place with a triumphant flourish: 'Short tale to make, I got her ring, and here it is! Let her deny it if she can, and what more I discovered, *non est tempus narrandi locus* [now is not the place for telling]' (5.3.241–3).

Mistress Purge telling Dryfat in a previous encounter that 'we fructify best i'th' dark' (3.2.17–18) primes the audience for the notion of sex under the cover of Familist night-time meetings. She further avers, 'These senses, as you term them, are of much efficacy in carnal mixtures ... when we crowd and thrust a man and a woman together' (45–6). Purge's choice of verb in his testimony echoes his wife's earlier statement as he testifies, 'I ... thrust in amongst the rest (as I had most right), on purpose to sound her, to find out the knavery' (5.3.238.41). Barry knocks back the jealous husband's attempt to frame, and publicly shame, his wife. Purge's charge suffers at first by the gallants' inability to testify to anything more than kissing Rebecca Purge, 'once at coming, once at going, and once in the midst' of the meeting (210–11). Gerardine, now disguised as Doctor Stickler, a judge, dismisses their evidence as insufficient. Mistress Purge delivers the weightiest blow to the apothecary. Pushed to explain the ring's whereabouts, she assumes an attitude of sprezzatura:

My wedding ring? Why, what should I do with unnecessary things about me when the poor begs at my gate ready to starve? ... Now truly ... however he came by that ring, by my sisterhood, I gave it to the relief of the distressed Geneva.' (5.2.222–4, 233–5)

In claiming to have donated her ring to the Protestant burghers of the besieged Geneva, Mistress Purge puts humanitarian need and religio-political allegiance above the demands of marital loyalty. She shifts nimbly from this defiance of conventional mores to a humanistic appeal to the 'right use of feeling and knowledge'. She addresses Purge:

as if I knew you not then, as well as the child knows his own father. Look in the posy of my ring: does it not tell you that we two are one flesh? And hath not fellow-feeling taught us to know one another as well by night as by day? Now, as true as I live I had a secret operation, and I knew him then to be my husband e'en by very instinct. (5.3.244–53)

In a similar vein to Mariana in act 5, scene 1 of *Measure for Measure* (1604), Mistress Purge asserts agency and consent in the sexual encounter, punningly alleging that, despite the secrecy of the night-time meeting, she 'knew' Purge as her husband.<sup>24</sup> Few characters can rival the Falstaffian élan with which Mistress Purge claims 'a secret operation' that allowed her to sense her husband's body 'by very instinct'.<sup>25</sup>

More than bravado is at play in this confrontation between a Familist and her jealous husband. The values she espouses highlight Purge's blindness in seeking to subject her to public shame. This absence in Purge of what his wife terms a 'light of nature' underpins her preservation of spiritual independence in response to his attempt to proscribe her pursuit of her faith. When Purge reluctantly makes peace with the proviso that his wife 'come no more at the Family', Mistress Purge replies, 'Truly husband, my love must be free still to God's creatures; yea, nevertheless preserving you still as the head of my body, I will do as the spirit shall enable me' (5.3.367–9). As Familists practiced their faith while professing conformity to the Church of England, so Mistress Purge pays lip service to patriarchal marriage with the key difference that she boldly declares her spiritual autonomy.<sup>26</sup> Simon Shepherd comments that 'the language of Puritanism allows [Mistress Purge] her freedom of sexual choice'.<sup>27</sup> We can be more specific than this assertion, for Rebecca Purge's declaration of faith echoes a verse of a Familist ballad printed in 1574:

Let us obeye the Governours,  
 And lyue under their lawes a;  
 And eake to them all tribute paye,  
 Eaven for the Peace's cause a.  
*Yet loue is free* though she agree,  
 That they shall have such thynge a;  
 And what is right to God Almighty,  
 That must wee to him brynge a.<sup>28</sup>

A suggestive consonance links Mistress Purge's qualified assent to her husband's 'favour' with the ballad's assertion that, although obedience to temporal authority is required, 'Yet love is free'.

Beyond Familist free love, purging and evacuation dominate *The Family of Love's* rhetoric of bodily humours. Remarking on the 'dung-hill' humour found in the 'small, merry books' of early modern England, Margaret Spufford notes that 'jokes about defecation and urination' appear to have been universally relished in seventeenth-century England; women, as well as men in the playhouses, would have laughed at such jests.<sup>29</sup> In *The Dutch Courtesan* Cocledemoy's and Crispinella's language distinguishes itself with scatological oaths and quips. Cocledemoy rises to the philosophical insight that 'Every man's turd smells well in's own nose' (3.3.52–3). His questioning of Mulligrub on the scaffold, 'You do, from your hearts and midriffs and entrails, forgive him, then' (5.3.135–6), shows his refusal to divorce the affections from their visceral origins. Crispinella embraces the body wholeheartedly even while she makes fun of men's physicality. We see her robust attitude as she satirizes the male practice of saluting women, declaring 'I had as lief they would break wind in my lips' (3.1.24–5).

The association between doctors and the tubes with which they administered 'clysters' or enemas to their patients circulates in Jacobean satirical comedy.<sup>30</sup> When Cocledemoy addresses Mary Faugh as '[his] worshipful clyster-pipe' (1.2.12), the joke is that Faugh administers women to men as a doctor administers enemas or suppositories. Barry fully embraces the obscene pun in naming his play's antagonist 'Doctor Glister'. With sure comic instinct, he juxtaposes his disease-spreading, 'pocky doctor' (3.3.66) with an ultra-fastidious wife. Barry took a few hints from Marston's female vintner for his house-proud Mistress Glister, such as Mistress Mulligrub's sensitivity to tobacco smoke and her scolding of the boy servants for their 'arsy-varsy' laying of the table (68). Early in *The Family of Love* Mistress Glister cautions her servant: 'I pray, let's have no polluted feet nor rheumatic chaps enter the house' (2.4.1–2). No wonder that she is severely tried by the visit of Gerardine disguised as a London porter who coughs, spits, and smells, threatening her punctilios of hygiene. Dressed in a white labourer's frock, complete with porter's badge, Gerardine delivers a letter for Doctor Glister purporting to come from one 'Thomasine Tweedles', wet nurse to Glister's alleged bastard in the country (4.3.88). The fraudulent letter serves a dual purpose. Arousing jealousy in Mistress Glister, it biases her to believe that her husband is unfaithful; reading it deflects her attention from Gerardine, who takes the opportunity to update Maria (the Glisters' niece) on their love intrigue's progress.

MISTRESS GLISTER Did ever such a peasant defile my floor, or breathe so near me! — I'faith, sirrah, you would be bummed [walloped<sup>31</sup>] for your roguery if you were well served.

GERARDINE I am bummed ['My bum sticks out'<sup>32</sup>] well enough already, mistress. Look here else: [*Offering his bum to Mistress Glist*] sir-reverence in your worship, master doctor's lips are not made of better stuff. (4.3.73–78)

Gerardine has introduced himself to Mistress Glist as 'Nicholas Nebulo', a marked allusion to Hendrik Niclaes.<sup>33</sup> The surname 'Nebulo' pokes fun at the esoteric discourse produced by the Dutch mystic, the meaning of which is often hard to make out. Gerardine's demeanour as a London porter demands a strongly physical impersonation, set off by traits of bodily incontinence shared with figures such as the hard-drinking merchants Hans Van Belch in Dekker and Webster's *Northward Ho!* (1605) and Franceschina's former client Haunce Herkin Glukin Skellam Flapdragon (2.2.19n).<sup>34</sup> According to Mistress Glist, 'Nicholas' reeks of 'grease and taps-droppings' (a Barry neologism for beer), and he admits to the fashionable habit of taking 'tobacco at the alehouse' to cure his cough (4.3.67, 72). Possible effluvia associated with him in this sequence include sweat, saliva, phlegm, vomit, and excrement. The performative puns that typify the repertoire of the King's Revels Children lend gusto to this passage.<sup>35</sup>

Another way that Marston's and Barry's comedies speak to each other is through their dramatization of female wit, particularly that of the unmarried women Crispinella and Maria.

As defined by Marston's Crispinella, 'Virtue is a free, pleasant, buxom quality' (3.1.51–2). Maria's enthusiastic invocation of Gerardine's 'buxom limbs' (3.4.2) after they have made love in Barry's play seems partly inspired by Crispinella's Montaignian-inflected account of virtue. In early modern English the epithet 'buxom' gathers to itself the senses of 'pliant', 'vigorous', 'lively', as well as 'plump' and 'wanton'.<sup>36</sup> Of course, neither Maria nor Crispinella has a monopoly on wit in their respective plays; witness the musically accomplished Franceschina or the voluble, articulate Mistress Glist. Given the conversation between the plays, it is perhaps unsurprising that Barry scripts a balcony scene for Maria in *The Family of Love* that requires the actor to sing.<sup>37</sup> The intimate environment of the Whitefriars playhouse, the well-honed association between feminine singing and pathos, as well as a talented youthful performer contribute to this moment. To a greater extent than other characters in Barry's play, Maria pushes at comedy's boundaries. Her body swells with her and Gerardine's child over the course of the

action, threatening to shame and betray her. In a troubled soliloquy, she indicates their lovemaking has given 'life and limb to generation's act'; she portrays her body as a text inscribed with 'wordless notes' of guilt, representing a potential 'argument of scorn' (5.2.1–4). From the moment of her entrance in the play's final scene, Maria is silent; this is a feature she shares with her romantic counterpart, Marston's Beatrice. I offer below one example of the way Beatrice may be made expressive in performance terms of posture, gesture, and facial changes, to add nuance to Marston's dénouement. In Maria's case, her body is made to speak by Mistress Glister who addresses the court, intent on incriminating her lecherous husband: 'what say you to his own niece *that looks big upon him?*' (5.3.322–3, emphasis mine). This marvellous performative pun evokes Maria's physicality in the sense of her being 'big with child'; it implies further that she looks boldly at Glister, confronting her uncle with his alleged misdeed.

Having examined some features these plays have in common, as well as some of their differences, can we draw meaningful connections between the endings of *The Family of Love* and *The Dutch Courtesan*? The latter prepares its audience for two executions, that of Malheureux and Master Mulligrub; in the manner of tragicomedy, the play forestalls both. Mistress Mulligrub presents herself at her husband's imminent hanging as a supportive spouse. In 3.3 she is caught off-guard by the whirlwind of Cocledemoy's cunning, exclaiming 'How everything about me quivers' (3.4.95). In the last scene she becomes similarly affected by her husband's reprieve, stating 'I could weep, too, but God knows for what' (5.3.162–3). Reading empathetically, one might say that her humoural responsiveness resonates with her spiritual practice. Moments earlier, she has reassured Cocledemoy, 'I have a piece of mutton and a featherbed for you at all times' (100–1). The overriding impression is that Mistress Mulligrub feels disappointed at losing the conviviality and social prestige offered to her by Cocledemoy when he invokes his status as a widower and glances at the citizen wife being 'almost a widow' (98).

Mistress Purge's short-circuiting of Purge's revelation of her ring in *The Family of Love* prompts reflection on the formal substitutions created by Marston's comic design. Freevill tries to substitute Malheureux for himself in Franceschina's bed, but her keen apprehension of men's inconstancy drives Franceschina to block that plot with her demand that Malheureux kill Freevill, giving her the ring Beatrice gave him as proof of his death. Through his witty deceptions, Cocledemoy substitutes himself as proprietor of all of Mulligrub's possessions (including his wife's bed), but his plot doesn't depend on keeping these possessions. Both Cocledemoy and Freevill bring their 'alter ego' to near-death confessions, but neither man

recognizes their shared likeness as manipulative rascals who have wriggled out of punishment. Freevill displaces his culpability onto Franceschina, saying, 'what you can think / Has been extremely ill is only hers' (5.3.56–7). Having witnessed his callous use of Franceschina and Beatrice, the audience feels troubled by his attempted manoeuvre. In the 2019 Toronto production, during Freevill's indictment of Franceschina (37–57), the actor who played Beatrice widened her eyes and raised an eyebrow in a manner that led some spectators to question the justice of Franceschina's fate. Such questioning sits awkwardly with celebration. Both university productions of the play at York in the United Kingdom (2013) and Toronto omitted a concluding dance, notwithstanding Cocledemoy's invocation of 'merry nuptials and wanton jigga-joggies' (171–2).

If *The Dutch Courtesan* leads us to question the patriarchal society it dramatizes, *The Family of Love*'s conclusion may be read as 'a carnivalesque reaffirmation of patriarchy'. In this reading put forward by Christopher Marsh, Barry's comedy works as a caution against 'bad patriarchy [which] forces good people, like Gerardine and Maria, to behave mischievously'.<sup>38</sup> Alongside this reading, we should consider the effect of both plays in performance. The Children of the King's Revels was a company composed of 'younge men [and] ladds'.<sup>39</sup> While Mary Bly estimates that the actors 'were probably between 14 and 17 years of age', Lucy Munro shows that players from the Children of the Queen's Revels, who acted *The Dutch Courtesan*, performed into their early twenties. Importantly, the actors comprising both companies were, in Munro's words, 'sexually liminal adolescent performers'.<sup>40</sup> In Marston's tragicomedy, the theatrical power of a young male actor playing Franceschina mitigates both the disempowerment of her 'will' and her hauling away by officers 'to the extremest whip and jail!' (*Dutch Courtesan*, 5.3.63).<sup>41</sup> The young lovers in Barry's play defeat the lecherous Glistler with palpable ebullience; the displaying of Maria's swollen belly contributes to the scene's hyper-theatricality. Sarah Scott suggests *The Family of Love* 'should end with a marriage or a dance, preferably both'<sup>42</sup> because these actions would celebrate Maria's and Gerardine's union. The predominant tone of the last scene is riotous merriment, effecting what Dryfat calls 'the death of melancholy' (5.3.2). Once the lovers clinch their victory over the avaricious doctor for whom 'wealth command[ed] all' (3.1.163), the disguised Gerardine, Dryfat, and Club reveal themselves, as do Freevill and Cocledemoy at the end of Marston's play. *The Family of Love* enacts no final expulsion; instead, its hero Gerardine good-humouredly invites everyone to 'join with me, / For approbation of our Family' (5.3.391–2). He punningly draws together his wife-to-be Maria, and their unborn

child, with the Familist fellowship satirized in the play, the play *The Family of Love*, the ensemble of actors, and the audience.

The dialogue between *The Dutch Courtesan* and *The Family of Love* with which this essay has been concerned indicates a lively interest in religious separatism among Jacobean coterie theatre playwrights and audiences. Composed and performed in close proximity to *The Dutch Courtesan*, Barry's comedy pays enthusiastic homage to Marston's. While Marston displays a paranoid approach to religious dissent, his treatment of citizen women as Familists, commodities, and wits inspired Barry's interest and emulation. Both dramatists emphasize the sensual female body. Each of them experiments with new registers of female speech: Crispinella, Beatrice, and Maria all have their own way of speaking back. Both plays end in trial scenes; both suggest that men abuse freedom and that women might do a better job of preparing a new generation for public life. As a mixed mode play, *The Dutch Courtesan* has greater subtlety than Barry's bawdy farce. Franceschina may leave the stage, but her theatrical impact prevents her from fading out. While Marston's play has enjoyed a modest number of modern productions, *The Family of Love* remains unperformed in modern times.<sup>43</sup> Though critical opinion has been unfavourable, a re-attribution and a twenty-first-century edition of Barry's play should stir up interest. If some visionary (and well-endowed) theatre company should stage these plays in parallel, then the dialogue between Marston's and Barry's treatment of religious minorities, sensualized women, and witty actresses would take on new life.

## Notes

I am very grateful to Helen Ostovich and Erin Julian for their invaluable suggestions and encouragement. I would also like to thank the two anonymous readers for *Early Theatre*. For special help, thanks to Ruth Barton, Charles Edelman, Mac Jackson, and Michael Wright. Audiences at the University of Toronto and the University of Auckland gave useful feedback on earlier versions of this paper.

- 1 King James I, *Basilikon Doron. Or His Majesties Instructions to his Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* (Edinburgh, 1603; STC 14351), A4v.
- 2 I cite the composition date proposed for *The Dutch Courtesan* by Karen Britland, who estimates that the play was performed 'in the early months of 1605', 'Introduction', in *The Dutch Courtesan*, ed. Karen Britland (London, 2018), 62. It was played by the Blackfriars Boys. Barry completed *The Family of Love* between mid-May 1605 and the end of 1606, which was performed by the Children of the King's Revels at their Whitefriars playhouse in late 1606 or early 1607. See Gary Taylor, Paul Mulholland, and MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Thomas Middleton, Lording Barry, and *The Family of Love*', *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 93 (1999), 224, 239.
- 3 Charles Cathcart, *Marston, Rivalry, Rapprochement, and Jonson* (Aldershot, 2008), 8, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315594057>.
- 4 The authorship debate on *The Family of Love* is beyond the scope of this essay. See Darren Freebury-Jones, Marina Talinskaja, and Marcus Dahl, 'Attributing John Marston's Plays', *Studia Metrica et Poetica* 5 (2018), 30–1, 47–8, <https://doi.org/10.12697/smp.2018.5.1.02>; MacDonald P. Jackson, 'Lording Barry, Trigrams and *The Family of Love*', *Notes and Queries* 66 (2019), 49–52, <https://doi.org/10.1093/notesj/gjy197>.
- 5 *The Essayes of Michael, Lord of Montaigne*, trans. John Florio, 3 vols (London, 1897), 3.5.102–3.
- 6 Christopher W. Marsh, *The Family of Love in English Society, 1550–1630* (Cambridge, 1994), 30; Jean Dietz Moss, 'Variations on a Theme: The Family of Love in Renaissance England', *Renaissance Quarterly* 31 (1978), 189. See also Marjorie Rubright, *Doppelgänger Dilemmas: Anglo-Dutch Relations in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Philadelphia, 2014), 47–50, <https://doi.org/10.9783/9780812290066>.
- 7 J.W. Martin, 'Elizabethan Familists and English Separatism', *Journal of British Studies* 20 (1980), 56, n8; H[endrick] N[iclaes], *The Prophetie of the Spirit of Love* (Cologne, 1574), C5. On Niclaes's concept of 'communitie', see Martin, 'Elizabethan Familists', 62.

- 8 Kristen Poole, *Radical Religion from Shakespeare to Milton: Figures of Nonconformity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), 76.
- 9 Lording Barry, *The Family of Love*, ed. Sophie Tomlinson, Revels Plays (Manchester, forthcoming), 4.2.34. Hereafter references appear in parentheses in the text.
- 10 Barry's play references 'Famelist(s)' eight times, 'Family' or 'the Family' twenty-nine times, and 'the Family of Love' twice. Britland renders *The Dutch Courtesan's* three usages of 'family of love' in lower case (1.1.158, 1.2.18, 3.4.6).
- 11 Margot Heinemann, *Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuart* (Cambridge, 1980), 83.
- 12 See further on 'gadding' in this issue's essay by Andrew Fleck, 'Proximity and the Pox: Pathologizing Infidelity in Marston's *Dutch Courtesan*', 100. With the exception of the essay title, where '1608' is the publication date of *The Family of Love* quarto, dates in parentheses following play titles in the main text of this essay are dates of performance.
- 13 Marsh, *Family of Love in English Society*, 30.
- 14 John Marston, *The Dutch Courtesan*, ed. Karen Britland (London, 2018). All further references to the play are to this edition.
- 15 *Oxford English Dictionary (OED)*, s.v. 'mulligrub', n., 1a, 1b.
- 16 'Introduction', *Dutch Courtesan*, ed. Britland, 58.
- 17 Charles Cathcart, 'Club Law, *The Family of Love*, and the Familist Sect', *Notes and Queries* 50 (2003), 67–8, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20477986>.
- 18 Hendrik Niclaes, *Epistolae HN, the Principall Epistles of HN* (Cologne, 1575; stc: 18552), 8; 'Introduction', *Dutch Courtesan*, ed. Britland, 53.
- 19 *OED Online*, s.v. 'garnish', v. 2a (OBS).
- 20 See Moss, 'Variations on a Theme': 'The elders, or priests as they were termed interchangeably [in Niclaes' group], advanced through ranks of the ecclesiastical hierarchy as they increased in "holy understanding" ... Interestingly, women were eligible to become members of the first rank of the priesthood in Niclaes' scheme though they could rise no higher' (192). Christopher Marsh, "'Godlie matrons" and "loose-bodied dames": Heresy and Gender in the Family of Love', in *Heresy, Literature and Politics in Early Modern English Culture*, ed. David Loewenstein and John Marshall (Cambridge, 2007), 60–1, <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511627507.004>.
- 21 Sarah K. Scott, 'Discovering the Sins of the Cellar in *The Dutch Courtesan*', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 26 (2013), 70. See also in this issue [Meghan C. Andrews](#), 'How Marston Read His Merchant: Ruled Women and Structures of Circulation in *The Dutch Courtesan*', and [Noam Lior](#), "'Unwholesome Reversions": Contagion as Dramaturgy in *The Dutch Courtesan*'.
- 22 *The Dutch Courtesan*, ed. Britland, 2.2.190–3n.

- 23 MarliSS C. Desens calculates that (based on her research), ‘male characters arrange almost 60 percent of bed-tricks in English Renaissance drama, [thus] the bed-trick is not a convention exclusive to female characters’, *The Bed-Trick in English Renaissance Drama: Explorations in Gender, Sexuality, and Power* (Newark, 1994), 59. For Desens’s discussion of the bed trick in *The Family of Love*, which she treats as authored by Middleton, see 74–5.
- 24 William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, gen. ed. Stephen Greenblatt (New York, 2016), 5.1.205–8. I am indebted to Melinda Gough for this point. Subsequent references to Shakespeare’s plays cite this edition.
- 25 Compare Falstaff’s claim to have recognized Prince Hal during the Gadshill robbery: ‘I knew ye as well as he that made ye’; William Shakespeare, *1 Henry 4*, 2.4.244. Mistress Purge adapts the proverb ‘it is a wise child that knows his own father’; see M.P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Ann Arbor, 1950), C309.
- 26 Martin, ‘Elizabethan Familists’, 55, 58, 66–7; Rubright, *Doppelgänger Dilemmas*, 49–50.
- 27 Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (Brighton, 1981), 61.
- 28 W.[illiam] S.[eres], ‘Another Ballad, out of Good-Will’, in *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth (Hertford, 1896), 8.40, emphasis mine. See Marsh, *Family of Love in English Society*, 42–3.
- 29 Margaret Spufford, *Small Books and Pleasant Histories: Popular Fiction and its Readership in Seventeenth-Century England* (London, 1981), 184. For evidence of early modern noblewomen telling and enjoying bawdy jests, see Pamela Allen Brown, ‘Jesting Rights: Women Players in the Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange’, in *Women Players in England, 1500–1660*, ed. Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (Aldershot, 2005), 305–14.
- 30 See, for example, Thomas Dekker and John Webster, *Westward Ho!* (London, 1607; STC: 6540), *Early English Books Online (EEBO)*, A3: ‘what meanes hath your Husband to allow sweet doctor Glister-pipe, his pention?’
- 31 *OED*, s.v. ‘bum’, v.<sup>3</sup>, 1.
- 32 *OED*, s.v. ‘bum’, v.<sup>4</sup>, 1.
- 33 Cathcart, ‘*Club Law*’, 66–7.
- 34 Helen Ostovich has suggested to me that Flapdragon’s full name itself is incontinent as ‘it all rushes out like projectile vomiting or violent bowel expulsions’, as might the brandy-soaked flaming raisins in the game flapdragon when a player cannot tolerate the burning.

- 35 Mary Bly, *Queer Virgins and Virgin Queans on the Early Modern Stage* (Oxford, 2000), 116.
- 36 These definitions are my glosses of the word ‘buxom’ in Barry, *The Family of Love*, 3.4.2n.
- 37 I indicate this action in my edition of Barry, *The Family of Love*, 1.2.80–2n.
- 38 Christopher Marsh, ‘Heresy and Gender’, 74, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315233703>.
- 39 Articles of agreement between Martin Slater and shareholders in the Whitefriars Playhouse, 10 March 1608, cited in H.N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History*, 1926 (New York, 1964), 224.
- 40 Bly, *Queer Virgins*, 127; Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen’s Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge, 2005), 41, 47, <http://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511486067>.
- 41 Tom Bishop’s discussion of Franceschina’s continental genealogy is illuminating in this respect; see in this issue Tom Bishop, “La bella Franceschina” and other foreign names in Marston’s *Dutch Courtesan*, esp. 50–4.
- 42 Sarah K. Scott, “Modern for the times”: Barry, Marlowe, and Ovid’, *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1800* 60 (2020), forthcoming.
- 43 Britland lists eleven productions of *The Dutch Courtesan*, ‘Modern Productions Cited’, 264–5. She omits a 1992 production by the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond (Peter Porter, ‘Cage of Discontent’, *TLS*, 6 November 1992, 18) and an ‘off-off-Broadway production by the Casa Italiana Renaissance Theatre (June 1966)’. For the latter, see John Marston, *The Selected Plays of John Marston*, ed. MacDonald P. Jackson and Michael Neill (Cambridge, 1986), 161. The 2019 Toronto production brings the current tally to fourteen.

