A Critical Modern-Spelling Edition of

John Fletcher’s

Rule a Wife and Have a Wife

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This dissertation is a fully-annotated scholarly edition of John Fletcher’s 1624 play Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. Fletcher’s comedy of intrigue about two couples who wed under false pretenses was his final non-collaborative play and represents the culmination of his achievements as a comic dramatist. It has received surprisingly little attention for a play that remained a staple of English and American theatres into the 1860s. The introduction to this edition is the most comprehensive study of the play to date. The critical examination of the domestic politics and structural patterning of the play argues that Rule a Wife and Have a Wife presents marriages that become protective spheres to shield spouses from the twin depredations of economic necessity and tyrannical power once the spouses have given up the urge to dominate each other. A section on Fletcher’s language and style explores what Dryden praised as its imitation of the “conversation of gentlemen.” The study of Fletcher’s source material considers not only the two Spanish narratives he adapted, but also the resources of the King’s Men and their theatres.
which influenced the play’s composition. The introduction then contextualizes the play in its initial historical moment and the ways it reacts to England’s preparations for war and the marriage negotiations for Prince Charles. The final two sections of the introduction examine the play’s circulation in print and on stage. The stage history is supplemented by two appendices: a calendar of nearly 800 known performances and a collation of changes made in acting editions of the play. A recognition of the style and ubiquity of *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* will aid scholars in understanding continuities of taste and repertoire in English drama.
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**Rule a Wife and Have a Wife: An Overview**

Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, licensed *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* for performance on 19 October 1624. Written for the King’s Men, it was Fletcher’s last play to be licensed before his death in August 1625 (Bawcutt 157).\(^1\) Herbert’s licence attributes the play solely to Fletcher, and though collaborators have been identified for a number of plays so designated by Herbert, Fletcher’s distinct authorial characteristics are present throughout *Rule a Wife* and his sole authorship of it has never been doubted.\(^2\) It is Fletcher’s finest comedy and may be the best of his non-collaborative plays.

In *Rule a Wife* Fletcher rearranges familiar theatrical formulae both to entertain his audience and to raise again the questions of honour and sexuality which were central preoccupations of all his work. The play’s double plot concerns two couples who wed under false pretences and the subsequent struggle for dominance in each marriage. In this comedy of intrigue, Fletcher carefully reveals the levels of deception within each marriage. With suspense, dramatic irony, and volatile emotional confrontations, he involves the audience in a manner famously described by James Shirley in his introduction “To the Reader” in the 1647 Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher plays: “You may here find passions raised to that excellent pitch and by such insinuating degrees that

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\(^1\) Two more Fletcher plays were licensed after his death: *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, a collaborative play for which Fletcher may have written as little as a single scene (Hoy, “Authorship V” 100), and *The Noble Gentleman*, which Finkelppearl argues was an earlier play perhaps revised by another hand (*Court and Country* 249-53).

\(^2\) *The Prophetess*, *The Sea Voyage*, and *The Spanish Curate*, now thought to be Fletcher-Massinger collaborations, name only Fletcher in their licences, as do those for *The Fair Maid of the Inn* and *The Noble Gentleman* (see previous note).
you shall not chuse but consent, & go along with them, finding yourself at last grown insensibly the very same person you read, and then stand admiring the subtile Trackes of your engagement” (n.p.).

The following critical discussion of the play traces in detail the subtle tracks of plot, language, and characterization in *Rule a Wife*. Fletcher is a skeptical writer who rarely presents solutions to the issues and problems raised by his elegantly constructed dramas. The figure at the heart of his dramaturgy is that of apposition. He places competing or irreconcilable positions, ideals, or emotions side by side, and rather than produce a synthesis he often leaves the issues in perpetual ambiguity. At the same time he, almost paradoxically, resolves the particulars of the plot in accordance with generic expectations. *Rule a Wife* ends with two happy marriages, but the tension of the contrast between the husband who seems to rule his wife and the wife who seems to rule her husband generates more ambiguity than it resolves. “Marriage and Collaboration” examines the domestic politics and structural patterning of the play while “Fletcher’s Casual Style” explores the finer points of Fletcher’s diction, metre, syntax, and imagery to argue that apposition is a key figure at all levels of Fletcher’s writing.

Fletcher constructed the appositional plot using two Spanish prose fictions as sources. “Sources, Resources, and Dramaturgy” traces Fletcher’s skillful intertwining of Cervantes and Salas Barbadillo. He took from his sources unusual situations but departed from their conclusions and instead used a set of circulating stage properties (a letter, a casket of jewels) to organize and unify events in the latter part of the play. This section then examines the actors and theatres Fletcher had in mind as he composed *Rule a Wife*. He wrote it specifically for the King’s Men at the Globe and Blackfriars theatres, and so
the actors and theatres are treated together with the narrative sources because they contributed to the nature and shape of the play.

*Rule a Wife* was probably composed during the summer and fall of 1624. This was a celebratory time in England because of the final failure of the Spanish Match and subsequent preparations for the war with Spain that aggressive Protestant factions had long desired. The section “*Rule a Wife* in 1624” argues that Fletcher’s comedy of troublesome Spanish marriages delicately engages the public concern with the deceptive marriage practices associated with Spain in light of King James’s and Prince Charles’s failure to come to terms with King Philip for the hand of the Infanta. “The Book of the Play” explores the unusual circumstances of *Rule a Wife*’s appearance in print in Oxford in 1640. Plays of the professional stage were rarely printed in Oxford, and this publication was an early instance of the Royalist appropriation of the works of Beaumont and Fletcher that would find its most enduring monument in the 1647 Folio of their works. *Rule a Wife* remained in the King’s Men’s repertoire until the closing of the theatres and was revived shortly after the Restoration. Between 1660 and 1800 it was performed more often on the London stage than any other comedy written before the closing of the theatres in 1642. “A Stage History” documents the popularity of *Rule a Wife* throughout the British Isles and in North America well into the mid-nineteenth century.

A recognition of the importance and ubiquity of *Rule a Wife* on stage will aid theatre and cultural historians in understanding continuities of taste and repertoire in English drama. Fletcher’s style of witty repartee among gentle and leisured types powerfully influenced the playwrights of the Restoration, and through them his influence

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3 Fletcher’s previous play, the tragicomedy *A Wife for a Month*, was licensed on 27 May 1624.
is felt in the comedies of Oliver Goldsmith, Oscar Wilde, Tom Stoppard and others. Whereas Shakespeare’s style was often not amenable to successful imitation, Fletcher provided a workable model for the elegant talk that would became the primary mode of discourse in stage comedy from the late 16th century to the 20th century.
Marriage and Collaboration

The only details known of any of John Fletcher’s adult domestic arrangements are those reported by John Aubrey: Beaumont and Fletcher “lived together on the Banke side, not far from the Play-house, both batchelors; lay together; had one Wench in the house between them, which they did so admire; the same cloathes and cloake, &c. betweene them” (184). While Beaumont later married a wealthy heiress, Fletcher seems to have remained single. Celia R. Daileader and Gary Taylor argue that Fletcher’s representation of marriage modelled a type of relationship of which he had no personal experience on a type of relationship with which he was very familiar: “[l]acking any personal experience of marriage, Fletcher imagined it, at its best, as a relationship like those between male collaborators: a ‘due equality’ that requires and enables both parties ‘to love mutually’” (2, quoting from the epilogue to The Woman’s Prize). The happiest pairings in Fletcher involve couples who work together to produce exciting events. Rule a Wife is a more complex consideration of the problems of collaborative marriage than The Woman’s Prize. Fletcher does not simply reverse power relations in Rule a Wife, as he does with Maria’s triumph in The Woman’s Prize. Instead he doubles the plot and apposes a wife who seems to triumph over her husband with a husband who seems to triumph over his wife. This subtle and comic exploration of the battle of the sexes is an ambivalent, skeptical tale of desperate adventures undertaken for economic survival and of the perverse behaviour produced by irrational patriarchal strictures. Rule a Wife presents men and women whose options are so limited that only the uncertainty of war or dangerous criminal gambles offer any hope of prosperity or survival. Fletcher imagined the state of marriage as a protective sphere that, when the spouses learn to trust each
other, shields them from the twin depredations of economic necessity and tyrannical power.

Margarita, a wealthy heiress, marries Leon, an apparently cowardly soldier, on the condition that he not object to her taking lovers. Leon reveals in a series of escalating rebellions that he is not a complacent cuckold and redeems Margarita from her wanton desires. To demonstrate their newfound trust, they collaborate in the humiliation of her prospective lover, the Duke, by convincing him that the drunken noise of Cacafogo under the stairs is actually the devil come to take his soul. In the other plot, Estifania, a poor lady in Margarita’s service, marries Perez, a dashing captain, by pretending Margarita’s well-appointed house is her own. Estifania soon finds that Perez is just as poor as she is, but she is able to turn his worthless collection of bric-a-brac into a small fortune by pawning the goods to the usurer Cacafogo. This deed so impresses Perez that he submits to Estifania. Both plots are connected through the use of Cacafogo as a device to achieve reconciliation. Richard Levin, discussing the parallel structure of the play, points out that Perez and Margarita are both “convinced that they have found the perfect mates who can be exploited to serve their needs” while Estifania and Leon “both succeed in duping their prospective mates by misrepresenting themselves, outface them when the deception is revealed, force them to surrender, and then relent somewhat for a harmonious resolution” (Levin 52). In other words, the plot structure is itself an instance of Fletcher’s use of apposition. Fletcher places the taming plots side by side, with both male and female “victors,” and avoids the triumph of only one sex that occurs both Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* and his own earlier play, *The Woman’s Prize*. He raises the question of proper obligation and duty within marriage without offering a stable answer, though the
point is at least implied that marriage is an unending series of negotiations and collaborations.

In a recent discussion of *Rule a Wife*, Sandra Clark points out that “Leon’s role, as he says [in 3.5], is reclamatory. Margarita’s disordered appetites need curing, but she is reluctant to abandon her bid for dominance and sexual freedom without a struggle” (*Renaissance Drama* 53). Modern critics are usually sympathetic to Margarita’s desire for control of her erotic life, as if “sexual freedom” were an actual possibility for her. They tend to focus on what William Appleton calls Leon’s “shock therapy” (78) and his use of “all the statutory and traditional powers of a husband to keep her chaste” (McLuskie, “Plays” 187). The conservative and patriarchal nature of Leon’s actions are obvious, but we must also consider the kind of life from which Leon insists on saving Margarita. She was raised to be the sexual plaything of courtiers. Fletcher’s critique is not of a young woman’s desires, but of the culture that has inculcated her with such desires yet would hypocritically punish her for acting upon those desires (see 2.1.4-8).

To read Leon merely as the enforcer of patriarchal norms is flawed because such a reading posits a monolithic patriarchal power structure that simply does not exist in *Rule a Wife*. The readiest counter-example is the Estifania-Perez plot: the wife exercises control in the marriage in a way that the husband accepts. Estifania and Perez form a kind of economic partnership by gulling Cacafogo. Perez, unwittingly at first, provides the “capital” (his worthless goods), and Estifania possesses the mercantile acumen to extract “A thousand ducats” (4.1.155) for the casket of trinkets. They manage to rescue each other from lives of danger and uncertainty. Both marriages become successful only when their members are able to acknowledge each other’s unique talents and abilities.

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4 This point is also made in Clark’s earlier book on Beaumont and Fletcher (*Plays* 149).
Fletcher represents this spousal acknowledgement and reconciliation in a mode with which he was very familiar: playful collaboration. Each couple comes together by improvising and performing a charade at the expense of some dupe. Leon and Margarita work together to overthrow and humiliate the Duke. A political valence comes into play as a husband and wife unite to rebel against a petty tyrant. Sandra Clark argues, “That the Duke continues to encourage her disorderliness lends a political significance to the unbalanced marriage as symbolic of social disorder” (*Plays* 149). The correlative is that a proper balance of power in a marriage is analogous to the proper balance of power in government. The tyranny of a husband over a wife or a wife over a husband creates an opportunity for a ruler to take advantage of that couple, just as tyranny in a nation makes it vulnerable to threats foreign and domestic.

**Structural Figures**

Fletcher raises serious political issues in *Rule a Wife*, but he leaves these issues unsettled in his typically skeptical manner. Politics remain for the most part below the surface and are easy to miss, in part, because of the coherence and tightness of the structure of the play. The highly-wrought surface is enough to distract or placate any who would prefer to ignore the questions which remain unanswered. Clifford Leech observes that Fletcher “refrains from assertion as from challenge” (47), and Fletcher’s diffidence helps to explain the popularity of the play in the theatre over hundreds of years because any serious implications are relatively easy to brush off. One way Fletcher achieves such sleight-of-hand is through pacing. *Rule a Wife* is a short, fast-paced play. Just over two thousand lines long, only one of its twenty-three scenes exceeds two-hundred lines in length. It does not adhere strictly to the unities of time and place, but
there are a small number of locations, the entire action takes place in about one week, and the events of each act usually take up a single day apiece.\textsuperscript{5}

The play is set in an unnamed Spanish town and its nearby countryside, and scenes are set in only a few specific locations. Outlining the architectural patterning of scenes reveals the discipline Fletcher applied to formal, pleasing arrangements. His use of rhetorical schemes and parallel arrangements are as evident in his ordering of scenes as they are in his ordering of words. Fletcher structures the two plots around a single town house which, at one time or another, all four central characters claim to own. Just fewer than half of the scenes take place there. Often critics refer to this location as Margarita’s house, but the house itself is the locus of contention in the play, so to call it Margarita’s is to settle a question which the main characters insist on unsettling. Therefore I refer to it as the town house in the annotations and the following discussion.\textsuperscript{6} The town house becomes the central emblem of the struggle for dominance in both marriages. It represents the promise of economic stability, but the stability threatens to be no more than an illusion built on “a house of cards” (3.2.25). The town house contrasts explicitly with the poor house in which Perez and Estifania take refuge for two scenes (3.2, 3.4). The awe many characters express at the rich appointments of the town house counter Perez’s long descriptions of the poor house’s horrors. The other specified locations are the house of Juan de Castro (1.1) and Margarita’s country house (1.4, 2.1, 2.3). In the movement from Margarita’s country house, where she first meets Leon, back to the town

\textsuperscript{5} The exception is that 2.1 takes place the same day as 1.4. Perez and Estifania have had time to marry between 1.6 and 2.2, so the break in the day must occur between 2.1 and 2.2, rather than between acts.

\textsuperscript{6} Locations are not indicated in the original quarto stage directions but are embedded in the dialogue.
house after they are married (all within Act 2), there is an ironic echo of the traditional comic movement from the green world back to the city once courtship is completed.  

All five acts climax with confrontations in the town house. The first act begins in the house of Juan de Castro, as he talks to his friend Perez. The town house is first mentioned here in an almost casual manner: Estifania agrees to meet Perez later, and tells him to “let your man follow me / And view what house I enter; thither come” (1.1.99-100). Sanchio and Alonzo, gossiping of Margarita in 1.2, report that “She has bought a brave house here in town” (1.2.35). In 1.3 Perez’s servant watches Estifania enter the town house and declares, “I shall sleep now like an emperor, / And eat abundantly” (1.3.9-10). Servants also invest their hopes in the town house. In 1.6, the last scene of the act and the first scene set in the town house, Perez looks about himself in wonder at what Estifania coquettishly calls “this poor place” (1.6.10):

Poor do you call it?

There’s nothing that I cast mine eyes upon
But shows both rich and admirable; all the rooms
Are hung as if a princess were to dwell here,
The gardens, orchards, everything so curious. (1.6.10-14)

The second act is constructed in a similar manner: two scenes in Margarita’s country house and one in an unlocalized space build up to the final scene in the town house. Suspense builds as the first three scenes of Act 2 present Margarita’s arrangements to marry Leon and Perez’s boast to his friends about his rich new house. These events lead

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7 The remaining nine scenes are purposely unlocalized. They could take place in the street or some other public space, but the very vagueness of the settings emphasizes by contrast the importance of the explicitly located houses.
to 2.4, in which Margarita returns to the town house, and Estifania, who we now discover is only a servant to Margarita, must improvise in order to salvage her confidence trick. Act 4 has the same pattern as the first two acts: two unlocalized scenes precede a confrontation at the town house in 4.3. Variation occurs with a shift in pattern for Acts 3 and 5. In Act 3 the pattern of locations has a chiastic structure: town house (3.1), poor house (3.2), public space (3.3), poor house (3.4), and town house (3.5).¹ This pattern is repeated with a slight variation in Act 5: town house (5.1), public space (5.2), town house (5.3), public space (5.4), town house (5.5). The parallelism of the settings is embodied in the plot, as the second and fourth scenes of Acts 3 and 5 concern the conflict between Perez and Estifania. The play concludes with both couples agreeing to live together in the town house.

Fletcher further unifies the elements of his play with parallels in the content of individual scenes, placing slightly varied treatments of themes and situations in apposition with each other. 1.1, for example, opens with two officers, Juan and Perez, discussing their latest recruitment efforts for the ongoing war in the Low Countries. They are both disillusioned with war and turn to gossip about the prospects for opting out of war by marrying a wealthy woman. The substance of 1.2 is similar to that of 1.1 but in a more bawdy key. Sanchio and Alonzo discuss whether they will allow themselves to be recruited. They compare the pains of war to the pains of venereal disease and come to

¹ 3.3 is located at the very centre of the play, but is the least necessary in terms of the plot. It is a showcase for Cacafogo, played by the company’s lead clown, and its matter seems incommensurate with its structural prominence. The gap between the content of the scene and its structural prominence is analogous to the syncopation common in Fletcher’s verse: emphasis and position are at odds (see “Fletcher’s Casual Style”). Fletcher creates a sense of significance for what is both an extraneous bit of clowning and character development for the figure who ties the two plots together.
the same conclusion as Juan and Perez: marriage to a wealthy woman is their only option for avoiding the dangers of war (if not venereal disease). The hopes of 1.1 and 1.2 are made concrete in 2.2 when Perez brags to Juan and Alonzo that he has achieved what they have all imagined, a rich wife. Juan observes that Perez “intend[s] a safer war at home” (2.2.15). The irony is that Perez will face a much more serious war at home than he ever expected. The repetition of the limited choices of these men, however, gives a life-and-death urgency to the schemes of Leon and Perez: either they wive it wealthily or they submit themselves to the vicissitudes of war. The play firmly establishes their motivation for accepting such potentially humiliating marriage terms.

Scenes rhyme with each other in multiple ways, and these echoes help establish why some characters fail and others succeed. For example, 1.5, the enlistment interview between Leon and Juan, combines the recruiters of 1.1 with the recruits of 1.2. Margarita’s first meeting with Leon in 2.3 echoes both Juan’s interview of Leon in 1.5 and the marriage negotiations between Perez and Estifania in 1.6. Leon plays the role of an honourless fool to demonstrate his unfitness for military service in 1.5 and plays the role of an honourless fool to demonstrate his fitness for marital service in 2.3. In both scenes Leon’s role obliges him to make increasingly humiliating admissions. To Juan he admits cowardice and a lack of honour. To Margarita he promises to accept her adultery: “If you kiss a thousand I shall be contented: / It will the better teach me how to please ye” (2.3.59-60). Both scenes end with indications that Leon is indeed only playing a role. He kicks Cacafogo, which causes Juan to suspect that Leon is not what he seems, and he “cannot be all fool” (1.5.27). After Leon convinces Margarita to marry him, he reveals

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Here as elsewhere, Juan plays a kind of honest broker between the play and the audience, pointing out elements which deserve more scrutiny (see for example, 1.1.120, 2.2.44-47).
to the audience that he has an accomplice: “A thousand crowns are thine, and I am a
made man,” he says to Altea (2.3.71). These actions lay the groundwork for the
eventual revelation of Leon’s true character.

Margarita’s interview of Leon in 2.3 echoes, in more obvious ways, Estifania’s
and Perez’s negotiations for marriage in 1.6. Both end with impatient calls for immediate
marriage: “I’ll have a priest o’th’ sudden,” Perez says (1.6.67), echoed by Margarita’s
“Get me a priest, I’ll wed him instantly” (2.3.64). Both Perez and Margarita direct a
number of comments away from their interlocutors, providing a running commentary on
their own actions. In 1.6 (and in 1.1) Perez conveys his excitements and frustrations
directly to the audience, while in 2.3 Margarita addresses comments to her advisers, the
Old Ladies and Altea. Perez’s asides help him build a rapport with the audience which
will be crucial later, because he will need audience sympathy after his series of
humiliations. Margarita’s comments are to other onstage characters rather than to the
audience, so she does not build the same kind of rapport. At the same time, Perez’s
willingness to communicate his thoughts directly to the audience contrasts with Leon,
who keeps his own counsel. This contrast helps to explain Leon’s success and Perez’s
failure. Perez’s garrulity ultimately makes him as a weaker figure lacking in self-control,
but when Leon does eventually speak out his words carry more weight. Margarita’s
mastery over Leon seems assured in these early scenes, however. She and Estifania both
have the upper hand in 2.4, when the two plot-lines intersect and the four newlyweds
share the stage together for the only time before the final scene. Leon does not speak at
all, Perez is persuaded to give up his house. Only Estifania and Margarita say anything
of substance.

10 The play’s conclusion reveals a less mercenary motivation for Altea: she is Leon’s sister (5.5.166).
The parallels noted above illustrate Fletcher’s type of virtuosity: an ability to present with variety a deliberately limited range of situations. He wrote for an audience very familiar with theatrical tropes who delighted in the manipulation of conventions. The play’s structure is carefully patterned, but the imaginative and lively characters make the play entertaining. No amount of formalist bravura would have inspired the demand for *Rule a Wife* that kept it onstage for hundreds of years. Estifania’s grace under pressure, Perez’s misfiring condescension, Margarita’s frustrated sensuality, Leon’s metamorphosis, and most of all the witty struggle for domination kept audiences coming back for more.

Estifania establishes her ability to manipulate Perez early in the play. In 1.1 Estifania is veiled and this mystery stokes Perez’s already piqued interest in her. Estifania refuses to remove the veil and instead insists that he meet at her residence. The shift of scene gives her a home-field advantage. When she appears unveiled in 1.6, Perez is so taken by this discovery that it does not occur to him that there is more matter to discover. Her unveiling is a little truth to obscure a big lie. Their subsequent marriage negotiations are richly ironic as they both attempt to assert power through a seemingly false modesty that nevertheless vastly overstates the wealth they own. Estifania is so intent on carrying out her deception that she does not realize that Perez is equally dishonest. At the end of Act 1 Estifania and Perez kiss each other repeatedly, demonstrating the physical sexual attraction between them. Their attraction is the one thing they do not lie to each other about.
2.4 begins with Estifania’s reaction to her marriage, and parallels Perez’s boasts to his friends about his new-found fortune in 2.2. Estifania’s reaction is more thoughtful and less bombastic than Perez’s. She shows a sportsman-like pride in the way she lured her husband into marriage: “I told thee what would tickle him like a trout, / And as I cast it so I caught him daintily” (2.4.10-11). Her fishing metaphors show that she sees Perez as quarry, and she is very satisfied that her plan has worked. She does seem surprised by some of Perez’s better qualities: he is “the most kind man, and the ablest also / To give a wife content; he is sound as old wine” (2.4.3-4), verifying that she finds him physically satisfying. Her subsequent angry outburst, though, shows that she suspects Perez is too good to be true: “but when he doubts, I hate him, / And that wise hate will teach me how to cozen him” (2.4.21-22). She knows that once her fraud is revealed Perez will have ample reason to doubt her, but she transfers this sense of guilt to Perez. She blames him for what she thinks he will do in the future. Her plan is to provoke his anger in order to give herself a pretext for cheating him. Perez, clumsily enough, fulfills Estifania’s fear by becoming suspicious of Clara as soon as he sees her (2.4.39). He worries that Clara will help cuckold him “by proxy” (2.4.52). Estifania will not countenance any anger from Perez and threatens that any jealousy on Perez’s part will cause her to cheat on him, but if he is pliant there is no need for concern. Perez, embarrassed and defeated, retreats with a face-saving untruth: “No, no, I do but jest with ye” (2.4.60). The power dynamic of this relationship is established and this cycle is then repeated with variations throughout the play: Perez discovers some fact, becomes angry, makes empty threats, and finally submits in the face of Estifania’s superior gamesmanship.

The audience first learns that Estifania is a fraud when Clara asks “Does thy lady know” of her plan to catch Perez. Estifania has just made it clear that marrying Perez
was part of an elaborate plan, but even more shocking is the information that she is only a servant and not the owner of the house. Margarita’s unexpected return “a week too soon” (2.4.69) forces Estifania to improvise. She realizes that her first priority is to “set a new wheel going, and a subtle one” which will blind Perez (2.4.70-71). Fletcher increases the comic suspense of the scene: will Estifania think of a plan in time? Perez is all the more tractable since he is ashamed by his earlier outburst of premature anger. Perez reveals in soliloquy that Estifania’s behaviour attracts rather than repels him: “The rogue speaks heartily, / Her good will colours in her cheeks, I am born to love her” (2.4.82-83).

Fletcher supplies part of Perez’s motivation for remaining with Estifania even though she continues to cozen him. It is not despite this behaviour that he loves her, but because of it. Estifania demonstrates her quick-wittedness by assembling her new stratagem from pieces at hand. Her problem is to get Perez to vacate the house without rousing Margarita’s suspicions, which she does by simply transferring her earlier stratagem to Margarita. Estifania tells Perez that Margarita is poor and “This house she has brought him [Leon] to as to her own” (2.4.99). All the plan requires of Perez is “yield[ing the house] unto her [Margarita] for four days” (2.4.105). Despite his professed submission earlier, Estifania must spend forty lines convincing Perez to agree. On the page the action of this part of the scene reads awkwardly. Estifania and Perez talk apart at length after the entrance of Margarita and her retinue, who have no lines or stage business until near the conclusion of the scene. The reader must visualize Perez looking on in horror at people who appear to be making themselves at home in his home while Estifania tells him that vacating the house is in his own best interest. Estifania makes use of stage properties to give her story the illusion of reality. She shows Perez a paper which she claims promises them two hundred pounds from Margarita once she is married. Estifania
does not let him read it because she could not have had time to forge such a document: “I’ll show it you tomorrow” (2.4.110).

But that particular tomorrow seems never to come. Perez next appears in the poor-house scenes (3.2 and 3.4), and he believes their occupation of the hovel is temporary. In retrospect, it is clear that while Perez is on-stage complaining of the smells of poverty, Estifania is in the other room removing the few valuables that Perez owns. Perez does not know it, but at this point Estifania plans never to see him again. Instead, she engineers a further humiliation for Perez: she agrees to meet him at the town house later, “But if I come not at my hour, come thither, / That they may give you thanks for your fair courtesy” (3.2.63-64). She wants to ensure that he learns how thoroughly gulled he has been as quickly as she safely may. Estifania’s plan is that Perez will discover her treachery when he attempts to dress for dinner since she asks him to “be brave,” i.e., well-dressed, when he goes to the town house (3.2.65). He will find, however, that she has left him with but one suit of clothes. Estifania’s plan succeeds beyond her expectations as Perez insists on making himself a spectacle of humiliation in 3.5. He confronts Margarita, and she reveals that Estifania “had but a scant fame” and was “a wild young girl” (3.5.157-58, 161). Estifania had no choice but to find a new source of support because her employment with Margarita was soon to end. As with Perez’s and Leon’s desire to avoid war and Margarita’s fear of legal forfeiture, Fletcher takes care to establish strong motivations for his comic characters’ risky courses of action. Estifania finds a suitable gull in Perez, but what she does not plan for is Perez’s persistence in locating her and his willingness to love her despite, or rather because of, her ability to quickly manipulate any situation to her advantage.
Perez and Estifania confront each other in 4.1, and the argument is structured like a formal debate. Perez makes his opening argument, Estifania gives a rebuttal of equal length, and then they engage in a stichomythic back-and-forth. Perez outlines his search for Estifania in bawdy houses, private cellars, plays, puppet shows, gossipings, a nunnery, and finally a church, proceeding from the most to the least likely places he expects to find her. Perez describes a kind of harlot’s progress in reverse: he assumed the worst of her and began in the lowest resorts. Estifania then delivers a competing fictional narration of her search for Perez as a rake’s progress. Beginning at taverns and dicing houses, she skips ahead to a surgeon who sends her back to the brothels (she missed a step), and finally she comes to the church (where all rakes arrive, repentant or dead). The chiastic pattern of locations recalls their marriage negotiations in 1.6. Estifania takes the upper hand in this scene by slowly revealing that Perez is just as much a fraud as she is. She asks, “Why do you rail at me / For that that was your own sin, your own knavery” (4.1.54-55). This is new information to the audience and is a key development for both characters: they are both frauds and both victims. Her presentation of Perez’s shoddy possessions—his gilt chains, false jewels, and clothing threaded with copper rather than gold—is a theatrically effective moment. Estifania is not satisfied with Perez’s submission. She demonstrates her power over him by sending him back to the house, convincing him that this has all been an elaborate practical joke. Before he agrees, Perez insists on knowing whether she is a whore or not. Estifania’s answer to this is so wily it continues to confuse critics of the play (see 3.4.63n). Estifania says that the story told by the Old Woman “was my plot” (4.1.111), and the truth of the matter remains ambiguous. Estifania may be demonstrating her improvisatory skills, or the Old Woman may be playing a role on Estifania’s behalf. The ambiguity is the point because Perez and the
audience, here and again at the end of the play (see 5.5.156-57), must rely on nothing other than Estifania’s word.

The reconciliation of Perez and Estifania occurs in 5.4, and it remained one of the most popular scenes in the play throughout its long theatrical history. Perez wants to forget about her, but says he has no option but to kill her. This is a reluctant rage, though, because, “I would not seek thee to destroy thee willingly” (5.4.6). He suggests she commit suicide, as if, relieving him of everything else, she would relieve him of this burden as well. Estifania carefully bides her time, letting Perez talk and coolly managing his anger so that he suspects nothing when she reaches into her bag for a book which turns out to be not one but two handguns. Estifania turns the tables on Perez, regaining control spectacularly. Her first statement reaffirms her status as Perez’s spouse: “I am a soldier’s wife” (5.4.28). She opens the door to a reconciliation, and all she has to do to persuade Perez is to show him the money she took from Cacafogo. She makes peace with him by fulfilling her original promise of a substantial dowry. Their reconciliation shows that the only problem in their marriage was financial. They have both contributed to this new nest egg since Estifania used Perez’s casket as a pawn. Both of them get what they wanted all along: marriage and financial security. Estifania marries a handsome soldier and Perez no longer needs to go to war.

**Leon and Margarita**

When Leon fully asserts his rights as a husband and host in 3.5 when the Duke and other men have come to visit Margarita, he makes two arguments. One, that he has Margarita’s best interests and the defence of her honour in mind, and two, that he is the owner of the house by law. His stance captures the essence of patriarchy. He stakes his
life and reputation on redeeming and controlling her: “I will be known to be your lord now, / And be a fair one too, or I will fall for’t” (3.5.66-67). He asserts control of her property, and will “hold it to my use, the law allows it” (3.5.73). Margarita is now trapped by the very law she tried to escape; instead of forfeiting her property to the state, she has forfeited it to her husband. Leon declares, “I stand upon the ground of mine own honour / And will maintain it” (3.5.82-83). His newly acquired estate is the literal ground upon which his honour stands. Property and honour are the foundation of his new behaviour, as is made clear when the Duke asks, “Is there no difference betwixt her and you,” and Leon replies, “Not now, lord, my fortune makes me even, / And as I am an honest man, I am nobler” (3.5.101-103). Sandra Clark points out that Rule a Wife “endorses the egalitarianism of virtue; Leon, though of mean social rank, justifies his claim to Margarita’s wealth and status by his qualities as a husband” (Plays 150). Leon redefines nobility in terms of the mutually reinforcing combination of behaviour and property rather than birth alone.

Leon’s rhetoric lays claim to ideals of honour and decency, but only by recognizing the power of Leon’s moral exhortation can we appreciate the irony which undercuts his use of such appeals. He is lying, after all. He lied to avoid military service, he lied to Margarita about his acceptance of her conditions of marriage, and the entire marriage is part of a conspiracy between his sister Altea and himself. The character who most loudly preaches virtue is the most thoroughly deceptive.

The struggle between Margarita and Leon is for a kind of absolutist control because each strives for total dominance over the other. Therein lies an important contrast with Perez and Estifania. Estifania framed her relationship with Perez in terms of negotiation and near-equality, whereas Margarita’s prenuptial agreement with Leon
included complete control over his behaviour. Therefore, Leon’s rebellion must include a countervailing assertion of the same kind of complete control. He must replace Margarita’s tyranny with his own. The contrast is an ironic statement on wealth: it is easy for Perez and Estifania to cede different levels of control to each other because neither of them really has any property. Margarita has much to lose and breaks social norms to prevent such loss. Part of the point is that in wealth itself lies the tyrannical impulse. At the same time, Fletcher shifts from the dangers of tyranny within marriage to the dangers tyranny can pose to marriage. Fletcher embodies the external threat to marriage in the person of the Duke. Throughout Fletcher’s work tyranny is associated with royal or noble sexual interference in matrimonial relationships (see Maid’s Tragedy, Valentinian, and A Wife for a Month, for three of the clearest examples). The Duke defends Margarita, insisting he will not stand by “To see a lady weep” (3.5.113-15). The Duke then draws his sword to fight Leon. Leon accuses the Duke of acting like a tyrant, but the Duke only has the power to interfere with this marriage because Leon and Margarita are attempting to exercise tyrannous control over each other rather than collaborate in a fulfilling, companionate, orthodox relationship.

The entrance of Perez in 3.5 suspends rather than dissipates the tension generated by the narrowly averted sword fight. Despite the regular brandishing of weapons Rule a Wife contains no sword fights at all. Plays written with indoor performances in mind (Rule a Wife was written for both Blackfriars and the Globe) tended to reduce swordplay because of the dangerous proximity of the audience. Fletcher puts this constraint to use by promising then denying the audience the release that action usually provides. A confrontation is also delayed between the two husbands, since Leon and Perez do not

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11 See Sandra Clark’s chapter, “Sex and Tyranny” (Plays 101-27).
speak to each other here, but their presence on stage together places them in apposition. Their positions relative to one another, as Leon’s fortunes are rising and Perez are falling, are expressed through the opinions of Juan and, to a lesser extent, Sanchio and Alonzo. Leon’s show of honour and courage in 3.5 persuades Juan to aid Leon rather than the Duke. Juan’s reaction affirms for the audience that they “have seen a miracle” in Leon’s protest (3.5.146). Perez, however, is mocked by his friends. As a character within the play privileged with a distanced and ironic view of the action, Juan serves as an audience surrogate, so the varying amount of respect he has for Leon and Perez clearly expresses the appositional contrast between them.

In 4.3 Margarita’s reaction to the news that she must accompany Leon to war, after the Duke sends Leon a false commission to be an officer in the Low Countries, shows that she is also a quick thinker, though not as skilled an improviser as Estifania. She is not privy to the details of the Duke’s plan because the lines of communication between them have been severed. She, like Leon, assumes that this commission is part of the Duke’s plan to gain access to her. She falsely professes her love for Leon since she believes she will no longer have to live with him. She is bold enough to try to turn this into an opportunity to see the Duke himself: “I’ll to the Duke, my cousin, / He shall t’th’ king” (4.3.50-51). But she overplays her hand because, as Leon tells her, the Duke “did me this great office” (4.3.51). This mistake shows that though Margarita deduced the commission was part of the Duke’s stratagem she was not aware of the details. Her ignorance here is important to notice because this situation is repeated later when Margarita is not aware of the Duke’s second stratagem, the faked duel and injury in 5.3. In the first case she has guilty intentions, but in the second she is innocent of the charges Leon makes against her.
The awkward comedy of 4.3 builds as Margarita tells a series of lies to extricate herself from the journey to the war zone. She claims to be pregnant, but the argument over this claim reveals that she was a virgin before her marriage. Leon says, “I’ll swear you were a maid when I first lay with ye” and Margarita responds, “Pray do not swear, I thought I was a maid too, / But we may both be cozened in that point, sir” (4.3.79-81). Her quibbling response, as if she may have lost her virginity unwittingly, indicates that she does possess at least some modesty. Leon, undeterred, insists on her virginity: “In such a straight point, sure, I could not err, madam” (4.3.82). Margarita’s virginity is an aspect of her character occasionally overlooked by critics who are misled by the intensity of the erotic charge in both her own dialogue and the other characters’ descriptions of her. For example, in a recent essay Barbara Fuchs describes Margarita as “a lascivious wealthy lady of loose morals” (153). This description is accurate since Margarita, in her introductory scenes, certainly projects a sexual appetite. But Fuchs then describes the Duke as Margarita’s “former lover,” which is not true if by “lover” she means sexual partner (154). Mary Bjork similarly characterizes Margarita as “a young heiress whose interest in freely continuing her intemperate lifestyle compels her to seek a husband for protection from the authorities” (69). Margarita is not “continuing” a lifestyle, she is instead eager to begin the lifestyle that she has not begun in part because of her fear of the law. Sandra Clark helpfully observes that Margarita is “a figure of masculine fantasy” (Renaissance Drama 53). All male characters in the play speak of their attraction to her at one time or another, and Margarita insists that “I desire my pleasure, / And pleasure I must have” because her body is “young and lusty” (2.1.10-12). She is constructed, both for the men in the play and for the audience of the play, as the fantasy of an attractive, wealthy, and sexually available woman. But the dialogue and gossip are
just that: talk. This distinction is what makes Margarita worth redeeming for Leon and
what confirms the play’s mostly orthodox point of view.

The Duke enters in 4.3 with a misplaced preening confidence believing that his
false commission has removed Leon as an obstacle. Unaware that Leon has already
outmanoeuvred him, he praises Leon’s valour and scolds Margarita for “mourn[ing] at
his advancement” (4.3.98). But the Duke is no match for Leon, who makes clear that it is
the Duke himself who is the corrupting influence: “I would not leave her fame to so much
ruin, / To such a desolation and discredit / As her weakness and your hot will would work
her to” (4.3.121-23). Leon asserts once again that he sees himself not as Margarita’s
defrauder, but her redeemer. He is the honest “country” man who will save her from the
corrupting influences of the court.12 Leon’s speech (4.3.114-23) and Perez’s entrance
effectively silence the Duke. The Duke’s weakness, his rhetorical failure, is apparent
because his claims can be put on hold while Perez takes centre stage. His delayed
response is impotent when he reveals to Leon what Leon already suspects:

Then I must tell ye, sir,

Ye have no command, now ye may go at pleasure

And ride your ass troop; ’twas a trick I used

To try your jealousy, upon entreaty

And saving of your wife. (4.3.191-95)

The Duke attempts to put a noble face on his behaviour, as if he were rescuing an abused
damsel in a courtly romance. The Duke believes he is delivering a coup de grâce, but in

12 See the books of Finkelpearl and McMullan for the “court versus country” aspect of Fletcher’s
ideology.
one move Leon frustrates both Margarita and the Duke with quick-witted resourcefulness:

All this not moves me,
Nor stirs my gall, nor alters my affections;
You have more furniture, more houses, lady,
And rich ones too. I will make bold with those,
And you have land i’th’ Indies, as I take it;
Thither we’l go and view awhile those climates,
Visit your factors there that may betray ye.

’Tis done, we must go. (4.3.195-202)

With stoic resolve, he outlines a globe-trotting yet economically pragmatic life together (protecting her investments) for himself and his wife. This speech leads to the most important ambiguous moment in the play, Margarita’s statement that, “Now thou art a brave gentleman, / And by this sacred light I love thee dearly” (4.3.202-3). She may be lying, but if she is telling the truth then the vision, imagination, wit, and resourcefulness Leon displays have won her over.

The irony is that Leon does not realize he has won until the next act. This delayed recognition is the play’s subtlest variation on the comic pattern of the battle of the sexes. This moment is one of the sudden conversion scenes common in Fletcher’s dramaturgy, part and parcel of the romantic and tragicomic traditions.\(^\text{13}\) In his courtship comedies such as *The Scornful Lady* and *The Wild-Goose Chase*, for example, conversions typically involve the reluctant object of affection finally accepting the pursuing lover.

\(^{13}\) The traditions are “romantic” in the sense of having to do with ancient, medieval, and early modern prose and verse romances.
Sometimes these conversions seem to happen more because it is the fifth act (time to wrap things up), than because of character development. In *Rule a Wife* the pattern varies because Leon is blind to the fact that the conversion has indeed happened, thus requiring an additional act of comic activity, tension, and suspense to shift the terms of the struggle. Margarita tries to demonstrate her change of heart by promising Leon that she will secure him a real commission and accompany him to war. She asks only that they stay together in Spain for one month so that they can establish their relationship on a surer footing. Crucially, she phrases this as a “request,” asking him to “Give me but will so far” (4.3.211-12). She has learned the value of negotiated collaboration; now it is Leon’s turn to learn the same lesson. The rest of this plot is not about Leon redeeming or taming Margarita because he has achieved that; rather, it is about Leon realizing and acknowledging her love for him. Leon is just as skeptical of sudden conversion as most critics: “Well, I will try ye” (4.3.213). Fletcher here plays with the dramaturgical problems that arise in comedies of intrigue in which the action relies on a series of ruses, tests, and sudden reversals.

Regardless of whether Leon would have been willing to believe Margarita at the end of Act 4 or not, the letter he receives from Estifania in 5.1 about Cacafogo’s desire to gain “access” to Margarita gives him reason to doubt her sincerity as well as an opportunity to “try” her (as he vowed to do at 4.3.213). Fletcher intertwines the two plots organically. Estifania defrauds Cacafogo of money by pretending to be Margarita’s agent in 4.1, and here she fishes for another reward by warning Leon of Cacafogo’s plan. Furthermore, when Leon asks Margarita whether the Duke shall visit again, Margarita answers, “No, sure, sir; / Has now no policy to bring him hither” (5.1.15-16). As far as she knows, this is true. Thus, when the Duke does find a “policy” to enter the house it
looks to Leon as if she has lied. This appearance of wilful subterfuge on Margarita’s part, along with the suspicions raised by Cacafogo’s visit, helps to explain the violence of Leon’s angry tirade at 5.3.60-89.

Despite the grounds for potential mistrust established in 5.1, 5.3 opens with Margarita and Leon in apparent marital bliss. Margarita’s unruliness is gone: “I wait upon your pleasure; / Live in a hollow tree, sir, I’ll live with ye” (5.3.5-6). Leon, like Maria in The Woman’s Prize, cedes authority back to his tamed spouse: “Command you now and ease me of that trouble, / I’ll be as humble to you as a servant” (5.3.19-20). The restoration of usurped domestic dominance marks the happy ending of Fletcher’s earlier play, but here he injects a stronger sense of ambiguity into the proceedings. Leon tells her to “visit acquaintance, / Go at your pleasure, now experience / Has linked you fast unto the chain of goodness” (5.3.22-24). This exchange can be interpreted (and performed) in a number of ways. Either Leon believes that Margarita has submitted to him and so he can honestly and trustingly free her, or he is dissimulating, testing Margarita’s seeming submission. Furthermore, it is still possible that Margarita is faking her subservience, biding her time before trying to reassert her control over Leon. The scene is more effective and ironic if we decide that Margarita is sincere but Leon is still trapped in his role as a woman-tamer. Their relationship to each other is dynamic yet consistent in that Leon is still play-acting while Margarita is honest about her desires, as she has been throughout the play. She is the only main character who does not lie about herself or what she wants. The difference is that her desires have changed. The choice remains for actor and director. When the Duke blatantly tricks his way into the house,

14 Leon’s image of a “chain of goodness” emphasizes that Margarita’s freedom is still a circumscribed freedom. Yet this is not tyrannical, it is part of their negotiated domesticity: the bonds of matrimony.
however, Margarita looks guilty. She is implicated despite her innocence in the matter. Though she spends time with the Duke offstage during 5.3, he does not inform her of his deception until 5.5.23-25. Leon berates Margarita savagely. Their argument may feel like a repetition, but there is a completely different dynamic underlying their relationship now. Leon’s rhetoric is no longer appropriate to the situation at hand. It is Leon’s turn to sound like Perez, and his violent threats are just as impotent. He speaks from a position of weakness rather than power because his premise (that Margarita persists in plotting against him) is incorrect. Margarita speaks with power in her brief replies because virtue and understanding are now on her side. In her new role as a faithful wife she is right to criticize his irrational behaviour: “You are always [mad], / You carry a kind of bedlam still about ye” (5.3.73-74).

Margarita stops arguing, however, and demonstrates her submission physically by kneeling to Leon. This is not the conversion moment; it is a reaffirmation of her obedience to Leon. She submits even when he is unreasonable. Remarkably, Fletcher undercuts this moment when Leon interrupts her speech in a reversal of audience expectation. Leon does not want to see her grovel, but he does not know whether to trust her. Fletcher does not repeat the ending of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but he does again present explicitly a central dramaturgical problem of a romantic intrigue comedy: how do the characters and the audience know when other characters are sincere? The pattern of deception in the play establishes that, potentially, the two couples could continue lying to each other indefinitely. They must learn to trust each other and show what tokens of sincerity they can. This sort of skeptical ambivalence has bothered many critics when it

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15 In an important difference, however, his images are therapeutic: letting blood and purging spirits, rather than Perez’s fantasies of torture.
occurs in Fletcher’s plays, but the inability to know whether the final reconciliations are true is precisely the point of *Rule a Wife*. The question of sincerity is presented and then set aside when the couples demonstrate the fulfillment of their matrimonial obligations to one another. Leon and Margarita are finally reconciled after they work together to perform the humiliation of the Duke, an exquisite comedy of discomfort in which Fletcher works yet another variation on his favoured “disastrous wedding-night” topos, substituting an unconsummated infidelity for the usual unconsummated marriage.  

Margarita demonstrates her sincere reformation through her performance. She attempts to drive the Duke mad by denying the evidence of his own senses, insisting that, in this darkened room (signified by the taper she carries), there is no noise. This combination of the darkness, the demonic, and the denial of plain sense recalls the humiliation of Malvolio by Feste in *Twelfth Night*. Despite the Duke’s insistence that he is not wounded, she treats him as if he is hurt, and so unable to satisfy her sexually: “You are hurt mortally, / And fitter for your prayers, sir, than pleasure . . . I would not kiss you wantonly / For the world’s wealth” (5.5.40-43). She raises the Duke’s sexual expectations only to deny him satisfaction. Margarita pretends to have sympathy for him, and she makes a point that never occurs to Desdemona (who never sees that her advocacy for Cassio increases Othello’s fury): “for me to entreat” on the Duke’s behalf, “Would show me little better than one guilty” (5.5.68-69). She offers herself to him as if she were merely testing the strength of his desire: “You say you love me: come, come bravely now, / Despise all danger, I am ready for ye” (5.5.73-74). Margarita emphasizes his total humiliation by reminding him of his honour: “You do me a double wrong if you sneak

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16 Compare the wedding nights in *The Maid’s Tragedy* (2.1), *The Woman’s Prize* (1.3), and *A Wife for a Month* (3.3), for example.
off, sir, / And all the world would say I loved a coward” (5.5.95-96). He is neither noble nor wicked, merely a fool and a coward. His fear, not his honour, has banished his lust. Margarita forgives him and takes the Duke under her protection, and they kiss “Chastely and modestly” according to the custom of the country (5.5.113), which leads to a potentially charged moment. Leon and the other men enter during this kiss, and he could react with his accustomed rage. Instead he shows not a flicker of jealousy, demonstrating his own belief in Margarita’s honesty.

Fletcher concludes the play by uniting the two plots with the entrance of Perez and Estifania. The winners of the play are united. Previously, Perez’s entrance in the house consistently led to his humiliation, but now with Estifania by his side he is finally invited to live in the house. Leon tells him, “thou shalt live with me, / My merry coz, the world shall not divorce us” (5.5.150-51). Leon’s generosity is a mark of his true, though new-found, nobility. The two poor soldiers have in the end triumphed, and they ally themselves as new members in moneyed society. Despite all they have achieved they still decide to go to war. Of course, now they will have comfortable commissions and go to war as gentlemen.
A critical prejudice which has dogged interpretation of the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher is that they are skillful but meaningless entertainments. The surface and structure of the plays are so well-constructed that generations of critics concluded they could not be anything but superficial. Coleridge finds that the plays lack a natural organic unity: “just as a man might put together a quarter of an orange, a quarter of an apple, and the like of a lemon and of a pomegranate, and make it look like one round diverse-coloured fruit” (Literary Remains 1: 103). Accusations of superficial meaninglessness often centre on the ways characterization in the Beaumont and Fletcher plays differs from Shakespeare’s. Una Ellis-Fermor, for example, describes a character as “not a homogeneous and continuous human being, but a series of imperfectly associated groups of responses to the stimulus of carefully prepared situations” (208). 17

This critical tendency reached its apogee in what is still the most sensitive and acute formal analysis of the plays, Eugene Waith’s 1952 The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher. His argument is that each Beaumont and Fletcher play is “a series of hypothetical situations made compelling by sheer technical virtuosity” (201). The self-conscious rhetorical patterning that he uncovers with impressive insight, however, leads him to dismiss the possibility of serious meaning. It is astonishing to read Waith’s masterful literary and historical contextualization of the fusion of declamatory rhetoric, satire, and pastoral in the Beaumont and Fletcher tragicomedies because it is followed by his insistence that it all does not really mean anything; the plays are merely

17 Sandra Clark argues, “this sort of critical discomfort with Beaumont and Fletcher’s techniques of characterization arises from their resistance to humanist reading” (8).
“a triumph of technique” (201). There is an underlying anti-rhetorical prejudice that equates technical virtuosity with shallowness. While one goal of the following discussion of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife is to illustrate Fletcher’s rhetorical and dramaturgic virtuosity, it is crucial to emphasize here Clifford Leech’s often-overlooked insight into the governing attitude of John Fletcher’s plays. He writes, “In Fletcher’s major plays we are never allowed to think only in one way about anything: the antithesis between strange action and easy conversational dialogue mirrors the clash in judgments” (47). Interpretations which see Fletcher as “only a skillful practitioner intent on securing the most effective shock,” Leech argues, ignore the way the plays are “a representation of an ambivalence which Fletcher discerned in actuality” (114). Fletcher’s dramaturgy is founded on representations of unresolved conflicting viewpoints. Russ McDonald finds in the “resistance to certainty or ‘meaning’” an important forerunner to the postmodern aesthetic which he finds useful for explaining, or diagnosing, the low opinion earlier critics had of Beaumont and Fletcher (171).

Fletcher’s refusal to make definitive statements is part of a profoundly skeptical world-view, and it helps generate the sense of political “unease” throughout his plays documented by Gordon McMullan. The withholding of certainty is evident in many ways in Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. The title, for instance, could mean that in order to properly possess a wife one must exercise proper authority over that wife. In light of the double-plot construction of the play, however, the title bifurcates. Instead of a conditional statement (if you rule your wife, then you have your wife), it reads as an appositional phrase, a title and subtitle describing the two plots. Leon rules Margarita and Perez merely has Estifania. Even though the discussion in the previous section necessarily collapsed some of the ambiguities of the play, the question remains at the end
whether Leon really does rule Margarita and perhaps whether Perez does not really rule Estifania. The easy misogyny of the title transforms into a site of anxiety and uncertainty. Understanding Fletcher’s ability to place conflicting viewpoints, characters, images, or hypothetical situations side-by-side and then refuse to present a satisfying resolution is necessary for appreciating his art. Coleridge’s fruit simile verges on an understanding of Fletcher’s appositional strategy, but he refuses to look below the particoloured surface. Fletcher places elements in apposition and leaves it to the audience to draw their own conclusions. This habit of apposition applies to his word choice, syntax, setting, scene, character, and plot. To pun on the idea of oppositional drama in the Stuart period, we may think of Fletcher as an appositional playwright.

Waith’s rhetorical analysis cannot help but focus on the most ostentatiously rhetorical elements of the plays, especially the passionate aria-like speeches that are supposed to draw attention to themselves. This focus, however, pulls attention away from an aspect of Fletcher’s writing which was often praised in the earliest days of dramatic criticism, what Dryden in his Essay of Dramatic Poesy notes as Beaumont and Fletcher’s superior understanding and imitation of “the conversation of gentlemen . . . whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet can ever paint as they have done” (111). Dryden neglects to mention that this kind of conversation is not restricted to gentlemen. Female characters speak with just as much, if not more, vivacious wit. Furthermore, the key to Fletcher’s dramaturgy is not primarily this mimetic chat but the dynamic modulation between elegant conversation and passionate declamations. The contrasting movement between the two modes produces a representation of the studied informality in conversation mixed with a readiness for rhetorically elaborate speech-making that were renaissance ideals, part of the necessary
sprezzatura of self-presentation. The plays were so appealing to a large segment of the audience because the characters reflected an idealized self-image of gentlemanly wit equally suitable to the tasks of comic repartee and persuasive declamation. The following pages anatomize how Fletcher in *Rule a Wife* constructed this casual style.

Fletcher establishes a sense of rapport with his audience through the use and manipulation of proverbial expressions. Drawn from a common stock of wisdom and phrases, proverbs provide a sense of shared language that helps to create a community of feeling in the theatre, an illusion, at least, of consensus. Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, concerning maxims and proverbs, advised speakers that “people love to hear stated in general terms what they already believe in some particular connection” (Bk. 2.21). All renaissance playwrights, of course, used proverbial expressions, as is shown in the indexes of Dent and Tilley.¹⁸ Fletcher’s practice was to constantly twist, combine, and subvert proverbs in ways which ironically undercut the very idea of common sayings expressing a shared community of wisdom. For example, one of Fletcher’s most often used proverbial ideas is that of women wearing breeches (see Tilley B645).¹⁹ He conjures with this shorthand the misogynist’s nightmare of women taking control of society. In *Rule a Wife*, however, Margarita tells Leon he may not talk “i’th’ house as though you wore the breeches” (2.3.38). The world she presents to him is already upside-down because she is already wearing the breeches, and for Leon to put them on would constitute the innovation. The title of the play itself has a proverbial ring, but it actually plays against the sense of the

¹⁸ *Rule a Wife* falls outside the date limits of Dent’s index of proverbial language in non-Shakespearean drama, but the use of proverbs in the Beaumont and Fletcher plays has been catalogued in three articles by Archer Taylor.

¹⁹ See, for examples, *Noble Gentleman* 2.2.237, 2.4.37, *Women Pleased* 5.3.104-5, *The Woman’s Prize* 1.1.35-36, 1.2.145-46, 2.6.44-46, and *Little French Lawyer* 3.1.111.
common proverb, “every man can rule a shrew but he that has her” (Tilley M106). This is a wry comment on the ease with which other men can advise a hen-pecked husband. Fletcher’s title, on the other hand, seems to assert that a man can both rule and have a wife. It promises the audience a proverbial impossibility.

Fletcher also uses ironically reversed proverbs for purposes of characterization. 1.4 introduces the three Old Ladies whom Margarita consults for advice. The joke is that these supposedly wise women charged with upholding community standards do nothing of the sort. Instead they license her bad behaviour. Their untrustworthy nature is revealed in 2 Old Lady’s pseudo-proverb (after an offer of refreshments) “And good wine breeds good counsel” (1.4.23). This is the opposite of the wisdom that “counsels in wine seldom prosper” (Tilley C701). It parallels the syntax of the proverbs “good wine makes a merry heart” (Tilley W460) and “good wine makes good blood” (Tilley W461). The audience is led to expect, perhaps, one of the latter phrases, then is entertainingly surprised by the Old Lady’s decidedly unorthodox sentiment. The perverted proverb signals that the ladies are untrustworthy and/or that the world of the play is topsy-turvy. Aristotle argues that the use of maxims and proverbs invest a speech with moral character, “so that, if the maxims are sound, they display the speaker as a man of sound moral character” (Bk. 2.21). Here Fletcher puts unsound proverbs in the ladies’ mouths to display their lack of moral character. Fletcher also elliptically combines proverbial phrases in ways that depend on the audience’s knowledge of the traditional ideas to which he alludes. Cacafogo, the usurer, suspects that Estifania “hast some wedding ring to pawn now, / Of silver and gilt with a blind posy in’t, / ‘Love and a mill-horse should go round together’” (4.1.137-39). Rings were sometimes inscribed with sayings and declarations of love, and if written on the inside of the ring the posy would be “blind”
Cacafogo in a metaphorical leap combines two ideas proverbially associated with blindness: “Love is blind” (Tilley L506) and “To go round like a blind horse in a mill” (Tilley H697). In this punning riddle Cacafogo equates love with a perpetually labouring beast, so his materialistic cynicism is boldly apparent. Fletcher’s manipulation of such phrases must have appealed to his audiences because he acknowledges the tradition of proverbial lore while declaring an ironic, sophisticated distance from received ideas. He plays with the dialectic of convention and innovation that is part and parcel of wit and repartee, and we see why James Shirley would think of Fletcher’s plays as constituting the curriculum of an academy of wit.

Fletcher’s idiosyncratic metre is one of his most distinctive achievements, and it provides an ideal medium for seemingly casual conversation. The hallmarks of his verse are well-known: a striking combination of a high percentage of end-stopped lines coupled with an abundance of feminine endings (often with stressed extra syllables so that many lines have the feel of alexandrines), and a tendency toward what may be scanned as either trisyllabic feet or extra-metrical syllables throughout the line. The large proportion of lines that begin with a stressed syllable, known as a trochaic substitution, is also notable. The following passage in which Margarita discusses her new husband Leon with her waiting-woman Altea provides a useful illustration of Fletcher’s metre:

That’s it I aim at;
That’s it I hope too, then I am sure I rule him.

20 These characteristics were noted by in part by Weber in his 1812 edition, building on Lamb’s observations (Weber 13: 166-67). Brian Vickers shows that their value for authorship attribution was overlooked until the work of Spedding, Fleay, Boyle and others (Shakespeare Co-Author 47-51).

21 Gayley uses this passage as a representative example of Fletcher’s metre (Beaumont 244-45). The following discussion is indebted to his analysis, but it disagrees in many points of detail.
For innocents are like obedient children
Brought up under a hard mother-in-law, a cruel,
Who, being not used to breakfasts and collations,
When they have coarse bread offered ’em, are thankful,
And take it for a favour too. Are the rooms
Made ready to entertain my friends? I long to dance now,
And to be wanton—let me have a song. [Boy sings.]

Is the great couch up, the Duke of Medina sent? (3.1.16-25)

Only two of the lines run into the next without pause, and sentences end mid-line only twice. Only line twenty-four contains ten syllables, while the others range from eleven to as many as fourteen. I have not, in the above quotation, indicated stressed syllables and divisions of feet so as not to foreclose one of the main advantages of what Waith calls “Fletcher’s unfailing sense of rhythm” (193). His frequent trochaic substitutions and extra syllables create a variety of potential line readings for the actor (or scanner), while the end-stopping “breaks the rhythmical flow of the verse into well-defined units” (Waith 193). The underlying sense of the pentameter line is never lost, stretched though it may be. For instance, “Who, being | not used | to break- | fasts and | collations, / When they | have coarse | bread off- | ered ’em, | are thankful,” are relatively straightforward iambic pentameter lines with feminine endings, but the line that precedes them, “Brought up under a hard mother-in-law, a cruel,” is very syncopated. That is, the sense of the line tends to stress syllables that occur in normally unstressed positions. The opening two

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22 The lineation of ll. 24-25 is emended (see Appendix A), so they are not discussed below.

23 The syncopation of Fletcher’s verse, “that the emphasis, arising from the sense of the verse, very often clashes with the cadence that would naturally result from the metre: i.e., syllables that have an
syllables are easily iambic, but this line is enjambed with the previous line which ends with an unstressed syllable so emphasis migrates to “Brought” and the first two feet then establish a trochaic pattern which shatters against that comic bugbear, “a hard mother-in-law.” Stressing the first syllable would continue the trochaic pattern uninterrupted through to “mother,” but shifting the stress to “hard,” especially in an exaggerated manner so that two stressed syllables then abut, subtly embodies in the metre the difficulties caused by that traditional figure of comic anxiety. Moreover, the additional adjectival phrase “a cruel” seems extrametrical. The extra syllables Fletcher uses at the end of his lines often carry stress, but in this case the extra syllables may encourage the actor to slur or remove the stress on “law.” If the line were pronounced this way then “mother-in-law” could be spit out in a burst of four unstressed syllables while the line ending is marked by the strong “cruel.” Mothers-in-law, metrically and figuratively, seem to take up too much space. For Margarita to imagine parental authority figures with a kind of loathing is completely in-character because her motivation throughout most of the play is to live in pleasure and freedom without the restricting oversight of fathers, mothers, laws, or husbands.

Fletcher’s characteristic wedding of extra syllables and feminine endings with consistently end-stopped lines provided him with an ideal vehicle both for his stylized casual conversation and for tirades of passionate intensity. Partly because Fletcher’s verse is so useful for authorship attribution the effects and ramifications of his metrical experimentation are often overlooked. Augustan formal discipline would reject the emphasis in the sentence upon account of the sense or meaning of it, are put in the uneven places in the verse,” was noticed before 1757 by a Mr. Roderick.

The only other playwright with a verse line as free as Fletcher’s was Thomas Middleton, also known for the demotic energy of his dialogue (Oliphant 30-31). Fletcher did not move freely between verse and
openness of his lines. A fundamental misunderstanding of the principles of his verse led
to the procrustean relineations by the editors of the 1750 edition of the works of
Beaumont and Fletcher. Fletcher explored the potential of English verse in ways that
would not be seen again until, as Gayley notes, the poems of Robert Browning (246). It
is not unrealistic, even, to cite Fletcher as an important forerunner of English free verse.

The passage quoted above also illustrates Fletcher’s constant use of repetition:
“That’s it I aim at; / That’s it I hope too” (3.1.16-17). The repetition of initial sounds
(alliteration); of words at the beginning (anaphora), middle (mesodiplosis), and end
(epistrophe) of lines; and of words and phrases (epizeuxis) occurs with great frequency.
Often, as in the example above, the purpose of the repetition is to present the illusion of
extemporaneous speech, as if the characters are stuttering or stalling for time to gather or
develop their thoughts. Repetition also works to comic effect in confrontations, perhaps
most entertainingly between Perez and Estifania in the following exchange:

*Perez.* Why am I cozened?

*Estifania.* Why am I abused?

*Perez.* Thou most vile, base, abominable—

*Estifania.* Captain.

*Perez.* Thou stinking, overstewed, poor, pocky—

*Estifania.* Captain.

*Perez.* Do you echo me?

*Estifania.* Yes, sir, and go before ye,

And round about ye. (4.1.50-54)
The repetition, using isocolon (sentences, phrases or clauses of similar structure and length) and epistrophe (repetition of a word at the end of a line, sentence, or clause), is appropriate in context because Perez and Estifania are both accusing each other of the same transgression: marriage under false pretenses. Their crimes and their sentences look the same. Estifania continues the epistrophe a few lines later: “You had best now draw your sword, captain, / Draw it upon a woman, do, brave captain, / Upon your wife, oh most renownèd captain” (4.1.56-58). She emphasizes by the repetition of “captain” the disparity between his rank and his violent rhetoric, between ideal and reality. Perez complains that the “house and riches” Estifania promised him “are but shadows, / Shadows to me (4.1.63-64), in an anadiplosis that makes him sound weak. Estifania’s anaphoric counter-claim indicates that she is winning this war of words because the rising intensity of her rhetorical pattern sounds more powerful: she was promised “So much in chains, so much in jewels, husband, / So much in right rich clothes” (4.1.67-68). The strong iambic rhythm is uninterrupted until the last foot when the stress on the first syllable of “husband” encourages a slight pause before it is said, a moment the actor may invest with irony and spite before resuming the syntactical pattern of repetition.

Repetition might be the simplest kind of apposition, so the frequent repetitions in Fletcher’s dialogue are of a piece with his appositional style. In a similar manner, Fletcher’s syntax tends toward accumulation when he places series of phrases in apposition. This style results in clauses that do not always have clear coordinating or subordinating roles. Often an assertion is made and a list of examples follows. Fletcher’s characters attempt persuasion through accumulated example rather than syllogism. This pattern occurs most often in the elevated speeches of passion or complaint. Such speeches are also where the majority of the relatively sparse figurative
language of the plays clusters together. In fact, the sudden accumulation of tropes and imagery tends to signal such moments. As Waith and others have noted, “there is comparatively little imagery in his language—almost none of the sort of metaphor by which Shakespeare, Chapman, or Tourneur [sic for the author of The Revenger’s Tragedy] achieves emotional intensity” (198). Fletcher’s rhetoric relies more on schemes and figures (the arrangement and formal patterning of word order) than on tropes (turning the principal meaning of words). Apposition, parenthesis, ellipsis, repetition, parallelism, and antithesis are Fletcher’s favoured tools. Tropes are not absent or even rare in Fletcher, but striking metaphorical language occurs at a rate which seems very low to readers accustomed to the habits of Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, and Jonson. It is the very clarity and transparency of his diction, however, that kept Fletcher in critical favour into the late eighteenth century. As early as 1666 Dryden admitted that “Shakespeare’s language is likewise a little obsolete” compared to Fletcher’s (111). A later example of this distinction from an editorial point of view is Weber’s experience that in the Shakespearean portion of Two Noble Kinsmen “the language is far more metaphorical and involved, so that the body of notes requisite to illustrate the text, is about three times the volume of those necessary in [Fletcher’s portion]” (13: 166). As the understanding of and appreciation for Shakespeare’s imagery and diction grew, the absence of the same in Fletcher (along with his more straightforwardly intelligible bawdy) contributed to his fall from critical grace.

Perez’s complaint opening 3.2 is typical of Fletcher’s cumulative parallel sentence structures coupled with bursts of hyperbolic similes and metaphors.²⁵

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²⁵ Gayley suggests, with little elaboration, that this speech is one of the clearest examples of Fletcher’s habit of using cumulative three-part structures (270). While triplets of all kinds are common in Fletcher,
Shall I never return to mine own house again?
We are lodged here in the miserablest dog-hole,
A conjurer’s circle gives content above it,
A hawk’s mew is a princely palace to it.
We have a bed no bigger than a basket,
And there we lie like butter clapped together,
And sweat ourselves to sauce immediately.
The fumes are infinite inhabit here too,
And to that so thick they cut like marmalade,
So various too, they’ll pose a gold-finder.

Never return to mine own paradise? (3.2.1-11)

Perez complains of three things: the small house, the small bed, and the noisome fumes. Each of these topics is given three end-stopped lines apiece, but while the structure is the same in each complaint (the first line names the object of complaint, the remaining two develop it with a simile or metaphor), the syntactical pattern of the two developing lines is varied in each of the three sections. Parallel phrasing occurs within each of the three units (lines 3-4, 6-7, 9-10), but varied slightly among the units. The core of Perez’s complaint is an elaborate but easily audible tricolon designed to call attention to itself. Perez first emphasizes the size of the hovel: it is smaller and less comfortable than a dog-hole, a conjurer’s circle, or a hawk’s mew. Perez feels as confined as domesticated animals or a summoned demon. The description of the smallness of the hovel leads to the smallness of the bed, and the sweat generated in the bed leads to the next item in the complaint, the bad smell that permeates the hovel. The smell is thick enough to “cut like

Gayley’s emphasis on them obscures other patterns.
marmalade” (3.2.9), and to offend even those employed to clean out toilets (ironically called “gold-finders”). Perez begins and ends the complaint asking when he will return to his “house” and to his “paradise,” book-ends that signal the self-consciously rhetorical, epideictic nature of this speech. His nostalgia for the town house allows him to picture himself as an Adam cast out of Eden, sweat upon his brow (and everywhere else).

This speech and the one following it are clear examples of the figurative pattern Charles Lamb describes as the way Fletcher “lays line upon line, making up one after the other, adding image to image so deliberately that we see where they join” (2: 68). Lamb sees this pattern as slow and tedious, but Wallis correctly argues, “if the speeches were rapidly delivered on the stage, the effect of this technique should usually be cumulative, animated and even a bit high-pitched rather than languid” (64). Furthermore, the advantage of making the “joinings” obvious is that they are easier for the audience to follow: they do not get lost in a maze of images. It is a method of raising the passions without losing the train of thought and is unlike Shakespeare who “mingles everything, he runs line into line, embarrasses sentences and metaphors; before one idea has burst its shell, another is hatched and clamorous for disclosure” (Lamb 2: 68-69). Shakespeare’s richer style of course makes for denser and ultimately more satisfying poetry, but Fletcher’s style makes allowances for an audience whose full attention could not always be assumed. The distinction made by Lamb helps explain why audiences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries found Fletcher’s casual style appealing as an idealized version of the way the wits watching the plays imagined themselves speaking.

Perez’s first speech in 3.2 also contains examples of every major category of imagery that runs through Rule a Wife. Fletcher’s use of image patterns in the play is very disciplined. He restricts his images to a few types. The “dog-hole” and “hawk’s
mew” are part of the pervasive animal imagery, by far the most common type of image. The “conjurer’s circle” fits with a complex of images having to do with devils and magic, while the “butter,” “sauce,” and “marmalade” belong with the food imagery of the play. The substance of his complaint, the unhealthy nature of the “fumes” in the hovel, is expanded on in his following speech. These images are belong with those having to do with disease and (especially in relation to Perez) madness. There are other image patterns not present in this speech, including the association of Margarita with jewels and pearls.26

Images of animals, food, illness, and sorcery dominate the play. Images of sexual disease are part of the representation of jocular masculinity, as the men discharge their anxiety about sex and disease through jokes.27 Figurative language involving devils and magic is an important element in the characterization of Perez, Estifania, and Cacafogo. When Perez realizes his plight he blames devils and evil spirits (see especially 3.4 and 5.2, passim), and because of his accusations the use of diabolic magic becomes associated with Estifania. Cacafogo is a “fire-drake” (1.5.53), a “monster” (5.1.6), “a spirit wild” (5.2.28), a “goblin” (5.5.28), and in the final scene he is, crucially for the plot, mistaken for the devil himself. Since it was Estifania who sent Cacafogo to the house so that he could inadvertently play the devil, it is as if she is a magician who has raised a spirit. Perez’s vision of her as a witch becomes metaphorically true. Actual supernatural occurrences are rare in Fletcher’s plays, but the pattern of diabolic imagery in Rule a Wife climaxes in a pseudo-exorcism when the Duke renounces his sins and the devil

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26 Margarita means pearl as does orient, the adjective often used to describe her. See 1.2.22-23, 3.3.32, 3.5.120, 4.2.8, and 5.3.13.

27 See especially the conversation of Sanchio and Alonzo in 1.2.
Cacafogo is cast out of the house. Fletcher’s use of supernatural imagery without actual magic is another example of his talent for having it both ways. He does not remove the events too far from the everyday reality familiar to his audience, and he maintains plausibility by refusing to use magical solutions. At the same time he gains access to the theatrical power of representations of magic, devils, and ghosts.28

Fletcher is most notorious for his bawdy language. Richard Flecknoe in 1664 identified Fletcher as “the first who inroduç’t that witty obscenity in his Playes, which like poison infused in pleasant liquor, is alwayes the more dangerous the more delightful” (G6v). All types of images are at one time or another given sexual overtones, and as Russ McDonald notes with delight, “Reading through the plays with an ear for the erotic is, to adapt a phrase of Noel Coward’s, like piling Pelleas on Melisande” (156). Fletcher’s sexual wordplay is another major factor in both his popularity and eventual decline. It was heavily imitated by Restoration playwrights. Bawdy raillery is an inextricable element of his representation of the conversation of gentlemen. The animal and food images are often sexualized. As the sexualized images multiply it becomes clear that they represent an anxiety or a warning about the inherently dehumanizing dangers of unfulfilling or incomplete sexuality. Rule a Wife is, ultimately, a play written in praise and defence of a sexually fulfilling and culturally orthodox matrimonial chastity. Outside of marriage or in an improper marriage people become animals and foodstuff fit only for use and consumption. Margarita, who weds in order to disguise her coming sexual adventures, is described as a glutton with “a greedy eye that must be fed / With more than one man’s meat” (1.2.28). Perez and Estifania see each other as food.

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28 Notable use is made of fake magic and ghosts in The Night Walker, The Chances, and The Pilgrim. McMullan discusses the political implications of this “artificial magic” (176-81).
Perez responds to a comment about his wife by insisting, “I can cut up my pie without your instructions” (2.2.8). Estifania tells Clara that Perez “is sound as old wine, / And to his soundness rises on the palate” (2.4.4-5). Until they see each other as humans and not food they will not find peace. Leon’s first attempt to persuade Margarita to give up her plans for adultery contrasts the insubstantial candied men she is after with the wholesome nutritiousness of her husband:

Courtiers are but tickle things to deal withal,
A kind of marzipan men that will not last, madam;
An egg and pepper goes further than their potions,
And in a well-built body a poor parsnip
Will play his prize above their strong potables. (3.1.80-84)

These lines are a riot of sexual punning with food. Leon’s down-to-earth virility bests the impotent courtiers who cannot compete with his “well-built body.” Only he can satisfy Margarita. Margarita continues the food imagery when she realizes that Leon is “unlike the lump [she] took him for, / The piece of ignorant dough” (3.1.108-109).

The most significant image pattern is the comparison of people to animals. The men are repeatedly called, or call themselves, asses. More importantly, the wives consistently figure their husbands as tamed animals or prey. Margarita wants Leon to be a pet or beast of burden, and Estifania sees men as fish to be caught. Margarita wants to know whether Leon’s “mind [is] so tame” (2.3.8), and Leon assures her that he will “be a dog to please” her (2.3.52). She agrees that he “must fetch and carry as I appoint ye” (2.3.53). (Perez, too, discovers that he is “the arrant’st puppy” [3.5.190].) Altea, to calm

29 See annotations for the sexual wordplay in this passage.

30 At 1.5.7, 2.2.13, 2.4.25, 3.1.113, 3.3.3, 3.4.79, 3.5.36, 4.1.121, 4.1.130, 5.4.43.
a suspicious Margarita, insists that Leon “needs no spurring” to obey (3.1.74). After his first rebellious outburst Margarita threatens to give him “lodgings with the hinds” (3.1.130) and wants to “tie him to the grindstone” (3.1.139) like an ox or horse. True, Perez, speaking hypothetically, says at the beginning of the play, “Would I were married, I would find that wisdom, / With a light rein, to rule my wife” (1.1.38-39), but this prepares for his ironic reversal to come. Both Perez and Margarita will find that their spouses are not amenable to the rein and saddle. Estifania suspects that Perez may be of the kind of men who know “How to decline their wives, and curb their manners, / To put a strong rein to their natures” (2.4.24-25), and so is prepared to counter him at every turn. She will “colt” him and call him an “ass” (4.1.106, 121). When Clara asks whether she has indeed married Perez, Estifania answers:

What, dost thou think I fish without a bait, wench?
I bob for fools? He is mine own, I have him;
I told thee what would tickle him like a trout,
And as I cast it so I caught him daintily,
And all he has I have ’stowed at my devotion. (2.4.8-12)

When Cacafogo presents an easy target, she repeats herself, “Here comes another trout that I must tickle” (4.1.122). The image of fly-fishing even occurs early in the play when Juan warns Perez about Estifania: “Sit close, Don Perez, or your worship’s caught, / I fear a fly” (1.1.119-20). Perez realizes when he is trapped in the hovel, “I stink like a stall-fish” (3.2.58). The only animal comparison Perez can muster against Estifania, on the other hand, is to call her a “pole-cat” (3.5.1), a proverbially smelly animal.

When Leon gains the upper hand, the burden of animal imagery tends to shift toward Margarita. When she lies about being pregnant Leon asks, “Do you conceive as
our jennets do, with a west wind?” (4.3.77). Exasperated that she seems to have been in cahoots with the Duke, Leon asks, “Have I not kept thee waking like a hawk, / And watched thee with delights to satisfy thee, / The very tithes of which had won a widow” (5.3.69-71). Sleep deprivation was a standard element of training hawks, and the image cannot help but recall Petruchio’s soliloquy in *The Taming of the Shrew* in which he tells the audience his strategy for taming Katherine (4.1.188-211). Petruchio’s plan is based on depriving her of the basic necessities of life, food and sleep, whereas Leon keeps Margarita waking with “delights to satisfy” her, a superabundance of pleasure (so much sex that one-tenth would have satisfied a stereotypically lusty widow). Leon adopts and reverses the falconry image to answer Petruchio’s challenge: “He that knows better how to tame a shrew, / Now let him speak; ’tis charity to show” (*Taming of the Shrew* 4.1.210-211). Fletcher’s critical engagement with Shakespeare’s early comedy did not end with his near-sequel, *The Woman’s Prize.* The way animal images are distributed at the conclusion of *Rule a Wife* tells us much about both relationships. They are absent between Leon and Margarita, who seem to have accepted each other as human beings. Perez, however, reconciles with Estifania by admitting, “I see I am an ass when thou are near me” (5.4.43). Margarita is no longer a bird in a cage, but Perez, invited to live in the house, says, “I would live a swallow here” (5.5.155). After his humiliations he has not yet regained his sense of humanity.

31 Taylor and Daileader compare animal imagery in *The Woman’s Prize* and *The Taming of the Shrew* to find that “Fletcher repeatedly takes up Shakespeare’s equestrian metaphors, but puts the woman ‘on top’, casting her as the rider” (19).
Sources, Resources and Dramaturgy

The plots of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife are adapted from two Spanish prose fictions. The Perez-Estifania plot derives from “El casamiento engañoso” (“The Deceitful Marriage”), a tale in Miguel de Cervantes’s Novelas ejemplares (Exemplary Novels, printed in 1613). The Leon-Margarita plot is based on Alonso Jerónimo Salas Barbadillo’s El sagaz Estacio (The Wise Estacio, licensed in 1613, printed in 1620). In the first half of the play Fletcher follows his source materials very closely, but he diverges from the original narratives in the second half, reshaping the stories in response to each other. Instead of using entire plots, Fletcher typically looked to his source materials for unusual situations and interesting hypothetical dilemmas to serve as starting points. To supplement his narrative sources, Fletcher, like all professional playwrights, drew on the personnel and material resources of the acting company, in this case the King’s Men at the Globe and Blackfriars. Because he crafted the play specifically for these actors and their two theatres, these elements were shaping influences on the play itself. Conventions of dramaturgy and stagecraft, common to all the acting companies of the time, also contribute to the construction of the play. Fletcher invents characters to unify his two plots whose origins owe more to theatrical convention than any narrative source. He also structures the second half of the play around recurring appearances of two emblematic stage-properties: a small casket and a letter representing a military commission. The intrigues of the second half of the play are based on these two common props (a box and a piece of paper) in much the same way that the intrigues of the first half are based on the stories of the two Spanish authors.
Henry Weber in 1812 was the first to identify Cervantes’s brief story as the source for the Perez-Estifania plot.32 “En casamiento engañoso” is the penultimate tale in the *Novelas ejemplares*.33 This ironic story of a deceiver deceived is an introduction to the satirical “El coloquio de los perros” (“The Dialogue of the Dogs”). Don Campuzano (the prototype for Perez) tells a friend of his unfortunate marriage, then gives his friend a transcript of what he claims is an overheard conversation between two dogs. Cervantes’s story foregrounds the problem of the unreliable narrator when Campuzano’s companion promises to read the following dialogue only if he does not have to believe it (see El Saffar 33). *Rule a Wife* echoes this theme because it too is concerned with the problem of how much credence one should give to the stories that others tell about themselves. The story consists of Don Campuzano, newly released from the hospital after a treatment for

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32 Weber was unaware of any previous English translation of the story, though one had appeared by John Ozell in 1709. It was published in *The Monthly Amusement* 5 along with Ozell’s translation of the “Dialogue of the Dogs” (Rudder). James Mabbe’s translation of six of the *Novelas ejemplares* (“El casamiento engañoso” not among them) was published in 1640. Bond and Grant, however, cite a complete translation of the *Novelas* by Thomas Shelton dated 1642, and McMullan claims Shelton translated the tales in 1624 (McMullan 258), but such a translation seems never to have existed. These references are probably a confusion for the volume published by J. Nourse in 1742 (title page undated, date from ESTC) entitled *Instructive and Entertaining Novels*. This book contains slightly revised versions of the six stories translated by Mabbe but attributes them to Thomas Shelton, the first translator of *Don Quixote* (1613-1620).

33 It is often assumed that Fletcher used the 1615 French translation of the *Exemplary Novels* for this and other plays; however, Edward M. Wilson has argued that Fletcher’s command of Spanish was more extensive than he is usually given credit for (“Did John Fletcher Read Spanish?” 188). Patricia R. Grant’s 1944 article gives a table of verbal parallels between the Spanish story and the English play but does not compare the French translation.
syphilis, telling his friend Peralta of his recent marriage to Doña Estefanía de Caicedo, who has since run off with her lover. When Campuzano first met her she invited him to what she claimed was her house, and after a few meetings they agreed to marry. Soon after the marriage the actual owner of the house, Doña Clementa Bueso, arrived. Estefanía then convinced Campuzano to “lend” Clementa the house so that she could use it to convince her companion, Don Lope, to marry her. Campuzano and Estefanía moved to poor lodgings where he eventually learns the truth from their landlady. He returned to Clementa’s house, but did not confront her or Lope. He returned to the landlady, who told him that while he was gone she informed Estefanía that Campuzano knew of her treachery. Estefanía fled with her lover, and Campuzano is left with a single suit of clothes and the satisfaction of knowing that all the goods stolen by Estefanía are worthless (Peralta expresses shock at this revelation).

The scenes that derive more or less directly from “En casamiento engañoso” are 1.1 (Perez meets Estifania, she refuses to lift her veil), 1.3 (Perez’s servant follows Estifania to the town house), 1.6 (they negotiate their marriage), 2.4 (Margarita returns to the town house), and 3.4 (the Old Woman reveals that Estifania is poor). Campuzano tells Peralta of a day when he and Captain Pedro de Herrera (loosely the prototype for Juan de Castro) met two ladies after lunch at a public inn. Fletcher changes the location to Juan’s house for 1.1, but the substance of the meeting is the same, including such details as Campuzano’s entreaties to the lady to remove her veil, the mention of her white hands, the arrangement for Campuzano to visit her house after sending one of his servants with her (Fletcher expands the mention of the servant following her into the brief 1.3), and the report by Pedro that Estefanía’s companion has requested him to deliver letters to a captain in Flanders. (In Cervantes’s story Pedro is certain that this captain is
actually her lover; Fletcher raises this possibility but does not develop it.) The interview between Estefanía and Campuzano is the longest episode in the story and 1.6 closely parallels it. Cervantes places this interview during Campuzano’s fourth visit to her house rather than his first—as is typical in the adaptation of prose narrative to drama, the time-scheme is collapsed. Estefanía admits that she is indeed looking for a husband and boasts both of her housekeeping skills and willingness to submit to a husband. Campuzano claims that his wealth consists of his chains, jewels, and clothes. Cervantes here introduces the “cousin” who is later revealed to be Estefanía’s lover, but this character is omitted by Fletcher. This omission is necessary for Fletcher’s most important change to Cervantes’s plot, which is to reunite Perez and Estifania at the conclusion of Rule a Wife.

2.4 is based on the early return of the real mistress of the house (one of two prototypes for Margarita) and adapts Estefanía’s improvisatory solution to this problem: projecting her deceit onto the mistress of the house. In both the play and the story, Perez and Campuzano become complicit in the same deception of which they are victims. 3.4 is based, with comic expansions, on the two brief interviews between Campuzano and his landlady. In Cervantes there is no indication that the Landlady lies about Estefania, while Fletcher’s Old Woman seems to exaggerate Estifania’s sins. After this scene the parallels between the two works diminish as Fletcher reworks the story in his own direction.

3.2 and 4.1 are developed from details in the story, but do not directly parallel any events presented in it. Campuzano reports that he and his wife argued incessantly, so Fletcher presents one such confrontation in 3.2. In 4.1 they confront each other again after Perez has discovered the true owner of Margarita’s house, and they construct

34 See note to 3.4.63.
competitive inventories of the places they have searched for each other. This argument derives from Campuzano’s comment that he could not find Estefanía in any of the places he expected her to be. It was Fletcher’s innovation to include two confrontations between Perez and Margarita, whereas Campuzano is afraid of confronting the lady of the house because of the presence of her male companion. Fletcher presents a cycle of increasing humiliation for Perez which is resolved by his submission to Estifania. Campuzano, in contrast, is left alone, syphilitic and possibly delusional. Fletcher softens Cervantes’s bitter satire into comedy.

**Salas Barbadillo**

Alonso Jerónimo Salas Barbadillo’s *El sagaz Estacio, marido examinado* was approved for publication in 1613 (the same year that Salas Barbadillo himself approved Cervantes’s *Novelas ejemplares*) but was not printed until 1620 (Peyton 20). The book is a “comedia en prosa” or dialogue novel, a form made popular in Spain by Fernando de Rojas’s *La Celestina* (first printed in 1499, it was translated into English by James Mabbe in 1630 as *The Spanish Bawd*, and earlier served as the ultimate source for John Rastell’s 1527 play *Calisto and Melebea*). As noted above, Edward M. Wilson argues forcefully

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35 Mabbe and Fletcher are associated if Fletcher is the “I. F.” who wrote two commendatory poems for the 1622 first edition of Mabbes’s *The Rogue*, a translation of the picaresque novel *Guzman de Alfarache* by Mateo Aleman. For the attribution to Fletcher see McMullan 257. *The Rogue* is a source for Fletcher and Massinger’s *The Little French Lawyer*. Mabbe spent several years in Spain, and he could have supplied Fletcher with Spanish books not otherwise widely available. Another possible avenue for Spanish literature reaching Fletcher is Leonard Digges. His translation of *Gerardo, The Unfortunate Spaniard*, also published in 1622, was the source for Fletcher and Rowley’s *The Maid in the Mill*. Digges and Mabbe both supplied commendatory verses for Shakespeare’s *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies*, published, along with
in favour of Fletcher’s command of Spanish and of his direct use of Salas Barbadillo’s untranslated novel as a source for *Rule a Wife*. G. E. Bentley is hesitant to accept Wilson’s conclusion, claiming that while Fletcher “may have heard the story of the Spanish novel,” the similarities Wilson cites “seem to me sufficiently obvious developments of the situation to have been due to chance” (*JCS* 3: 411). Bentley bases his reasonably cautious comments on Wilson’s summary, but a recent comparison of *El sagaz Estacio* and *Rule a Wife* by Mary Lucille Dudy Bjork conclusively demonstrates Fletcher’s indebtedness to Salas Barbadillo (Bjork 61-101).

The novel portrays Doña Marcela’s search for a husband who will add a patina of respectability to her life as a courtesan, protect her from arrest, and shield her property from legal seizure. She and her lover Don Pedro, along with other male admirers, suggest and reject a satiric catalogue of potential husbands. They then interview Estacio, who demonstrates his aptitude as a consenting cuckold by praising Marcela’s caresses of Pedro. Estacio even claims that he was formerly supported by his dead wife’s lovers. There is then a mock-trial in which a set of witnesses testify on behalf of Estacio’s character. Marcela decides to marry Estacio, who is then inducted into the brotherhood

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*The Rogue* and *Gerardo*, by Edward Blount. Gary Taylor discusses the connections between these authors in “Making Meaning Marketing Shakespeare 1623.” See Lee Bliss’s “*Don Quixote* in England: The Case for *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*” for an important reappraisal of the cultural commerce between England and Spain in the first decade of the seventeenth century

36 *El sagaz Estacio* has never been translated into English and it was not translated into French until 1634.

37 A more extensive summary of the main plot is given by Wilson (“*Rule a Wife*” 190-91). The following discussion is indebted to his article and to Bjork’s dissertation chapter.
of complaisant cuckolds. Pedro and his entourage visit Marcela hoping for a luxurious reception, but instead are confronted by Estacio, who prevents their entrance by threatening them with a shotgun. He reveals that during a storm at sea he made a vow to god to reform a prostitute, hence the elaborate deception, and he reports that Marcela has consented to his rule and reformed her lustful behaviour.

Wilson notes that 2.1 (the list of potential husbands), 2.3 (the examination of Leon by Margarita), 3.1 (Leon’s first signs of rebellion), and the first half of 3.5 (Leon threatens Margarita’s lover) “tell the same story as I have summarized from the novel” (191). In addition to the parallel plots, Wilson cites these details: the names Medina and Sanch(o), Marcela/Margarita’s fear of legal forfeiture, the prodigious appetites of Estacio and Leon, and a close verbal parallel in the description of Leon and Estacio as trees or trunks to which Margarita and Marcela will add branches (191-92). Fletcher models 2.1 on the episode in which many types of suitors are proposed and rejected, but in an important change Margarita consults a group of ladies while Marcela consults her lover and his servants. In both of Fletcher’s source stories the female protagonists have taken lovers before their marriages. Adjusting his sources to his own needs, Fletcher eliminates these lovers. In Rule a Wife the husbands compete not with other men, but with their own wives.

Fletcher alters the narrative proportions of his source considerably. Most of El sagaz Estacio consists of prenuptial negotiations, and the central episode is the

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38 Estacio’s induction into a brotherhood of cuckolds is loosely reflected in his short banter with the Servant at 3.1.46-55.

39 For example, the Duke is only a prospective lover and does not appear until after Margarita’s marriage to Leon. Estifania’s level of sexual experience is left ambiguous.
examination of three witnesses (an old wife, a military captain, and a drunk posing as Estacio’s foster-father) who attest to Estacio’s character. Leon presents no witnesses on his behalf, but in 2.3 Margarita examines Leon herself. The episode in which servants to Marcela’s lover examine Estacio is loosely reflected in 1.5, though Juan questions Leon’s fitness for military duty rather than his fitness for marriage. Both episodes demonstrate Estacio and Leon’s (seeming) willingness to forgo honour and fidelity in favour of material comfort. It is not until the last few pages of *El sagaz Estacio* that the marriage of Estacio and Marcela is reported, while Leon and Margarita wed between 2.3 and 2.4. Fletcher is interested in the unusual behaviour and situations generated by this marriage; Salas Barbadillo reports rather than presents the post-nuptial events. Estacio’s transformation is instantaneous, whereas Fletcher, working according to the demands of a different medium, dramatizes a process whereby Leon’s true nature is revealed to both Margarita and the audience in phases. Marcela’s reclamation is presented as a *fait accompli*, while the timing and nature of Margarita’s submission is presented in a deliberately ambiguous manner by Fletcher.

As with Fletcher’s use of Cervantes, the correspondence between the source text and *Rule a Wife* diminishes in the later sections of the play. The collaboration between Leon and Margarita in which they humiliate the Duke is entirely of Fletcher’s own invention. Perhaps the most important element that Fletcher adopts from Salas Barbadillo is what Myron Peyton cites as the Spanish author’s “original twist” to the tradition of the complacent cuckold: “having Eustace, the supposed cuckold, reveal his ultimate purpose as that of merely feigning complaisance in order to gain a rich wife, whose irregular customs he intended to reform” (22).
Unifying the Sources

Fletcher usually looked to his sources for extreme situations which could be exploited to dramatic and rhetorical effect.40 His practice in Rule a Wife is no different: after the first two acts, once he establishes a situation ripe for dramatic confrontation, he deviates widely from his source material and reshapes the two plots in relation to each other. Fletcher found in these works two complementary hypothetical situations which he fused into a coherent whole. Margarita, for example, draws the two plots together because she is based on both Clementa, the real owner of the house in Cervantes, and Marcela, the subjugated wife of El sagaz Estacio. Fletcher creates other characters who function as devices to unite the two plots. It is the witty serving-maid Altea rather than a male matchmaker who introduces Leon to Margarita. Fletcher supplements the sources with conventional figures drawn from his dramatic idiom. Colonel Juan de Castro and the soldiers Sanchio and Alonzo are part of the martial background of the play. This martial background is found in Cervantes, but Fletcher integrates it into both plots by inventing Juan’s interrogation of Leon’s fitness for service and the fake commission the Duke presents to Leon. Juan himself is a detached observer of the kind that early modern audiences had learned to rely on for accurate information about intrigue plots. Many of Fletcher’s plays contain a small group of men, usually courtiers or soldiers, who comment on the main action while remaining only tangentially connected to it. This dramaturgical convention is as significant a source for Juan de Castro as Captain Pedro de Herrera, Juan’s analogue in “El casamiento engañoso.” Sanchio and Alonzo share some characteristics with the men who surround Marcela in El sagaz Estacio and repeat

40 Eugene Waith’s Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher is perhaps the most influential statement of this point of view.
some of the jokes from Cervantes about the sweating cure for syphilis, but they also have their origins in the witty, bawdy soldiers and gentlemen of almost any Jacobean comedy. Fletcher’s mastery is not in his characterizations of these standard figures (which were conventional enough to require little preparation by the actors), but in his use of them to integrate his plots.

The most important character Fletcher created to unite his plots is Cacafogo, a fat, greedy usurer (a type also heavily indebted to theatrical convention). Cacafogo wishes to become one of Margarita’s paramours. Estifania learns of Cacafogo’s desire and pawns Perez’s worthless jewels to him by claiming they are Margarita’s and that this favour will endear him to her. This money is part of the reason Perez finally yields to her because it demonstrates her ability to thrive despite their straitened circumstances. Estifania also directs Cacafogo to Margarita’s house where he serves as the “devil” yelling under the stage with which Margarita frightens the Duke out of his pursuit of her, demonstrating to everyone that she is faithful to Leon now. In both plots Cacafogo is instrumental in the reconciliation of each couple. Richard Levin describes his structural purpose: Cacafogo creates a three-level hierarchy which contrasts the ruling and ruled members of each couple with an unequivocal loser. After Margarita and Perez have been fooled by their spouses, “the Cacafogo episodes . . . can work toward a reduction of that inferiority by allowing them to take a part, albeit a secondary one . . . in tricking this universal ‘fall guy,’ so that at the end they seem to have ascended the scale of wit to a point more nearly equal to Leon and Estifania” (87-88).

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41 1.2, which at first glance seems to be the scene least related to either plot, introduces Margarita as a woman of notorious reputation. Their talk of Margarita owes something to the two scoundrels in El sagaz Estacio, Montufo and Ahumado, who hope to find pleasure at Marcela’s house.
ACTORS

Fletcher drew on conventional character-types, but he also wrote with specific actors in mind. He had grown familiar with these actors in his more than a decade of writing for the King’s Men, and it is important to consider the actors who probably took part in the original performances of *Rule a Wife* because their skill sets were resources available to Fletcher before he sat down to write. We have unusually detailed information about the active members and employees of the King’s Men during the season when *Rule a Wife* was first performed. Fletcher’s play was licensed on 19 October 1624 and performed at court on 2 November and 26 December of the same year. Presumably it was performed at least a few times in the Blackfriars theatre in those months. On 20 December, between the two court performances of *Rule a Wife*, the leading actors of the King’s Men signed a letter of apology and submission to Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, for performing without the required licence *The Spanish Viceroy*, a lost play (*JCS* 5: 1412). The signers are Joseph Taylor, John Lowin, Richard Robinson, John Shank, Eyllaerdt Swanston, John Rice, Thomas Pollard, William Rowley, Robert Benfield, Richard Sharpe, and George Birch.\(^42\) Bentley notes that “every patented member of the troupe except John Heminges and Henry Condell signed the letter” (*JCS* 5: 1413). Heminges and Condell, the established leaders of the company who had ushered Shakespeare’s *Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies* into print the previous year, are unlikely candidates for the first cast of *Rule a Wife* because they “had long since ceased to act,” and so were presumably not required to apologize (*JCS* 1: 18). Rather, the men named in this letter are the starting-point for speculations concerning the male roles

\(^{42}\) Spelling has been normalized according to the form of the entry-headings in *JCS*. 

in the original cast. There is less direct evidence for the boys who originated the female roles, but the most likely candidates are named playing female roles in cast lists of the mid-to-late 1620s: John Thompson, John Honyman, William Trigg, Alexander Gough, Robert Pallant, and James Horne.

There is one other relevant document to note before exploring the original cast of the play. Names of the musicians and hired men who took part in the production of drama in the early modern period do not usually survive. Henry Herbert, however, issued an official letter exempting the named “Musicians and other necessary attendants” of the King’s Men from arrest or impressment on 27 December 1624, the day after the second known court performance of *Rule a Wife* (*JCS* 1: 15-16). Those who aided the King’s Men in the first production of *Rule a Wife* and the other plays of late 1624 were: the bookkeeper Edward Knight; the actors William Gascoigne, William Mago, Robert Pallant, William Patrick, Thomas Tuckfield, Nicholas Underhill, George Vernon, and perhaps George Ricknor (whose name is deleted); the wardrobe-keeper John Rhodes; the musicians Ambrose Beeland, William Saunders, William Tawyer, and Henry Wilson; and the hired men (whose connection to the company is known only through this list) Edward Ashborne, Alexander Bullard, William Carver, William Chambers, Robert Clark, Henry Clay, Jeffery Collins, and Anthony Knight.43

It is impossible to know which actors originated the roles of *Rule a Wife*. The editors of the 1679 second folio of the Beaumont and Fletcher plays did not add a cast list as they did for many other plays. Not all of the actors, hired men, and musicians noted

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43 The classification of the men is based on *JCS*, vol. 2, and Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company* (appendix 1).
above took part in the play.\footnote{T. J. King makes this point in his study of surviving promptbooks and cast-lists: “the leading actors play most of the principal roles in any given play, but in no instance do all the leading actors of the company perform in any one play” (50).} Given the impossibility of determining a complete assignment of roles, the following discussion will focus only on a few roles and indicate only ranges of probability. The underlying assumption here is that Fletcher, a veteran playwright with years of experience writing for the same company, chose his material and shaped his plays with the talents and needs of the company in mind. Seven adult actors are required for the major non-doubling male roles (parentheses contain the approximate number of lines spoken by each character): Perez (450), Leon (360), Cacafogo (130), Juan (110), the Duke (80), Alonzo (65), and Sanchio (40). As the list above demonstrates, the King’s Men had no shortage of attendants available in 1624 to act as extras. Two hired men, however, can easily play the other male roles (none of whom speak more than thirteen lines): Lorenzo, the Coachman, and servants for Perez, Juan and Margarita. Three non-doubling boys are required for the roles of Margarita (300), Estifania (275), and Altea (70). The play also has a relatively large number of smaller (but still principal) female roles: the Old Woman (25), 2 Lady (20), Clara (15), 1 Lady (15), and the Maid (10).\footnote{I use King’s definition of a “principal” role here: more than twenty-five lines for a male character and more than ten lines for a female character (King 1).} Then there are the remaining minor parts of 3 Lady and Margarita’s female servant who each have less than five lines (the boy who only sings a song in 3.1 should be counted as well).\footnote{3 Lady speaks three lines in 1.4 but does not appear in 2.1, the next scene with the two Old Ladies Margarita has summoned for advice. It is possible that the character was cut from the play sometime during the rehearsal process. Also, the 1 and 2 Old Lady of 1.4, 2.1, and 2.3 are different characters from}
play all the secondary and minor female roles (most of whom appear in only one or two scenes), though that would allow only twelve lines for them to change from the Old Woman and her daughter in 3.4 before entering as mute Ladies in 3.5. It is more likely that these smaller parts were divided among three or even four boy actors and that the comic parts of the Old Woman and her daughter the Maid were played by older comedians. In the later stage history of the play it was traditional for male comedians to play the Old Woman and her daughter. Though most surviving evidence indicates that female roles were always taken by young actors, it is not unreasonable to project that tradition backwards.\textsuperscript{47} Fletcher knew the resources of the company, so there were at least three very talented boys taking roles in 1624 and at least three or four competent boys, perhaps in the earlier years of their training, available for smaller to middling roles.

Though it is a work to be approached with caution, T. W. Baldwin’s \textit{The Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company}, tempered with the skeptical (and often sarcastic) reservations of G. E. Bentley, is still a useful departure point for determining the possible roles of the company’s actors. The following paragraphs make use of both these works along with the study of casting made by T. J. King. Baldwin casts the play as follows: Taylor as Perez, Lowin as Leon, Pallant as Margarita, Thompson as Estifania, Rowley as Cacafogo, Swanston as Juan, Sharpe as the Duke, the two Ladies who attend Margarita in 3.5 and 4.3. Because the Ladies and Old Ladies appear in no scenes together and could be played by the same boys, they are not distinguished here.

\textsuperscript{47} David Kathman’s recent article on boy actors examines the evidence that Anthony Turner may have played a small comic female role in \textit{Fair Maid of the West}, pt. 1 when he was an adult sharer in Queen Henrietta’s Men: “if the [cast] list is accurate, it suggests that sharers may have occasionally taken very minor female roles of a non-sexual nature, perhaps for comic effect” (238).
Honyman as Altea, Pollard as Alonzo, Benfield as Sanchio, Trigg as the Old Woman, and Goffe as Clara. Baldwin does not propose an actor for 2 Lady, a larger role than Clara.

During the 1620s and 1630s John Lowin and Joseph Taylor were the premier actors of the King’s Men. Their known roles indicate that they typically shared the two largest parts between them. This dual star structure of the King’s Men probably motivated Fletcher to combine the two source stories so that the two leading actors could take turns as the focus of attention. In this sense, the desires and talents of the actors are also a source for *Rule a Wife*. According to Baldwin, Lowin, who played Bosola in *The Duchess of Malfi* and Domitian in *The Roman Actor*, would have brought to Leon a “certain bluff gruffness, which may be of the ‘honest’ soldier type, or that of the rather domineering villain” (186). In his known roles, Lowin’s large size is often remarked upon, so his physical stature may be the source for similar references to Leon’s large size. Taylor was known for playing “the handsome, heroic young lover,” and probably played Perez, a handsome lover who is driven to extremes (*JCS* 2: 591, paraphrasing Baldwin). He played Ferdinand in *The Duchess of Malfi*, so Fletcher shaped the speeches in which Perez verges on madness, episodes only hinted at in Cervantes, with a clear idea of Taylor’s ability in such situations. Lowin and Taylor did not act in every play staged by the King’s Men, however, and it is always possible that one or both of them did not act in this play. Fletcher may have written characters with certain actors in mind, but that practice is no guarantee that those actors did play those characters.

For the second-tier male characters it is foolhardy to claim certainty about specific assignments based on the little evidence which survives, but there are strong possibilities to consider. Juan, the Duke, Alonzo, and Sanchio could have been played, in any number of combinations, by Robinson, Shank, Swanston, Rice, Pollard, Benfield, Birch, or
Sharpe. Shank and Pollard were both famous comedians, and the bawdy dialogue in 1.2 between Sanchio and Alonzo could have been written for them. On the other hand, they may have originally played the poor Old Woman and her daughter with their age contributing to the grotesque nature of the characters. Eyllaerdt Swanston, who joined the King’s Men sometime between 1622 and 1624, played villains and lovers before becoming a leading man in the 1630s. Baldwin assigns Juan to him, but the role of the Duke would better fit a villainous lover. Robinson and Sharpe were both famous as boy players with the King’s Men, but by the mid-1620s they seem to have grown out of playing female roles. They would not have been out of place in any of the four secondary male roles. Benfield’s known roles tend, Baldwin and Bentley point out, to rank third or fourth in number of lines (such as Antonio in the 1619-23 revival of *The Duchess of Malfi*), and his presence in a large number of cast lists in the 1679 Beaumont and Fletcher folio shows that Fletcher wrote many roles for him. Benfield joined the King’s Men around 1616, approximately the same time Fletcher began writing exclusively for them. They had probably worked together earlier when both were involved with the Queen’s Revels and Lady Elizabeth’s companies. Baldwin notes that Benfield tended to play kings, senators, and other “dignified parts” (183). Juan is the only character in *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* who does not have his dignity severely compromised at one time or another. It is tempting to speculate that he could have played many of the detached observers, such as Juan, who appear throughout Fletcher’s plays. It is very likely that William Rowley, known for his roles as a fat clown, first played Cacafogo (*JCS* 2: 556). He had recently joined the King’s Men in 1623. Bentley,

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48 Sharpe played the Duchess of Malfi, and Robinson’s female impersonations were praised by Jonson in *The Devil is an Ass* (2.8.64-75).
following Baldwin, notes that Cacafogo is similar to other characters thought to have been written for (and by) Rowley, a veteran actor and co-author of plays such as *The Changeling* and *A Cure for a Cuckold*.\(^{49}\) As noted above in the discussion of the structural function of Cacafogo, Fletcher made Rowley’s role integral to both plots of *Rule a Wife* rather than using him in detachable comic episodes.

There is less evidence indicating which boy actors took part in the first performances of *Rule a Wife*. John Thompson played Julia in *The Duchess of Malfi* and Domitia in *The Roman Actor*; he was “the leading boy actor in the King’s company” between 1621 and 1631 (*JCS* 2: 599). There is little reason to argue with Baldwin’s assignment to him of Estifania. A regular playgoer would recognize an echo of Thompson’s performance as Julia, who attempts to seduce Bosola at gunpoint in *The Duchess of Malfi* (5.2), when Estifania confronts Perez with two handguns. Fletcher could have been alluding to the earlier play itself, or he may have written this scene to repeat a situation which may have been popular for this actor.\(^{50}\) John Honyman, born in 1612, was also “one of the most important boy actors in the company from about 1626 to about 1630” (*JCS* 2: 476). He acted Domitilla, the second largest female role in *The Roman Actor*, and he is a likely candidate for the role of Margarita. Baldwin’s suggestion that he played Altea also has merit, a smaller role perhaps more appropriate to his younger age. Robert Pallant, named in the 1624 list of attendants, played Cariola and

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\(^{49}\) Other roles in Beaumont and Fletcher plays that Bentley and Baldwin assign to Rowley are Bustopha in *The Maid in the Mill* (which he co-authored with Fletcher), Tony in *A Wife for a Month*, the Cook in *Rollo, Duke of Normandy*, and the Clown in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. The King’s Men seem to have been very accommodating of their new member’s talents; the successive drafts of Middleton’s *A Game at Chess* show the creation of a new character, the Fat Bishop, for Rowley.

\(^{50}\) Estacio does confront Marcela’s suitors with a firearm at the climax of *El sagaz Estacio*. 
the Doctor in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Baldwin assigns him the role of Margarita (which Bentley doubts), and if he was the son of the older actor Robert Pallant born in 1605 then he may have already outgrown female roles. Trigg and Gough both played smaller roles in *The Roman Actor* and could have played Altea, 1 and 2 Lady, Clara, or the Old Woman. Gough was only twelve when he first played Vespatian’s concubine in *The Roman Actor*, but it is unlikely that he took one of the major female roles in *Rule a Wife* when he was just ten years old. James Horne is, as Bentley writes, “somewhat difficult to place” (*JCS* 2: 479). He appears in the list of King’s Men who received black cloth for James I’s funeral in 1625, which argues against considering him a boy at all. He played one of the Lictors in *The Roman Actor*, but his placement among the other boys in the cast list for *The Lover’s Melancholy* in 1628 indicates that he sometimes played female roles.

**Theatres and Staging: First Performances**

The theatres of the King’s Men, the small indoor Blackfriars and the larger outdoor second Globe, were also important resources for Fletcher. He designed a play which could work in either theatre without awkwardness. It relies on witty dialogue and situations rather than extraordinary (and expensive) spectacle. The necessary staging is so compact that the play would have been easily portable, requiring no modifications for court or provincial touring. Act breaks, which the King’s Men seem to have adopted after they began performing regularly at the Blackfriars late in the first decade of the seventeenth century, are written into the play. Acts 3, 4, and 5 all begin with the entrance of characters who exited at the conclusion of the previous act. Presumably a musical interlude separated the acts. *Rule a Wife* requires only two stage-doors; for example,
dialogue indicates that Sanchio and Alonzo exit in different directions at the conclusion of 1.2. Nothing in the play requires a third door or discovery space, nor are any scenes set “above” the stage, even though these resources were available at both the second Globe and the Blackfriars. There are directions in 5.5 for Cacafogo to make noise “below,” so there must be a usable space underneath the stage; however, he does not enter or exit from below, so a trapdoor in the stage is not required. Off-stage knocking noises are called for in 2.4 and 4.3, but they originate from behind rather than below the stage. The final scene takes place at night, which is indicated by the taper which Altea carries on as that scene begins. The Duke enters in a “gown” (5.5.12.1) to show that he was in bed, but a bed itself is not required. In another instance of a common prop pointedly not appearing in the play, Margarita calls for a banquet in 3.4 but Leon enters instead to inform her that the meal will not be ready until he has met her guests. The only special music called for is a song sung by a boy in 3.1, but the lyrics are not printed in Q1. Costuming requirements include, in addition to the gown for the Duke mentioned already, veils for Estifania and Clara to wear and a change of clothes for Leon after his marriage. There is explicitly only one costume apiece for Estifania and Perez. In 3.4, the Old Woman tells Perez that Estifania had but “one civil gown” (3.4.50), and Perez notes with horror that he too is left with “one civil suit” (3.4.53). The economic disparity between the two couples is emphasized onstage by these costuming choices. Given the number of plays set in Spain or with Spanish characters staged by the King’s Men in the preceding decade, flamboyant Spanish-style attire would have been part of their stock of costumes. No special costs were required to dress the characters. The play also calls for a few weapons which were common on the Jacobean stage: swords for the gentlemen (Leon and the Duke almost fight in 3.5, and the sound of swords clashing is heard at
5.3.24) and a pistol and a dag (a large handgun) for Estifania in 5.4. There are no actual sword-fights onstage, though, so combat choreography is not required. As a consummate professional, Fletcher composed this play according to the resources which were available to the company. The small production costs required of a repertory company by *Rule a Wife* may partly help explain its appeal to later troupes and its longevity on the stage.

Fletcher departs from his narrative sources in the third act, and in the fourth act he introduces two stage properties with emblematic and structural functions. A commission (just a piece of paper) and a casket are used in a pattern of exchanges in the latter half of the play. In 4.2 the Duke gives a commission to Juan so he can deliver it to Leon, which Juan does at the start of 4.3. The false commission is a ploy by the Duke to separate Leon from Margarita by sending him to fight in the Low Countries. Leon sees through the ruse and foils the plan by vowing to bring Margarita with him on his tour of duty. The Duke enters later in 4.3, and Leon berates him for his “too rank, too open, too evident” trick (4.3.117). The false commission drives the action of the Leon-Margarita plot in Act 4 and has no direct parallel in *El sagaz Estacio*. The same piece of paper appears again during the reconciliations at the end of the play when the “true commission” is given to Leon by the Duke (5.5.161). The parallelism of this doubled prop gives a sense of form and coherent design to the Leon-Margarita plot, which otherwise could have devolved into a series of disconnected deceptions.\(^{51}\) Perez’s casket of worthless jewels first appears in 4.1 when Estifania describes the costume jewelry in

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\(^{51}\) Though the King’s Men presumably had no shortage of such small props, the same paper which represented the commission could have represented the letter Clara gives Juan in 1.1 and the paper Estifania shows Perez in 2.4.
order to humiliate Perez. This inventory was to become one of the favourite points for actresses performing Estifania. The circulation of the casket drives the action of their plot in the last two acts. Later in 4.1 she pawns the casket with Cacafogo; he re-enters with it in 5.2 after learning that it is worthless and he meets Perez. In this scene it is Perez’s turn to humiliate Cacafogo. Perez is impressed by Estifania: “She has taken half mine anger off with this trick” (5.2.69). He purchases the casket back for half a ducat—a 999.5 ducat loss for Cacafogo. The casket, a token without value, contrasts with whatever token of value, either money or a jewel, that Margarita gives Estifania in “recompense for service” (5.4.158). The box of jewels does originate in Cervantes, where Campuzano reveals late in the story that his gifts to Estefanía were worthless, but the intrigue by which Estifania cozens Cacafogo and wins Perez’s submission is Fletcher’s invention. This line of action, based on the circulation of a prop, reunites the couple who remained estranged in “En casamiento engañoso.” Once Fletcher establishes the situations found in his sources and rings a series of changes following from the implications of those hypotheticals, he resolves the play through different intrigues and manipulates them toward a complementary conclusion.
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife in 1624

The political and cultural climate of 1624, particularly England’s preparations for war and the ongoing negotiations for the marriage of Prince Charles to Henrietta Maria, shaped certain features of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife. The play’s prologue illustrates how the King’s Men themselves situated the play in the context of late 1624, and so an examination of it will help us begin to understand Rule a Wife’s complex relationship to its initial historical moment.

Plays on Spanish topics were very popular in the 1620s, yet the prologue of Rule a Wife expresses a fear that the audience will not enjoy the play because of its Spanish setting. The prologue pleads with the audience, “do not your looks let fall, / Nor to remembrance our late errors call, / Because this day we’re Spaniards all again” (Pro. 3-5). The “late errors” refer to the scandal surrounding the production of Thomas Middleton’s A Game at Chess and to a less well-known episode involving the lost play The Spanish Viceroy. In early August the nine-day run of A Game at Chess led to a suspension of playing by the King’s Men for two weeks (and possibly Middleton’s imprisonment). Middleton’s play celebrated Charles’s return from Madrid after the failure of England and Spain to come to terms for the marriage of Charles to the Infanta Maria. James

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52 Paulina Kewes discusses this proliferation of “Spanish” plays in the 1620s, and compares them to earlier treatments: “[t]he tone of theatrical accounts of contemporary Spain changed from defiance and outrage in late Elizabethan drama to more muted and subtle condemnation of Spanish guile in Jacobean and Caroline plays” (180). Rule a Wife uses the Spanish setting to accentuate the atmosphere of intrigue.

53 The circumstances of A Game at Chess’s performance are outlined in T. H. Howard-Hill’s Revels edition, as well as his Middleton’s ‘Vulgar Pasquin.’ Dutton (Licensing) and Cogswell (Blessed Revolution) also offer important interpretations of the events surrounding the play.
briefly punished the company, however, in order to smooth ruffled diplomatic feathers after the Spanish ambassador complained. *Rule a Wife* was licensed on 19 October, two months after the King’s Men were ordered to cease performing *A Game at Chess*.

Fletcher’s comedy was performed at court “for the ladys” on 2 November and for Prince Charles on 26 December (*JCS* 3: 408). The cheeky tone of the prologue leads one to suspect that it was not spoken at either of the court performances of *Rule a Wife*, but was instead written for audiences at the Blackfriars (the company’s winter house). Preceding the play at its first performance(s), the prologue would have reminded audience members of *A Game at Chess*, a production that, despite official censure, was an outstanding success for the King’s Men. The prologue does not apologize for *A Game at Chess*. Instead, it warns (dares?) an audience ready to apply the play to contemporary events that “we present their [Spain’s] wit and not their state” (Pro. 8).

The King’s Men’s other recent error, *The Spanish Viceroy*, did present the Spanish “state” in some way (given the title), but the nature of that treatment is unknowable. What little is known of this play derives from a letter sent by the King’s Men to Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, in which they “doe confess and herby acknowledge that wee have offended . . . and are very sorry” for performing the play despite its “not being licensed under your worships hande” (*JCS* 5: 1412). The King’s

54 If anyone had forgotten the play’s very public insult to the Spanish, a reminder came in early October in the form of the Spanish ambassador’s hasty departure. John Chamberlain reported that “Don Carlos Coloma went hence without kissing the King’s hand” (E. Thomson 333).

55 The original letter, dated 20 December 1624 (the week before the King’s Men performed *Rule a Wife* for Prince Charles), refers to the play as having been acted “not long since” (*JCS* 5: 1412). Herbert copied the letter into his account book in 1633 as part of the aftermath of the censorship of *The Woman’s Prize*. The series of documents relating to this event is printed in Bawcutt, 182-84.
Men correctly gambled that they could perform an unlicensed play on a potentially
dangerous topic without serious consequences: they played at court six times that
season. Perhaps this lack of punishment explains the self-assured tone of the prologue
to _Rule a Wife_. It tells the audience to not take offence at the play because, “’tis Spain, /
No such gross errors in your kingdom reign” (Pro. 9-12). Like other prologues, it is
“typical of its form in disingenuously alerting the audience to find exactly what it tells
them they should not expect” (Dutton, _Licensing_ 60). The emphasis on the Spanish
setting and the allusion to _A Game at Chess_ cannot help but bring to mind the failure of
the Spanish Match. In one sense, the prologue celebrates the fact that Spanish manners
could be dealt with lightly because they no longer posed the same danger they had when
Charles contemplated marrying the Infanta. The magnitude of the events following the
dissolution of the match threatens to distract attention from the way _Rule a Wife_, under
cover of a Spanish setting, reflects the anxiety surrounding the subsequent negotiations
with France for the hand of Henrietta Maria. The relationship between the French Match
and the play is discussed below, after an examination of the martial background of the
play. The preparation for war with Spain and marriage with France were the twin prongs
of English foreign policy following Charles and Buckingham’s return from Spain.

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56 The only other company to play that season, the Queen of Bohemia’s Men, performed only once
(Astington, _English Court Theatre_ 256).

57 Theatrical responses to the Spanish Match and war preparations are explored by Jerzy Limon in his
book _Dangerous Matter_, which outlines the political implications of many dramatic productions during
1623 and 1624. He discusses Jonson’s _Neptune’s Triumph_, Thomas Drue’s _The Duchess of Suffolk_,
Massinger’s _The Bondman_, Dekker and Ford’s _The Sun’s Darling_, and Middleton’s _A Game at Chess_ at
length.
“Are You For the Wars?”

*Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* is a comedy about deception and marriage. It begins, however, with a discussion of military matters between two officers. Michael Perez, a captain, asks his friend and senior officer Juan de Castro, a colonel, whether he has fulfilled his recruitment quota. Juan admits that his companies are not full, “[n]or will not be this month yet, as I reckon” (1.1.2). Perez responds that he is still recruiting, and notes, pragmatically, that as long as money is available for recruitment, they will fill their companies. Juan points out that “[m]any young gallants” recruited so far are attracted not only by the salary, but also by “dainty dreams” of war (1.1.7). Juan observes, “[t]ime and experience will allay those visions” (1.1.8). These opening lines, which may seem to later audiences to be merely scene-setting, had a special relevance to the play’s first audiences and performers.

As discussed above, Henry Herbert issued a warrant on 27 December 1624 (the day after the second known performance of *Rule a Wife*) which ordered that none of the men named, nor any “[m]usitions and other necessary attendantes” be “arested, or deteyned vnder arest, imprisoned, Press’d for Souldiers or any other molestacon” because they must be available for the King’s winter revels (*JCS* 1: 15). Protection from arrest is a fine benefit for a working performer, but the most important clause in Herbert’s warrant is the protection from impressment. Many warrants for forced military recruitment were issued in 1624 because that year England prepared, for the first time during King James’s long reign, for full-scale war. The hired men and musicians of the King’s Men needed this additional protection because they were not, like the sharers of the company, liveried servants of the king; they were vulnerable to impressment. The King’s Men, Henry Herbert (who licensed plays), and Fletcher were concerned about the state of military
recruitment for very practical reasons, as the warrant of 27 December demonstrates. The warrant was not issued until after the play had been written and performed, but war-drums were beating throughout the year, and it is necessary here to sketch in some of the important events of 1624 to show that military questions were in the foreground of the author’s and original audience’s interest.

England in 1624 prepared two major undertakings: the marriage of Prince Charles to Princess Henrietta Maria of France and war with Spain. The war and the marriage were the direct results of the failure of negotiations with Spain for the marriage of Prince Charles to the Infanta Maria of Spain, sister of the young King Philip IV. Marriage negotiations between England and Spain had been under way in a more or less leisurely fashion since before 1614, though the failure of the Addled Parliament of that year made James even more eager for the dowry a marriage would bring (Kishlansky 95). Fletcher gently joked about the planned alliance in *The Scornful Lady* (performed by the Queen’s Revels children in 1614-15): “I will stile thee Noble; nay, Don Diego, / Ile woe [i.e., woo] thy Infanta for thee” (3.2.17-18). This is a reference to the Spanish ambassador Don Diego Sarmiento, Count Gondomar, who arrived in England to begin negotiations in May 1613 (Gayley, *Beaumont* 371-73). James’s diplomatic goal was to balance the marriage of his daughter Elizabeth to Frederick, the Protestant Elector Palatine, with a Catholic Spanish bride for Prince Charles, in order to “encourage the reconciliation of protestants and catholics and thereby contribute to that general pacification which he hoped to bring about” (Lockyer, *Tudor and Stuart Britain* 236). The Bohemian crisis in the early period of what became the Thirty Years War made the need for such a match

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58 *The Scornful Lady* is a Beaumont and Fletcher collaboration, but this particular scene is usually ascribed to Fletcher (Hoy, “Shares III” 96).
acute. James’s son-in-law Frederick accepted the crown of Bohemia (against James’s explicit advice), but was soon driven out of Prague by Imperial troops at the Battle of White Mountain in October 1620. Frederick was also dispossessed of his hereditary lands in the Palatinate by the invasion of Spinola’s Spanish Army of Flanders in the weeks before White Mountain. Though James resented Frederick’s failure to follow his advice, his “grandchildren were legitimate heirs [to the Palatinate] and it was neither just nor reasonable to deprive them of their inheritance,” as Buckingham pointed out in a letter to Gondomar (qtd. in Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution* 18-19). James spent years attempting to make Spanish support for the restoration of the Palatinate a condition of the marriage. Frustration with the protracted negotiations led to the famous journey to Spain of Charles and Buckingham in February 1623.\(^{59}\) Their return on 5 October 1623 without a Spanish bride provoked the largest positive public celebrations that the early Stuart dynasty was to experience.\(^{60}\) The return of the Prince effectively quashed any hopes of a Spanish Match and in late March James accepted Parliament’s advice to break off negotiations and declare war on Spain. Simultaneously, he sent ambassadors to France to open talks for a marriage with Henrietta Maria.

The course of action which emerged from the Parliament of 1624 was to equip an army and refurbish the English navy (for coastal protection and, it was hoped, interception of the Spanish bullion shipments from the new world). The Palatinate

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59 A detailed narrative of the journey is given by Roger Lockyer in his biography of Buckingham (136-64); the most comprehensive treatment of the episode is S. R. Gardiner’s *Prince Charles and the Spanish Marriage 1617-1623*. A recent study making use of archival material not available to Gardiner is Glyn Redworth’s *The Prince and the Infanta*.

60 Thomas Cogswell discusses the cultural and historical significance of these celebrations in his article “England and the Spanish Match” and the prologue to *The Blessed Revolution*. 
expedition was to be commanded by the German mercenary Count Ernst von Mansfeld. James “agreed to give him command of a force of ten thousand infantry and three thousand horse, to be employed, under the joint direction of England and France, ‘for re-establishing the peace and recovering the Palatinate’” (Lockyer, Buckingham 192). The preparation of “the first military expedition in a generation” involved “[e]xtended wrangling over the new officers,” leading Secretary of State Sir Edward Conway to complain that “the Sea was never more agitated then the Court hath bin with the nomination of the Colonels and Captaines” (qtd. in Cogswell, Blessed Revolution 275-76). From the opening dialogue to the delivery of Leon’s “true commission” (5.5.159) at the end of the play, the action of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife unfolds against a backdrop of the recruitment of soldiers and the commissioning of officers. When they are not talking about women, the men are talking about the foreign conflict, asking each other whether or not they are “for the wars” (1.2.1, 3.3.16). Dryden praised Fletcher for his imitation of the conversation of gentlemen, and in 1624 the conversation of gentlemen concerned England’s preparation for war. John Chamberlain, for instance, wrote in June 1624 that in London there “is much canvassing about the making of captains and colonels for these new forces that are to be raised to assist the Low Countries” (E. Thomson 331). That the play is responding to recent public discourse can be shown by contrasting Rule a Wife with a passage from The Spanish Curate, which Fletcher wrote with Philip Massinger in 1622. The parliament of 1621 (the last before 1624) had been dismissed in anger by King James after a petition requesting that Charles marry only “one of our

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61 The Mansfeld expedition was a failure. The army, after many delays, sailed out of Dover on 31 January 1625, after generating ill will throughout southeast England while James and Louis argued over whether it would land in France or Holland. Faced with bad weather and disease, “the army crumbled away without achieving anything” (Lockyer, Buckingham 228-29).
religion” (qtd. in Lockyer, Buckingham 109). The end of that parliament precluded the possibility of raising funds for a military solution to the Palatinate crisis (and hastened Charles’s desperate Spanish journey). In 1622 war was not an option as far as the English government was concerned. This is reflected in this conversation among a group of young gentlemen:

Jamie. [W]hat newes is stirring?

Nothing to passe the time?

Milanes. ’Faith, it is said

That the next Summer will determine much

Of that we long have talk’d of, touching the Wars.

Leandro. What have we to do with them? Let us discourse

Of what concerns our selves. (1.1.231-36)\(^{62}\)

Leandro lists various states making war preparations, but Spain (and England) are not among them. In this 1622 comedy the playwrights mentioned but did not dwell on the wars. In 1624, however, preparation for war and jockeying for commissions were what concerned many in the audience.

The military theme is integral to Rule a Wife, which is set against the background of the Spanish campaign in the Low Countries. Clara visits Juan to request that he deliver a packet of letters to her kinsman Don Campusano, a captain stationed in Flanders (1.1.65-70), and this is when Estifania and Perez meet. Juan and Perez discuss Leon’s fitness for military duty in the opening of the play, and Leon’s first appearance is an interview conducted by Juan wherein he (falsely) demonstrates that he would be an unsuitable choice for ensign (1.5.1-27). Leon must wriggle his way out of service so that

\(^{62}\) This passage is usually attributed to Massinger (BFC 10: 298).
he can marry Margarita. Leon’s ruse convinces Alonzo to advise Juan to “turn him off; / He will infect the camp with cowardice / If he go with thee” (1.5.56-58). This scene both introduces Leon in his assumed role of coward and highlights the military context of the play. Leon must avoid military service so that he can marry a rich woman. On the other hand, it is Perez’s military prowess which makes him attractive to Estifania. Perez’s false inventory of wealth is believable because he offers “jewels, chains, such as the war / Has given me” (1.6.60-61). He claims to have already found, through military service, the fortune he seeks. Both Perez and Leon desire to marry wealthy women so that they will not be forced to continue to seek their fortunes in war. Alonzo shares this desire, saying, “If I find peace amongst the female creatures / And easy entertainment, I’ll stay at home” (1.2.3-4). The hope of finding peace through marriage instead of fighting a foreign war echoes the policy behind James’s desire for a Spanish Match: he hoped that the marriage would make a continental incursion unnecessary. The French marriage, on the other hand, was envisioned by Charles and Buckingham as a stepping-stone to a military alliance with France. Both of these motivations are echoed in the play’s conclusion: Perez stays home and Leon goes off to the wars in a style supported by his wife’s dowry. Once again, Fletcher attempts to have it both ways with an ending that reflects the matrimonial strategies of both James and Charles.

The constant references to war and mobilization in *Rule a Wife* have a clear resonance when the play is placed in the context of 1624. But the focus here on this aspect of the play should not obscure the aesthetic use Fletcher makes of his martial metaphors. Fletcher consistently figures each marriage as domestic war. As Juan says to Perez when he learns of his marriage: “you intend a safer war at home belike now” (2.2.15). Perez’s character arc from this point on invests Juan’s observation with a
retrospective irony. First Perez learns he has no home, and then his safety proves illusory when Estifania threatens to shoot him. Margarita agrees to marry Leon because Altea claims he has only the superficial qualities of a soldier: a strong body and good clothes, but no anger or sense of honour (2.1.47-60). After Leon receives his false commission, he takes down “all those furnitures that shall befit me / When I lie in garrison” (4.3.61-62). The noise this generates makes Margarita “think the war’s begun i’th’ house already” (4.3.58), but she is nearly dumbfounded when she learns that she must accompany him to war. Instead of bringing the war home to her, as Estifania does for Perez, Leon threatens to bring Margarita away from home to the war. The idea of marriage as a kind of war is conventional (Fletcher exploited siege warfare in a similar way in *The Woman’s Prize*), but the war at home is a controlling metaphor which ensures that Fletcher’s references to contemporary events are never extraneous in the ways risked by the purely topical.

Another element which requires historical contextualization is the number of anti-Dutch gibes which lightly pepper *Rule a Wife*. Most of the comments about the Dutch refer to the “love of alcohol” which was a traditional signifier of Dutchness on the English stage (Hoenselaars 60). Perez imagines Spanish soldiers who will “make the drunken Dutch creep into molehills” (1.1.26). Cacafogo “[scorn[s] the Hollanders, they are my drunkards” (1.5.35-36). Hostility toward the Dutch makes sense coming from the mouths of Spaniards preparing to fight in Spain’s long-running war against Dutch independence. War in the Low Countries is explicitly part of the context of Fletcher’s source material in Cervantes, and in the early 1620s the conflict was again heating up following the expiry of a long-term truce. It is in keeping with contemporary verisimilitude that Leon promises, “I will not leave a turnspit / That has one dram of
spleen against a Dutchman.” (4.3.24-26). The audiences in the Globe and Blackfriars in 1624, however, would have had their own spleen against the Dutchmen. A bloody episode in the growing commercial rivalry between England and the Netherlands occurred in February 1623, when ten members of the British East India Company were tortured and executed by the Dutch East India Company at Amboyna in Indonesia. The historian Godfrey Davies dryly notes, “[t]his massacre of Amboyna exercised an influence upon Anglo-Dutch relations out of all proportion to the number of victims” (53). News of the Amboyna massacre reached London in the summer of 1624 and generated vast outrage (Kewes 182). Descriptions of the massacre were widely disseminated in the pamphlet “A True Relation of the Vnivst, Crvell, and Barbarovs Proceedings against the English at Amboyna” (STC 7451). A broadside ballad commemorating the event, “Newes out of East India” (STC 547), features an engraving depicting a trussed-up Englishman being whipped while water is poured over his cloth-bound face. The ballad details the torture each merchant suffered, and the image, portraying the torture known today as waterboarding, is clearly designed to inflame the anger of the English population. With this in mind, it is possible to imagine loud agreement from the audience when Lorenzo says, “We’ll flay these beer-bellied rogues” (4.3.32). Fletcher, as he often does, has it both ways here. He gives his Spanish characters historically and dramatically appropriate anti-Dutch gibes which possibly elicited a more enthusiastic response from his audience because of the emotions excited by the Amboyna massacre. Fletcher does not extend or develop this rabble-rousing any further. The English East India Company, on the other hand, waged a propaganda

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63 This outrage, however, did not prevent England from signing a mutual protection treaty with the United Provinces in June 1624.
campaign against their commercial rivals, and they even went so far as to commission a play on the massacre which was denied license for performance “for fear of public disorder” (Limon 4). The comments in Rule a Wife could raise eyebrows and emotions, but they were hardly incitements to open violence. In fact, they may have allowed for sympathy and identification between the Spanish characters and the English audience by constructing a common antagonist. The anti-Dutch comments are only a small aspect of the play and must be considered in the larger context of the treatment of the Dutch in Fletcher’s work overall. That study is outside the scope of this edition, but it should suffice to recall that while he never passed up the opportunity for easy jokes about Dutch drunkenness, Fletcher also co-wrote with Philip Massinger both Sir John Van Oldenbarnavelt, an insightful and controversial drama about contemporary Dutch politics, and Beggar’s Bush, a Robin Hood style comedy set in a pastoral and romanticized Flanders among noblemen disguised as thieves.

**The French Match**

On 9 January 1625 Prince Charles took part in Ben Jonson’s masque The Fortunate Isles. This piece recycled materials (poetry and scenery) from the previous year’s unperformed Neptune’s Triumph for the Return of Albion, an unabashed celebration of the failure of the Spanish Match. For the revised masque Jonson added lines celebrating the upcoming marriage of Charles and Henrietta Maria, calling up a choir to “sing the present prophecy that goes / Of joining the bright lily and the rose” (ll. 363-64). A gibe against poor Spanish hospitality from the earlier masque remains: “Boast no more to us / Thy being able all the gods to feast; / We saw enough when

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64 Passages from The Fortunate Isles are quoted from Stephen Orgel’s edition.
Albion [i.e., Charles] was thy guest” (ll. 386-88). This insult is followed, as in Neptune’s Triumph, by scenes representing the sea and the English Navy, “a part of Neptune’s strength” (ll. 423). The added lines in The Fortunate Isles generate the new implication that France and England, represented by their royal emblems the fleur-de-lis and the Tudor rose, will join together to “fetch the riches of the Ocean home” (Spain is represented by the “House of Oceanus,” and the riches are American bullion), “So to secure him [Neptune/James] both in peace and wars” (ll. 425-26). This is an optimistic view of the possible fruits of the upcoming marriage, and it reflects Charles’s and Buckingham’s plans that the marriage with France would lead to a more wide-ranging military and economic alliance. Rule a Wife, however, obliquely presents a more wary view of the prospective marriage.

James opened marriage talks with the French in late March 1624. They continued through the summer and were especially trying because of the factional struggles in France which accompanied the rise to power of Cardinal Richelieu; by August, Charles was ready to break off negotiations (Lockyer, Buckingham 201-3). In early October the tide had turned and John Chamberlain informed Dudley Carleton, “the report goes that matters are well forward in France, and that the Duke of Buckingham is to go thither shortly” (E. Thompson 333). In November the upcoming marriage was publicly celebrated, but Chamberlain famously captured the equivocal mood which greeted the news:

The next day after I wrote last [November 7] we had here great triumph and rejoicing for the good forwardness of the French match, by public commandment: the organs in Paul’s played two hours on their loudest pipes, and so began to the bells, the bells to the bonfires, the bonfires to a
great peal of ordnance at the Tower. God grant it may prove worth all this noise. (E. Thompson 318)\(^{65}\)

*Rule a Wife*, licensed on 19 October, had been finished before the engagement was announced. The play does not react to the royal marriage, but it does participate in the circulation of social and cultural anxiety surrounding the French match. Fletcher creates a theatrical entertainment which presents with great comic energy the possible results of marriage negotiations undertaken in bad faith.

The correspondence between *Rule a Wife* and the French marriage negotiations is necessarily of a general nature. Neither Leon nor Perez represents Charles in, say, the way the White Knight represents him in *A Game at Chess*. Rather, the two marriages in *Rule a Wife* present patterns which, when applied to Charles’s situation, generate analogies.\(^{66}\) The play performed before Charles on 26 December 1624 could be a warning of the potential duplicity of pre-nuptial agreements (as if, after his Spanish adventure, he needed such advice), and the two plots present two possible results of a marriage between Charles and Henrietta Maria. Leon pretends servility in order to take possession of Margarita’s property, and then commandeers control of her household. In his obsequious interview with Margarita he promises, “I would do anything to serve your ladyship” (2.3.36). Her demands in this scene begin reasonably but quickly escalate as she details the humiliations he must suffer. Leon responds, “If you kiss a thousand [other

\(^{65}\) Though James ratified the marriage treaty in early December, the negotiations continued to March. The marriage was further delayed when James died the day before Buckingham was to leave for France to accompany Henrietta Maria back to England (Lockyer, *Buckingham* 233). She did not arrive until June 1625.

\(^{66}\) I rely here on Richard Dutton’s argument that “early modern readers . . . read plays and other texts analogically, often ‘applying’ quite exotic fictions to contemporary persons and events” (*Licensing* xi).
men] I shall be contented: / It will the better teach me how to please ye” (2.3.59-60).

This scene is a parodic recapitulation of the series of increasingly outrageous demands made first by the Spanish and then by the French except that for religious toleration Fletcher substitutes sexual toleration. Leon does not retain his servile demeanour for long and asserts control of the household: “I am lord of it, I rule it / And all that’s in it” (3.5.76-77). Eventually, Margarita renounces “all that was my base self; disobedience, / My wantonness, my stubbornness I have lost too” (5.3.90-91). Applied to Charles, this plot could advise him to say anything necessary to secure the French dowry, grant the controversial terms of the marriage treaty, but then suspend those concessions once they no longer serve their purpose.67 Despite the underhanded means involved, Margarita’s ultimate reaction argues that the example of Charles’s virtuous character may still serve to convert Henrietta Maria from Catholicism. Fletcher presents a similar scenario in the context of the Spanish Match in his 1621 play The Island Princess. There the virtue of the Christian protagonist Armusia convinces the princess Quisara (like both the Infanta Maria and Henrietta Maria, a sister to a king) to convert from paganism to Christianity.68

The explicit concerns of Rule a Wife, though, are property and honour, not religion.

Fletcher, who was not above repeating himself, decided not to return to that theme. Leon takes possession of Margarita’s property, and this is represented by the control he exercises over her servants. In 3.5 Margarita requests her coach in order to flee Leon; he responds, “Let me see who dare get it / Till I command, I’ll make him draw your coach, /

67 This was, in fact, the strategy Charles used to escape Spain. After repeated denials of his requests for permission to return home, Charles agreed to terms for marriage and left a representative for a marriage by proxy. As soon as Charles left the Spanish court, he wrote a letter rescinding the proxy’s authority.

68 See Claire Jowitt for an exploration of the relationship between The Island Princess, the Spanish Match, and the Palatinate crisis (121-39).
And eat your coach too” (3.5.104-6). The series of orders he gives to the servants in the early lines of 4.3 shows that his threats were effective and that he now runs the household. Fletcher could not have known many details of the ongoing negotiations, but much of the marriage treaty was indeed taken up with arrangements for Henrietta Maria’s household and retinue (especially as it concerned the number of priests she was to bring into England). Control of the prospective Queen’s household was a real political concern and a great source of friction in the early years of the marriage. In a proleptic historical irony, Leon’s usurpation of Margarita’s servants was to be oddly echoed by Charles’s expulsion of Henrietta Maria’s French servants in August 1626 (Lockyer, *Buckingham* 251-52).

The Leon-Margarita plot as applied to Charles’s situation presents a kind of best-case scenario. Barbara Fuchs argues that in *Rule a Wife* Fletcher, “remind[s] his English readers [sic] of their superiority to Spain,” which is what the prologue literally says, but she simplifies the implications of the play by reading the Leon-Margarita plot as an unequivocal English victory over Spain: an English husband triumphing against an “over-assured Spanish wife” (153). Fuchs does not explain how Leon comes to represent England. He is no more (or less) English (or Spanish) than any other character. Furthermore, Leon’s victory is more equivocal when viewed in apposition to the Perez-Estifania plot, which warns of the problems that occur when a husband is the victim of false promises. Perez, like Leon, hopes to marry for money and property. When Estifania shows Perez the house, she lets him think that marriage is his idea—as she tells Clara later, “I have him. / I told thee what would tickle him like a trout” (2.4.9-10). At this point, though, Estifania and Perez are equally cozened because neither of them has money or real property. Perez proves the worse fool because he continually believes
Estifania’s stories despite the growing evidence of her untrustworthiness. In 4.1 he gives up trying to determine whether she is telling him the truth, and accepts her claim that everyone else in the play has lied to him and that the house really is hers, though he admits to himself, “I am fooled, yet I dare not find it” (4.1.118). Perez’s defeated haplessness reflects back on the continual disappointments which marked the Spanish negotiations: no matter how unpropitious the terms and circumstances became, James and Charles persisted for many years in attempting to arrange the marriage. Perez’s treatment also serves as a warning not to give too much credit to the promises made by the French. In this light, Juan’s warning to Perez at the beginning of the play, “Sit close Don Perez, or your worship’s caught, / I fear a fly,” echoes the anxiety and caution with which many treated the news of the French marriage negotiations (1.1.119-20). Seeing the two plots together, there are no unequivocal victories, and certainly none that are framed in easy nationalistic terms. Fuchs asserts, however, that there is a “simplistic jingoism” in Rule a Wife which is “undone” by the complex intertextuality of “the multiple intersections of plot and subplot with each other and with their redoubled sources” (155). Because it draws on Spanish sources, “the text reveals itself as far more hybrid a product than its strident nationalism would suggest” (155). The play, however, is not simplistically or stridently nationalistic. Fuchs’s strategy is to claim the play is simple, and then to discover that it is really complex. Such a reading follows only if we deny to Fletcher a complex and ambiguous understanding and representation of the anxieties concerning dynastic marriage with foreign Catholic powers. There is a kind of condescension to the past in this sort of critical stance, as if hybridity and cosmopolitanism are purely modern qualities.
A nationalist strain in *Rule a Wife* is present in the way that it continues the celebration which followed Prince Charles’s “escape” from marriage to a Spanish bride. Though the Prince returned close to a year before *Rule a Wife* was licensed, the fear of a Spanish marriage had not yet abated. On 9 October 1624 (ten days before Herbert licensed the play), Chamberlain noted that the presence of a new Spanish ambassador made “some suspect that there is a new kind of negotiation on foot” (E. Thomson 333). In the same letter he also described the relief still felt by the general public and celebrated by “the ringing of bells and bonfires the 5th of this month, as an anniversary of his happy return the last year” (E. Thomson 333). In addition to its engagement with anxieties concerning the French marriage and war preparations, *Rule a Wife* is also a kind of anniversary celebration. The comedy displays the sort of everyday duplicity imputed to the Spanish which Charles avoided: not because Charles is Leon, controlling a Spanish wife, but because he rid himself of the intrigues of the entire country. Putting Charles’s escape from Spanish entanglements in this positive light, *Rule a Wife*, like *A Game at Chess* and *Neptune’s Return/The Fortunate Isles*, turns the failure of the Spanish Match into a personal triumph for the prince.
The Book of the Play

*Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* was first printed in Oxford in 1640 by Leonard Lichfield. The first quarto is the only substantive text of the play and so is the basis for this edition. The title page of Q1 reads: “RVLE A WIFE | And have a Wife. | A COMOEDY. | ACTED BY HIS | Majesties Servants. | [rule] | Written by | JOHN FLETCHER | Gent. | [rule] | [unicorn ornament] | OXFORD, | Printed by LEONARD LICHFIELD | Printer to the Univerfity. | ANNO 1640.” Lichfield printed *Rule a Wife* and the second quarto of *Rollo, Duke of Normandy* (first printed in London in 1639 as *The Bloody Brother*) as companion pieces. Their title pages share the same setting of type except for the titles themselves and the ornaments (*Rollo* has a lion ornament). It is very likely that the plays were printed concurrently. Much of the work on both quartos must have taken place in late 1639 because they were finished before 25 January 1640, the day Robert Burton (author of *The Anatomy of Melancholy*) died in Oxford. Burton’s signed copy of each play is now in the Bodleian library (*BEPD* 2: 734). Both plays were available in London before 4 March 1640, when they appear in a bill of sale signed by Humphrey Moseley’s servant Nicholas Dixon (*BEPD* 3: 1317-18). Both plays appear in a catalogue printed in 1660 of books sold by Moseley (*BEPD* 3: 1180). *Rule a Wife* was not entered in the Stationers’ Register because Lichfield was not a London stationer, but on 8 August 1661 Anne Moseley, Humphrey’s widow, made her first appearance in the Register when Samuel Browne and William Wilson assigned their rights in *Rollo* and *Rule a Wife* to her.

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69 The purchaser is unknown. The bill lists sixty-seven plays and nine volumes of “New poems & historyes” (recent collections of Shakespeare, Jonson, Beaumont, and others). Greg notes that Moseley “was clearly acting as a retail bookseller, for the plays enumerated were printed and published by many different firms” (*BEPD* 3: 1317).
It is not known how Browne and Wilson came to have rights in either play. Anne Moseley, who died in 1673, never published either play, but they were both included in the 1679 Beaumont and Fletcher second folio, printed by John Macock for John Martyn, Henry Herringman, and Richard Marriot (Wing B1582). The third and final seventeenth-century edition of *Rule a Wife* was a 1697 quarto printed for Samuel Briscoe and sold by Richard Wellington (Wing B1606).

**Leonard Lichfield, Playbooks at Oxford, and Royalist Printing**

How *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* came to be printed in Oxford is something of a mystery, as the following outlines of Lichfield’s career and play publication in Oxford

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70 The rights in six books were transferred to her that day, including *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*.

71 Searches in *STC*, Wing, and Stationers’ Register transcripts have turned up no other venture connecting Lichfield, Browne and Wilson (and the *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* entry is the only one connecting Wilson and Browne), except that each of the three was involved with Moseley at different times. Lichfield printed an edition of John Bird’s *Grounds of Grammar* (Wing B2953) for Moseley in 1641. Wilson printed a number of books for Moseley, including part of the 1647 Beaumont and Fletcher folio, and he was a witness to Moseley’s will (Reed 142). Both are named in the imprints on five books (Wing C6309, M356, P1468, T970, and A3778). Browne, a royalist who left London in 1643 and printed in the Hague until 1660 (Plomer 36), printed Cavendish’s play *The Country Captain* in 1649, which was entered in the Stationers’ Register by Moseley and Humphrey Robinson in 1646. Moseley acquired Browne’s edition and issued it (with cancels) in a volume with Cavendish’s *The Variety* (*BEPD* 3: 1031-32). The assignment of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* to Anne Moseley was Browne’s first appearance in the Stationers’ Register after his return to England.

72 Briscoe and Wellington were both booksellers; the printer or printers have not been identified. *Rollo* was reprinted by Ralph Holt for Dorman Newman in 1685 (Wing F1350). These later publications of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* were either in response to theatrical revivals or advertisements for those revivals.
will make clear. Leonard Lichfield was, as the title pages of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* indicate, “Printer to the University.” His father, John, began printing at Oxford in 1617 (with a succession of partners until 1627), and the Lichfield family (Leonard’s widow, Anne, and three more Leonards) operated there until the middle of the eighteenth century. Leonard took over his father’s business in 1635 and continued specializing in the same kinds of books as his father: sermons and theological works (usually by Oxford divines), collections of occasional verse by members of the university, and other books aimed at the academic market. Leonard, like his father, printed books for other booksellers and published books on his own. For instance, John printed part or all of the first four editions of Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy* for Henry Cripps (STC 4159-63), and Leonard printed the 1640 English translation of Francis Bacon’s *Of the Advancement and Proficiency of Learning* for Robert Young and Edward Forrest (STC 1167). Barbara Fitzpatrick characterizes the output of the Lichfield press as “reflect[ing] . . . a compromise between his responsibility for printing academic books and the practical necessity of maintaining a profitable business” (156). Leonard, a royalist *avant la lettre*, became the primary printer of royal proclamations and propaganda when King Charles moved to Oxford at the outset of the Civil Wars. The royal printing bill during the wars (petitioned for by Lichfield’s widow, Anne, in 1661 and partly paid by Charles II) reached £1,294 19s. 4d (Fitzpatrick 159). The implications for *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* of Lichfield’s royalism will be discussed below, but first an

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73 The essay on Leonard Lichfield by Barbara Fitzpatrick contains a brief and comprehensive account of the Lichfield family.

74 The bibliographical situation is complex because Lichfield’s imprint was often forged by London royalist printers.
outline of the printing of dramatic works in Oxford is necessary to demonstrate an aspect of these two books which is unique in the history of English play publication in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

It was uncommon for plays to be printed in Oxford. Except for *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* all plays printed there were written by men directly associated with the university (usually as faculty). In most cases the plays were performed at the university by members of the university, not by visiting players. Fletcher was a Cambridge man and there is no record of a performance of either play in Oxford. Even if the King’s Men had performed the plays during a visit some time between 1624 and 1640, they would have performed under the auspices of the town, as university performances by then were exclusively by members of the colleges themselves (REED *Oxford* 2: 614).

John Lichfield did not print any plays, but in 1629 he did print, for Edward Forrest and William Webbe, a third edition of John Rainolds’s *Th’overthrow of Stage-Playes* (STC 20618). The book (really a collection of correspondence) was written in 1592 as part of an anti-theatrical controversy at Oxford. Rainolds wrote his polemic in response to William Gager’s satire of him in an afterpiece Gager wrote for Seneca’s *Hippolytus*, a play for which Gager had also written additional scenes. *Hippolytus* was performed at Oxford in February 1592, and Gager’s additional material was printed, also

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75 The latest payment to a travelling company by the university is to the King’s Men in 1615-16 (REED *Oxford* 2: 614). Thomas Crosfield’s diary “records many kinds of entertainers,” including players, in the city of Oxford during the 1620s and 1630s (REED *Oxford* 2: 615).

76 First printed by the Dutch printer Richard Schilders of Middelburg in 1599 and 1600 (STC 20616 and 20617).

77 A brief overview of this controversy, with extracts from the many texts it produced, is contained in Appendix 11 of the REED *Oxford* collection (2: 860-70).
in 1592, by the Oxford printer Joseph Barnes, John Lichfield’s immediate predecessor as printer to the university. The additions to the play were included with Gager’s original Latin play *Meleager* (STC 11515), and the afterpiece with another Gager play, *Ulysses Redux* (STC 11516). These two volumes were the only plays to be published in Oxford until Leonard Lichfield began printing dramatic material in the late 1630s (*BEPD* 3: 1582). Lichfield stepped into play publication lightly. First, in 1636, he printed two recent entertainments: an anonymous masque known as *The King and Queen’s Entertainment at Richmond* (STC 5026), and *The Several Speeches and Songs, at the Presentment of Mr. Bushell’s Rock* (STC 4187.5). Both of these events were staged as part of the 1636 royal progress that included the presentation of William Cartwright’s *The Royal Slave* at Oxford, which was so enjoyed by Queen Henrietta Maria that it was performed twice during the visit. At her request the costumes were lent to the King’s Men for a further performance at Hampton Court (*REED Oxford* 2: 606, 790-94). Another play, Jasper Mayne’s *The City Match*, was written for the visit, but it was not performed. Instead it was sent along with *The Royal Slave* for performance at Hampton Court (*REED Oxford* 1: 544). Leonard Lichfield printed *The City Match* (STC 17750) in 1639, and in the same year William Turner (another Oxford printer) printed *The Royal Slave* for Thomas Robinson (STC 4717). Cartwright and Mayne were both of Christ Church, as was Robert Randolph, brother of the poet Thomas Randolph, who was of Trinity College, Cambridge, and all four had been students together at Westminster.

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78 Gager’s works have been edited and translated by Dana F. Sutton.

79 The title page of the Richmond entertainment specifies that it was performed “After their Departure from Oxford . . . Sept. 12. 1636.” Bushell, an Oxford poet, staged his entertainment on 23 August (as part of the royal arrival). William Strode’s *The Floating Island* and George Wild’s *Love’s Hospital* were also performed for the King and Queen while at Oxford.
School (DNB “Jasper Mayne”). Robert edited a posthumous collection of his brother’s poems and plays, *Poems, with the Muses Looking-Glasse: and Amyntas*, published in two editions (1638, 1640) by Leonard Lichfield (STC 20694-5). Four other plays were printed in Oxford in 1640: Lichfield printed *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo*, as well as a Latin play by Thomas Snelling, *Thibaldus* (STC 22888), and William Turner printed a play by Samuel Harding, *Sicily and Naples, or the Fatall Union* (STC 12757). *Thibaldus* was performed at St. John’s College some time between 1634 and 1640 (REED Oxford 2: 823), and Samuel Harding was an Oxford student who received his B.A. in 1638 (DNB). No more plays were printed in Oxford until 1658 (*Two Plays* by Jasper Mayne). *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo*, then, were the only two plays printed at either university which had no connection (via author or performance) to the university.

The question of how these two plays came to be printed at Oxford has generated speculation which unfortunately has been tied to the question of the nature of the copy underlying each quarto; therefore those speculations will be addressed in the discussion of copy below. First, it is necessary to examine the political use to which Lichfield put these quartos. As noted above, the two title pages shared the same setting of type, except for the titles and the ornaments. The title page of *Rollo* features a lion and that of *Rule a Wife* a unicorn, together the royal emblems of England and Scotland. The plays were printed after the first but before the second of the Bishops’ Wars, the Scottish conflicts of 1639 and 1640 which preceded the Civil Wars. At a time when two of Charles’s

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80 Barbara Fitzpatrick speculates that it was Robert’s involvement that led to an Oxford rather than Cambridge publication for the Cambridge-based poet (157). Randolph’s play *The Jealous Lovers* was printed in Cambridge to commemorate its performance during a royal visit to Cambridge in 1632 (DNB), and reprinted there in 1634 and 1640. It was the only English-language play printed in Cambridge in the early seventeenth century (BEPD 3: 1581).
kingdoms were threatening to come apart, Lichfield situated these two otherwise innocuous playbooks in the growing discourse of royalism by this subtle use of ornamentation. As Williams notes, “these royal emblems were not chosen lightly” (*BFC* 6: 490). We have Lichfield’s own word for it that he intended every product of his press to serve the king. In a poem ending a collection of university verse also printed in 1640, he declares “let / My FOVNTS, to give you Ioy, for ever ſweat. / But unto ſuch as doe oppoſe Your Throne / May every Letter be a killing one.”81 *Rollo*, at least, was presented to King Charles himself, as a copy of it is bound in a volume of nine Fletcher plays owned by him (*BFC* 6: 490). Furthermore, these playbooks are an early instance of the royalist appropriation of the works and reputations of Beaumont and Fletcher, an appropriation best known from the prefatory matter to the first Beaumont and Fletcher folio of 1647, published by Humphrey Robinson and Humphrey Moseley (though in the case of *Rollo* and *Rule a Wife*, Fletcher alone is appropriated). The association of Beaumont and Fletcher with royalist politics (one might say the taint of royalism) persisted into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries through critics such as Coleridge and John Danby, and the axiomatic association of Beaumont and Fletcher with royalism was finally rejected only in the 1990s, thanks to the work of Philip Finkelpearl and Gordon McMullan. Lichfield’s printing of the plays, decorated with the pointed use of English and Scottish royal emblems during a time of extreme tension between those two nations, incorporated Fletcher’s name into the dispute on the side of the king and so is an early

81 From “The Printer to Their MAESTIES” (sig. e4v) in *Horti Carolini Rosa Altera* (STC 19039). This poem, along with many others written by printers, is included in the amusing appendix in Simpson’s *Proof-Reading* entitled “Musa Typographica.” Simpson expresses doubt over whether the printers actually composed the poems he collects (a doubt echoed by Fitzpatrick), but this seems based on no more evidence than a donnish horror at the idea of a printer writing poetry (and sometimes in Latin too).
evidence of the adoption by cavaliers of Beaumont and Fletcher as mascots for the more extreme versions of divine-right ideology.

**Printing, Proof-reading, Press-correction**

The 1640 quarto is very well printed and contains few literal errors. The play is clearly divided into five acts. It consists of nine sheets (each containing eight pages) collating A-I. The title page is on A1r, a prologue is on A2r, the play begins on A3r and concludes on I4r, with an epilogue on I4v. The compositors made a point of leaving no blank pages at the end of the quarto and split a few verse lines in two (see lineation collations in Appendix A) on the ante-penultimate page. These changes ensured that the final lines of the play could extend to the next page and the epilogue could be printed on the final page of the quarto. As noted above, it is apparent from the setting of the title pages of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo*, along with other shared features such as act headings and ornaments that, as John D. Jump points out, Lichfield “regarded the printing of these two quartos almost as a single job” (xiii). George W. Williams, the most recent editor of both plays, and his student Barbara Fitzpatrick have built on this insight and provided the most detailed account of the printing of these two quartos. The following analysis is based on the work of Jump, Williams and Fitzpatrick, and it addresses the printing of both plays together. Jump distinguishes two compositors, P and Q, in *Rollo* on the basis of variant forms of speech prefixes (xi). Williams and Fitzpatrick further distinguish the two

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82 The most notable errors are those concerning speech prefixes. On a few occasions, prefixes are set a line early or late, and in some scenes, Altea is denoted by a “4.” The misplaced speech prefixes may point either to ambiguity in the manuscript copy, or to the compositor’s unfamiliarity with setting playtexts.

83 Williams credits Fitzpatrick with “preparing the details of the analysis” of compositorial attribution for both *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* (*BFC* 6: 489n. 1 and 10: 163n. 8).
compositors on the basis of medial comma spacing: P tends to insert a space after the medial comma and Q tends not to insert a space. Their assignment of compositorial stints for *Rollo* matches but refines Jump’s: they are able to assign compositors for sheet A, and they find evidence of shared composition on a few pages. It is highly probable that each play was set *seriatim* rather than cast-off by formes; that is, the pages were set in the order in which they are to be read, because (with the exception of sheets A and, in *Rollo*, sheet K) “one compositor set four consecutive pages of a sheet while his fellow set the other four” (*BFC* 6: 489, 10: 152). For example, in sheet D of *Rule a Wife*, pages 21-24 (D1r-2v) are set by compositor Q, and pages 25-28 (D3r-4v) are set by compositor P. This composition produces an outer forme that prints this sheet (text direction is indicated by arrows, followed by signature, page number, and compositor):

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84 The assignments for *Rule a Wife* are: P: A3r-4r, B3r-4v, C1r-2v, D3r-4v, E1r-2v, F1r-2v, G1r-2v, H3r-4v, I1r-2v. Q: A2r, A4v, B1r-2v, C3r-4v, D1r-2v, E3r-4v, F3r-4v, G3r-4v, H1r-2v, I3r-4v.

85 Sigs. B2v, C2v, E2v and E3r. In each case (except E3r) an in-coming compositor sets part of the last page of the previous compositor’s stint (*BFC* 10: 163n. 10).

86 Q had already set pages 17-20 (C3r-4v), and P would set pages 29-32 (E1r-2v).
and an inner forme that prints this sheet:

These illustrations show the basic difficulty with *seriatim* printing: all eight pages must be fully composed and imposed before anything can be printed, and so it is an inefficient way to manage a stock of type.
In sheets C-E of both quartos, the compositor who set the last four pages of a sheet would continue setting the first four pages of the next sheet. This pattern of alternating four- or eight-page stints holds for both plays, and as Williams and Fitzpatrick have found, the alternations are complementary in both quartos for sheets B-G. That is, the half of a given signature set by one compositor in one quarto will be set by the other compositor in the other quarto. For example, we noticed above that compositor Q set D1r-2v of *Rule a Wife*; on the other hand, compositor P set D1r-2v of *Rollo*. The following tables from Williams’s edition of *Rule a Wife* (BFC 6: 492) illustrate the alternating assignments in the quartos:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B1r-2v</th>
<th>B3r-4v</th>
<th>C1r-2v</th>
<th>C3r-4v</th>
<th>D1r-2v</th>
<th>D3r-4v</th>
<th>E1r-2v</th>
<th>E3r-4v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P:</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q:</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The pattern changes slightly in sheets F and G of both plays. Since the compositors’ stints had been eight consecutive pages (stints that continue from one sheet to the next), each would be expected to continue setting pages for the play he had been working on at the end of sheet E. Instead they trade plays to begin sheet F and then continue to swap at four-page intervals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F1r-2v</th>
<th>F3r-4v</th>
<th>G1r-2v</th>
<th>G3r-4v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P:</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q:</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Rule</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

87 Sheet A does not fit this pattern partly because the main text of *Rollo* begins on A2r, while the text of *Rule a Wife* begins on A3r.

88 I have split the single table in Williams’s edition in order to mark the change in pattern.
The compositors end sheet G setting the same play they would have been setting if the earlier pattern had not been interrupted, and so one could expect the pattern to resume as before, but instead the stints become “conflicting rather than complementary” (BFC 6: 492). The following chart (not in Williams) illustrates the different pattern in the final sheets of each play (there is no sheet K in Rule):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>H1r-2v</th>
<th>H3r-4v</th>
<th>I1r-2v</th>
<th>I3r-4v</th>
<th>K1r-2v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now, each compositor is setting the same half-signature in each quarto. To illustrate the change in comparable terms, here is a restatement of the information in the first table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B1r-2v</th>
<th>B3r-4v</th>
<th>C1r-2v</th>
<th>C3r-4v</th>
<th>D1r-2v</th>
<th>D3r-4v</th>
<th>E1r-2v</th>
<th>E3r-4v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and the second table, when the compositors alternate at four- rather than eight-page intervals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F1r-2v</th>
<th>F3r-4v</th>
<th>G1r-2v</th>
<th>G3r-4v</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rollo</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is likely that late in the printing process another job intervened to upset the established pattern. *Rollo* is a half-sheet longer than *Rule a Wife*, and this may also have had an effect. It could also mean that a third (and maybe fourth) compositor began working on
the quartos. Because the medial comma test is binary, it is difficult to use it to
distinguish between more than two compositors.\footnote{In this case, more than two could have been at work throughout, or in certain sections of, the
printing of the two quartos, putting the pattern described above in question. Peter W. M. Blayney pointed
this out to me in conversation. I am indebted to him for this and other advice, as well as for reading and
commenting on this section.}

The pattern of alternating complementary compositorial stints for the majority of
each quarto raises a number of questions. It seems clear that since a given signature set
by one compositor in \textit{Rule} is set by the other compositor in \textit{Rollo}, and since the pattern
changes at the same point in each quarto (after sheets E and G), the two plays were
worked on nearly simultaneously. Other elements, such as the pattern of shared act
headings (see Williams’s analysis in \textit{BFC 6: 490-91}), and the damaged types appearing
“interweavingly throughout the quartos” traced by Fitzpatrick (mentioned but not
specified in Williams, “On Editing” 6), and the shared title-page setting argue strongly
that work on the two quartos proceeded in tandem. There are degrees of simultaneity,
however, and the available information encourages further speculation.

The question is whether the two plays were worked on in parallel or in alternating
chunks. Williams has, at different times, proposed both styles of work. In his article “On
Editing Beaumont and Fletcher” he suggests that “while Compositor P is setting the first
half of a sheet in \textit{Rollo}, Compositor Q is setting the first half of the comparable sheet in
\textit{Rule a Wife}; while Compositor P is setting the second half of that sheet of \textit{Rule a Wife},
Compositor Q is setting the second half of the sheet of \textit{Rollo}” (6). To extend this
example, the process becomes interlocking because Q continues setting the first half of
the next sheet \textit{Rollo}, while P continues setting the first half of the next sheet of \textit{Rule}.
manner illustrated by the first table above. Before proceeding to Williams’s other suggestion, it is necessary to explore the implications of this manner of production. This procedure allows for two compositors to set the quartos completely *seriatim*, with no casting-off. Setting two quartos concurrently this way would increase the amount of type left standing almost to the point of absurdity because *seriatim* setting would require at least three-and-a-half formes (fourteen pages) to be composed before presswork could begin, and even more type would be required to continue composing before the finished formes are printed and the type redistributed. Lichfield did have a relatively large supply of the type used in these quartos, as the strain shows only in the recurring shortage of roman capital “I” and in a few italic capitals (which are used often in speech headings and stage directions).\(^90\) One explanation for this unlikely procedure could be that the copy for each of the plays was bound and that the person who provided that copy required that it not be disbound. The concurrent setting of the quartos is an economical way to keep two compositors occupied if there are two texts to be printed from copies which cannot be physically separated. A requirement that the copy remain bound, however, would not explain the pattern of compositors alternating work on the two plays. After all, one could have set *Rollo* and the other set *Rule a Wife*, each working through one play.

Williams’s other description of the possible process of composition occurs in his editions of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo*. He writes with nearly identical phrasing in each introduction, “one compositor set four (consecutive) pages of a sheet while his fellow set

\(^90\) The need for capital roman “I” was supplemented by using types from a smaller font, in addition to italic and swash capitals. In *Rule a Wife*, italic capital “M,” “P” and “L” (used heavily in speech headings) occasionally run short.
the other four” (BFC 6: 489; 10: 152). Two appreciably distinct processes are implied by this statement and the one quoted above. Both compositors working on the same play at the same time would require some casting off: each compositor would take an estimated four pages of text to set seriatim, they would complete the sheet, and then repeat the process for the other play.\footnote{Perhaps the pages in Rollo that show evidence of shared composition (see note above) do so because of minor errors in this kind of casting off (lines were set and then moved to different pages). On the other hand, shared composition on certain pages (which always occur at the end or beginning of a compositors stint, never in the middle) could equally indicate that one is picking up where the other left off, regardless of whether a page had been completed or not. The fact of shared composition on some pages alone is inconclusive in this case.} Only two formes would need to be completed before presswork could begin, and work on the two quartos would still progress at a nearly equal rate. The question this process raises, though, is why not fully cast off by formes if the copy would be physically separated? The play is entirely in verse, which largely eliminates the guesswork of casting off (a process, in any case, that should not have been difficult for an experienced printer like Lichfield). Arguing against simultaneous work on the same sheet of a given play are some type shortages that persist from one compositorial stint to another within the same sheet. For instance, italic capital “P” runs short in the lower half of compositor P’s F2v, and remains short on compositor Q’s F3r before the supply is replenished on F3v. Williams proposes that “it is possible that the two compositors here used the same cases” (BFC 6: 489).\footnote{There is a shortage across stints of italic capital “R” in Rollo (E2v-E3r), and Williams likewise suggests that “the two compositors were working alternately from the same cases” (BFC 10: 152).} If the compositors are taking turns setting consecutive pages from the same case, then they were not both working on the same play at the same time, obviously. The shortages across stints occur relatively
late in both quartos (when the pattern of stints begins to change) so it may be unwise to
draw conclusions from them concerning the pattern that prevails during the majority of
middle sheets in both quartos.

Another factor to consider is that while both the inner and the outer forme of a
sheet are completed at roughly the same time in *seriatim* setting (though the inner forme
would be finished first, as the last page of the signature is in the outer forme), only one
forme could be imprinted at a time. Even if multiple presses are at work, an interval
between imprinting one forme and another is required for drying the ink. Perhaps the key
to the interlocking pattern of the composition of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* lies in the time
needed to dry sheets, though it would still be unlikely to explain why the compositors
switched work on each play with such regularity. The questions raised here could
perhaps be settled by a detailed analysis of recurrent damaged type in both quartos, along
with a fuller understanding of Lichfield’s press in late 1639 and early 1640. The outcome
of such an intensive investigation, however, could have little to no effect on the treatment
of the text of *Rule a Wife* in a modernized edition such as this one, and so must be left to
future research.

Another unusual feature of the printing of *Rule a Wife* is that the 1640 edition is
one of the very few early modern play quartos for which a proof-sheet with a corrector’s
marks survives. The sheet now does duty as the front flyleaf of a copy of volume 6 of St.
Cyril’s *Opera* (Paris, 1638) at Brasenose College, Oxford (Shelf mark Lath. F.2.6.), and
has been reproduced by J. K. Moore (Plate 57).93 Many of the flyleaves in this set of St.
Cyril’s writings are proof-sheets from works printed by Leonard Lichfield between 1638

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93 The existence of the sheet was noted by Peter W. M. Blayney, *Texts of King Lear*, 195n. 1, where he
thanks Paul Morgan for bringing it to his attention.
and 1640, including John Prideaux’s *Certaine Sermons* (STC 20345), Robert Sanderson’s *Logicae Artis Compendium* (STC 21704), John Bird’s *Grounds of Grammar* (STC 3085), a sermon by Nathanael Carpenter (STC 4675), and a selection from the *Book of Common Prayer* (STC 16448). These sermons and textbooks are a fair cross-section of the sort of books Lichfield most often published before the Civil Wars.

The single-sided proof is the outer forme of sheet G (G1r, 2v, 3r, 4v). There are twelve corrections marked on this forme, and five of them were ignored by the compositor (see Appendix B). Three direct the insertion of a period following a speech heading, and another four correct punctuation. Two call attention to spaces which were printing visibly, one calls for a word to be closed up, and another for the capitalization of a noun. None of the corrections affects the text substantively. Given the minor and cosmetic nature of these corrections, this proof probably represents the later stage of a multi-part proof-reading process. It is apparent from the very small number of literal errors in the quarto itself that it was very carefully printed, and this proof-sheet, an all-too-rare piece of direct evidence, confirms this observation.

**Copy**

The twentieth-century hope that one could deduce from certain features of a printed text the nature of the underlying copy for that text, whether it was another printed text or a manuscript (either authorial, scribal, fair, foul, prompt), has not been abandoned. Nearly all of the methods and criteria used by bibliographic investigators, however, have

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94 See Moore, 73-4, for shelf marks and details.

95 For an overview of proof-reading and press-correction in early modern printing see Blayney, *Texts of King Lear*, 188-207, and for a more extensive treatment see Simpson, *Proof-Reading*. 
been seriously questioned in the last thirty years. The theoretical and evidentiary problems underpinning the presuppositions concerning types of copy and the methods by which they can be “divined” have been thoroughly critiqued in the work of Paul Werstine, William B. Long, Grace Ioppolo, and others. The thrust of this critique, however, is not that no conclusions can be drawn concerning the origin of copy, but that any such conclusions must proceed from the evidence at hand, rather than from an attempt to fit the variety of surviving texts into a few predetermined, largely fictional, categories. For instance, it was suggested above that one explanation for the decision to set *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo seriatim* was that the copy for each play was bound, and disbinding it was not an option. This is only one of many possibilities. In the following pages suggestions by earlier editors concerning the nature and origin of the copy underlying the printed text of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* are re-examined in light of this increased skepticism.

Jump and Williams argue that both plays contain stage directions of the kind which were once thought to be typical of “prompt-books.” In the case of *Rollo*, both editors contrast the Oxford Q2 with the first printing of that play, which contains characteristics of what they call a more “literary” type of transcript. Jump proposes, on this basis, that both of Lichfield’s quartos derive from “either a prompt-book or a manuscript in the direct line of descent from a prompt-book” and on this basis tentatively suggests that Lichfield obtained his copy from “a company of players” (xiii). Williams, in his editions of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo*, accepts Jump’s hypothesis, but in the introduction to *Rollo* (published in 1996, eleven years after his edition of *Rule a Wife*), the original tentative proposal (without any further evidence) expands to “Lichfield would seem to have secured his copy from the King’s Men themselves while they were
playing for the King at Oxford” (*BFC* 10: 147). This explanation developed as a solution to the question of how the play came to be printed at Oxford. Though neither editor specified a time when the King’s Men would have been playing at Oxford, one could support their hypothesis by observing that Joseph Taylor, lead actor for the King’s Men, was in Oxford in 1636 working as an acting coach for students who would perform for the royal visit (*REED Oxford* 2: 606). Some of the plays written for that occasion were later printed at Oxford in 1639 and 1640, as discussed above. It does not follow that the manuscript must have come to Lichfield from the King’s Men, even if it was derived from the prompt-book. There is no necessary relationship between the nature of copy and the origin of that copy, a false equation that began with A. W. Pollard’s argument that bad quartos came from bad people (Blayney, “Publication” 383). There is no evidence for the assertion that Lichfield acquired the manuscript for *Rule a Wife* directly from the King’s Men. It is an attractive speculation because it would answer the question of how the play came to be printed in Oxford, and it would supply a chain of “authority” for the manuscript: Fletcher to the King’s Men to the King’s printer.

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96 He was reimbursed £15 6s 8d by Christ’s Church “for his Iourney, & for Loane of Cloathes” (*REED Oxford* 1: 521).

97 There is another possible explanation for how the plays came to be printed in Oxford. *Rollo*, as noted above, was printed in London in 1639 as *The Bloody Brother*, with a title-page attribution to “B. J. F.” The play was entered in the Stationers’ Register on 4 October 1639 to John Crooke and Richard Sergier (and attributed to “J. B.”), but it was printed by John Bishop for Thomas Allot and John Crooke (*BEPD* 2: 703). The two quartos, though “fairly closely related” still “differ considerably at several points” (Jump xii). It is possible that some interested person, aware of the London publication, wished to print a version of the play with the proper title and a more specific authorial attribution. Since the rights to London publication were already secured in the Stationers’ Company Register, this concerned person arranged for publication in Oxford. This narrative would make the publication of *Rule a Wife* an
Though reasons for the publication of *Rule a Wife* and *Rollo* at Oxford remain a mystery, there are a few details of the copy for *Rule a Wife* which can be discerned from the printed text. Two features of the *Rule a Wife* quarto have been cited as clues to what lies behind the veil of print. As noted above, Jump and Williams believe that some of the stage directions in the quarto indicate that the copy was derived from the prompt-book. Williams correctly notes that “evidence for such an assertion is slight,” but gives as examples the directions: “*A letter,*” “*Noise below,*” and “*Cacafogo makes a noise under the stage*” (*BFC* 6: 487). Such directions would be helpful in a theatre, but there is no reason to suppose that they must have been written by a bookkeeper rather than Fletcher himself. He had been a professional playwright for nearly twenty years by the time he wrote *Rule a Wife,* and would know that the kinds of marginal notations desired by bookkeepers were those “emphasizing an off-stage sound, or making sure . . . that a particular property was available” (Long, “Stage-Directions” 126). The quarto may or may not show slight signs of theatrical use. There is indirect evidence that the copy Lichfield used was not in Fletcher’s hand. Cyrus Hoy, in the first of his articles on the authorship of Beaumont and Fletcher plays, notes that *Rule a Wife,* along with *A Wife for a Month* and *The Woman’s Prize,* contains a number of the pronoun form “*ye*” (instead of “*you*”) far lower than in any of the other plays usually attributed to Fletcher working alone. The number of “*ye*”s that are there, however, are still enough to rule out most of his usual collaborators. What has come to be called the “Fletcherian ‘*ye*’” is distributed evenly throughout the play so there is no reason to suspect that parts of the play are not unexplained by-product of the desire to produce a better version of *Rollo,* but it perhaps echoes too closely the desire to discover conspiracy in “irregular” play publications. Blayney suggests that Lichfield and/or an unknown publisher were simply unaware that *Rollo* had recently been printed under another name (private communication).
by Fletcher. It is possible that the compositors of Q1 are responsible for changing many of Fletcher’s “ye”s to “you”s, but the survival of so many “ye”s in both compositorial stints shows that it was not a policy or house style to eliminate them. It is extremely likely, then, that at least one scribal transcript intervenes between Fletcher’s hand and Q1 which inconsistently substitutes “you” for “ye.” A loose analogy may be drawn from the subsequent textual history of *Rule a Wife*. In each edition from F2 to Weber, the number of “ye”s altered to “you”s increases incrementally until “ye” is completely eliminated in Dyce’s edition. Given the evident care with which the quarto was printed, it is more likely that Lichfield’s compositors contributed to, but did not originate, the half-life decay of “ye.”

Cyrus Hoy proposes that Edward Knight, the bookkeeper for the King’s Men in the mid-1620s, may have been the scribe whose copy of the play was used by Lichfield, but the case is not proven. Though nothing in the quarto itself proves that the transcript was necessarily of a copy marked for performance, we should not rule out the

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98 Not counting the prologue, epilogue, or any contracted forms, “you” appears 437 times in the *Rule a Wife* quarto, and “ye” or “yee” appear 213 times. A sampling of other plays by Fletcher shows a preference for “ye” to “you” ranging roughly from 1:1 to 2:1. The nearly 1:2 ratio of *Rule a Wife* marks it as anomalous because the predominance of “you” over “ye” nearly reverses the proportions of his usual habit.

99 All editions following Dyce (with the exception of Saintsbury’s) reinstate Q1’s “ye”s.

100 He based his tentative conclusion on the prevalence of “um” and “hir” spellings in the *Rule a Wife* quarto (“Authorship [I]” 142-43). The spelling “um” for “em” (as an abbreviated form of “them”) appears in Knight’s transcript of *Bonduca* (but not *Honest Man’s Fortune*), while “hir” appears throughout both. Therefore, while some emendations may be justified by positing scribal error (such as the confusion of Altea’s speech prefixes [2.1.24]), none can be justified by an appeal to Knight’s habits.
possibility. In his epistle to the first Beaumont and Fletcher folio, Humphrey Moseley describes the common practice of actors making copies of plays at the request of “private friends” (n.p.). These copies reflected staging practices, Moseley says, because actors “transcribed what they Acted.” Such a copy of Rule a Wife may have been made by request and then found its way to Lichfield. Lichfield himself may have requested the copy on a visit to London. The inconclusiveness demonstrated by the above investigation of the 1640 quarto of Rule a Wife is a reminder that we must “keep in play . . . the multiple and dispersed agencies that could have produced” this textual artifact (Werstine, “Narratives” 86). The likelihood that Rule a Wife was printed from a scribal transcript is strong, but the identity and motives of the scribe are uncertain.

**Subsequent Editions**

The transmission of the text of Rule a Wife is much easier to trace following its initial appearance in print. It is one of the most frequently printed plays in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, with nearly fifty editions having been produced, most of them in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This popularity in print is largely due to the play’s popularity on the stage, which will be discussed in the following section. The many appearances in print of Rule a Wife form a textual line of descent consisting of two branches. The first branch consists of editions which reproduce the play mostly as it was first printed, though edited in various degrees. This is the main line of the textual tradition, represented by the collected editions of Beaumont and Fletcher and the editions

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101 One of the attractions of Hoy’s suggestion that Knight was the transcriptional agent is that, as bookkeeper for the King’s Men, he could have been both the scribe and the playhouse annotator. Paul Werstine’s recent analysis of Edward Knight’s transcripts of Bonduca and Honest Man’s Fortune (“Continuing Importance”) unfortunately came to my attention too late to inform this section.
of *Rule a Wife* alone that are textually derived from these editions. The second branch consists of editions which reflect theatrical alterations, and which promise to give the reader a text which more closely resembles what audiences would have seen on stage. This second category includes editions of *Rule a Wife* alone, as well as its many appearances in anthologies of drama printed “as it is acted in the theatres” (or some similar phrase), such as *Bell’s British Theatre, New English Theatre*, and *The British Theatre*, etc. These theatrical texts began appearing in the late eighteenth century and form the majority of editions of *Rule a Wife*. Because they present altered versions of the play rather than the play itself, they have for the most part not been collated for this edition; however, the revisions of the more important theatrical versions are collated in Appendix D and discussed in the Stage History. The following paragraphs are concerned with the textual tradition of non-theatre-based editions of *Rule a Wife*, and are generally indebted to Williams’s discussion of the editorial history of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon that appears in the first half of his article “On Editing Beaumont and Fletcher.”

As noted above, *Rule a Wife* was first reprinted in 1679, along with most of the plays in the canon, in the second folio collection of Beaumont and Fletcher (F2), and it appeared alone in a 1697 quarto (Q2). The title page of Q2 states that the play is printed “As it is Acted at the New Theatre in Little Lincoln’s Inn-Fields by His Majesties Servants.” The quarto advertises recent or upcoming performances, and gives a cast list, but the text is based on the 1679 folio, which in turn was based on the 1640 first edition. The most striking feature of Q2’s title page, though, is that it names no author at all. The play itself and the company performing it, rather than the name of Fletcher, or Beaumont and Fletcher, are the selling points. F2 and Q2 introduce a number of important corrections, as well as errors. F2, for instance, corrected the erroneous speech headings
in 2.1, 2.3, and 3.1, in which the character Altea is denoted by the number “4.” Though relatively simple to correct, it is not clear what led to the error in the first place. Williams, in a textbook example of the use of compositorial analysis in editorial deliberation, argues that “Since both compositors set the form “4.” and since neither had difficulty in spelling the full name . . . we may posit a manuscript formation for an abbreviation of the prefix, “A” or “At” that resembled the characters for “4” or “4th” and so misled both men” (BFC 6: 495-497; qtn. from 497). On the other hand, F2 omits a line (3.4.24) that would not be restored to the text until 1750, among other persistent errors.

*Rule a Wife* was next printed in Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Works* printed by Jacob Tonson in 1711. As with Q2, *Rule a Wife* here is printed from F2. This edition, issued in octavo first in seven volumes then in ten volumes, both in the same year, was modelled after Tonson’s successful collection of Shakespeare’s *Works* of 1709. An engraving precedes every play, and as the Shakespeare edition is introduced by a biographical essay by Nicholas Rowe, so the Beaumont and Fletcher is introduced by an “Account of the Authors and their Writings.” This account is anonymously authored, but is often misattributed to Gerard Langbaine the younger, who died in 1692 (cf. Williams, “On Editing” 66). In fact, it greatly expands upon the accounts in any of Langbaine’s writing, or even in Gildon’s 1699 revision of Langbaine. Rather, the account consists of new biographical information supplemented by lengthy excerpts from Langbaine and, importantly, it contains the first publication of John Dryden’s “Heads of an Answer to Rymer.”

Subsequent free-standing editions of *Rule a Wife* were printed in 1717, 1720,

102 That the “Account” itself is not the work of Langbaine is made explicit on p. xxvii: “Mr. Langbaine . . . is very particular upon the several Plays of our Authors, and therefore I shall conclude with
1728, 1733, 1735, 1736, and 1744. The 1728 and 1735 editions were printed in Dublin, while the others were printed in London, and all of those except the 1720 edition were issued by the Tonson publishing family. The 1717 title page ascribed *Rule a Wife* to both Beaumont and Fletcher, as it had been in the collected editions, and until the late nineteenth century, the play would be thought of as the product of both playwrights rather than Fletcher alone. Each of these editions derives ultimately from *1711*, though in each case the Tonson publications are most likely printed from the immediately preceding edition (and the 1720 edition shows some consultation of Q2). As such, they add little to the textual tradition. Though the play was no doubt printed so often because of its popularity in the theatres, the title pages of the London editions make no mention of theatres or performances at all. After Q2, no London editions of *Rule a Wife* would give a cast list until that of 1772.

The second eighteenth-century edition of Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Works* was published by the Tonson group in 1750, edited by Lewis Theobald, Thomas Seward, and J. Sympson. The edition was printed from marked-up copy of *1711* (it was standard procedure to work from the immediately preceding edition), but it was a major reworking of the text according to the principles of eighteenth-century vernacular editing. Earlier and variant editions were sporadically consulted (resulting, in the case of *Rule a Wife*, in

Transcribing him[.]” The 1711 edition is referred to as the Langbaine edition throughout the Bowers edition of Beaumont and Fletcher.

The 1720 duodecimo was printed for M. Wellington, who presumably derives his right to print the play from the Richard Wellington who sold Q2. The Tonson right to print the play individually derives from their publication of the collected *Works*.

The Dublin editions do mention theatres and give cast lists. Comically, the identical list is printed in 1728, 1735, and 1761.
the restoration of a dropped line and the emending of other errors originating in F2 and
1711), but a free hand was taken in the matter of “correcting” the text. Seward, who
edited *Rule a Wife*, was a metrical Procrustes, and seemed to have devoted most of his
attention to regularizing Fletcher’s idiosyncratic rhythms. While, as a glance at
Appendix A will show, many of his changes have been adopted in this and subsequent
editions, the majority have been rejected. His emendations did not end with simple
relineation, but rather relied on the insertion and deletion of many single-syllable words.
Seward’s text of *Rule a Wife* presents a radical extreme from which subsequent editors
retreat, but many of its emendations persist in the main line of the textual tradition and in
the acting texts. The 1753 Tonson duodecimo of *Rule a Wife* contains the Seward text
(though it seems to have been printed from a copy of the 1744 duodecimo marked up
with reference to Seward), and it was from either the 1750 collection, or, more likely, the
1753 duodecimo that the 1763 Tonson edition of *Rule a Wife* was printed. 1763 is the
first edition of *Rule a Wife* printed with theatrical alterations. It, along with the two 1776
ditions (which contain further alterations), derive from the Seward text. After 1763,
nearly all editions of *Rule a Wife* published outside of the collected works of Beaumont
and Fletcher are of various acting versions, and so fall outside the range of this survey
(see Stage History and Appendix D).

An anonymously edited *Dramatick Works*, usually ascribed to George Colman the
elder, was published in 1778. It is not an innovative edition, as most of its work is in
undoing Seward and, in the best editorial fashion, quarreling with him in the footnotes.
His main contribution to *Rule a Wife* was in regularizing the speech headings for each

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105 The 1763 version was reprinted in 1767 and 1772. The 1767 edition was the last of *Rule a Wife*
published by the Tonson family (Richard, the last Tonson, died in 1772).
character. Henry Weber undertook the editing of Beaumont and Fletcher at the strong insistence of Sir Walter Scott, and the results were published in 1812 in Edinburgh. Weber follows Colman pretty faithfully for the text itself, but was the first editor of a Beaumont and Fletcher *Works* to number the scenes and add location descriptions. He also added a large number of stage directions. For many of these insertions he consulted acting editions of *Rule a Wife*. In some ways, his editorial practice is in accord with modern editorial theorists who recognize that the theatrical tradition also has some authority when it comes to the editing of dramatic texts.\(^{106}\) Weber’s edition was followed by a two-volume edition printed in 1840 (and subsequently reprinted a number of times) prefaced by George Darley. This edition simply reprints Weber’s text, minus his notes and apparatus, and so is mostly irrelevant to the textual tradition of *Rule a Wife*, with the exception of the repunctuation of 4.3.206-207, which makes a substantive contribution to clarifying the text (see note to those lines). The Darley edition is important not for its treatment of the text, but because it was created to satisfy the demand for a popularly-affordable collection of Beaumont and Fletcher. Ironically, it may have contributed to the devaluation of Beaumont and Fletcher because the introduction, originally to have been written by Robert Southey, is a cursory and mostly negative appraisal of their plays.

Alexander Dyce’s edition of Beaumont and Fletcher’s *Works* appeared in 1843-46. This is still one of the most all-around useful editions of Beaumont and Fletcher, and editors remain in debt to his helpful annotations. Dyce was the first editor of *Rule a Wife* to thoroughly collate all of the early editions. The worst of intrusive eighteenth-century emendations have been eliminated; however, in the case of *Rule a Wife* at least, all of

\(^{106}\) A number of collations in this edition attribute emendations, which have been attributed to Weber by other editors, to the acting editions in which they first appear.
Fletcher’s characteristic “ye”s have been changed to “you”s. From Dyce to the present, the editorial tradition of Rule a Wife is one of erratically increasing and decreasing rigour. Volume three of the unfinished Beaumont and Fletcher Variorum containing R. W. Bond’s edition of Rule a Wife was printed in 1908. The Variorum began publication in 1904, and a year later, Cambridge University Press began publishing a Works edited by Arnold Glover and A. R. Waller. The Cambridge edition was, oddly, a direct reprint of F2, with other editions collated in notes at the back of each volume. The decision to reprint derivative rather than substantive texts makes this edition nearly useless for scholars, and its faithful reproduction of old spelling and punctuation also alienates many general readers. Bond’s edition, on the other hand, is modernized with copious annotations, and he proposes persuasive solutions to many cruces that had heretofore stymied editors and readers. A serious shortcoming, however, is that it takes absolutely no note of 1711, and instead attributes most of the features originating in that text to the 1717 quarto.

The only significant non-acting edition of Rule a Wife to appear outside of the collected works of Beaumont and Fletcher was produced in 1914 by George Saintsbury for Charles Mills Gayley’s anthology Representative English Comedies. Saintsbury’s is an idiosyncratic edition. Most of the annotations are insufferably condescending, perhaps appropriately so for one of the last of the great Victorian men of letters, and he makes heavy use of elisions and relineations in order to fit Fletcher’s verse to his own theories of English prosody. Like Bond, he takes no note of 1711, but he also completely ignores Bond’s edition. He either did not know or did not care about it. Williams notes that Saintsbury essentially reverts to Weber’s text (BFC 6: 499). My own suspicion, based on
some shared accidentals, is that Saintsbury worked from the more familiar and widely available Darley text and only occasionally consulted other editions.

The most recent edition of *Rule a Wife* is that by George Walton Williams in the Cambridge *Dramatic Works in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon*, general editor Fredson Bowers. This edition is an old-spelling text produced in strict accordance with the exhaustive principles of twentieth-century New Bibliography. The goal of this style of editing is to discover as much as possible about the physical conditions of the printing of the play so that, among other things, the type of copy from which the play is printed can be inferred. Though New Bibliographic theories have been critiqued, justifiably in many cases, the analysis of printing methods has added undeniably to our understanding of the processes by which texts have made their way to us. As I hope is apparent throughout this edition, I am thoroughly indebted to the extraordinary work done by Williams. There is something perverse, however, in an editorial project that “will not bring our authors back on stage, nor will it improve their reputation as literary figures” (Williams, “On Editing” 20). Why then spend three decades editing these playwrights? To argue that “next to the establishment of the text, the most important contribution the [BFC] will make will be the successive studies of printing houses and printing house practices that it will offer” (Williams, “On Editing” 6) seems an odd justification for such effort. If one studies printing houses, then printers, printing houses, and all of their products must be the object of research, without being limited to authorial or generic groupings (as the work of D. F. McKenzie and Peter Blayney has established). Still, the existence of the BFC has coincided with a number of critical revaluations of the work of Beaumont and Fletcher, as well as a growing number of productions, and it is the purpose of this edition to contribute to this growing awareness of Fletcher’s value.
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife: A Stage History

Rule a Wife and Have a Wife was, from the reopening of the theatres at the Restoration until the mid-nineteenth century, one of the most consistently popular plays on the British stage. The data collected by the editors of The London Stage 1660-1800 (hereafter LS) show that Rule a Wife was performed more often (nearly four hundred times) in that period than any other comedy written before the closing of the theatres in 1642, including Shakespeare’s most popular comedies, The Merry Wives of Windsor and (in various adaptations) The Tempest.\(^{107}\) In addition, Rule a Wife was performed almost as many times as I Henry IV and Nahum Tate’s adaptation of King Lear (LS and Schneider passim). Of pre-Restoration plays, only Shakespeare’s tragedies Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello were seen more often by eighteenth-century audiences (Hogan, Shakespeare 2: 716-19).\(^{108}\) Appendix C lists nearly 800 performances of Rule a Wife in the United Kingdom and North America between 1624 and 1860, a record for early modern plays matched only by a handful of Shakespeare’s dramas. Though certain periods of the stage history of Rule a Wife were explored by A. C. Sprague (from 1660 to 1710) and Donald J. Rulfs (from 1776 to 1833), who both discuss it in the context of Beaumont and Fletcher revivals as a whole, no complete account of the play’s stage history exists.\(^{109}\) This lacuna is understandable in light of the relative lack of interest in Fletcher’s plays during much of the twentieth century (both

\(^{107}\) Unless otherwise noted, all performance data are derived from LS. LS is a calendar so reference is made by date rather than volume and page (except when the introductions are cited). Names of actors are regularized to the spelling found in BDA.

\(^{108}\) Unfortunately the lack of a similarly comprehensive calendar of nineteenth-century performances makes similar comparisons for that period difficult.
critically and theatrically); however, this battle-of-the-sexes comedy remained appealing to audiences for an almost unbelievably long period of time and we must do what we can to discover the source of that appeal.

A problem with this objective is the imbalance in the historical record between the plentiful evidence of the fact of performance and the paucity of descriptions and information about the particulars of why a given performance was appealing. In short, all we know of most performances of Rule a Wife is that they happened, and perhaps a cast list from a playbill survives. This problem is common to all plays performed before the rise of regular dramatic journalism and criticism, and we must make do with the occasional diarist or correspondent. Often, particular details of staging are known only because of unusual problems. For instance, Perez’s laughter (5.2.31-33) had become such an established point of performance that David Garrick’s inability to master the expected type of laugh led to his decision to play Leon instead. Choosing this role then led to his revisions that emphasized the importance of Leon, which profoundly affected the reception of the play thereafter. Or, a more slapstick example, during the afterpiece on 6 February 1800 at Drury Lane an actress slipped on stage, “her head striking with so much violence against the boards that she fainted away” (qtd. in LS). “This disaster,” another newspaper informs us, “originated in the peel of an orange, which the Copper Captain [Perez] throws away” (qtd. in LS). Perez is directed to eat an orange in the prompt-book used for both the 1825 and 1839 productions at Covent Garden.110 This

109 Wendy Griswold’s wide-ranging study of revivals of early modern plays ignores Rule a Wife (as well as Fletcher’s other long-lived play, The Chances) because of the book’s exclusive generic focus on city comedy and revenge tragedy.

110 This prompt-book, a marked-up copy of the 1811 edition, is housed in the Newberry Library. I consulted a photocopy of it held by Robarts Library, University of Toronto.
illuminating piece of business occurs towards the end of Act 4, as Perez gains confidence when Margarita insists that she did give the town house to Estifania and hence to Perez. Perez demonstrates the self-satisfaction of his ownership by “sucking an orange,” as the prompt-book directs, consuming the expensive fruit in a physical kind of gloating. But even the prompt-book does not provide a complete account, as it is only from a reviewer we learn that when Margarita reveals that the house is not Perez’s after all, “the orange was helplessly dropped . . . to express Michael’s ludicrous despair” (The Examiner, 20 October 1839). Oranges remained a relatively expensive delicacy throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and were also, in the Restoration theatre and after, strongly associated with quasi-prostitute “orange-girls.” They sold these fruits, initially sought after by returning royalists who had gained a taste for them during their French exile, during performances. Eating an orange in this context would have associated Perez with both prostitutes and upwardly-mobile social pretensions. The iconic ambiguity of the prop cleverly works in tandem with the Garden of Eden imagery sprinkled throughout Perez’s dialogue, as he realizes that his paradise is a fiction. What frustrates these speculations, though, is that it is not certain when the eating of an orange was added to the performance of Perez. We know Thomas Betterton, the famous Restoration actor, was well-regarded as Perez and played him often, but we do not know whether he ate an orange while the orange-girls prowled the auditorium.

Partly because of its long-lasting popularity, Rule a Wife experienced a kind of invisibility because of its ubiquity, and individual performances were so common that they were unremarkable. The play did, however, leave its imprint on popular culture. Estifania’s denunciation of Perez, that he is “a man of copper, / A kind of candlestick” (4.1.92-93) inspired his appellation as the “Copper Captain,” which appears in the
dramatis personae list of Q2 in 1697. The term entered the lexicon to refer to various kinds of militant impostors. Thomas Carlyle, for instance, would insult Napoleon III, whom he saw as an upstart, by referring to him as a copper captain (Cumming 344), and the copper captain as a characteristic type became familiar enough to appear in the many editions of Brewer’s *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. By the late nineteenth century, however, the phrase “copper captain,” while it remained in circulation, began to puzzle readers, and newspapers would helpfully inform their inquiring readers that the name originated in a play, sometimes adding that, “[i]t was at one time a sort of test part for popular actors, much as that of Hamlet is to-day” (*Boy’s Own Paper* 19 February 1887). The play was a thing of the past for Charles Dickens in 1867. When seeking old plays worthy of alteration to contemporary tastes, he noted that “During Garrick’s reign . . . *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* was most followed. Everyone knew Estifania and the Copper Captain by heart” (204). By 1911, the London theatre critic for *The New York Times* observed that *Rule a Wife* and Congreve’s *The Way of the World* were “antiques prized as literature which would never be selected for theatrical revival” (“Harking Back” n.p.). Implicit in that grouping is the judgement that the bawdy humour of those plays was not acceptable, even to audiences “used to Shaw, Pinero, and Galsworthy, not to mention Ibsen” (“Harking Back”).

After its initial performances in the 1620s and 1630s (discussed above in “Sources and Resources”), *Rule a Wife* was excerpted as a droll in the collection *The Wits; or, 111 This was not the play’s only contribution to the common stock of phrases. The title was originally an ironic twist on familiar proverbs, but in the United States the phrase “Rule a wife and have a wife” became itself proverbial (Kerschen 20). 112 See also *The Era*, 19 May 1867 and 28 February 1885, for similar answers to correspondents. The questions may have been provoked by the number of racing horses named Copper Captain.
Sport upon Sport. It was quickly revived on the Restoration stage. It provided one of the early breakout roles for Thomas Betterton before becoming the property of a rival company for the next few decades. When the companies reunited Betterton revived his old role as Perez and continued in it until his death in 1710. After his death, the play became exclusively associated in the public mind with Robert Wilks and Anne Oldfield at Drury Lane, who entertained as the duelling Perez and Estifania for twenty years.

During the 1720s, Rule a Wife also established itself as a standard in Dublin, Edinburgh, and throughout the circuit of provincial theatres visited by travelling acting companies. Rule a Wife would remain a standard on provincial stages into the 1860s. In the 1730s, when old plays were no longer the property of a single company, all the major and minor theatres presented Rule a Wife. Occasionally they competed with head-to-head shows on the same nights. There were an unprecedented number of performances into the 1740s, and this glut may have contributed to a brief cessation of performances in the 1750s.

Rule a Wife was revived by David Garrick in 1756, and he revised the play a number of times, shifting the starring focus from Perez and Estifania to his own character, Leon. His final revision became the standard acting version. Garrick’s alterations were relatively small compared to many other eighteenth-century adaptations of early modern drama, but they had the lasting effect of turning most audience attention to the actor playing Leon. The sole exception to this trend was the Estifania of Frances Abington, which remained a signature role for her from 1766 to 1797 at both Drury Lane and Covent Garden. The next significant run in London of Rule a Wife was that by John Philip Kemble in the first decade-and-a-half of the nineteenth century. He established Leon as a good role for tragic actors who had trouble with comedy—it was necessary for actors to play roles in both genres because of the demands of the repertory system. One
tragic actor who played Leon as one of his very few comic roles was Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, an Englishman who migrated to the United States in 1796. He became one of the nation’s most prominent and well-travelled actors, active until 1838, and he ensured that *Rule a Wife* became an element of nearly every American theatre company’s repertoire. Edmund Kean in 1815 introduced a radical new interpretation of Leon, though it found less success with audiences than his other roles. In the early nineteenth century the repertory system began its decline, and performances of *Rule a Wife* became less frequent in London. Major productions included Charles Kemble in 1825, the debut of George Vandenhoff in 1839 (both at Covent Garden), and Samuel Phelps at Sadler’s Wells in 1848. These were isolated revivals rather than business as usual, however. *Rule a Wife* also remained standard in the provinces and in the London summer season at minor theatres before fading from the stage in the 1860s, a victim of changing standards of morality and the changing structure of the profession. This history will begin, however, by examining the two major productions of the last hundred years, revivals which lacked the infrastructure of the professional repertory companies that had nourished the play for so long.

**Modern Performances**

The Renaissance Theatre, a group influenced by the theory and practices of William Poel and dedicated to performing neglected early modern plays, produced *Rule a Wife* along with *The Maid’s Tragedy* and *The Wild-Goose Chase* in 1925 for a tercentenary celebration of John Fletcher (Summers 329). *Rule a Wife* was directed by Alice Fredman and J. T. Grein (Wearing 2: 625). Critics were sympathetic but

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113 Complete cast and production credits are given in Wearing.
underwhelmed by the performance, which seems to have been of the dull, respectfully
earnest type. The reviewer for *The Nation and Athenaeum* complained of the slow pace,
adding that while the performance was “on the whole very agreeable,” it “indicated rather
than realized its unquestionable possibilities as an acting play” (429). The reviewer for
*The Times* had less patience with the play itself, allowing only that “perhaps it is an
entertaining comedy, if you are content with a patchwork” (14). They both describe
the leading actresses as somewhat flat: Margarita “seemed to tire of it after a few scenes”
(*Times* 14), and Estifania “was a little too conscious that she was acting in costume”
(*Nation* 429). Leon was “too stately now and then, but generally as amusing as any Leon
could hope to be” (*Times* 14). The production seems to have been saved, though, by the
comedic talents of Baliol Holloway as Perez and Margaret Yarde as the Old Woman.
“What pleasure there must be in acting” these characters, the *Times* reviewer exclaims,
“watching Mr. Baliol Holloway cursing his poor lodging with luxuriant profanity, or
cross-questioning his landlady while she . . . grossly delights in shattering his illusions”
(14). This was long a favourite point in performances of *Rule a Wife*, and the scene had
been expanded multiple times in eighteenth and nineteenth century performance texts.\(^{115}\)
The *Times* critic singled out for praise the Old Lady (one of Margarita’s advisers) played
by Marie Ault, whose brief performance was made memorable by her “striking
resemblance to a very famous [but unnamed] comedian of the music halls” (14). The
intrusion of music-hall comedy “perhaps is not the spirit to celebrate a tercentenary,”
concludes the same critic, “but if the Renaissance Theatre will be pious we must find our
own entertainment where we may” (14). Approaching the play in a reverent manner, the

\(^{114}\) Citations of these reviews are located under “rev. of *Rule a Wife*” in the Works Consulted.

\(^{115}\) See Appendix D, 3.4.78-79n for the expansions.
company failed to produce a living entertainment and instead produced a museum piece. The costumes and performances were too stiff, and only the slapstick and music-hall allusions enlivened matters for the audience.

The most recent production of *Rule a Wife* was in May 2003 at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. Fletcher’s play was altered extensively. The director, Eric Samuelson, reports that at least half of the play was cut and many contemporary references were added (private correspondence). Like the Renaissance Theatre production, the Brigham Young production found success in appeals to popular culture, in this case transferring the setting to a “mythologized pop-culture derived” California of the 1830s and “Zorro-izing the play.” Forgoing the antiquarian piety of the 1925 staging, this production reduced the running time to about ninety minutes and interpolated many sword-fights (there are none in the original play). This was not the first time such an approach was taken to the play, and the effect was perhaps not unlike that of the two-act adaptation of *Rule a Wife* known as *Leon of Aragon* performed in the 1860s. The production designs and costumes were especially reminiscent of both the 1960s Disney *Zorro* television show and the 1998 *The Mask of Zorro* film (starring Antonio Banderas). There were tight pants, wide-brimmed hats, and black capes for the men and brightly-coloured full skirts for the women. Estifania even strips to a very modest version of underwear for a sword fight with Perez—a direct lift from *The Mask of Zorro*.

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116 These and the following quotations are from Eric Samuelson’s “Director’s Note” in the production program unless otherwise noted. I am grateful to Janice Jenson at the Production Office of Brigham Young University for sending me materials including production notes and photographs (though I have unfortunately not been able to secure permission to reproduce those photographs).

117 This adaptation was not printed and its existence is known only from a few playbills and advertisements.
Zorro. The elegantly designed adobe set conjured a world straight out of old sword-and-cape movie serials in a deliberate attempt to distance the subject matter from reality, while the reviews and photographs suggest a pace of action accelerated toward the farcical. This distancing strategy was chosen not only in deference to a modern audience’s willingness or unwillingness to be entertained by Jacobean comedy, but also because of a discomfort with “the play’s questionable gender politics.” To Eric Samuelson the shades of “unrighteous dominion” (a Church of Latter-Day Saints doctrinal term for the unjust exercise of authority) presented a problem to be neutralized, rather than an issue to be engaged. Samuelson decided to emphasize swordplay and the campy Zorro effect, reasoning that “[a] conversation between a man and his wife that could be construed as supporting unrighteous dominion has a very different flavor if they both have swords and can use them.” The desire to “defuse the gender issue” rather than engage it also seems motivated by an unvoiced anxiety about the auspices of the production; that is, that the performances took place in Utah, in a Mormon institution, a community with an actual patriarchy. The anxiety is not unfounded since the idea of a “Mormon production” of a play called Rule a Wife and Have a Wife never fails to raise a chuckle at, say, Shakespeare conferences. Anxious not to perpetuate Mormon cultural stereotypes, the Brigham Young production worked to displace the issue by importing Hispanic cultural stereotypes associated with Zorro. Despite the stated intention to “distance [the play] from some of its more troubling implications” concerning gender-power dynamics and the unstated intention to avoid conjuring the patriarchal traditions associated with Mormonism by invoking pop-cultural elements that “might be more accessible to our audience,” one reviewer found a different sort of relevance in the action.

118 On “unrighteous dominion” see Doctrine and Covenants 121: 39.
of the play. Referring to the tendency in his community toward marrying at a younger age, Peter Thunell observed that “any show about hasty engagements by people who hardly know each other sure sounds applicable to the BYU we all know and love.”

Distancing itself from concerns that the play may be too sexist, the production seems to have backed into another sort of relevance. Even if it were unintentional, the discovery of a previously unconsidered contemporary relevance must be counted on the positive side of the ledger because such discoveries should be one of the basic goals of any dramatic revival.

**A Stock Play**

*Rule a Wife* remained on stage for so long because it continued to please audiences who continued to buy tickets. When audience expectations changed, it was amenable to light revision that counteracted growing concerns about its potentially objectionable morality. To look at this popularity and answer the question, “Why *Rule a Wife*?” is difficult, though. It is a double-plot play about the struggle between the sexes within marriage, and this aspect alone sets it apart from the majority of comedies that end in marriage. Part of the answer is in the balance between the two plots, one in which the husband prevails, or at least seems to, and one in which the wife prevails, or at least seems to. This balance may presumably please both men and women in the audience, but then how to account for the shift toward Leon’s unambiguous victory in Garrick’s revision and the subsequent nineteenth-century critical habit of forgiving the play its immorality only on account of Leon’s decisive defence of a husband’s marital rights? While it is tempting to look at the sexual politics of the play and diagnose conclusions about the cultural climate in which the play found favour—to assert that the popularity of
*Rule a Wife* can tell us anything about many complex periods of history—such generalizations would inevitably be too facile and would beg the question rather than answer it.

The play’s longevity was nurtured by the repertory system, a system which continued until the structure of the theatrical profession changed in the mid-nineteenth century.\(^{119}\) The repertory system involved a number of companies (usually two or three officially licensed groups in London) which, in seasons lasting from September to May or June, presented a program of entertainment nightly (excepting Sundays). Shows usually consisting of a main-piece and one or more after-pieces, often with songs and dances between the acts. In London and elsewhere one or more companies would operate during the summer, providing entertainment for those who could not leave town. Except in cases of successful new plays or new revivals, different main-pieces were typically provided every night. While star actors became more important, the plays themselves were necessarily ensemble pieces using as much of the company as possible in an economical manner. This professional structure obviously has more in common with early modern theatres than theatres now, when even demanding companies rarely present more than eight or nine plays a season.

To understand *Rule a Wife*’s popularity and longevity we must examine not only what *Rule a Wife* offered audiences but also what it offered a company of actors. The first element which must be emphasized is that, dramaturgically, it is an extremely lightweight play, in the sense that it makes very few demands on the resources of a

\(^{119}\) The professional structure of repertory companies, and analyses of the changing repertory, are discussed in the introductions to the five parts of *The London Stage 1660-1800* (Van Lennep, et al.). For changes in the nineteenth century see Booth 13, 35.
theatre. Its portability may partially account for its frequent use by provincial travelling companies both in England and the United States. As discussed above (“Sources and Resources”), Fletcher designed the play for the King’s Men, a repertory company, and wrote notable parts for almost all the typical “lines,” or specializations, of an acting company. There are two clown roles, Cacafogo for the lead clown, and the Old Woman (who continued to be played by a male actor in drag) for the broad or low comedian. The Duke provides a fine showcase for the devious villain. There is a forceful male lead and a hapless comic male lead, as well as two feisty but individuated female leads. By having two sets of leading characters, Leon, Perez, Margarita and Estifania, the play creates an opportunity for second- and third-tier actors to shine in the supporting roles of Juan and Altea. Those two roles, as well as the gentlemanly soldiers Sancho and Alonzo, however, are short enough that they did not tax the perhaps limited skills or memories of already overworked actors (and since they are small roles, other company players could step in at short notice). *Rule a Wife* made flattering and economical use of the “deep bench” of a professional repertory company. There is another advantage built into the play which helps ensure its appeal to some types of actors. Leon, the lead male role, and Estifania, the lead female role, rarely appear together (and never speak to each other), so *Rule a Wife* offers an acting company a play in which the male and female stars both have strong roles but do not have to share scenes together struggling for the spotlight. In addition, Leon and Perez, the second male role, also spend very little time on stage together. In a theatrical context which often valued individual “points” over ensemble acting, and in the claustrophobic atmosphere of a repertory company that often fostered intense professional rivalries, *Rule a Wife* made

\[120\] In the interests of clarity, I have not avoided using anachronistic terminology for types of roles.
use of the company’s best (and sometimes most temperamental) actors without the
danger of their getting in each other’s way.

THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The King’s Men performed *Rule a Wife* twice at court soon after it was licensed
by the Master of the Revels on 19 October 1624: once “for the ladys” on 2 November and
again for Prince Charles on 26 December (*JCS* 3: 408). As was often the case, the
King’s Men presented their untested new play along with established favourites during
the festive season of royal entertainments. The only other record of performance for
*Rule a Wife* before the closing of the theatres in 1642 dates from February 1635, when
John Greene, a student at the Inns of Court, saw it at the Blackfriars Theatre (Symonds
386).

There is no evidence for any performances of *Rule a Wife* between 1635 and the
reopening of the theatres at the Restoration of Charles II. Episodes from the Perez and
Estifania plot were recast in prose as a short dramatic piece printed in the first edition of
*The Wits, or Sport upon Sport* in 1662. Slightly abridged versions of 3.2, 3.4 and the
first part of 4.1 are fused under the title “An Equall Match.” The “Argument” succinctly
describes the action: “A loose Officer, and a wanton waiting Woman, marry in hopes of
eithers Riches, and cozen one another” (Elson 98). Though some of the pieces collected

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121 The earliest performances and probable casts of *Rule a Wife* are discussed in “Sources and Resources” above.

122 See the chart in Astington, *Court* 256.

123 Printed for Henry Marsh with a preface signed by him (Wing W3218). The same preface is signed by Francis Kirkman in his 1672 edition (Elson 1).
in *The Wits* and its sequel (also titled *The Wits*, published by Francis Kirkman in 1673) may have been performed surreptitiously during the closure of the theatres, John James Elson argues that the abridgements of longer plays (mostly works by Beaumont and Fletcher, Shakespeare, and Shirley) “were designed for reading rather than for acting” (32). John Astington’s study of these types of collections concludes that they “are unlikely to be associated with any of the Interregnum acting companies which occasionally performed in London between 1642 and 1660” (“Dramatic Extracts” 608-9).

There is no reason to believe that “An Equall Match” was ever performed for a paying audience, but as Astington points out, such collections of short dramatic pieces are well-suited to entertainments in private homes (609). The extracts found in *The Wits* constitute something of a greatest hits package of comic episodes (the grave-digging scene from *Hamlet* and the Gadshill robbery from *1 Henry IV*, among a majority of Fletcherian pieces), so the inclusion of “An Equall Match” provides evidence for the appeal of *Rule a Wife* and of the Perez-Estifania plot in particular. In the opinion of the compiler of *The Wits*, at least, this strand of the play contained some of the most memorable (or notorious—the male brothel scene from *Custom of the Country* is also

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124 In support of this Elson notes that most of the abridgments do not attempt to limit the number of actors required nor do they tend to make concessions to “makeshift stage facilities” (32). Though “An Equall Match” requires only four actors, the Maid’s lines could have easily been assigned to the Old Lady, if reducing the number of actors required were desired. Elson proposes Kirkman, an author and play-collector as well as a bookseller, as the person most likely to have made the abridgments.

125 Astington adds that another purpose of these collections could be “to widen the taste for the buying and reading of play texts proper” (609). Kirkman writes in his edition of the first part of *The Wits* (1672): “If you please to Turn over the Leaf, you may find from what Plays these several Droll Humours are Collected: And if you please to come to my Shop . . . you may be Furnished” (Elson 257).
included) comic scenes in English drama, “fitted,” as the title page puts it, “for the
pleasure and content of all Persons” (Elson 41). Almost all of the plays represented in
The Wits had already been performed by the time it was published (LS and Schneider
passim). Therefore, The Wits may tell us not just what one compiler thought readers in
1662 would enjoy, but what Restoration playgoers had already enjoyed and preferred. It
is possible that the compiler was not anticipating taste but collecting scenes which had
already proved to be favourites of the theatre’s patrons. In either case, the selection of
the Perez-Estifania plot in “An Equall Match” might be said to constitute one of the
earliest pieces of critical commentary on the play.

By the time The Wits was published in 1662 the theatres had been reopened for a
few years and Rule a Wife had been performed a number of times. As part of the attempt
to return to normalcy after the Restoration two courtiers, William Davenant and Thomas
Killigrew, were awarded royal patents to operate acting companies. These patents
imitated the structure of theatrical regulation that prevailed before the English Civil
Wars. Both companies performed Rule a Wife, but rights to certain plays were officially
restricted to one company or another as competition became more acute. The Duke’s
Company, managed by William Davenant, was formed mostly from a group of young
actors assembled by John Rhodes in 1659 to perform at the Cockpit prior to the official
reopening of the theatres (LS 1: 5). Rhodes had been the wardrobe keeper at the
Blackfriars before the closing of the theatres, and so he provided a continuity of practice
and performance tradition otherwise lacking in the company of inexperienced actors.
The breakout star of this troupe was Thomas Betterton, who was to become the most
famous actor of the Restoration. Downes includes Rule a Wife in a list of plays
performed by Rhodes’s company in which Betterton “was highly Applauded” (45).
Davenant was assigned exclusive rights to *Rule a Wife* for two months in a warrant of 12 December 1660, though his troupe continued to perform it as late as 1 April 1661 when Samuel Pepys saw “part of it” at Salisbury Court: “I never saw [it] before, but do not like it” (*LS*). Seeing only a portion of an unfamiliar complexly plotted play may have put Pepys off, or the relatively inexperienced actors of the company may have been at fault. Rights to perform the play soon passed to the King’s Company, and when Pepys saw the veterans of that troupe perform *Rule a Wife* on 5 February 1662 at the Vere Street theatre he found it “very well done.” Two young Dutch travellers saw it a week later. The King’s Men, the company of patentee Thomas Killigrew, was made up mostly of experienced actors trained before the closing of the theatres in 1642, including Michael Mohun, Nicholas Burt, Charles Hart, and Walter Clun, just to name those who we know performed in *Rule a Wife* during the Restoration era. All but Mohun were initially trained by the King’s Men, and so some of them may have acted in earlier performances of *Rule a Wife*, providing a continuity of tradition. Other than the admittedly revolutionary presence of actresses, there is little reason to believe that the staging and acting of *Rule a Wife* was very different from pre-Restoration performances. The high concentration of performances shows the play’s popularity, and *Rule a Wife* remained one of the company’s standard pieces in the years to come. Downes, in his 1708 history of the stage, *Roscius Anglicanus*, names *Rule a Wife* second in the list of “Principal Old Stock Plays” performed by the King’s Company (11, 24).

The primary evidence for their early careers is James Wright’s *Historia Histrionica* of 1699. Downes provides a cast list for the King’s 1663–1664 season: Mohun as Leon, Burt as Juan, Hart as Perez, Clun as Cacafogo, Anne Marshall as Margarita, and Elizabeth Bowtell as Estifania (11-12).

The surviving records from these years are very incomplete, and the only other known performance by the King’s Company is disputed: for an entertainment at court on 14 February 1667, one document
The King’s Company’s rights to *Rule a Wife* and many other old plays were affirmed in a Lord Chamberlain’s list of 12 January 1669. 128 But faced with ageing actors and a stale repertory, the King’s Company deteriorated during the 1670s. The Duke’s Company absorbed the weakened King’s Company in 1682, and the newly united troupe wasted no time in producing “several old and Modern Plays, that were the Propriety of Mr. Killigrew” (Downes 82). Downes implies that access to these plays was the primary incentive for the Duke’s Company to unite with the other company, and *Rule a Wife* is the first play he names among their new properties (82-83). They were so eager to perform *Rule a Wife* that they gave a performance at the Inner Temple on 1 November 1682, “before,” Downes’s editors note, “the union formally took effect” (83, n. 263). The show was “to the great satisfaction of all the Spectators” and the company received £20 (LS). Two weeks later *Rule a Wife* was performed at court as the first known (official) performance of the United Company (LS 15 November 1682), showing that it was considered a play appealing enough to have the opening performance of a risky new venture staked on it. Thomas Betterton played Perez, returning to a role he had not performed in over twenty years and which had been, as noted above, one of his first “highly applauded” successes. United Company performance records are very incomplete, so the performances listed in the appendix can only give a vague indication of the number of times they actually performed *Rule a Wife*. Notably, in 1694 a song for the play set by Henry Purcell was published, “There’s not a Swain on the Plain.” This names *Rule a Wife* as having been played, another names *Flora’s Vagaries* (LS).

128 The list, reproduced in LS, assigns a large number of plays to the King’s Company by virtue of their having been “formerly acted at Blackfriars.” The list is an attempt to block the performance of these plays by the rival Duke’s company by reinforcing the sense of continuity between the old King’s Men and the new King’s Company. Whether many of these plays were ever performed is uncertain.
song was most likely written to supply the missing one Margarita asks the boy to sing at 3.1.24 (see Appendix D for the lyrics).

The United Company came to an end in 1695 when Betterton led a group of actors to form another troupe which would perform at Lincoln’s Inn Fields. Their performances of Rule a Wife at that theatre were accompanied by the 1697 quarto of the play. It includes a cast list and is advertised, “As it is Acted at the New Theatre, in Little Lincolns Inn-fields. By His Majesty’s Servants” (Q2). Edward Kynaston played Perez, but the actor who played Leon is mysteriously not listed. Another puzzle of the Q2 list is that the most vivid description of a seventeenth-century performance in Rule a Wife is Colley Cibber’s recollection of the way Kynaston played Leon. According to Cibber,

He had something of a formal Gravity in his Mien, which was attributed to the stately Step he had been so early confin’d to, in a female Decency. But ev’n that, in Characters of Superiority had its proper Graces; it misbecame him not in the Part of Leon . . . which he executed with a determin’d Manliness, and honest Authority, well worth the best Actor’s Imitation. (72)

Cibber probably saw Kynaston play Leon in earlier United Company performances when Betterton would have played Perez. Though Betterton was usually loath to give up his roles, perhaps at this point Kynaston insisted on assuming the lead. The move from Leon to Perez as a step up would be inconceivable to later audiences because Leon would

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129 LS dates the revival to “not later than October 1696” because the Huntington Library copy is dated 27 October 1696.

130 Also puzzling is the absence of Fletcher’s name (or Beaumont and Fletcher’s names) from the quarto.
become the star attraction after Garrick’s revisions. In the Restoration and early eighteenth century, however, Perez was the more prized role.

The 1696 revival by Betterton’s company was evidently unsuccessful because when they played it next it was advertised as “Not Acted by that Company these Nine Years” (LS 8 June 1705). No cast is given, but the bill claims that “The Principal Parts [are] to be perform’d by those who play’d them when ’twas reviv’d in King Charles the Second’s time.” They were advertising their performance on the basis of nostalgia, emphasizing tradition as opposed to the inexperienced younger actors who remained at Drury Lane (where Rule a Wife was performed at least ten times in the first decade of the century). Given the makeup of Betterton’s company at this time it is plausible to assume that he took part in this revival. It was successful enough to be performed on 28 October 1706, “For the Entertainment of Hamet Ben Hamet Cardenas, Ambassador from the Emperor of Fez and Morocco.” This would be the last hurrah in the play for Betterton, because in the following performance on 20 November the dashing young actor Robert Wilks played Perez. Soon Wilks was joined by Anne Oldfield as Estifania. Together, they created a new era for the play, and they would sustain their popularity in these roles for the next two decades.

1710-1756

After the epoch-defining death of Thomas Betterton in April 1710 a triumvirate of managers inaugurated a period of stability at Drury Lane which would last until the 1730s. Robert Wilks became the preeminent actor in London after the death of Betterton. Wilks was “most highly praised for his acting in comedies,” especially in roles

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131 The company had moved from Lincoln’s Inn Fields to the new Queen’s Theatre in the meantime.
he created in plays by his close friend George Farquhar (*BDA* 16: 114, 120). He was praised by Cibber for his devotion to his craft (however, the difficulties produced by his temper and vanity form one of the comic sub-plots of the *Apology*). Anne Oldfield’s Estifania fit well her specialization in “amoral, high-spirited young women,” a line which included her famous portrayal of Millamant in *The Way of the World* (Donohue 19).

Between 1708 and 1730 Oldfield and Wilks appeared together in *Rule a Wife* at least seventy-three times. During these years, *Rule a Wife* was performed between three and five times a season. While these numbers are less than for successful new plays or blockbuster revivals, this sustained frequency shows it was a core piece of the Drury Lane repertoire. At no point in these decades did London audiences tire of seeing Wilks and Oldfield perform Perez and Estifania. According to Thomas Davies, “[t]he comic humour of Wilks was so intimately blended with the elegant manners of the gentleman, that his performance of . . . the Copper Captain, was esteemed one of his best-represented characters. Mrs. Oldfield’s Estifania was an excellent counterpart of comic spirit to the sprightly humour of Wilks” (406). Luckily, Davies follows this frustratingly vague summation with a closely observed account of the most famous moment in the Perez- Estifania plot:

> When Oldfield drew the pistol from her pocket, pretending to shoot Perez, Wilks drew back as if greatly terrified, and, in a tremulous voice, uttered,

> *What! thy own husband!* Oldfield replied, with an archness of

> countenance and half-shut eye, *Let mine own husband, then, be in his own*

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132 The managers were Robert Wilks, Colley Cibber, and Thomas Doggett, who would soon be replaced by Barton Booth. The confusing events of these years, involving many movements of actors between companies and of companies between theatres, are summarized clearly in Milhous, 114-18. Colley Cibber’s *Apology* brings the managerial struggles of the period to colourful (if biased) life.
wits, in a tone of voice so exactly in imitation of his, that the theatre was in a tumult of applause. (407; see 5.4.34-35)

Until his death in 1714, George Powell acted Leon. Powell resented the younger Wilks’s success to the point that when Wilks joined the Drury Lane company Powell deserted it for the other troupe in a fit of pique (BDA 12: 111). Rule a Wife may have appealed to these contentious actors at least partly because the structure of the play ensured that they rarely shared the stage. John Mills took over from Powell, and was a versatile but mediocre actor with a large build that suited Leon. Mills also had the advantage of being a close friend of Wilks, who, according to Cibber, “chose him for his second, in many Plays, [rather] than an Actor of perhaps greater Skill” (144). Mills’s middling talents were an advantage in the eyes of the company’s star. Davies writes that the company’s other lead actor, Barton Booth, “certainly would have been an admirable Leon; for he had enough of comic humour for the assumed folly of the part, and abundance of manly fire and noble action to display, when he broke through the cloud of his disguise, and proved himself the vindicator of his own honour” (405-6). Thus petty company politics contributed to the parade of mediocre actors in the part of Leon, which ensured that the focus of the audience’s attention would remain on the Perez and Estifania of Wilks and Oldfield.

Even after the deaths of Oldfield and Wilks in 1730 and 1732, respectively, Rule a Wife remained a staple of Drury Lane seasons and was performed consistently until 1742. The charm of Rule a Wife for Drury Lane’s patrons in this period lay in the sharp-

133 One critic wrote that Mills “had a Stamp with his Foot, which, in some of his Parts, appeared to be directed by his Judgment . . . . It had a very fine Effect in the Part of Leon” (qtd. in BDA 10: 249). It is not clear where in the play Mills stamped his foot.
witted performances of Kitty Clive, who was considered the most gifted comic actress of her time, as Estifania (BDA 3: 341). *Rule a Wife* was dropped from the repertoire when Clive briefly left the company in 1743, and it would not be seen again at Drury Lane until David Garrick revived it in 1756. *Rule a Wife* remained in the Drury Lane repertoire on the strength of Clive’s popularity in the role, but this is yet another case in which there is little specific information about what exactly made her Estifania so popular for so long.

John Rich’s company began performing *Rule a Wife* at Lincoln’s Inn Fields in 1731, and it continued in their repertoire after their move to Covent Garden in 1732, where it was the third play performed in the new theatre. Perhaps the recent performances at Goodman’s Fields (see previous footnote), along with the death of Oldfield, gave the sense the the play was up for grabs after such a long period associated exclusively with Drury Lane. Covent Garden’s appropriation of *Rule a Wife* was part of the aggressive competition between the two patent theatres. The production was an immediate success. Three performances followed within a week (one by royal command with the Prince of Wales in attendance), along with four more before the end of the season. This is the kind of reception more usually associated with successful debuts of

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134 Drury Lane’s unofficial monopoly on *Rule a Wife* was ended on 7 April 1730 by actor-manager Henry Giffard’s company. They would perform the play eighteen times at Goodman’s Fields between 1730 and 1736. Giffard was a skilled manager who specialized in the training of young actors, many of whom (among them David Garrick) would go on to successful careers at the two patent theatres (Giffard’s career and his innovations as an actor-manager are outlined in LS 3: lxxx-lxxxv). As a stock play, *Rule a Wife* was an obvious choice for such a troupe because actors could expect to play in it if they made the jump to one of the two official patent theatres. For example, Dennis Delane played Leon for Giffard’s company, and continued successfully in the role after joining the Covent Garden company. Rather than competing directly with the patent companies, Giffard was providing a valuable service by increasing the pool of available talent.
new works, and it suggests that something about the company’s production allowed the London audiences to rediscover an old favourite as if it were new. *Rule a Wife* held its place in their repertoire with fifty-seven performances at Covent Garden between 1732 and 1753. Forty-three of those performances were concentrated in the years 1732-42, when they were directly competing with the productions at Drury Lane. Attendance often increased for both theatres when the companies performed the same play because audiences enjoyed comparing the familiar and established points, certain moments or actions that became emblematic of the play as a whole. Moments such as Perez’s laugh, Estifania’s quick-draw, and Leon’s revelation of his hidden purpose were points to which the easily distracted audiences would pay particular attention.

After 1742 the frequency of performances dropped dramatically. There were a number of reasons for this trend. Giffard’s troupe stopped acting and Drury Lane dropped *Rule a Wife* from their repertoire altogether. Given the high number of performances in the 1730s, it is possible that the town tired of the play. Even Covent Garden took a breather, performing it only three times from 1743 to 1749. The revival there in the early 1750s was a success, as Peg Woffington injected new blood into the proceedings with her portrayal of Estifania, alongside veterans Lacy Ryan and (as Leon) James Quin. Even though neither man was very old (both were in their mid-50s), the kind of acting they both specialized in had come to seem old-fashioned after the revolution in performance style following Garrick’s debut in 1741. The change was vividly recorded by Richard Cumberland, who noted that during a performance of *The Fair Penitent* at Covent Garden in 1746, after Quin and Ryan had appeared onstage declaiming their lines and sawing their hands, Garrick entered and “it seemed as if a whole century had been stept over in the transition of a single scene” (qtd. in *DBA* 12:
One reason *Rule a Wife* may have temporarily fallen out of favour is that it was too closely associated with the old style of acting. It would take Garrick himself to reintroduce audiences to the play’s pleasures and possibilities. Furthermore, judging by the sighs of relief emitted by critics after Garrick’s alteration of *Rule a Wife*, audiences were growing ill at ease with its witty immorality. Changing senses of propriety and decorum were also contributing factors to the brief cessation of performances of *Rule a Wife* in the 1750s.

**Garrick and After**

If *Rule a Wife* had faded away in the mid-eighteenth century, it would have fit the pattern of a number of other Fletcher plays which had enjoyed strong performance traditions up to the 1750s before falling out of favour thereafter. *Beggar’s Bush, The Humourous Lieutenant, The Island Princess, The Maid’s Tragedy, The Pilgrim, The Scornful Lady*, and *Wit Without Money* (some in adapted forms) were performed often in the first half of the century, but were rarely, if ever, revived after the 1760s. Only *Rule a Wife, The Chances*, and, to a lesser extent, *Philaster* remained onstage for the duration of the century.¹³⁵ *The Chances* and *Rule a Wife* were both revised by David Garrick, and he gave the plays a new lease on life by adjusting them to suit the changing tastes of

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¹³⁵ Another perennial favourite was Farquhar’s *The Inconstant*, an adaptation of *The Wild-Goose Chase*. Rulf examine the slight uptick in revivals of (usually heavily adapted forms of) Beaumont and Fletcher plays after Garrick’s retirement, but this was a brief phenomenon and the revivals were usually short-lived (1247-52).
London’s audiences. These revisions are examined below following a brief outline of the play’s performance history during the last half of the eighteenth century.

*Rule a Wife* returned to Drury Lane on 25 March 1756 advertised as “Not acted [there] in 15 [actually fourteen] years.” Garrick probably decided to stage the old Fletcher favourite because of the success of *The Chances*, revived during the previous season (Pedicord and Bergmann 403). The casting for *Rule a Wife* included a few surprises. Kitty Clive, still the lead female comedian at Drury Lane, did not reprise her role as Estifania. Rather, the role went to Hannah Pritchard, “who acted it with much applause” until her retirement in 1768 (Davies 408). The other surprise was Garrick’s performance as Leon instead of Perez. Leon was not Garrick’s first choice, and John Taylor reports that Garrick “several times rehearsed” Perez:

> but there is a traditional laugh introduced, which he never could execute to his own satisfaction, and, therefore, kept to Leon, in which character he was admirable, having an opportunity of showing how well he could represent timid simplicity with a sly mixture of archness in the early

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136 *The Chances* was revised (and its last two acts rewritten) by the second Duke of Buckingham and published in 1682. This version has recently been edited in Hume and Love 2-122.

137 On Garrick’s version of Buckingham’s adaptation of *The Chances*, see Pedicord and Bergmann 394-401.

138 Her absence was odd enough to elicit comment from Davies, who noted that “Mrs. Clive had an undoubted claim to this part, as the superior comic actress of the theatre. But neither master nor man, neither Garrick nor [Henry] Woodward, wished to see her in this play; and I firmly believe they kept her out of it from a tribute which they paid to her superior abilities” (408). The long-running antipathy between Clive and Woodward included a physical altercation during a performance of *Catherine and Petruchio* in 1756 (*BDA* 16: 252).
scenes of the character, and afterwards assert the claims of the husband with spirit, energy, and grandeur. (348)

Davies has this to say of Garrick’s performance as Leon:

He wore the disguise of folly, to intrap the cautious Margareetta, so exactly and humourously, that he presented the complete picture of a Wittol. When he put on the man of courage, and asserted the honest rights of a husband, no one of a more brawny or sinewy figure could have manifested more fire or beautiful animation. The warmth of his spirit was so judiciously tempered, his action so correspondent to his utterance, his whole deportment so significant and important, that I think I never saw him more universally captivate the eyes and ears of an applauding theatre.

(409)

Davies’s description specifies that Garrick did not add any business to hint at his eventual change of demeanour, as John Philip Kemble would do. He defends Garrick’s performance against that of “a more brawny” actor because Leon is written as a physically large man, and the smaller Garrick “was obliged to curtail several lines which described him as the author intended him” (409).

Much of the success of this revival was due to Garrick, and the play was less successful (with fewer performances and smaller house earnings) when Garrick was absent during his extended European tour of 1763-65.139 Garrick returned to the role in 1767, and the playgoer Sylas Neville, in an example of the pleasures of repetition

139 William Powell played Leon in this period, and William Hopkins, the prompter, noted of his first performance on 24 April 1764, “Leon by Mr Powell—Queer enough—Not above charges in the House” (LS) Hopkins, always a Garrick partisan, recorded in his diary for the performance on 11 October 1775, “Mr [William] Smith Leon very la! la!” (LS).
available to the audience of a repertory theatre, noted, “By having seen him in the character before, and having read the play, I enjoyed the excellency of his acting more than I ever did” (*LS* 23 May 1767). This night was to be Hannah Pritchard’s final performance as Estifania, and the play was not repeated at Drury Lane until 1 March 1770, when Frances Abington, who would become the most famous Estifania since Anne Oldfield, joined the cast. An engraving of her in the role of Estifania graces an undated edition of *Rule a Wife* (c. 1784-90), featuring her in profile with a pistol extended, and another image of her as Estifania was reproduced on a piece of collectible delftware tile (reproduced in *DBA* 1: 13).

Covent Garden reintroduced *Rule a Wife* in 1761, and it remained in their repertoire until 1769. Audiences once again, as in the 1730s, were able to use the play as a basis to judge the relative merits of the two companies. After a long absence, *Rule a Wife* reentered the repertoire of Covent Garden in 1784 when Frances Abington joined the company.\(^{140}\) Abington found a suitable foil in the popular Perez of William Thomas Lewis, and they became the only Perez and Estifania duo to rival the fame of Wilks and Oldfield. Abington retired in 1797, but Lewis continued playing until 1809. On 29 May 1809, William Thomas Lewis gave his farewell performance, playing Perez to “an overflowing house” (*BDA* 9: 288). Having acted the role since 1780, the venerable Lewis was the last Copper Captain strong enough to garner more praise and adulation than the actors playing Leon.

\(^{140}\) In the 1772-73 and 1773-74 seasons, *Rule a Wife* was a vehicle for the debut of Jane Barsanti. Estifania was the ravishing ingénue’s first major role and the town flocked to see her in it (*BDA* 1: 360).
The alteration of *Rule a Wife* known as the Garrick version, which superseded the original play on stage, was not printed until 1776, the year Garrick retired.\(^{141}\) This version was the end result of a process of alteration and experiment, as it was Garrick’s practice to continue fine-tuning plays he revived. Earlier versions of the alterations of *Rule a Wife* survive in the edition printed in 1763 and in a manuscript of Act 5 housed in the Folger Shakespeare Library (MS W.b. 466). The manuscript presents multiple stages of revision, but all of them are intermediate between 1763 and 1776 (italicized dates refer to the editions of those years; see the list of editions in “Editorial Procedures”). A full record of the changes made in these texts is given in Appendix D, but before summarizing and discussing these changes it is necessary to examine the motivations for the revisions. In a recent comprehensive study of Garrick’s adaptations of Shakespeare, Vanessa Cunningham helpfully outlines his “four main tasks” in altering older plays (with reference to Garrick’s adaptation of Jonson’s *Every Man in his Humour*):

First, he had to shorten the play to serve as a main piece in a full evening’s entertainment; second, he had to make adjustments to language and staging because of differences between the playhouses of Jonson’s day and his own. Third, because his public wanted to see leading players in leading parts, he needed to build up at least one character into an unequivocally starring role. Fourth, he had to take care that the overall

\(^{141}\) To make matters more complex, two editions were published that year with slightly variant texts of the what is substantially the same alteration. This version is referred to as 1776 and the individual editions are 1776a and 1776b (see the headnote to Appendix D). Garrick, as was his habit, denied authorship of the Drury Lane alterations, but the case for his main hand in the revisions is made by Pedicord and Bergmann (403-407).
moral message of the play would be acceptable, not only to his audience
but also to the Lord Chamberlain’s office. (31)

For the most part, the same criteria apply to Garrick’s work on Fletcher’s plays. Since *Rule a Wife* was much shorter than Shakespeare’s or Jonson’s plays, the first task was not quite as pressing an issue, but *Rule a Wife* was still reduced in length by roughly 10 to 15%. As for the second task, the staging of *Rule a Wife* is already so streamlined that little needed to be changed. In fact, Garrick introduced a large property, a couch in Act 5, not called for in the original. It is possible that Cacafogo’s drunken ranting under the stage in the final scene was curtailed because of acoustical problems in the theatre, if his lines were not clearly audible to the audience. The next two tasks, however, motivated the majority of changes. Garrick’s choice of Leon led him to expand the role in three ways: adding speeches for Leon, cutting speeches by other characters, and rearranging the final act to focus on the Leon-Margarita plot. The character who suffered the most reduction was Margarita; in this case the third task went hand in hand with the fourth because the character of Margarita had become the focus of complaints about the play’s immoral tone.

The edition printed in 1763, seven years after Garrick revived the play, is the earliest that reflects revisions for the theatre. This version was constructed primarily by excision. It adds only five lines (including a final couplet for Leon) and one stage direction for singing by Perez and Estifania (after 4.1.97, but no lyrics are given). It cuts about 330 lines of dialogue (130 of those from Act 5). References to Leon’s large size are cut, and a few cultural references are updated, such as when a pet dog is changed into a more fashionable (and lecherous) monkey (4.1.78). The heaviest cuts occur in Act 5:

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142 This version was reprinted twice with no substantive changes (in 1767 and 1772).
all of 5.1 is cut, Cacafogo’s role is reduced, and even Leon loses large chunks of his longer speeches. Leon’s extravagant praise of Margarita (5.3.9-18) and his recrimination of her (5.3.66-71) are cut, as are such excessive lines as “If thou persuest me further, I run stark mad” (5.3.75) and “I’ll have thy thoughts found too, and have them opened” (5.3.81). Though cuts such as these reduce the number of lines for Leon, they have a very important cumulative effect: Leon’s mood swings are not as extreme as the play approaches its conclusion. This Leon maintains more self-control than he does in the original. This change enhances the contrast between Leon and Perez, who is still driven nearly insane by Estifania, and ensures that Leon is the more impressive and stable central figure.

The character most severely altered in 1763 is Margarita, whose role is reduced by one-third, losing approximately 100 of its 300 lines. The primary focus of the cuts is to reduce the explicit lasciviousness associated with Margarita. For example, when Leon and Margarita meet in 2.3 Leon’s comically bashful reluctance to kiss remains, but Margarita’s reaction to his first kiss, “Beshrew my heart, he kisses wondrous manly— / Can ye do anything else?” is omitted (2.3.29-30). Also cut is Margarita’s explicit sexual promise to Leon, “And as you observe me I may chance lie with ye” (2.3.45). 2.1, the scene in which she seeks the counsel of the older Ladies, is heavily cut, and Margarita’s impropriety, while it is not eliminated, is toned down.

The oddest cuts are those which remove Margarita’s motivation for getting married in the first place. In the original, she explains that she must marry “for to preserve my credit, / Yet not so much for that as for my state” (2.1.3-4). Her reputation and her property are at risk. 1763 cuts her elaboration of this principle:

Credit I can redeem, money will imp it,
But when my money’s gone, when the law shall seize that,
And for incontinency strip me of all[.] (2.1.6-8)

These lines may have been cut only as a by-product of removing the more explicit lines which follow, but the other references to a legal reason for Margarita’s actions are also removed throughout the play, including the danger of “the squint-eye of the law upon me” (3.1.9) and the triumph of “now I shall take my pleasure, / And not my neighbour justice maander at me” (3.1.59-60). Thus Margarita’s motivation for marriage, the protection of her assets by means of a willingly cuckolded husband who will act as a “shadow of iniquity” (2.3.4, also an omitted phrase), is removed. The effect of this change is paradoxical. Though the scenes are more decorously worded, the removal of Margarita’s economic motive means that she is marrying for more depraved reasons—only, as Altea says, “Because a husband stops all doubts in this point, / And clears all passages” (2.1.24-25). (Not until Kemble’s nineteenth-century alteration of the play would the obscenity of this line be recognized and excised.) The concern with a surface decorum of speech inadvertently led to a more thoroughly immoral character.

The final scene is also cut heavily, mostly from the confrontation between the Duke and Margarita. Despite the extent of omissions which render the action abrupt and cursory (as if the audience were asked to supply the missing emotional dynamics), the overall shape of this section remains the same. 1763 sacrificed the extended gags involved with the Duke’s growing fear of Cacafogo’s noises and the teasing given him by Margarita in favour of dramatic economy. Margarita’s repulsion of the Duke in this version is still effective, but that would change in the next round of alterations. After 1763 had removed her economic motivation for marriage, the following versions
removed even the limited power she demonstrates in the final scene of the original and in 1763.

Folger Shakespeare Library manuscript W.b. 466 preserves intermediate stages of revision between 1763 and 1776. It is a twenty-leaf pamphlet with a note on the inside front cover reading, “Garrick’s copy / with passages written by him.” Mostly in a scribal hand, it contains deletions, interlinear insertions, and (usually on pasted-in slips of paper) additional passages and scenes in a hand identified as Garrick’s by his editors (Pedicord and Bergmann 407). There are also a number of pencilled-in blocking directions which indicate that, although this version may not have been performed, it probably reached the rehearsal stage. For the most part, it resembles the version of act 5 which would be printed in 1776, including the extensively rewritten final confrontation between Margarita and the Duke (which will be discussed below). As in 1763, 5.1 is omitted. Most significantly, scenes are rearranged so that 5.4 (when Estifania challenges Perez at gunpoint) immediately follows 5.2 (the laughing confrontation between Perez and Cacafogo). This change, which would persist in 1776, untwines the parallel plot by resolving the Perez-Estifania strand before the Duke’s gambit to enter the town house. While the Perez and Estifania scenes themselves are not altered very much, this structural change focuses the conclusion even more strongly on the Leon-Margarita plot and is a major element of Garrick’s strategy for making Leon the starring role.

In the manuscript much attention is given to changing the character of Margarita. As standards of public morality and decorum were becoming more strict in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the vocal sexual desires of Fletcher’s Margarita became the element of the play which threatened to banish Rule a Wife from the stage. Two scenes which were added in W.b. 466 but not included in 1776 show the difficulties Garrick had
finding the right tone for her and, to a lesser extent, Cacafogo. These scenes follow the conclusion of the Perez-Estifania plot (5.4 in the original, 5.2 in the new numbering), and are reproduced in Appendix D. In the first, Cacafogo offers Margarita jewels for sex and then runs away in fear when she calls for Leon. Following this is a short soliloquy for Cacafogo in which he swears to give up “fine ladies” in favour of women who will gladly accept his money. Garrick may have written the new material for the company comedian to replace the lines lost in 1763 and to make up for the removal of Cacafogo completely from the final scene in this version. The additional scene between Margarita and Cacafogo is ambiguous in its effects, which probably accounts for its eventual excision. She is accosted by a fat uncouth man and rejects him, but this response demonstrates only her taste, not a new-found marital fidelity. Margarita’s rejection of Cacafogo parallels her later rejection of the Duke and both scenes end the same way, with Margarita calling Leon to rescue her. The intention must have been that this would produce a theatrically effective and illuminating parallel, but instead it was merely redundant. Still, to see Margarita fend off a suitor after she had spent the entire play collecting them could have been an effective transition to her “redemption.” Perhaps it weakened the character of Margarita too much, increasing the sense of her victimization so that her final submission was even less satisfying. The scene as it stands in the manuscript is certainly an improvement over an earlier conclusion to the scene, just barely visible under a paste-in, in which Leon enters, frightens Cacafogo away, and then tells Margarita that he let Cacafogo approach her as a test of her fidelity. In that rejected version Leon would have tested Margarita’s claim to fidelity twice—a repetition that could call Leon’s power and control into question.
The version of *Rule a Wife* published (in two editions) in 1776 became the standard acting version and was widely reprinted, both singly and in anthologies, into the middle of the nineteenth century.\(^{143}\) It adopts most of the cuts made in the 1763, restoring only sixty-five lines (mostly to Leon’s speeches), and it also cuts all of 1.2, the scene featuring Sanchio and Alonzo.\(^{144}\) The rearrangement of Act 5 first seen in W.b. 466 appears in this version, but while there are a number of additional speeches, there are no additional scenes. The fusion of the beginning of 5.5 with the ending of 5.3, which had been done in a tentative manner in W.b. 466, is expanded in 1776 (see Appendix D, 5.3.94-103n and 5.3.97-103n). This change allows the final scene to begin in another chamber with “The Duke discovered upon a couch.” As in W.b. 466, the confrontation between the Duke and Margarita is completely revised. The noises made by Cacafogo under the stage are completely excised. Margarita no longer frightens the Duke with those devilish sounds, nor does she suggest that he is best off jumping out a window or killing himself. Instead of sexually humiliating the only nobleman in the play (“How wretched is my case,” she asks in the original play, “willing to please ye, / And find you so disable” [5.5.33-4]), she makes ineffective moralistic speeches at him. His advances toward her are unflagging: “Let me press you to me / And stifle with my kisses” (see Appendix D, 5.5.11-129n). He is stopped only when she screams for Leon to rescue her. Instead of toying with the Duke, she is rescued by her husband. The audience’s attention is directed to Leon, who saves the day. His rescue of her is simply one of the responsibilities he has accepted as the redeemer of a loose woman. Margarita no longer has an active role in the protection of her marriage. Denuded of agency, she is now a

\(^{143}\) An edition of this version is in Pedicord and Bergmann, 273-343.

\(^{144}\) This cut reduces these already small roles by half.
sentimental damsel in distress, and as such she was made acceptable for the increasingly restricted sense of moral and sexual decorum allowed for on the late-eighteenth-century stage. Garrick may have removed much of what is interesting about the character, but without those changes the play would probably have faded away. Instead it remained a stock play for another century.

**The Nineteenth Century**

The rate of productions of *Rule a Wife* slowed as the repertory system ground to a halt in the first half of the nineteenth century in London. Rather than the steady stream of performances evident since the Restoration the pattern became one of isolated revivals. John Philip Kemble played Leon from 1797 to 1813 at Drury Lane and then Covent Garden, revising the play once again. In 1815 Edmund Kean took the role at Drury Lane, and though it was in its own way revolutionary it did not redefine the play for audiences the way that his interpretations of Shylock and Sir Giles Overreach had done. He performed it only intermittently until his death in 1833. The next notable production was Charles Kemble’s at Covent Garden in 1825, but after a few years the play again lapsed from view until the short-lived 1839 production starring George Vandenhoff, also at Covent Garden. It should be noted that these are only the major London productions, and that the play was still regularly, though less often, performed in theatres such as the Haymarket in the summer, and throughout the United Kingdom by provincial companies (see Appendix C for details). The final major London production of *Rule a Wife* was at the Sadler’s Wells theatre under the management of Samuel Phelps. In the United States the play was very popular in the first half of the century largely as the result of the efforts of Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, but it did not long outlive the end of his career.
John Philip Kemble, though he produced and starred in *Rule a Wife* a few times in 1788 after becoming manager of Drury Lane, did not take the role of Leon regularly until 1797. This revival was a great success, garnering at least eighteen performances before Kemble moved to Covent Garden in 1803. After this transfer Kemble began lightly revising the play (Rulfs 1257). A copy of the 1811 edition, now at the Folger Library, served as a promptbook for his later productions and shows further alterations in Kemble’s hand. These changes are collated in Appendix D. Kemble worked from Garrick’s version. He trimmed the play of seventy more lines (another twenty were cut in the prompt-book), clarified stage business, and gave minor characters proper names. He expanded the comically violent struggle added in 1776 between Perez and the Old Woman (see Appendix D, 3.4.78-79) to what a later reviewer would call a “tumbling scene of practical Punch-and-Judy-ism” (*The Era* 20 October 1839). Both the Old Woman and her daughter continued to be played by the company’s male comedians. Nearly all bawdy and references to sexual intercourse are omitted. Even innocuous but suggestive lines are excised, such as Cacafogo’s promise to “Talk ye as wantonly as Ovid

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145 It was during this Drury Lane run that the orange peel incident discussed above occurred (*LS* 6 February 1800). At Drury Lane there were only “intermittent and rather insignificant performances” between Kemble’s departure and Kean’s arrival (Rulfs 1261).

146 This version was first published in the 1808 collection *The British Theatre* edited by Elizabeth Inchbald. A more thorough Kemble revision was published in 1811.

147 The promptbook is reproduced in Shattuck. The title-page attribution of the play, “Adapted to the Stage by James Love; Revised by J. P. Kemble” has caused some confusion. Love was a Drury Lane actor active during Garrick’s regime (d. 1774). Kemble credited Love with the adaptation because he accepted Garrick’s statement that he did not have a hand in the changes to *Rule a Wife*. Love may have collaborated with Garrick on the changes, but otherwise the source of Kemble’s ascription is not clear.
did / To stir the intellectuals of the ladies” (3.3.44-45). All references to Margarita’s
desperate claim that she is pregnant are cut (3.4.75-87), including Leon’s response:

At four days warning, this is something speedy;
Do you conceive as our jennets do, with a west wind?
My heir will be an arrant fleet one, lady;
I’ll swear you were a maid when I first lay with ye. (4.3.75-79)

The dialogue following this claim, in which Margarita and Leon both insist that she was a
virgin before marriage (4.3.79-84), had already been cut in 1763 and 1776, but the more
thorough censorship by Kemble completely removes a crucial element of the play:
evidence that Margarita was indeed a virgin before her marriage. As with the removal of
all references to Margarita’s motivations for marriage in earlier adaptations, this change
provides a surface decorum but produces a more depraved Margarita. Though she may
speak with less sexually explicit gusto, the Margarita that results from this series of
revisions has no reason to marry other than to humiliate the man foolish enough to marry
her, and there is no disputing the implication that she has already embarked on her life of
sexual adventurism.

The interpretations of Leon by John Philip Kemble and Edmund Kean provide an
informative contrast which illuminates the nature of performances of Rule a Wife during
the Romantic age. Kean’s interpretation of the character was, like many of his roles, a
direct challenge to the school of Kemble. Kemble’s was a “classical” style, emphasizing
decorum and a statuesque manner of bearing, while Kean was the innovator who
introduced “romantic” passions to the presentation of character. Comparisons of the two
often echo the distinctions made between Garrick and his “wooden” or “stiff”
predecessors, but it is clear that audiences saw something new in Kean. Happily, the
growing number of newspaper reviewers allow us to go beyond these generalizations in the case of Leon. Success as Leon was found in fully exploiting the contrast between his early foolishness and his later dignity. Actors varied in the way they chose to handle the transition from one to the other. Kemble “divulged the secret of his disguise [as a complacent cuckold] to the audience by looks aside and innuendoes” early in the play, hamming it up, as it were (Rulfs 1261). He added extra-textual business to assure the audience that his character is not really as despicable as he seems, perhaps as a way of heading off the always-growing objections to the morality of the play. Kemble also relied on the familiarity of the stock play, simultaneously sharing the joke with an audience who already knew the outcome while playing against the type of character he usually portrayed. The reviewer of *The Morning Chronicle* writes, “he shines no where more than in sarcasm, bluntness, and conscious extravagance,” and Kemble made the most of his return to dignity by preparing the audience to expect it (6 January 1802). Kean, however, “played the part ‘straight’ and therefore entirely omitted such tricks” (Rulfs 1261). Kean attempted the realistic portrayal of a man engaged in a confidence scheme. The reviewer for *The Theatrical Inquisitor* provides a description of how Kean accomplished this feat:

> In the first part of the play, where Leon assumes the appearance of weakness, almost amounting to ideotism [*sic*], Mr. Kean was singularly happy; the arch expression of the eye just threw sufficient animation upon his features, relaxed into stupidity, to justify the doubts of Juan [in 1.5]; this piece of hypocrisy, which has been overcharged by every other actor, he managed with uncommon skill; it was natural, refined, and unaffected.

(July 1815)
Kean’s performance was truer to the original play in which Leon’s real motives remain hidden until he reveals them (though there are careful and subtle indications that he is not all that he seems). Kean’s biographer notes, “[h]is strict adherence to the author’s sense was, however, attended with equivocal results” (Hawkins 1: 315). Kean’s approach did not work with audiences used to a certain way of doing things. This reaction may have surprised him because he was essentially applying to Leon the wildly successful breakthroughs he had made portraying other malicious schemers such as Shylock and Sir Giles Overreach. Even William Hazlitt, one of Kean’s most avid promoters, preferred Kemble’s portrayal. Hazlitt admired the contrast between Kemble’s inherent dignity and the “assumed character of the idiot,” which “carried off the disgusting effect of the part” (8: 233). Kemble, who rarely clowned, was successful as a willing cuckold only because the audience was aware of the subterfuge. The gravitas of his own public persona generated an ironic contrast with Leon’s apparent moral bankruptcy in the first half of the play. Kean, with his wilder public image, “both acted it [i.e., the immoral character] and looked it too well” (Hazlitt 8: 233). Even for audiences familiar with the play, Kean’s performance of Leon as a willing cuckold was too disconcerting, too possible, to be acceptable. Hazlitt did praise Kean’s comic abilities, however, noting that “[t]he house was in a roar” over the “self-complacent idiotcy [sic] with which he marched in, carrying his wife’s fan, and holding up her hand. It was the triumph of folly” (8: 233). Unable to rely as Kemble did on the comic disparity between actor and character, Kean developed the physical comedy of the part.

148 Hazlitt also praised Julia Glover’s Estifania (6: 240). She played Estifania at all major London theatres during her long career, and the BDA names Estifania first among her “best characters.” An engraving of her in the role fronted Rule a Wife in William Oxberry’s New English Drama (published in 1820).
There were no performances at Covent Garden between 1813 and 1825, when Charles Kemble returned to the role of Leon with great success (Genest 9: 342). Most critics praised his acting, with the critic of *The Theatrical Observer* noting that his “noble assumption of all the conjugal rights inspired an awe, indeed, to have tamed a recreant dame” (26 October 1825). This perspective shows just how attenuated Margarita’s motives and character had become, and that no ambiguity remained to question the rightness of Leon’s subterfuge. The next review of *Rule a Wife* in *The Theatrical Observer* (evidently by a different writer) used the occasion to issue a scathing denunciation of the practice of reviving old plays whose morals were no longer acceptable. With a Whiggish enthusiasm he excoriates the “mouldering rubbish,” in which there is “not a sentiment that would bear repetition, or convey a moral, unless it be, perhaps, the pleasing demonstration of the great progress of the human understanding, since the days when Beaumont and Fletcher could write comedies” (30 October 1825). Even this reviewer, though, acknowledged Kemble’s skill as Leon, and *Rule a Wife* would remain in his repertoire, including in his tours of North America in the 1830s.

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149 Charles Kemble first played Leon on 19 June 1810 at the Haymarket, where *Rule a Wife* was a summer-season standard into the 1830s. Henry Crabb Robinson, however, thought that Charles Kemble “plays Leon by no means so successfully as Kean” (E. Brown 112).

150 He continues: “The mind of man is constituted to make eternal advances in vigour, intelligence, and it is an encouraging evidence of its progress, to observe the decided superiority of the worst Comedy of modern times, over the best, that the groveling industry of our Managers can sweep from the dust of antiquity, in which should sleep, and sleep for ever, the bald wit, and coarse, unmeaning licentiousness, that did well enough for the infantine days of the maiden queen.”
After Charles Kemble left the financially struggling Covent Garden in 1831, *Rule a Wife* was revived there only once before 1839.\textsuperscript{151} By 1839 the theatre had come under the management of Elizabeth Lucia Vestris, who had spent the 1830s making a success of the Olympic Theatre by attracting a fashionable audience for intimate and sophisticated productions which were staged in opposition to the fare available at the cavernous patent theatres (*DNB*).\textsuperscript{152} At Covent Garden she revived *Rule a Wife* as part of a program of classic and modern comedies. George Vandenhoff made a successful theatrical debut as Leon under her management. The combination of the revival of an old favourite play along with a new actor with a famous name (the Vandenhoffs were an acting family, and George had recently quit a law practice to take to the stage) excited much interest about town. This may be the most heavily reviewed production of *Rule a Wife* ever. The response was largely positive with caveats for his inexperience, and subsequent reviews focused on Vandenhoff’s quick improvement. The reviewer for *The Morning Chronicle* explained why Leon was a good choice for debut performances: “in its opening scenes, he who personates [Leon] has to put on the semblance of timidity, which, with one new to the boards, is seldom assumed. It is really felt, and therefore it is well and naturally expressed” (15 October 1839).

Vandenhoff’s memoirs include an account of his first night as Leon, in which he writes of *Rule a Wife* that “its long absence from the London stage was the motive for its revival . . . though the same cause put me under the disadvantage of never having seen it

\textsuperscript{151} Charles Kemble returned to Covent Garden briefly after his long American tour; he played Leon there in 1836 (*Theatrical Observer* 26 Nov. 1836).

\textsuperscript{152} She staged a rare production of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* and first produced one of the few mid-nineteenth century plays still read and performed, Dion Boucicault’s *London Assurance*. 
played myself” (9). He acknowledges the advantage for him that the audience would have no memory of “the beauties and points” of John Philip Kemble or Edmund Kean in the role (9). Vandenhoff, though he had never seen the play, did have a material connection to its performance history; he appeared in the costume once worn by J. P. Kemble (10). The institutional memory of the theatre, its storehouses and archives, provided a physical link between actors past and present, a continuity of tradition. Despite the encouraging debut, however, Vandenhoff left London to play a few engagements in provincial theatres before emigrating in 1841 to the United States, where Leon remained one of his standard roles (DNB).

NORTH AMERICA

George Vandenhoff came to the United States shortly after the retirement of Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, one of the most famous actors in the country and one whose preference for the role of Leon ensured that Rule a Wife remained in the repertoire of every major theatre in the country. Before Cooper, though, there are the unusual circumstances of earliest recorded performances of Rule a Wife in North America to note. These performances occurred in 1777 when a group of British army officers stationed in New York City during the Revolutionary War presented a short season of plays for paying audiences.¹⁵³ The city was occupied throughout most of the war, and as a loyalist bastion it saw very little aggressive action after the initial battles of 1776. The officers, looking for amusement, decided to stage familiar plays to stave off boredom, Rule a Wife among them (Hornblow 154). Remarkably, Rule a Wife was performed publicly with an all-male cast for the first time since before the Restoration, with one Lieutenant

¹⁵³ Jared Brown analyzes the known facts of this series of performances (29-44).
Pennefeather, for example, playing Estifania (Dunlap 1: 97).\textsuperscript{154} Rule a Wife was popular in their first season (they continued playing throughout the war), and only The Beaux Strategem was performed more often (Odell 1: 187). Theatrical recreations were common throughout the empire, and Rule a Wife also received a performance by officers stationed in Kingston, Jamaica in 1780 (Wright 121).

In the early decades of the nineteenth century Rule a Wife was performed in nearly every major theatre in the United States. It was also performed at least once in Quebec (Bains 57). A single actor, Thomas Abthorpe Cooper, was largely responsible for the ubiquity of Rule a Wife on American stages. Cooper was of the John Philip Kemble school of “classical” acting, a declamatory style well suited to poetic tragedy and effective for Leon’s speeches in the second half of Rule a Wife (especially with the extra lines inserted by Garrick). Cooper’s career began in England, but he was quickly recruited to the U.S. by Thomas Wignell, the manager of the Chestnut St. Theatre in Philadelphia. He arrived in 1796.\textsuperscript{155} Rule a Wife was actually revived by the Philadelphia company during a visit to Baltimore before Cooper’s arrival, so that his adoption of the role could have been at the suggestion of the manager. In any case it was a lucky occurrence for Cooper, who soon made the role his own. He debuted as Leon in New York City on 31 December 1798 (Ireland, Records 1: 183). A writer for The Commercial Advertiser describes a revelatory moment from his performance:

\textsuperscript{154} William Dunlap, the first historian of North American theatre, noted that “[i]t is to be hoped that the allies of the English arms, the Mohawks, Senecas, Onondagos, and other supporters of his majesty’s honour, and asserters of the cause of justice, mercy, and humanity, were ignorant that the warriors of their great father, [King] George, submitted to the degradation of the petticoat” (1: 94).

\textsuperscript{155} The story of the abortive Covent Garden production of Pericles which was meant to star Cooper before he was lured to America is told by Suzanne Gossett in her Arden edition of that play (5-7).
When Leon, for the first time speaks as himself to his sister Altea, the intention of the poet seem’d to burst like lightning upon the audience, and was followed instantaneously by a peal of thunder from every part of the house. This excellent Comedy as prun’d and adapted to our stage will undoubtedly be one of the greatest favourites we have. (Odell 2: 47)

This moment is at the end of 2.3 when Leon promises Altea a thousand crowns now that he is “a made man,” revealing their conspiracy to the audience (2.3.71). Unlike Kemble, Cooper did not have an audience familiar with the play. Unable to wink at and nudge the audience in a shared joke, he instead conceals (until there is warrant for it in the text) that Leon is not what he pretends to be. Like Kemble, Cooper was primarily a tragic actor, and since Leon was one of the few comic parts he excelled in it remained in his repertoire throughout his career.

Unlike the English theatre industry centred in London and surrounded by distinctly provincial companies, the theatre industry in the United States had relatively strong concentrations of companies in all of its major cities. This meant that there were many opportunities for actors to travel and more managers to bid for their services. Because these stars did not travel with a company, in every theatre they visited the resident company would have to know the plays the stars performed.\textsuperscript{156} Since Cooper became famous enough to travel everywhere, nearly every company in the nation needed to have \textit{Rule a Wife} in their repertoire.\textsuperscript{157} Knowing the play, these companies would also

\textsuperscript{156} While a similar pattern also prevailed in the United Kingdom, with stars from London travelling in the summer, there is a significant difference between the multipolar rather than unipolar structure of the profession.

\textsuperscript{157} See Londré and Watermeier on the development in North America of the touring star system (90).
perform it on their own, so it accumulated a massive record of performances throughout the country. The Charleston, South Carolina company provides an example of how the touring star system worked in the case of *Rule a Wife*. Of fourteen performances recorded there between 1804 and 1824, seven featured Cooper, five were by the local company alone, and two starred other travelling actors (Hoole 70-85, 90).

Based at different times either in Philadelphia, New York, or Boston, Cooper’s touring initially included Baltimore and Charleston, which in the early decades of the century were the furthest limits of the southern circuit. William B. Wood often acted alongside Cooper as Perez (Dunlap 2: 34). Wood co-managed the Chestnut Street Theatre company in Philadelphia from 1805 to the late 1820s, along with theatres in Baltimore and Washington, D. C. (Londré and Watermeier 89). *Rule a Wife*, usually starring Cooper, was presented consistently by this company at its venues throughout this period. The most interesting night in Philadelphia was an “all-star” performance of *Rule a Wife* which took place on 14 February 1822. It featured Cooper as Leon and the younger rising star James Wallack as Perez (James, *Old Drury* 381). Both actors were playing at the theatre in alternating stints during the previous month, and there arose a “public request that the older and younger tragedian appear together” (James, *Old Drury* 43). They acted six plays (including *Julius Caesar*) over ten days which culminated in a resoundingly successful night for *Rule a Wife*, when Cooper’s benefit grossed double the average nightly receipts despite a snowstorm (James, *Old Drury* 380-81). *Rule a Wife*

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158 Of the list of 100 North American performances of *Rule a Wife* during Cooper’s career compiled for this stage history, sixty-seven feature Cooper as Leon.

159 Details of early Philadelphia theatre are from James, *Cradle and Old Drury*; for New York, see Odell; for Baltimore, see Ritchey; and for Charleston, see Hoole.
served as an ideal vehicle for the polite competition of the two actors in part because, as noted above, Leon and Perez barely appear on-stage at the same time and so do not have to draw attention away from each other.

The 1820s saw the expansion of theatrical activity geographically as entertainers followed the pioneers in the westward push. James H. Caldwell started a company in New Orleans in 1820, and in his second season he was able to host Cooper on his farthest tour yet. Caldwell’s company practised the travelling star’s repertoire to prepare for Cooper’s arrival (Smither 203). Concluding his successful engagement, Cooper chose to play Leon for his benefit night (Smither 197, 381). Noah Ludlow, who along with Caldwell was one of the most important theatrical entrepreneurs in the west, provided this notice in his memoirs:

The comedy was performed to great applause. The public were quite surprised to find Mr. Cooper had so much comic humor. This comedy was repeated after the departure of Mr. Cooper, with Mr Caldwell as Don Leon, but the audience did not like Mr. Caldwell’s Leon as much as they did Mr. Cooper’s; yet I thought that in his assumption of the affected simplicity of the awkward recruit, Mr. Caldwell was the most natural of the two. But in the closing scenes, when Leon returns to his real character of the high-minded, chivalrous man, determined to be master of his own house, Mr. Cooper was far ahead of the other gentleman, his manner and appearance being surprisingly dignified and commanding. (234)

Ludlow compares the comic skill of his friend Caldwell favourably to that of Cooper. The view of Leon as a “high-minded, chivalrous man,” rather than a conniving schemer, shows the lasting influence of Garrick’s revision, which suppressed much of the
ambiguity of the character. After Cooper’s path-breaking first journey, New Orleans became a regular stop on the tours of major actors. Cooper maintained a mutually beneficial relationship with Caldwell and Ludlow, returning to New Orleans and adding his stamp of legitimacy as they expanded to Natchez, Mobile and St. Louis in the 1820s. His tours ensured that Rule a Wife would be performed in the new theatres.

Though Cooper was instrumental in making Rule a Wife a part of the repertoire of nearly every American theatre company for many years, audiences, in addition to performances by their local company, were accustomed to seeing other visiting actors and were especially excited by the growing number of English actors crossing the Atlantic (either permanently or for limited tours). Mostly forgotten actors like Thomas Hamblin, William Conway, John Vandenhoff, and George Vandenhoff performed Leon throughout the U.S. The most significant stars to visit from England and perform Rule a Wife in America were Charles Kemble and his daughter Fanny. Nearing bankruptcy at Covent Garden, Charles undertook the lucrative but difficult American tour to restore his finances (Shattuck, American Stage 98). The tour began in New York City in September 1832, but they did not add Rule a Wife to their line-up until nearly the end of the two-year sojourn. On 11 March 1834, Charles played Leon and Fanny played Estifania at the Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, with healthy receipts (James, Old Drury 591). Since the play still had a popularity in America which it no longer had in England, they may have added the play late in the tour in response to local demand. Estifania also provided another star turn for Fanny, who had become more of a draw than her father.

Perhaps taking a cue from the success of Charles and Fanny Kemble the year before, Cooper began acting with his daughter Priscilla in October 1835 (A. Wilson 143).

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160 For a brief account of their American tour, see Williamson 205-18.
She joined him on his final visit to New Orleans where they played *Rule a Wife* on 7 March 1836. Charlotte Cushman, who was in her debut season and would go on to become one of the most important American actresses of the century, played Margarita (Smither 259). Later that year, Cooper and his daughter performed *Rule a Wife* in Philadelphia on 26 September with presidential candidate William Henry Harrison in attendance (Smith 271-72). Their final performances together in *Rule a Wife* were part of a desultory run at Boston’s National Theatre in 1838 (Clapp 401). The *Boston Courier* encouraged Cooper and declared, “[h]is personation of Leon . . . cannot be surpassed at the present day by any other actor on the American stage,” yet he barely recovered the costs of the engagement (qtd. in Smith 280). The praise is hedged, however, because fewer actors in “the present day” were playing Leon. Cooper’s fame had by then been eclipsed by the more aggressive styles of Junius Brutus Booth and Edwin Forrest (Smith 283, 290). As Noah Ludlow vividly but confusingly observed, “Mr. Cooper’s style of acting was founded on the John Kemble school . . . . It was as unlike that of Mr. J. B. Booth or Mr. Edmund Kean as a monsoon is to a whirlwind” (234).

*Rule a Wife*’s place in the repertoire began to slip following Cooper’s retirement in 1839, as can be seen in the well-documented case of the Philadelphia theatres (see Appendix C). The fits and starts of the 1840s contrast with the regular production of the play in earlier decades, and are similar to the erratic pattern of revivals in London during

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161 Harrison lost that election to Martin Van Buren. He then won the 1840 election and promptly died after the inauguration, leaving nearly a full term to his vice president, John Tyler. Priscilla Cooper had married Tyler’s son Robert in September 1839, and because John Tyler’s wife also died soon after the election he asked his daughter-in-law Priscilla, a former actress, to serve as the hostess of the White House. This domestic arrangement created a scandal (G. Smith 282, 286).
the 1830s and 1840s. A final burst of performances in Philadelphia occurred in 1853-54. An indication that the play was becoming less palatable to American audiences in these years is that it was, as Philadelphia newspapers advertised, “revised for the modern stage by W. Murry” (A. Wilson 642). This alteration was not published so the extent of the changes is unknown, but it is difficult to imagine what more was cut beyond the J. P. Kemble revisions that had by then made their way across the ocean. Murry, however, was not able to reshape the play in a way that found lasting favour with audiences. The last American performances of *Rule a Wife* in the nineteenth century were in 1855: once each in Boston and New York City.\(^{162}\) As it was petering out in North America, however, *Rule a Wife* experienced one last major extended run in London.

**Samuel Phelps**

The last revival of *Rule a Wife* on the London stage was not even, properly speaking, in London at all, but at the Sadler’s Wells Theatre in Islington under the management of Shakespeare revivalist Samuel Phelps. He introduced *Rule a Wife* as part of his mission to revive neglected plays from Jacobean authors such as Beaumont and Fletcher, Philip Massinger, John Webster, and William Rowley, as well as the stock plays of the Restoration and eighteenth century (Allen 252-70). In 1848, eight years after the last performances at Vestris’s Covent Garden, Phelps revived *Rule a Wife* in a slightly altered version. According to Shirley Allen, Phelps “prepared his own acting text, staying as close as possible to the original” (258). Most reviewers noted that this was a new version of the play, but rather than provide precise details (frustrating because

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\(^{162}\) Odell reports laconically that the comedy was “seen on subsequent occasions” in New York City (6: 443), but his history, which extends to 1894, chronicles no further performances of *Rule a Wife*. 
Phelps’s version was not printed) they focus on the omission of objectionable passages. One concrete detail is provided by the reviewer for *Bell’s Life*, who notes that Cacafogo “has been judiciously reduced into a mere cushion for Leon to kick, and disappears after the first act” (15 October 1848). This change raises the question of how the final scene between Margarita and the Duke was handled: does she frighten him in some other way, and/or were the ghostly noises excised as in the Garrick version? The reviewer for *The Satirist* informed readers that “[t]he present adaptation has been more cautiously pruned than the old version, and we find little that is actually indelicate; still no one can mistake the drift of licentiousness that runs through the play” (14 October 1848). By this time, Beaumont and Fletcher’s reputation as great playwrights had been mostly superseded by their notoriety for bawdy and explicit sexual situations, so reviewers seemed to have taken it as a duty to assure potential audiences that the worst excesses had been cleansed from this production.

There is little indication of what Phelps changed other than the excision of bawdy. Presumably, because of his desire to produce a true ensemble piece, he rejected the alterations made by Garrick that focused the spotlight on Leon and perhaps restored the original sequence of scenes in Act 5. Phelps did not rely on his star-power to generate audience interest, and reviews of the play were equally positive when Leon was played by Henry Marston. Phelps did introduce a new conception of the character of Leon. Rather than the winking schemer of John Philip Kemble or the thoroughgoing confidence man of Edmund Kean, Phelps played Leon as a character who undergoes a “transformation from a simple-minded, duped husband to a hero of masculine forcefulness and dignity” (Allen 258). For earlier generations, the most noted points of the role of Leon involved the extreme contrast between the idiotic foolishness in the first
half and his strident defence of masculine prerogatives in the second half. Phelps instead “managed this transition point with a tact that showed the skilful actor, dexterously avoiding the two extreme manifestations of the part” *(Bell’s Life* 15 October 1848). Phelps reinterpreted the character in a new and subtle manner, discovering a kind of moral education in Leon’s character arc. He removed the star-spotlight placed on Leon by Garrick, Kemble, and others, and the production was a hit because of the well-rounded performances of actors comfortable working together. *Rule a Wife* remained in the company’s repertoire until 1854 (with one final performance in 1860).

The decline of *Rule a Wife* in the nineteenth century was caused as much by the structural change in the professional organization of theatre companies as by Victorian discomfort with the morality of the plot and the energetic bawdy of the language. *Rule a Wife* fell victim to a confluence of two forces. The long-lived theatrical system of repertory companies which presented a nightly rotation of plays was disintegrating. By the mid-nineteenth century, the “long-run” was becoming the normal mode of theatrical production. There was less need for plays such as *Rule a Wife*: reliable but unspectacular ensemble pieces meant to be performed only a few times a season. It is no accident that the two major revivals in mid-nineteenth century London were by managers (Vestris and Phelps) who were self-consciously pursuing a strategy of preserving repertory practices that were no longer the norm. The increased number of theatres in Victorian London provided a variety of entertainments, but theatres producing legitimate drama were dominated by star actor-managers who had no time for ensemble pieces like *Rule a Wife* (even with Garrick’s focus on Leon). The leading actor-managers of the mid- to late-nineteenth century, Charles Kean, Henry Irving and Herbert Beerbohm Tree did not produce *Rule a Wife*, and Charles Macready played Leon only once (for a benefit
performance on 10 June 1833). This trend was perfectly evident at the time; a contemporary reviewer of Phelps’s production pointed out that the success of his ensemble cast “would not have been possible under the star system practiced at most theatres” (paraphrased in Allen 258).

Objections to the immorality of *Rule a Wife* had been raised since early in the eighteenth century, but by mid-nineteenth century London audiences were no longer willing to countenance, even in redacted form, the aspects they now found offensive. Provincial theatres performed the play less often or turned to a very abbreviated adaptation called *Leon of Aragon*, and it lost popularity in America as well. An important witness to this change in taste is Fanny Kemble, who acted in the play and so knew it better than most. In her *Journal* chronicling her first journey in America she notes her surprise when some Americans profess they “were shocked at my having to hear the coarseness of Farquhar’s Inconstant” (78). In a long footnote to this entry she marvels at the hypocrisy of audiences who complain of the indelicacies of language found in such plays as *Much Ado About Nothing* and yet “applaud and laugh, and are delighted, at the gross immorality of such plays as [Susannah Centlivre’s] the Wonder, and Rule a Wife and have a Wife” (79). She singles out *Rule a Wife* in particular, in which the immorality and indecency are not those of expression only, but of conception, and mingle in the whole construction of the piece, in which not one character appears whose motives of action are not the most unworthy, and whose language is not as full of coarseness, as devoid of every generous, elevated, or refined sentiment. (The tirades of Leon are no exception; for in the mouth of a man who marries such a woman as
Marguerita, by such means, and for such an end, they are mere mockeries. (79)

Kemble points out one of the reasons the play would soon fail to please audiences, and with a critical acuity that escaped most contemporaries she notes the sinister ambiguities underlying Leon’s motivations. In fact, her recognition of the base and desperate motivations of every character may make her the play’s most perceptive nineteenth-century critic. But the clever deceptions of the characters are no longer enjoyed as good fun; instead, enjoying them becomes a moral danger. Lord Byron protested legal and moral restrictions on the theatre in his 1811 poem “Hints from Horace” with specific reference to Rule a Wife and Farquhar’s The Beaux Stratagem. He demanded, “Repeal that act!—again let Humour roam / Wild o’er the stage! . . . Let ‘Archer’ plant the horns on ‘Sullen’s’ brows / And Estifania gull her ‘Copper’ spouse, / The moral’s scant—but that may be excused, / Men go not to be lectured, but amused” (ll. 358-62). This sentiment found little sympathetic echo as the century progressed. Between changing tastes and the changing structure of the profession, Rule a Wife faded from the stage to be revived only by the occasional curiosity of antiquarians and academics. If this edition is successful in its aims, then it will be by now apparent that this neglect is not because of any failure of the play, but because of the failure of most producers and scholars to imagine what Rule a Wife may offer audiences and readers: a subtle and comic exploration of the battle of the sexes that is also an ambivalent, skeptical tale of the degradation forced by the necessities of economic survival, and of the perverse behaviour produced by irrational patriarchal strictures. Leon and Perez have options so limited that only the uncertainty of war seems to offer any prospect of prosperity. Estifania is a chambermaid who is about to lose her job, and so she faces similar economic uncertainty.
Arcane laws prevent Margarita from exercising her growing sexual appetite without forfeiting her extensive property to the state. Through marriage each couple learns to collaborate together, so that Estifania and Perez cozen a sizable nest egg from the economic parasite Cacafogo, and Leon and Margarita humiliate the Duke, a representative of state power. One way of looking at the play is to see that Fletcher imagined in the state of marriage a protective sphere that, when the spouses learn to trust each other, shields them from the twin depredations of economic necessity and tyrannical power.
Editorial Procedures

The text of this edition is based on the quarto published by Leonard Lichfield in 1640 (Q1), the only substantive text of the play. Other than the exceptions listed below, all departures from Q1 are noted in the collations, and adjustments to Q1’s lineation are recorded in Appendix A.¹⁶³ Emendations or conjectures by other editors and commentators not adopted in this edition are collated when they merit notice. In the case of a conjecture, the editor who first accepted it into his text is named, followed by the source of the conjecture in parentheses. If an editor conjectures or queries a reading, but does not adopt it in his text, “conj.” or “query” is noted in parentheses. Unless otherwise noted, quotations from editors in the annotations are taken from their notes to the line(s) under discussion.

Stage directions (SD) which do not appear in Q1 are enclosed in square brackets. Additional words which clarify an existing Q1 direction (such as “and”), and editorial directions indicating an aside or dialogue spoken apart or to another character are bracketed but not collated. Directions such as “within” or “below” which do occur in Q1 are enclosed in parentheses. All other changes and additions to stage directions are collated. Collations indicate which editor was first to insert an additional stage direction, but if the wording varies this is indicated by “subst.” For example, the direction at 1.1.107 reads “Perez whispers to his Servant” and is attributed to Weber, whose direction reads “Whispers.” Speech headings and abbreviated names occurring in stage directions

¹⁶³ Long-s and ligature types are not reproduced in the collations. For important discussions of the editorial treatment of verse division, see Michael Neill’s note in his Oxford edition of Anthony and Cleopatra (370-74) and Paul Werstine’s “Line Division.”
are silently expanded and regularized, but emendations to speech headings are collated. Act divisions and the first scene in each act are marked in Q1, but subsequent scene divisions are not. Editorial act-scene numbers (first introduced by Weber) are provided in square brackets and are not collated.

When verse lines are shared between speakers, the latter part-line is indented. When three half-lines occur in succession, so that the middle half-line could form a full line with either the first or last part-line, none are indented and the three amphibious lines are counted separately.

Spelling is modernized along the lines established by Stanley Wells in *Modernizing Shakespeare’s Spelling*, but adjusted to Canadian usage. When modernization might result in an ambiguity, or the difference warrants it, the Q1 spelling is given parenthetically in the collations. Contractions and elisions are regularized, though “y’are” is preserved because it may represent Fletcher’s preference for the “ye” form. The past participle endings “-’d” and “-t” are expanded to “-ed” or, if required by metre, “-éd.”

The punctuation of this edition is modernized. A change in punctuation is collated when it results in a change of meaning or represents a choice between possible interpretations. In the collations, an underscore (“_”) indicates the absence of punctuation. The conventions which have developed in the contemporary practice of modernizing punctuation are an uneasy combination of modern punctuation and the frankly erratic habits of early modern compositors. As Stanley Wells points out,

164 Jonathan Crewe provides one of the most useful discussions of the “messy compromise between the early texts and our own conventions.” He emphasizes that although altering punctuation is unavoidable, “no amount of repunctuation can convert Shakespeare’s logic and syntax into ours.” He suggests that, at the very least, “more elaborate disclaimers are called for” in modernized editions (37).
“[m]odern practice is so flexible that it is impossible to legislate in ways that would be generally acceptable,” but he does offer the helpful guideline that an editor should “give the reader and the actor such pointing as is essential to intelligibility without attempting to impose on the text interpretive nuances and directions for emphasis which restrict the reader’s or actor’s range of response” (Modernizing 33). Dashes indicate interrupted speech, asides, and a change of address within a speech (all frequent features of Fletcher’s dialogue). The semicolon is used to arrange the cumulative structures of Fletcher’s language, even in some cases where a stricter application of modern punctuation rules would prefer periods. This approach preserves a basic feature of Fletcher’s syntax, which, as Hans Walter Gabler accurately describes it, “tends to convolution in piled-up modifying and affective phrases” (BFC 7:644).

ANNOTATIONS

All citations of Fletcher’s works other than Rule a Wife are to BFC; the original spelling of that edition has not been modernized. Shakespeare’s plays are cited from The Riverside Shakespeare. Other plays are cited in Revels editions unless otherwise noted. References to classical texts are, unless otherwise noted, to the editions and translations in the Perseus Digital Library <www.perseus.tufts.edu>, for which traditional book, chapter and/or line numbers (rather than page numbers) are given to facilitate reference across the variety of editions and translations. Rule a Wife falls outside the date limits of Dent’s index of proverbial language in non-Shakespearean drama, but the use of proverbs in the Beaumont and Fletcher canon has been catalogued in three articles by Archer Taylor. Proverbs and proverbial phrases are noted with reference to these articles, along with citations of parallels in Tilley where appropriate.
Editions collated (in chronological order):

Q1  Oxford, 1640.
Q2  London, 1697.
1711  *The Works of Mr. Francis Beaumont, and Mr. John Fletcher*. Vol. 3. London, 1711. 1017-84.
1717  London, 1717.
**Bond**


**Saintsbury**


**Williams**


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**Alterations and Adaptations Consulted (see Appendix D):**

**Equal Match**


1763

“As perform’d at the Theatres.” London, 1763.

W.b. 466

Manuscript of Act 5 in the Folger Shakespeare Library.

1776a


1776b


1776

Denotes changes common to both 1776a and 1776b.

**Butters**

“Buttered From Beaumont and Fletcher, By David Garrick, Esq. Taken from the Managers’ Book, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.” London, n.d. [1785-90].
1811  “Adapted to the Stage by James Love; Revised by J. P. Kemble: And now first published as it is acted at The Theatre Royal in Covent Garden.” London, 1811.

1811MS  Manuscript changes made in John Philip Kemble’s promptbook copy of 1811 (reproduced in Shattuck).

CONJECTURAL CRITICS:

Bullen  Printed in notes to Bond.

Coleridge  Marginal annotations in Charles Lamb’s copy of F2 (British Library, digital reproduction available on EEBO).

Heath  Printed in notes to Dyce.


Theobald  Printed in notes to Seward.
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife

By John Fletcher

for

The King’s Men
THE CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

Michael Perez
Leon
Margarita
Estifania
Cacafogo
Juan de Castro
Duke of Medina
Altea
Alonzo
Sanchio
3 Old Ladies
Clara
Old Woman
Maid
Servant to Perez
Lorenzo
Coachman
Boy
Other Ladies, Maids, Servants, and Attendants

SETTING: A Spanish town and a house in the nearby countryside.

The Characters . . . countryside. ] om. Q1
Rule a Wife and Have a Wife] The title plays against the proverb “every man can rule a shrew but he that has her” (Tilley M106), which is a wry comment on the ease with which other men advise a hen-pecked husband. Fletcher’s title asserts that a man can both rule and have a wife, promising the audience a proverbial impossibility. Each half of the title may also be thought of as referring to the two plots: Leon rules his wife while Perez merely has his wife.

The Characters of the Play] Q1 gives no list of characters. The first list is in Q2, which includes some descriptions and the names of actors from a recent production, but is incomplete omits Leon. The list and character descriptions given in 1711 were reproduced in most eighteenth-century editions with few changes, and simplified descriptions are given by Weber, Dyce, and Williams. All previous character lists follow the conventions of separating names by gender and ordering by rank or social status. The present list orders the characters by the number of lines spoken, except in the cases of a few minor characters.

Michael Perez] “The Copper Captain” (Q2). Though Perez is not called a “copper captain” in the play, Estifania calls him a “man of copper” during their argument in 4.1. The word “copper” itself occurs at 4.1.92 (see n.), 4.1.107, and 5.2.44, associated with Perez or his worthless treasures.

Leon] “Brother to Altea, and by her contrivance married to Margarita” (1711).

Margarita] “The Heiress” (Q2); “a wanton lady, married to Leon, by whom she is reclaimed” (1711). “Margarita” is a name derived from the Greek word for “pearl” and Fletcher plays on this meaning at 1.2.22, 3.3.32, 3.5.120, 4.2.8.
Estifania ] “[Margarita’s] maid, wife to the Copper Captain” (Q2), “a woman of intrigue, married to Perez” (1711).

Cacafogo ] “A usurer” (Q2), “a rich usurer” (1711). The name is derived from “cagafuego,” Spanish for “fire-shitter.” The OED defines the word more politely as a “spitfire” or “braggart,” and cites The Fair Maid of the Inn (1626), by Fletcher and others, as the earliest example of this word as an insult. Cacafogo or cacafuego are slightly Anglicized forms of the nickname for the Spanish ship Nuestra Señora de la Concepción captured by Sir Francis Drake in 1579. The report of the capture of this ship, one of Drake’s richest prizes, was printed in the second edition of Hakluyt’s Voyages (735-36). The manuscript source used by Hakluyt includes an anecdote that a boy from the Spanish ship told the Englishmen that “Our ship shalbe called no more the Cacafogo [shitfire] but the Cacaplata [shitsilver]” (qtd. in DNB “Sir Francis Drake”).

Juan de Castro ] “A Spanish Colonel” (1711). He plays the role of a slightly disinterested friend and observer (a common type in Jonson’s and Fletcher’s comedies), whose cryptic warnings to Perez prepare the audience for the revelations about Estifania.

Duke of Medina ] In Q1 this character (in dialogue and stage directions) is sometimes the “Duke of Medina” and sometimes “Duke Medina.” This edition preserves Q1’s inconsistency. The Duke of Medina best known to the English would be the one who commanded the Spanish Armada (and who was portrayed onstage in the revised version of Heywood’s 2 If You Know Not Me, You Know Nobody [printed 1632]).

Altea ] “[Margarita’s] servant” (1711), and Leon’s sister.

Alonzo, Sanchio ] “Officers in the army” (1711).

3 Old Ladies ] See 2.3.0.1n for a discussion of editorial disagreement about the
number of scenes in which these characters appear. The third Old Lady appears only in 1.4 and speaks only 2 ½ lines; she could easily be cut in performance.

*Clara*] “A Spanish Lady” (*1711*). A friend to Estifania who appears only in 1.1 and 2.4.

*Old Woman*] The poor landlady of the hovel that Estifania and Perez inhabit in Act 3. After the Restoration, this character continued to be played by a male comedian, emphasizing the comic grotesqueness of the character through transvestitism. She appears only in 3.4, but the brief scene was very popular.

*Maid*] The Old Woman’s daughter. Also traditionally played by a male comedian, she appears only in 3.4, and is not to be confused with the other maids who serve in Margarita’s house.

*Servant to Perez*] He appears briefly in 1.1 and 2.2, but has a scene to himself in 1.3, hence he is not grouped with the other servants below.

*Lorenzo*] Servant in Margarita’s household. Named only in 4.3, he may appear as a servant in other scenes. See 4.3.17n on the textual confusion surrounding his entrance.

*Coachman*] A one-line character appearing at 4.3.62-64.

*Boy*] Appears only at the beginning of 3.1 to sing a song which Q1 unfortunately does not preserve. See Appendix D for lyrics to the song composed by Henry Purcell for this scene.

*Other Ladies, Maids, Servants, and Attendants*] Though few of these supernumerary roles are silent, the characters combined speak only about 1% of the play’s dialogue. (Adding Lorenzo, the Coachman, and Perez’s Servant increases this proportion only to 2%.) The small amount of dialogue decreases the strain on actors doubling (and tripling and quadrupling) roles.

On the distinction between the Old Ladies and the Ladies who attend Margarita in 2.4, 3.1, 3.5, and 4.3, see
2.3.0.1n. A Maid employed by Margarita but in collusion with Estifania has a brief appearance at 2.4.63-82. A Servant to Juan appears in 1.1. Servants in Margarita’s household appear in 3.1, 3.5, 4.3, 5.3, and 5.5. Attendants (probably for the Duke, though this is not specified) are called for only in the opening stage direction to 3.5. The Servants who enter with him in later scenes could be the same characters. To give the Duke gentlemanly attendants in his first appearance and then strip them away, however, would allow a director to highlight the Duke’s increasing isolation as he is abandoned by the characters around him as the play progresses.

Setting] Of the two Spanish stories on which the play is based, *El sagaz Estacio* is set in Madrid and “El casamiento engañoso” is set in Valladolid. Weber and Saintsbury indicated in their editions that Valladolid was the setting, but no city is named in the play. There is a reference to Seville when Estifania brags that she has furnishings “as fair as Seville / Or any town in Spain can parallel” (1.6.20-21). Dyce, Bond, and Williams took this to mean that the play was set there, but Estifania’s comparison refers rather to the wealth generated by the city’s royal monopoly on New World trade.
Prologue

Pleasure attend ye, and about ye sit
The springs of mirth, fancy, delight, and wit
To stir you up. Do not your looks let fall,
Nor to remembrance our late errors call,
Because this day we’re Spaniards all again,
The story of our play, and our scene, Spain.
The errors too, do not for this cause hate,

Prologue ] The topical references of the prologue indicate that it was written for the earliest performances of the play at the Blackfriars Theatre in late 1624. The authorship of the prologue is uncertain because the heroic couplets would obscure Fletcher’s usual metrical habits. Though the reference to “the poet” (17) points toward composition by someone other than Fletcher, it is possible that he wrote it in the third person since the prologue would be spoken by an actor.

2-3 springs . . . up ] The “springs of mirth” are the audience members themselves. Because “stir you up” has a sexual connotation, the compliment also emphasizes the attractiveness and potential availability of members of the audience.

4 late errors ] Refers to the King’s Men’s recent controversial performances of A Game at Chess and the lost play The Spanish Viceroy.
Now we present their wit and not their state.

Nor, ladies, be not angry if you see

A young fresh beauty, wanton and too free,
Seek to abuse her husband; still, ’tis Spain.

No such gross errors in your kingdom reign.

We’re vestals all, and though we blow the fire

We seldom make it flame up to desire;

Take no example neither to begin,

For some by precedent delight to sin,

Nor blame the poet if he slip aside,

Sometimes lasciviously if not too wide,

Seward adopts Sympson’s suggestion of “You’re vestals,” which Seward claims “The Context very evidently requires[.]” The actors speak of themselves and the audience together as virginal keepers of a ceremonial flame (and allude perhaps to the ritual nature of the theatre), an ironic denial of the potential of the play to incite desire.

The King’s Men’s recent performances of politically sensitive plays set in Spain led to trouble with the authorities. The prologue tries (perhaps disingenuously) to convince the audience that no political commentary is intended by this comedy of foreign manners.

The prologue may have been spoken by a female character.
But hold your fans close and then smile at ease:

A cruel scene did never lady please.

Nor, gentlemen, pray be not you displeased,

Though we present some men fooled, some diseased,

Some drunk, some mad, we mean not you; you’re free,

We tax no further than our comedy.

You are our friends; sit noble, then, and see.

23 free I.e., free of the faults just listed, but combined with “tax” in the next line, the metaphor becomes financial: the audience is liable for only the cost of attending the comedy, and not for any faults audience members may have.

24 tax Censure (OED v. 6). This is the traditional claim that any satire applies only to the characters of the work, with a pun that the actors charge only for admission (see previous n.).

25 You... see Echoes the prologue to The Humorous Lieutenant: “sit nobly then, and see: / If it miscarrie, pray looke not for me” (21-22).
Enter Juan de Castro and Michael Perez.

Perez. Are your companies full, colonel?

Juan. No, not yet, sir,

Nor will not be this month yet, as I reckon.

How rises your command?

Perez. We pick up still,

And as our monies hold out we have men come;

1.1 ] Q1 (ACTUS. I. SCENA. 1.) 1 Colonel ] Q2; Coronell Q1 (throughout)

1.1 ] Location: a room in Juan’s residence.

1 Are your companies full ] The play was composed and first performed during the recruitment for Count Mansfeld’s ill-starred Palatinate expedition. See “Rule a Wife in 1624,” 91-98.

1 colonel ] Count Mansfields Directions of Warre (STC 17260, hereafter cited as Directions), published during the war-fever of 1624 (and hence providing the most current contemporary understanding of each military office), defines the office of a colonel: “Every Colonell is to Command ouer all his Officers, Captaynes and others, and all Souldiers or men of Warre of what degree soeuer, that doth put themselues, or are by superiour Authoritie put and ranged vnder his Regiment” (1). Except for the Duke, Juan is the highest-ranking officer in the play.

4 monies ] As commissioned recruiters, Juan and Perez would be allocated a certain amount of money to pay enlisting soldiers (see OED “press money” n. 3).
About that time I think we shall be full too,
Many young gallants go.

Juan. And unexperienced.
The wars are dainty dreams to young hot spirits;
Time and experience will allay those visions.

5 *that time* ] In one month (see l. 2). Perez is more optimistic than Juan that their recruitment quotas will be filled.

7-8 *The wars . . . visions* ] Expands the proverb, “Wars are sweet to them who know them not” (Tilley W58).

Erasmus wrote an important anti-war essay about this proverb in his *Adages* (see Barker 317-56). This view of war fever in the play contrasts with the pro-war fervour expressed by Fletcher in his letter to the Countess of Huntingdon in the early 1620s: “whether ytt bee true / wee shall haue warrs w^th^ Spaine: (I wolde wee might:)” (qtd. In McMullan 18). Fletcher perhaps defers to the preferences of his patroness. In *The Humorous Lieutenant* (c. 1619), Fletcher paints a vivid picture of the carnage when inexperienced “young gallants” (2.2.63) come to battle:

They’l never ride o’er other mens corne againe, I take it,

Such frisking, and such flaunting with their feathers,

And such careening with their mistres favours;

And here must he be pricking for honor,

And there got he a knocke, and downe goes pilgarlike,

Commends his soule to his she-saint, and *exit*. Another spurres in there, cryes make roome villaines,

I am a Lord, scarce spoken, but with reverence A rascall takes him o’er the face, and fels him;

There lyes the Lord, the Lord be with him.

(2.2.75-84)
We have strange things to fill our numbers;

There’s one Don Leon, a strange goodly fellow,

Recommended to me from some noble friends

For my alférez. Had you but seen his person,

And what a giant’s promise it protesteth—

Perez. I have heard of him, and that he hath served before too.

Juan. But no harm done, nor never meant, Don Michael,

That came to my ears yet. Ask him a question,

He blushes like a girl, and answers little,

To the point less; he wears a sword, a good one,

And good clothes too; he is whole skinned, has no hurt yet,

10 strange Q1; strong Colman (conj. Theobald)

10 strange Only Colman and Williams adopt Theobald’s conjecture (“strong”) here; Williams argues that the “easy misreading [was] influenced by ‘strange’ immediately above in line 9.” Such repetitions are not unusual in Fletcher’s writings, and here it emphasizes Leon’s unusual nature.

12 alférez Ensign. “In Fight, he shall euer carry his Ensigne advanc’d and flying,

17 He . . . girl Proverbial (A. Taylor, “Comparisons” 30).

17 little with few words; quietly
Good promising hopes; I never yet heard certainly
Of any gentleman that saw him angry.

_Perez._ Preserve him, he’ll conclude a peace if need be.

Many as strong as he will go along with us
That swear as valiantly as heart can wish,
Their mouths charged with six oaths at once, and whole ones,

23 strong] Q1; strange Theobald (conj.); stout Seward
25 mouths] F2; mouth Q1

23 _strong_] Seward’s emendation (“stout”) is more appropriate than Theobald’s “strange” because it captures the irony of Perez’s words (that the strength of the recruits lies only in their valiant swearing), but any change is unnecessary.

25 _mouths_] A pun on the sense of “the muzzle of a gun” (_OED_ n. 9b).

25 _charged . . . whole ones_] “Charged” means “loaded,” and a “charge” itself was the amount of gunpowder inserted in the weapon; hence, the Spanish attack with whole charges as opposed to half charges. Figuratively, the fully loaded braggarts fire their insults.

25-26 The aggressive and disdainful attitude toward the Dutch here and elsewhere in the play (1.5.35-36, 4.3.24-32) may reflect the increasing hostility among the English in the mid-1620s to the Low Countries because of increasing commercial competition and the Amboyna massacre of 1623.
That make the drunken Dutch creep into molehills.

Juan. ’Tis true, such we must look for; but, Michael Perez,

When heard you of Doña Margarita, the great heiress?

Perez. I hear every hour of her, though I never saw her,

She is the main discourse, noble Don Juan de Castro;

How happy were that man could catch this wench up,

And live at ease. She is fair and young and wealthy,

Infinite wealthy, and as gracious too,

In all her entertainments, as men report.

Juan. But she is proud, sir, that I know for certain,

And that comes seldom without wantonness;

He that shall marry her must have a rare hand.

Perez. Would I were married, I would find that wisdom,

With a light rein, to rule my wife; if ever woman

26 drunken Dutch ] English conventional wisdom held that drunkenness was a pervasive vice among the Dutch. A. J. Hoenselaars’s study of national stage-types discusses the long “theatrical tradition of drunken representatives from the Low Countries” (166 and passim). More references to Dutch dipsomania occur at 1.5.35-36 and 4.3.32.

26 molehills ] A disparaging reference to the earthen fortifications the retreating Dutch will use.

35-36 she . . . wantonness ] Fletcher sexualizes the proverb “pride goes before and shame/ambition comes after” (Tilley P576).
Of the most subtlest mould went beyond me,
I would give the boys leave to hoot me out o’th’ parish.

Enter a Servant.

Servant. Sir, there be two gentlewomen attend to speak with ye.

Juan. Wait on them in.

Perez. [To the Servant] Are they two handsome women?

Servant. They seem so, very handsome, but they are veiled, sir.

Perez. Thou put’st sugar in my mouth, how it melts with me—

I love a sweet young wench.

Juan. Wait on them in, I say.

Exit Servant.

Perez. Don Juan—
Juan. How you itch, Michael, how you burnish!

Will not this soldier’s heat out of your bones yet,

Do your eyes glow now?

Perez. There be two.

Juan. Say honest,

What shame have you then?

Perez. I would fain see that;

I have been in the Indies twice, and have seen strange things,

But two honest women? One I read of once.

Juan. Prithee be modest.

Perez. I’ll be anything.

47 itch . . . burnish ] Perez shows physical signs of his excitement at the prospect of meeting two attractive young ladies, as he hops about and his face turns red. “Itch” is used in the obsolete sense, “to shift one’s position a little; to move with a jerk or succession of jerks” (OED v.2). “Burnish,” “to become bright or glossy; to shine, gleam” (OED v.1 4, citing this line), is an appropriate figurative use of a verb associated with metal (OED v.1 1) to describe the reaction of Perez, “a man of copper” (4.1.92).

51-52 Indies . . . women ] The misogynistic joke that honest women were an exotic rarity appears also in Cupid’s Revenge: “Thunder in Januarie, or a good woman, thats stranger then all Affricke” (3.4.162-63, cited in A. Taylor, “Comparisons” 25). These comparisons work on a geographic scale: one good woman is as strange as Africa, but two honest women are as strange as the more remote Indies.
Enter Servant, [with] Doña Clara and Estifania veiled.

Juan. You are welcome, ladies.

Perez. [aside] Both hooded, I like ‘em well, though;

They come not for advice in law, sure, hither;

Maybe they would learn to raise the pike?

I am for ‘em. They are very modest, ’tis a fine preludium.

Juan. With me or with this gentleman would you speak, lady?

Clara. With you, sir, as I guess, Juan de Castro? [She unveils.]

Perez. [aside] Her curtain opens, she is a pretty gentlewoman.

Juan. I am the man, and shall be bound to fortune

I may do any service to your beauties.
Clara. Captain, I hear you are marching down to Flanders,

To serve the Catholic king.

Juan. I am, sweet lady.

Clara. I have a kinsman and a noble friend

Employed in those wars; maybe, sir, you know him,

Don Campusano, captain of carbines,

63 Captain } An error (either by Clara or 

Fletcher): Juan is a colonel (see 1.1.1n).

A captain “hath proportionably the 
same commandement ouer his 
Company, that a Colonell hath ouer his 
Regiment; and so all his Officers and 

Souldiers are to obey him” (Directions 
7). Perhaps Juan is simply too gallant 
to correct her accidental demotion of 
him (though the same error occurs at 

3.5.189).

63-64 Flanders . . . Catholic king ] The long 

fight for independence waged by the 

Low Countries against Spain was 

interrupted by a truce signed in 1609. 

Its expiration in 1621 led to renewed 

hostilities amplified by the burgeoning 

Thirty Years War. In 1619 Fletcher 

and Massinger wrote Sir John Van 

Olden Barnavelt, a play about the 

politics of the Low Countries during 

this truce.

67 Don Campusano ] Perez is modelled after 

the character Don Campuzano in 

Cervantes’s “El casamiento engañoso” 

(“The Deceitful Marriage”). This 

allusive in-joke allows Fletcher to 
establish rapport with the audience 

members and readers who share his 

interest in Spanish literature.

67 carbines ] Mounted soldiers, named for the 

weapon they used, “a kind of medium 

between the pistol and the musket” 

(Samuel Johnson, qtd. in OED).
To whom I would request your nobleness

To give this poor remembrance.  [She gives Juan] a letter.

Juan. I shall do it,

I know the gentleman a most worthy captain. 70

Clara. Something in private.

Juan. Step aside, I’ll serve thee.

Exit Juan and Clara.

Perez. Prithee, let me see thy face.

Estifania. Sir, you must pardon me,

Women of our sort, that maintain fair memories
And keep suspect off from their chastities,
Had need wear thicker veils.

Perez. I am no blaster of a lady’s beauty,

Nor bold intruder on her special favours.

I know how tender reputation is,

And with what guards it ought to be preserved, lady.

You may to me.

73 fair memories ] good reputations (Dyce)

75 This is a purposefully short line, concluding
Estifania’s sing-song “memories –
chastities” half-rhyme couplet, before
Perez begins his next four lines, which are heavily (almost ploddingly) iambic.

The artificial, or ritual, nature of this flirtation is embodied in the push and pull of their dialogue, which alternates between shared and unshared lines.
Estifania. You must excuse me, señor, I come not here to sell myself.

Perez. As I am a gentleman,

By the honour of a soldier—

Estifania. I believe you.

I pray you be civil. I believe you would see me,

And when you have seen me I believe you will like me,

But in a strange place, to a stranger too,

As if I came on purpose to betray you,

Indeed I will not.

Perez. I shall love you dearly,

And ’tis a sin to fling away affection;

I have no mistress, no desire to honour

Any but you—[aside] will not this oyster open?—

I know not, you have struck me with your modesty—

80 señor ] Q1 (Seignior)

89-93 Perez’s asides interrupt the syntax of his blandishments to Estifania, showing the growth of his anxiety and impatience to comic effect. Estifania will not show him her face, and by calling her an oyster he fleetingly applies to her the pearl imagery later associated with Margarita.

90 will . . . open ] Perez is frustrated that
[aside] She will draw sure—so deep, and taken from me

All the desire I might bestow on others;

Quickly, before they come.

*Estifania.* Indeed I dare not.

But since I see you are so desirous, sir,

To view a poor face that can merit nothing

But your repentance—

*Perez.* It must needs be excellent.

*Estifania.* And with what honesty you ask it of me,

When I am gone let your man follow me

And view what house I enter; thither come,

For there I dare be bold to appear open,

And as I like your virtuous carriage then,

I shall be able to give welcome to you.

92  me_ ] F2; ~ ? Q1

92  *draw sure* ] surely draw open her veil  97  *It . . . excellent* ] This could be spoken

97  *repentance* ] Estifania teases Perez with false modesty, claiming he will repent seeing how unattractive her “poor face”  101  *open* ] unveiled

102  *carriage* ] deportment
Enter Juan, Clara, [and] a Servant.

She hath done her business, I must take my leave, sir.

Perez. I’ll kiss your fair white hand, and thank ye, lady;

My man shall wait, and I shall be your servant.

Sirrah, come near, hark. [Perez whispers to his Servant.]

Servant. I shall do it faithfully.

Exit [Perez’s] Servant.

Juan. You will command me no more services?

Clara. To be careful of your noble health, dear sir,

That I may ever honour you.

Juan. I thank you,

And kiss your hands. [To Servants] Wait on the ladies down there.

Exeunt Ladies and Servants.

Perez. You had the honour to see the face that came to you.

Juan. And ’twas a fair one; what was yours, Don Michael?

Perez. Mine was ’tith ’clipse and had a cloud drawn over it,

But I believe well, and I hope ’tis handsome;

104 done her business ] The bawdy overtone of “business” would imply a sexual relationship between Juan and Clara.

105 white hand ] A detail borrowed from Cervantes; the character Estifania is based on has a “snow-white hand” (Exemplary Stories 238).
She had a hand would stir a holy hermit.

Juan. You know none of ’em?

Perez. No.

Juan. Then I do, captain,

But I’ll say nothing till I see the proof on’t;

Sit close, Don Perez, or your worship’s caught,

I fear a fly.

Perez. Were those she brought love letters?

Juan. A packet to a kinsman now in Flanders.

Yours was very modest, methought.

Perez. Some young unmanaged thing,

But I may live to see—

Juan. ’Tis worth experience.

Let’s walk abroad and view our companies.

Exeunt.

125.1 Exeunt ] F2; Exit Q1

120 I fear a fly ] The metaphor derives from fishing. Juan’s cryptic warning goes unheeded by Perez, but is an important signal to the audience.

122-23 Metrically short lines. Perez and Juan try to extract information from each other, and the dialogue becomes clipped, building tension (the audience does not yet know that the letters to Flanders are a red herring) and speeding up the conclusion of the scene.
Enter Sanchio and Alonzo.

Sanchio. What, are you for the wars, Alonzo?

Alonzo. It may be ay,

It may be no, e’en as the humour takes me.

If I find peace amongst the female creatures
And easy entertainment, I’ll stay at home;
I am not so far obliged yet to long marches

1.2 ] Location: Unspecified. Could be a public space, a street, or the residence of Sanchio or Alonzo.

This scene is cut in 1776 and 1811, probably because of the thorough-going bawdy, reducing the already small roles of Alonzo and Sanchio by about 60%, and leaving them only twenty-five and fifteen lines apiece, respectively. Lacking even the little personality sketched for them here, they become ciphers, mere sounding boards for Juan, Perez, and the Duke, and even less demanding roles for the lower-tier actors who would play them.

are you for the wars ] The first lines of 1.2 echo the first lines of 1.1, but from the point of view of soldiers rather than captains (though later in the play these two are treated more as officers than soldiers). Juan and Perez discuss whether they have filled their companies, while Sanchio and Alonzo discuss whether they will join those companies.

peace ] content, happiness, in opposition to the “wars” of l. 1, and with a bawdy pun on “piece” as in “genitals” (DSLI 1024-25).
And mouldy biscuits to run mad for honour.

When you are all gone I have my choice before me.

_Sanchio._ Of which hospital thou wilt sweat in; wilt thou

Never leave whoring?

_Alonzo._ There is less danger in’t than gunning, Sanchio.

Though we be shot sometimes, the shot's not mortal;

Besides, it breaks no limbs.

_Sanchio._ But it disables 'em.

Dost thou see how thou pull'st thy legs after thee, as they

6 _mouldy biscuits_ ] Unsavoury military camp food, with a bawdy pun referring to diseased military camp prostitutes (see “biscuit” _DSLI_ 107).

9, 14 See lineation notes in Appendix A. Both of these short lines occur in Q1, but have been adjusted by editors in a variety of ways. The structure of both of Sanchio’s speeches which these lines conclude is similar: an ironic reversal of Alonzo’s preceding claim, followed by a question critical of Alonzo’s behaviour.

10 _be shot_ ] Wounded by projectiles, with puns on the senses of having ejaculated ( _DSLI_ 1238-39) and being “exhausted by sickness” ( _OED_ “shotten” 3b). “[T]he shot” is both the projectile and the venereal disease.

11 _disables_ ] Refers to both the detumescence following ejaculation and the ravages of venereal disease.

13 _as_ ] as if
Hung by points?

*Alonzo.* Better to pull ’em thus than walk on wooden ones;

Serve bravely for a billet to support me.

*Sanchio.* Fie, fie, ’tis base.

*Alonzo.* Dost thou count it base to suffer?

Suffer abundantly, ’tis the crown of honour;

You think it nothing to lie twenty days

Under a surgeon’s hands that has no mercy?

*Sanchio.* As thou hast done, I am sure, but I perceive now

Why you desire to stay: the orient heiress,

The Margarita, sir.

1.2 20 mercy? ] *this ed.*; ~.

14 *points* ] Laces used to tie doublets to hose (*OED* n.¹ 23a). Sanchio jokes that *Alonzo’s* halting walk (due to venereal disease) makes it seem as if his legs have fallen off.

16 *billet* ] A thick stick or truncheon (*OED* n.² 2), here used as a crutch.

18 *crown of honour* ] Perhaps an ironic reference to hair loss caused by venereal disease.

19-20 *You . . . mercy* ] *Alonzo’s* rhetorical question alludes to the pain caused by contemporary treatments for venereal disease, equating that suffering to battlefield injuries, and so due the same amount of respect.

22-23 *orient . . . Margarita* ] A pun; both words mean “pearl.”
Alonzo. I would I had her.

Sanchio. They say she will marry.

Alonzo. Yes, I think she will.

Sanchio. And marry suddenly as report goes too;

She fears her youth will not hold out, Alonzo.

Alonzo. I would I had the sheathing on’t.

Sanchio. They say too

She has a greedy eye that must be fed

With more than one man’s meat.

Alonzo. Would she were mine,

I would cater for her well enough; but Sanchio,

There be too many great men that adore her,

Princes and princes’s fellows that claim privilege.

Sanchio. Yet those stand off i’th’ way of marriage;

---

27 *the sheathing on’t*] The protective covering on her youth (*OED vbl. n. 2*); i.e., her maidenhead.

28 *eye*] Pun on “vagina” (*DSLI* 453-54); Partridge explains the comparison in detail: “because of the shape, the garniture of hair, and the tendency of both organs to become suffused with moisture” (109). This line echoes Iago’s “Her eye must be fed” (*Othello* 2.1.225).

29 *meat*] Pun on “penis” (*OED n. 6b*; and *DSLI* 869-70). The bawdy quibble conflates sexual and culinary gluttony.
To be tied to a man’s pleasure is a second labour.

*Alonzo.* She has bought a brave house here in town.

*Sanchio.* I have heard so.

*Alonzo.* If she convert it now to pious uses,

And bid poor gentlemen welcome—

*Sanchio.* When comes she to it?

*Alonzo.* Within these two days; she is in the country yet,

And keeps the noblest house.

*Sanchio.* Then there’s some hope of her.

Wilt thou go my way?

---

34 *To be . . . labour* ] The first labour is not specified. Seward paraphrased this quasi-proverbial statement: “Great Men like to enjoy Margarita as a Mistress, but to be ty’d to her as a Wife would make their Pleasure become a Drudgery.” He added that this is “A Sentiment but too often verifyd in Persons who are marry’d even to Women of Virtue as well as Beauty.” The joke of sexual pleasure becoming excruciating labour is expanded in the brothel scene of Fletcher and Massinger’s *Custom of the Country*: “Place me before a Cannon, ’tis a pleasure; / Stretch me upon a rack, a recreation; / But women? Women? Ô the Divell! women?” (4.5.9-11).

36 *pious uses* ] Alonzo ironically speaks of Margarita making herself sexually available in her house as an act of religious charity, as if she were opening a hospital or convent rather than something he hopes will be akin to a brothel.
Alonzo.  No, no, I must leave you

And repair to an old gentlewoman

That has credit with her, that can speak a good word.

Sanchio.  Send thee good fortune, but make thy body sound first.

Alonzo.  I am a soldier, and too sound a body becomes me not.

Farewell, Sanchio.  Exeunt [severally].

41 old gentlewoman ] This particular old gentlewoman is not mentioned in rest of the play; she is either a red herring or a loose end.

43-44 sound . . . sound ] Healthy, but more specifically, “free from pox” (DSLI 1274-75). Alonzo insists that sexual adventurism is as much a requirement of soldiering as military adventurism.
Enter a Servant of Michael Perez.

Servant. ’Tis this or that house, or I have lost mine aim;
They are both fair buildings. She walked plaguy fast,
And hereabouts I lost her—

Enter Estifania.

stay, that’s she,
’Tis very she—[She signals him] she makes me a low curtsy.
Let me note the place, the street I well remember. Exit [Estifania].
She is in again; certain some noble lady,
How happy should I be if she love my master.
A wondrous goodly house, here are brave lodgings,
And I shall sleep now like an emperor,
And eat abundantly. I thank my fortune,
I’ll back with speed and bring him happy tidings. Exit.
Enter three Old Ladies.

1 Old Lady. What should it mean that in such haste we are sent for?

2 Old Lady. Belike the Lady Margaret has some business

She would break to us in private.

3 Old Lady. It should seem so.

'Tis a good lady, and a wise young lady.

2 Old Lady. And virtuous enough too, I warrant ye,

For a young woman of her years; ’tis pity

To load her tender age with too much virtue.

3 Old Lady. ’Tis more sometimes than we can well away with.

Enter Altea.

Altea. Good morrow, ladies.

All. Morrow, my good madam.

1 Old Lady. How does the sweet young beauty, Lady Margaret?

2 Old Lady. Has she slept well after her walk last night?

1 Old Lady. Are her dreams gentle to her mind?

Altea. All’s well,
She’s very well. She sent for you thus suddenly
To give her counsel in a business
That much concerns her.

2 Old Lady. She does well and wisely
To ask the counsel of the ancient’st, madam;
Our years have run through many things she knows not.

Altea. She would fain marry.

1 Old Lady. ’Tis a proper calling,
And well beseems her years. Who would she yoke with?

Altea. That’s left to argue on; I pray come in
And break your fast, drink a good cup or two
To strengthen your understandings, then she’ll tell ye.

2 Old Lady. And good wine breeds good counsel, we’ll yield to ye.

Exeunt.

1.4 16 ancient’st, ] Q2; ~ _ Q1

23 good . . . counsel ] The Old Lady begins by echoing the proverbs “Good wine makes a merry heart” and “Good wine makes good blood” (Tilley W460, W461) but combines it with “A full belly gives good counsel” (B294), thus ironically reversing the equally proverbial “counsels in wine seldom prosper” (Tilley C701). Fletcher alludes to the conventional wisdom that meetings between women for advice and complaint “feature fairly heavy drinking” (Woodbridge 233).
Enter Juan de Castro and Leon.

Juan. Have you seen any service?

Leon. Yes.

Juan. Where?

Leon. Everywhere.

Juan. What office bore ye?

Leon. None, I was not worthy.

Juan. What captains know you?

Leon. None, they were above me.

Juan. Were you never hurt?

Leon. Not that I well remember,

But once I stole a hen, and then they beat me;

Pray ask me no long questions, I have an ill memory.

Juan. This is an ass—did you never draw your sword yet?

Leon. Not to do any harm, I thank heaven for’t.

Juan. Nor ne’er ta’en prisoner?

1.5] Location: Unspecified. Since Alonzo and Cacafogo enter unannounced, it is probably a public space. Leon’s cowardice, emphasized by his answers here, was discussed earlier by Perez and Juan (1.1.10-22).

7 This . . . ass ] This comment, as well as those in ll. 12 and 26-27, may be spoken aside, but for Leon to hear these insults and not challenge them reinforces the impression of his cowardice.
Leon. No, I ran away,

For I had ne’er no money to redeem me. 10

Juan. Can you endure a drum?

Leon. It makes my head ache.

Juan. Are you not valiant when you are drunk?

Leon. I think not,

But I am loving, sir.

Juan. What a lump is this man—

Was your father wise?

Leon. Too wise for me, I’m sure,

For he gave all he had to my younger brother.

Juan. That was no foolish part, I’ll bear you witness.

Canst thou lie with a woman?

Leon. I think I could make shift, sir,

But I am bashful.

Juan. In the night?

Leon. I know not;

Darkness indeed may do some good upon me.

Juan. Why art thou sent to me to be my officer,

Ay, and commended too, when thou dar’st not fight?
Leon. There be more officers of my opinion,

Or I am cozened, sir; men that talk more too.

Juan. How wilt thou ’scape a bullet?

Leon. Why, by chance:

They aim at honourable men; alas, I am none, sir.

Juan. This fellow has some doubts in’s talk that strikes me,

Enter Alonzo.

He cannot be all fool. Welcome, Alonzo.

Alonzo. What have you got there, temperance into your company?

The spirit of peace? We shall have wars by th’ounce then.

Enter Cacafogo.

1.5 26 strikes ] Q1 (striks); strike F2 29.1 SD ] Q1 (in margin of l. 29, see lineation notes)

22-23 There . . . too. ] Leon’s comment continues the light criticism of military adventurism which runs through the play.

29 wars by th’ounce ] I.e., there will be very small amounts of war, if most of the recruits share Leon’s temperate and peaceful nature. Alonzo’s statement, along with Cacafogo’s behaviour at ll. 39ff, and Juan’s awareness of Leon’s passive nature in 1.1.15-21, show that Leon has spent much time laying the groundwork for his deception.
Oh, here’s another pumpkin—let him loose, for luck sake—

The crammed son of a starved usurer, Cacafogo.

Both their brains buttered cannot make two spoonfuls.

*Cacafogo.* My father’s dead, I am a man of war too;

Monies, demesnes, I have ships at sea too, captains.

*Juan.* Take heed o’th’ Hollanders, your ships may leak else.

*Cacafogo.* I scorn the Hollanders, they are my drunkards.

*Alonzo.* Put up your gold, sir, I’ll borrow it else.

**30** pumpkin] Q1 (Pumpion)

30 *pumpkin*] A fat man (*OED* “pumpion” *n.* 2, 35 *ships . . . else*) At sea Cacafogo’s ships will cite this passage, derived from a general term for various edible gourds (*OED* “pumpkin” *n.* 1a). Falstaff is referred to as a “gross wat’ry pumion” in *Merry Wives of Windsor* 3.3.41, also cited in *OED* (*Riverside* retains the archaic spelling).

30 *let . . . sake*] These words refer to Leon, as Alonzo advises Juan not to accept Leon as a recruit.

31 *crammed*] Stuffed full. Cacafogo’s girth is emphasized, and contrasted here with his thin “starved” father.

31 *my drunkards*] On drunkenness in the Low Countries see 1.1.26n. Cacafogo’s use of “my” hints that he may have loaned money to the Hollanders, which would mean he is engaged in treasonous financial arrangements.
Cacafogo. I am satisfied you shall not—

[To Leon] Come out, I know thee, meet mine anger instantly.

Leon. I never wronged ye.

Cacafogo. Thou hast wronged mine honour: Thou look’dst upon my mistress thrice lasciviously.

I’ll make it good.

Juan. Do not heat yourself, you will surfeit.

Cacafogo. Thou wonst my money too, with a pair of base bones

In whom there was no truth, for which I beat thee,

I beat thee much; now I will hurt thee dangerously.

This shall provoke thee.

38 Cacafogo’s short line allows for a pause as he recognizes Leon from a previous alteration. This fight and Juan’s comments show the audience that Leon’s self-presentation is not to be trusted.

41 look’dst [F2; look’st Q1  wonst ] 1717 (subst.); wan’st Q1; want’st 1711

41 my mistress ] The mistress in question is never specified, and does not appear in the play.

43 wonst ] won. 1711’s reading (“want’st”) was adopted in the acting editions 1763 and 1776a.

43 bones ] dice. Cacafogo accuses Leon of having used loaded dice.
He strikes [Leon, who retaliates].

Alonzo. You struck too low by a foot, sir.

Juan. You must get a ladder when you would beat this fellow.

Leon. I cannot choose but kick again, pray pardon me. [He kicks him.]

Cacafogo. Hadst thou not asked my pardon, I had killed thee;

I leave thee as a thing despised.

46 SD | this ed. 48 SD | Weber 50 despised. | Colman (subst.); ~, Q1

46 SD | The reaction of Juan and Alonzo, and 49 asked my pardon | A similar joke appears in

Leon’s remark that he must “kick again” indicates that Cacafogo’s assault on Leon results in comic fighting business which makes a point of Leon’s height. King and No King, where the coward Bessus, after a beating, claims, “I have beene kickt againe, but the foolish fellow is penitent, has ask’t me mercy, and my honor’s safe” (5.1.124-26).
To Juan. Beso las manos a vuestra señoria—[To Alonzo] a maestro.

Exit Cacafogo.

Alonzo. You have ’scaped by miracle; there is not in all Spain

Beso las manos a vostra siniare a Maistre” is not standard Spanish (and may result from scribal or compositorial error), but Theobald’s correction of “assoles” is persuasive (see following note), though Williams disagrees, preferring “asso les manus” (“I grasp the hands”). Theobald omits “a Maistre,” but Williams points out that it probably refers to a maestre de campo, which “denote[s] a high rank in the militia.” This edition adds stage directions to clarify Williams’s persuasive reading of the action: “Cacafogo, turning from Leon as a thing despised, takes a ceremonious departure from the other men.”

The phrase occurs often in the drama of the period as a marker of Spanishness and of foreign affectation in Englishmen. Fletcher uses the phrase elsewhere (The Pilgrim [4.2.92] and Love’s Cure [3.2.82]). In The Alchemist, Surly’s first words upon entering “like a Spaniard” are “Señores, beso las manos, à vuestras mercedes” (4.3.21). Montaigne complains, in Florio’s translation, of pernicious social practices including “That fond custome to kisse what we present to others, and Beso las manos in saluting of our friends (a ceremonie heretofore only due unto princes)” (“Of Sumptuarie Lawes”).
A spirit of more fury than this fire-drake.

Leon. I see he is hasty, and I would give him leave
To beat me soundly if he would take my bond.

Juan. What shall I do with this fellow?

Alonzo. Turn him off;
He will infect the camp with cowardice
If he go with thee.

Juan. About some week hence, sir,
If I can hit upon no abler officer
You shall hear from me.

Leon. I desire no better. 60

Exeunt [Juan and Alonzo one way, Leon another].

60.1 Exeunt ] 1711; Exit Q1

53 fire-drake ] A dragon. Here used figuratively for one who loves fighting (OED the origin of Cacafogo’s name (see “Characters of

4c). This could be a punning allusion to the
Enter Estifania and Perez.

Perez. You have made me now too bountiful amends, lady,

For your strict carriage when you saw me first;

These beauties were not meant to be concealed,

It was a wrong to hide so sweet an object;

I could now chide ye, but it shall be thus,

No other anger ever touch your sweetness.

Estifania. You appear to me so honest and so civil,

Without a blush, sir, I dare bid ye welcome.

Perez. Now let me ask your name.

Estifania. ’Tis Estifania,

The heir of this poor place.

Perez. Poor do you call it?

There’s nothing that I cast mine eyes upon

But shows both rich and admirable; all the rooms

Are hung as if a princess were to dwell here,

The gardens, orchards, everything so curious.

Is all that plate your own too?

1.6] Location: A room in the town house. but not required. If there is a kiss, then

2 carriage] cf. 1.1.102 Estifania’s “welcome” in l. 7 may

5 thus] Weber adds a direction for Perez to indicate that she returns his kiss.

kiss Estifania here, which is possible
Estifania.

’Tis but little,
Only for present use. I have more and richer
When need shall call or friends compel me use it;
The suits you see of all the upper chambers
Are those that commonly adorn the house;
I think I have, besides, as fair as Seville
Or any town in Spain can parallel.

Perez. [aside] Now, if she be not married, I have some hopes—
Are you a maid?

Estifania. You make me blush to answer;
I ever was accounted so to this hour,
And that’s the reason that I live retired, sir.

Perez. Then would I counsel you to marry presently—
[aside] If I can get her, I am made forever—
For every year you lose, you lose a beauty;

1.6 20 fair_ ] Q1; ~, F2 20 Seville ] Seward (conj. Theobald); civill Q1 21 Or ] Q1; As F2

18 suits ] The textile hangings referred to by Perez at ll. 12-13.

early modern English, but Q1’s lack of italics or a capital led to the F2

20-21 I think . . . parallel ] Elliptically,

emendations noted in the collations

Estifania does not specify the additional
ting the Spanish city’s name in

(adopted in Q2 and 1711). Seville’s

Spanish new world colonies enabled a

royal monopoly on trade with the

very luxurious standard of living.
A husband now, an honest careful husband,

Were such a comfort. Will ye walk above stairs?

*Estifania.* This place will fit our talk, ’tis fitter far, sir:

Above there are day-beds, and such temptations

I dare not trust, sir.

*Perez.* [aside] She is excellent wise withal too.

*Estifania.* You named a husband. I am not so strict, sir,

Nor tied unto a virgin’s solitariness,

But if an honest, and a noble one,

Rich, and a soldier, for so I have vowed he shall be,

Were offered me, I think I should accept him;

But above all, he must love.

*Perez.* He were base else—

[aside] There’s comfort ministered in the word “soldier,”

How sweetly should I live.

*Estifania.* I am not so ignorant,

But that I know well how to be commanded,

And how again to make myself obeyed, sir;

I waste but little, I have gathered much,

32 *day-beds*] Sofas or couches, usually with a sexual connotation. Compare “lolling on a lewd day-bed” in *Richard III* (3.7.67, Q; F reads “Loue-bed”). Fletcher uses the term only in this play (again at 3.1.27).
My rial not the less worth when ’tis spent,
If spent by my direction, to please my husband;
I hold it as indifferent in my duty
To be his maid i’th’ kitchen, or his cook,
As in the hall to know myself the mistress.

_Perez._ [aside] Sweet, rich, and provident, now fortune stick
To me—I am a soldier, and a bachelor, lady,
And such a wife as you I could love infinitely.
They that use many words, some are deceitful;
I long to be a husband, and a good one,
For ’tis most certain I shall make a precedent
For all that follow me to love their ladies.
I am young, you see, able I would have you think too;
If’t please you know, try me before you take me.

45  _rial_ ] Q1; _royal_  _Bond_

45  _rial_ ] A Spanish coin (also spelled _real_ and _royal_); throughout the seventeenth century it was consistently equated with a sixpence (LEME). Given Estifania’s actual poverty, her use of a relatively small sum here is ironic. See 3.4.72n.

50-51  Q1’s lineation is maintained here because the lines are consistent with Fletcher’s versification (“lady” is an extra-metrical vocative, a common feature of his verse); Sward’s arrangement is adopted by all other editors (See Appendix A).
'Tis true I shall not meet in equal wealth
With ye, but jewels, chains such as the war
Has given me, a thousand ducats I dare
Presume on in ready gold now, as your
Care may handle it, as rich clothes too, as
Any he bears arms, lady.

Estifania. You are a true gentleman and fair, I see by ye,
And such a man I had rather take—
Perez. Pray do so,
I’ll have a priest o’th’ sudden.

Estifania. And as suddenly
You will repent too.
Perez. I’ll be hanged or drowned first,
By this, and this, and this kiss. [He kisses her repeatedly.]

Estifania. You are a flatterer,
But I must say there was something when I saw you

62 gold_ now, ] this ed.; ~, ~ _ Q1 69 SD ] Weber (subst.)

59-64 Seward’s relineation (see Appendix A) order to secure her consent. His
makes the lines more regular and end-stopped, but the swift enjambment
indicates Perez’s excitement at his sudden change of fortune, and his
willingness to offer all to Estifania in

62 as ] because
First, in that most noble face, that stirred my fancy.

Perez. I’ll stir it better ere you sleep, sweet lady,

I’ll send for all my trunks and give up all to ye,

Into your own dispose, before I bed ye,

And then sweet wench—

Estifania. You have the art to cozen me. Exeunt.
2.1

Enter Margarita, two [Old] Ladies, and Altea.

Margarita. Sit down and give me your opinions seriously.

1 Old Lady. You say you have a mind to marry, lady?

Margarita. ’Tis true, I have for to preserve my credit,

Yet not so much for that as for my state, ladies;

Conceive me right, there lies the main o’th’ question:

Credit I can redeem, money will imp it,
But when my money’s gone, when the law shall seize that
And for incontinency strip me of all—

1 Old Lady. Do you find your body so malicious that way?

Margarita. I find it as all bodies are that are young and lusty,

Lazy and high-fed: I desire my pleasure,

And pleasure I must have.

2 Old Lady. 'Tis fit you should have,

Your years require it, and 'tis necessary,

As necessary as meat, to a young lady;

Sleep cannot nourish more.

1 Old Lady. But might not all this be, and keep ye single?

You take away variety in marriage,

The abundance of the pleasure you are barred then;

Is’t not abundance that you aim at?

Margarita. Yes,

12 2 Old Lady. ] Williams; 2. Q1 (throughout scene)

7 the law ] The legal hazards provide phrase “Day and night” is written over
Margarita with an important motivation these words by an unknown annotator.
for marriage. 14 necessary as meat ] Proverbial (A. Taylor, “Comparisons” 32). Fletcher tweaks
11 Lazy and high-fed ] The first lines of this the proverb “meat and drink and leisure
scene in the Folger copy of Q2 (the is good for work-folks” (Tilley M824).
bottom of sig. C1v, reproduced on
EEBO) are faint, and the conjectured
Why was I made a woman?

2 Old Lady. And every day a new?

Margarita. Why fair and young but to use it?

1 Old Lady. You are still i’th’ right, why would you marry then?

Altea. Because a husband stops all doubts in this point,

20 made a woman ] An ironic heading “4.” (with the exception of
acknowledgement of the boy actor 3.1.1). All editions since F2 have
under the costume, who is “made” corrected the heading, but Williams,
rather than “born” a woman. In this who discusses this error at length in his
sense, the following line (“and every introduction to the play (495-97), was
day a new”) becomes a different joke: the first to offer a satisfactory
instead of requiring, as a woman, a new explanation: “Since both compositors
pleasure every day, the boy is made, set the form ‘4.’ and since neither had
every day, into a new (different) difficulty in spelling the full name
woman.

20-22 These three short lines are treated here (frequently in directions and dialogue),
as “amphibious” verse; joining the we may posit a manuscript formation
second to either the first or third results for an abbreviation of the prefix, ‘A’ or
in an alexandrine. ‘At’ that resembled the characters for
24 Altea. ] In 2.1, 2.3 and 3.1, the character of ‘4’ or ‘4th’ and so misled both men”
Altea is designated by the speech

And clears all passages.

2 Old Lady. What husband mean ye?

Altea. A husband of an easy faith, a fool

Made by her wealth and moulded to her pleasure;

One, though he see himself become a monster,

Shall hold the door and entertain the maker.

2 Old Lady. You grant there may be such a man.

1 Old Lady. Yes, marry,

But how to bring ’em to this rare perfection?

2 Old Lady. They must be chosen so, things of no honour,

Nor outward honesty.

Margarita. No, ’tis no matter,

I care not what they are, so they be lusty.

2 Old Lady. Methinks now a rich lawyer, some such fellow

That carries credit, and a face of awe,

26 fool_] this ed. ; ~ , Q1

24-25 Because . . . passages ] Altea, who has already chosen a candidate for Margarita’s marriage, interrupts the objections raised by the Old Ladies, perhaps worried that Margarita will be swayed by their arguments.

25 Clears all passages ] The sexual innuendo is apparent, though the acting editions 1763 and 1776 do not cut this phrase.

35-43 ] This list of potential suitors is loosely patterned after a scene in El Sagaz Estacio (Wilson, “Rule a Wife” 192).
But lies with nothing but his client’s business.

**Margarita.** No, there’s no trusting them, they are too subtle;

The law has moulded ’em of natural mischief.

**I Old Lady.** Then some grave governor,

Some man of honour, yet an easy man.

**Margarita.** If he have honour I am undone, I’ll none such,

I’ll have a lusty man, honour will cloy me.

**Altea.** ’Tis fit ye should, lady,

And to that end, with search and wit and labour

I have found one out, a right one and a perfect;

He is made as strong as brass, is of brave years too,

And doughty of complexion.

**Margarita.** Is he a gentleman?

**Altea.** Yes, and a soldier, as gentle as you would wish him,

A good fellow, wears good clothes.

**Margarita.** Those I’ll allow him,
They are for my credit; does he understand

But little?

*Altea.* Very little.

*Margarita.* 'Tis the better;

Has not the wars bred him up to anger?

*Altea.* No,

He will not quarrel with a dog that bites him;

Let him be drunk or sober, is one silence.

*Margarita.* Has no capacity what honour is?

For that’s the soldier’s god.

*Altea.* Honour’s a thing too subtle for his wisdom;

If honour lie in eating, he is right honourable.

*Margarita.* Is he so goodly a man, do you say?

*Altea.* As you shall see, lady,

---

53 Has J Q1; Have F2

51 *my credit* J Fletcher reverses the gender dynamics of the idea that “Renaissance . . . husbands wanted smartly-dressed wives to parade their own prosperity” (Woodbridge 229).

53-54 Seward retains Q1’s lineation, arguing that Q1’s “warres” is disyllabic (See Appendix A).

56 *capacity* J understanding Leon is to be a kind of trophy-husband.
But to all this is but a trunk.

Margarita. I would have him so,

I shall add branches to him to adorn him.

Go, find me out this man, and let me see him;

If he be that motion that you tell me of,

And make no more noise, I shall entertain him.

Let him be here.

Altea. He shall attend your ladyship. Exeunt.
Enter Juan, Alonzo, and Perez.

Juan. Why, thou art not married indeed?

Perez. No, no, pray think so;
   Alas, I am a fellow of no reckoning,
   Not worth a lady’s eye.

Alonzo. Wouldst thou steal a fortune
   And make none of all thy friends acquainted with it,
   Nor bid us to thy wedding?

Perez. No indeed,
   There was no wisdom in’t, to bid an artist,
   An old seducer, to a female banquet;
   I can cut up my pie without your instructions.

Juan. Was it the wench i’th’ veil?

Perez. Basta, ’twas she,
   The prettiest rogue that e’er you looked upon,
   The loving’st thief.

Juan. And is she rich withal too?

2.2 ] Location: Unspecified. It could be a room in Juan’s residence or a public space. (D’SLI 1023). Proverbial (A. Taylor, “Phrases” 45).

3 eye ] Cf. 1.2.28n.
9 Basta ] enough (Spanish)

8 I... instructions ] i.e., “I can serve myself,” with bawdy pun on “pie” as “vagina”
Perez. A mine, a mine, there is no end of wealth, colonel.

I am an ass, a bashful fool; prithee colonel,

How do thy companies fill now?

Juan. You are merry, sir,

You intend a safer war at home, belike, now.

Perez. I do not think I shall fight much this year, colonel,

I find myself given to my ease a little,

I care not if I sell my foolish company,

They are things of hazard.

Alonzo. How it angers me,

This fellow at first sight should win a lady,

A rich young wench, and I, that have consumed
My time and art in searching out their subtleties,

Like a fooled alchemist blow up my hopes still.

When shall we come to thy house and be freely merry?

Perez. When I have managed her a little more,

13 I . . . fool ] Perez mocks Juan and Alonzo with false modesty throughout the scene.

25 managed ] Perez earlier referred to Estifania as “Some young unmanaged thing”

19 How it angers me ] He is angry because Perez has succeeded in the plan Alonzo outlined at 1.2.3-7.
I have a house to entertain an army.

*Alonzo.* If thy wife be fair, thou wilt have few less come to thee.

*Perez.* But where they’ll get entertainment is the point, *señor*.

I beat no drum.

*Alonzo.* You need none but her tabor.

*Perez.* Maybe I’ll march after a month or two,

To get me a fresh stomach. I find, colonel,

---

2.2 28 where ] Q1; whe’re Williams (conj. Bullen) 28 señor ] Q1 (Sinior)

30 Perez. ] Seward; om. Q1

26 house . . . army ] Perez brags of the outlandish hospitality that the house allows him to offer, but in the following lines Alonzo attempts to figure the house as a brothel, and Perez as a bawd.

28 where ] Though Bullen’s conjecture, “whe’r” (an elision of “whether”), has merit, Q1’s reading makes sense. Perez contradicts Alonzo’s claim that many men will visit Estifania by emphasizing that it is the house, not his wife, that they will visit. Throughout the play

29 I beat no drum ] He is no longer recruiting for the army, and he is not acting as a bawd for his wife.

29 tabor ] A small hand-drum usually played with a pipe. Alonzo contrasts the military drum with the festive tabor, while sexually punning on the sense of “vagina,” or, as Gordon Williams puts it, “the parts drummed” (*DSLI* “drum” 420-21).
A wantonness in wealth methinks I agree not with;
'Tis such a trouble to be married too,
And have a thousand things of great importance,
Jewels and plate and fooleries, molest me.
To have a man’s brains whimsied with his wealth!
Before, I walked contentedly.

Enter Servant.

Servant. My mistress, sir, is sick because you are absent,
She mourns and will not eat.

Perez. Alas, my jewel!
Come, I’ll go with thee. Gentlemen, your fair leaves,
You see I am tied a little to my yoke,
Pray pardon me, would ye had both such loving wives.

Juan. I thank ye—Exit Perez [and] Servant.
For your old boots. Never be blank, Alonzo,
Because this fellow has outstripped thy fortune;
Tell me ten days hence what he is and how
The gracious state of matrimony stands with him.
Come, let’s to dinner; when Margarita comes
We’ll visit both; it may be then your fortune.  

Exeunt.

46-47  *Tell . . . him* ] Either another hint that
Juan is aware of Estifania’s deception,
or an indication of general misogyny.
Enter Margarita, Altea, [and] the [Old] Ladies.

2.3 0.1 *Old Ladies* ] Dyce; *Ladies* Q1; *Ladies in waiting* Williams

2.3  Location: A room in Margarita’s country house.

Ladies are introduced in the brief 1.4, and in 2.1 they offer advice to Margarita. Though Margarita does reject their initial suggestions, she and Altea inform them specifically of the type of man she seeks, and Altea proposes her candidate. The same Old Ladies enter here and inform Margarita that they have examined Leon according to the criteria set out in 2.1, and found him “a man at all points” (2.3.5). Margarita is satisfied by her own examination of Leon, and asks the Old Ladies to “serve for witnesses” to the marriage (2.3.68). Margarita’s female attendants throughout the rest of the play, *after* she returns to the city in 2.4, are different characters from the Old Ladies she consults in the country (though it is likely, as Bond suggests, that the same actors doubled the roles).
Margarita. Is he come?

Altea. Yes, madam, has been here this half hour.

I have questioned him of all that you can ask him,

And find him as fit as you had made the man;

He will make the goodliest shadow for iniquity.

Margarita. Have ye searched him ladies?

Old Ladies. Is a man at all points,

A likely man.

Margarita. Call him in, Altea. Exit [Altea].

Enter Leon [and] Altea.

A man of a good presence—[To Leon] pray ye come this way—

Of a lusty body—[To Altea] is his mind so tame?

Altea. Pray ye question him, and if you find him not

Fit for your purpose, shake him off, there’s no harm done. 10

Margarita. Can you love a young lady?—How he blushes.

Altea. [To Leon] Leave twirling of your hat, and hold your head up,

And speak t’th’ lady.

1 Altea. ] F2; 4. Q1 (throughout scene) 5 Old Ladies ] Dyce (subst.); Omnes. Q1
6 Exit Altea ] 1711; Exit Lady Q1

5 Have ye searched him ladies ] In El sagaz (including the lover of the Margarita

Estacio, Estacio’s preliminary analogue).

examination is conducted by men
Leon. Yes, I think I can.

I must be taught, I know not what it means, madam.

Margarita. You shall be taught, and can you when she pleases

Go ride abroad, and stay a week or two?

You shall have men and horses to attend ye,

And money in your purse.

Leon. Yes, I love riding,

And when I am from home I am so merry.

Margarita. Be as merry as you will, can you as handsomely

When you are sent for back, come with obedience,

And do your duty to the lady loves you?

Leon. Yes, sure, I shall.

Margarita. And when you see her friends here,

Or noble kinsmen, can you entertain

Their servants in the cellar, and be busied,

And hold your peace, whate’er you see or hear of?

Leon. ’Twere fit I were hanged else.

Margarita. Let me try your kisses—

How the fool shakes—I will not eat ye, sir— [She kisses him]

28 SD] Weber (subst., after l. 27)

27-30 Margarita’s comments set off by dashes

are spoken either aside or to Altea.
Beshrew my heart, he kisses wondrous manly—

Can ye do anything else?

Leon. Indeed I know not;

But if your ladyship will please to instruct me,

Sure I shall learn.

Margarita. You shall then be instructed,

If I should be this lady that affects ye.

Nay, say I marry ye?

[Leon is silent.]

Altea. Hark to the lady.

Margarita. What money have ye?

Leon. None, madam, nor friends;

I would do anything to serve your ladyship.

Margarita. You must not look to be my master, sir,

33-34 Leon’s refusal or inability to speak here
is a bid for control, as he forces
Margarita to speak.
Nor talk i’th’ house as though you wore the breeches,
No, nor command in anything.

Leon. I will not.
Alas, I am not able; I have no wit, madam.

Margarita. Nor do not labour to arrive at any,
’Twill spoil your head. I take ye upon charity,
And like a servant ye must be unto me:
As I behold your duty I shall love ye,
And as you observe me I may chance lie with ye.

Can you mark these?

38 wore the breeches ] “to assume the
authority of the husband” (OED n. 2a).

One of Fletcher’s favoured proverbial
phrases (Tilley B645): “From this time
forth my wife shall wear the breeches”
(Noble Gentleman 2.2.237);
“[Claudia.] Pray what might cost those
Breeches? Chilax. Would you wear
’em?” (Valentinian 2.4.37); “Come
Lopez, let us give our wives the
breeches too, / For they will have ’em”
(Women Pleased 5.3.104-5); “Livia.

Why then let’s all wear breeches. /

Maria. Now thou com’st near the
nature of a woman” (Woman’s Prize
1.2.145-6). See also Woman’s Prize
1.1.35-36, 2.6.44-46, and Little French
Lawyer 3.1.111 (A. Taylor, “Phrases”
42-43). For an overview of the theme
in early modern literature, see Linda
Woodbridge’s chapter, “Saints of
Sonnet and the Fight for the Breeches”
(184-223).
Leon. Yes, indeed, forsooth.

Margarita. There is one thing

That if I take ye in I put ye from me,

Utterly from me: you must not be saucy,

No, nor at any time familiar with me,

Scarce know me when I call ye not.

Leon. I will not.

Alas, I never knew myself sufficiently.

Margarita. Nor must not now.

Leon. I’ll be a dog to please ye.

Margarita. Indeed, you must fetch and carry as I appoint ye.

Leon. I were to blame else.

Margarita. Kiss me again [They kiss]—a strong fellow,

There is a vigor in his lips—if you see me

Kiss any other, twenty in an hour, sir,

You must not start, nor be offended.

Leon. No,

If you kiss a thousand I shall be contented:

It will the better teach me how to please ye.

Altea. I told ye, madam.

54 SD ] this ed.

47 take ye in ] catch you doing
Margarita. ’Tis the man I wished for.

[To Leon] The less you speak—

Leon. I’ll never speak again, madam,

But when you charge me; then I’ll speak softly too.

Margarita. Get me a priest, I’ll wed him instantly—

But when you are married, sir, you must wait upon me,

And see you observe my laws.

Leon. Else you shall hang me.

Margarita. I’ll give ye better clothes when you deserve ’em—

Come in, and serve for witnesses.

Old Ladies. We shall, madam.

62 speak— ] Seward; ~ . Q1 68 Old Ladies ] this ed.; Omnes Q1; Altea and Ladies Dyce; Ladies Williams

2 speak— ] Leon interrupts Margarita in the midst of her injunction to speak little. This interruption, moments before the conspiracy of Leon and Altea is revealed, prepares for Leon’s assertion of power. It also parallels his interruption of her submission at 5.3.93. 64 Get . . . instantly ] Margarita speaks this either to Altea, one of the Ladies, or to an attendant.

66 my laws ] Her laws as opposed to the laws for property seizure, which provide her motivation for marriage, and the laws Leon later cites to justify his seizure of her goods and property.

67 better clothes ] Better than the good clothes he already has (cf. 1.1.19, 2.1.50).
Margarita. And then away t’th’ city presently,

I’ll to my new house and new company. 70

Leon. [apart to Altea] A thousand crowns are thine, and I am a made man.

Altea. Do not break out too soon.

Leon. I know my time, wench. Exeunt.
Enter Clara, and Estifania with a [concealed] paper.

Clara. What, have you caught him?

Estifania. Yes.

Clara. And do you find him

A man of those hopes that you aimed at?

Estifania. Yes too,

And the most kind man, and the ablest also

To give a wife content; he is sound as old wine,

And to his soundness rises on the palate,

2.4 [with a paper] Q1; om. Dyce

2.4 ] Location: a room in the town house.

4 able . . . content ] “Ability” is often used with

specifically sexual overtones (DSLI 1),

so Estifania here praises Perez’s talent

for giving her sexual pleasure.

4 sound . . . wine ] Proverbal (A. Taylor,

“Comparisons” 36). Sound wine is

“not spoiled or vitiated in any way;

hence, wholesome, good and strong”

(OED “sound” a. 3b). “Sound” is often

associated with freedom from the pox

(see 1.2.43-44n.), so Estifania may be

bragging about Perez’s venereal health

as well as his strength.

5 And . . . palate ] This is a syntactically

cramped expression. The sense is that

when pleasing Estifania sensually,

Perez rises to his soundness, that is, he

fulfills the promise of his healthy body.

“[O]n the palate” continues the wine

comparison from the previous line; the

palate is “the seat of taste” (OED n.

2a), and by extension represents the

senses in general.
And there’s the man. I find him rich too, Clara.

Clara. Hast thou married him?

Estifania. What, dost thou think I fish without a bait, wench?

I bob for fools? He is mine own, I have him;

I told thee what would tickle him like a trout,

And as I cast it so I caught him daintily,

And all he has I have ’stowed at my devotion.

Clara. Does thy lady know this? She is coming now to town,

Now to live here in this house.

Estifania. Let her come,

She shall be welcome, I am prepared for her;

She is mad, sure, if she be angry at my fortune,

For what I have made bold.

Clara. Dost thou not love him?

Estifania. Yes, entirely well,

As long as there he stays and looks no further

Into my ends; but when he doubts, I hate him,

8-12 ] Cf. 1.1.120. Estifania and Juan both use fishing metaphors to describe the “catching” of Perez.  
9 bob ] Literally “to fish;” figuratively “to seek to capture or obtain by artifice” (OED v.4).
And that wise hate will teach me how to cozen him,

{                                      }

How to decline their wives, and curb their manners,

To put a stern and strong rein to their natures,

And holds he is an ass not worth acquaintance,

That cannot mould a devil to obedience.

I owe him a good turn for these opinions,

And as I find his temper, I may pay him.

Enter Perez.

Oh, here he is, now you shall see a kind man.

Perez. My Estifania, shall we to dinner, lamb? I know thou stayst for me.

Estifania. I cannot eat else.

Perez. I never enter but methinks a paradise Appears about me.

Estifania. You are welcome to it, sir.

23  { . . . } line missing  Q1; A lady-tamer he, and reads men’s warnings  Seward (subst.); The best on’t ’tis, he professes to teach husbands  Coleridge (conj.); For he has studied well the rules men use  Williams

23  ] The shift from singular to plural in  Estifania’s speech suggests that a line is missing. Proposed replacements are  24  decline ] “To turn (a person) aside from or to a course of conduct” (OED v. 11b).
Perez. I think I have the sweetest seat in Spain, wench,

Methinks the richest too; we’ll eat i’th’ garden,

In one o’th’ arbors, there ’tis cool and pleasant,

And have our wine cold in the running fountain—

[He sees Clara] Who’s that?

Estifania. A friend of mine, sir.

Perez. Of what breeding?

Estifania. A gentlewoman, sir.

Perez. What business has she?

Is she a learned woman i’th’ mathematics,

Can she tell fortunes?

Estifania. More than I know, sir.

Perez. Or has she e’er a letter from a kinswoman

That must be delivered in my absence, wife;

Or comes she from the doctor to salute ye,

And learn your health? She looks not like a confessor.

38 cold] Q1; cool’d 1711 39 SD] this ed.

39 Who’s that] Perez does not recognize and opportunities for speaking to

Clara, who unveiled in front of him at

1.1.59-60.

45-46 kinswoman . . . doctor . . . confessor] These figures, along with astrologers,

alluded to in ll. 41-42, all have reasons to cuckold him by proxy (cf. ll. 48, 52-53).
Estifania. What need all this, why are you troubled, sir?

What do you suspect? She cannot cuckold ye,

She is a woman, sir, a very woman.

Perez. Your very woman may do very well, sir,

Toward the matter, for though she cannot perform it

In her own person, she may do it by proxy;

Your rarest jugglers work still by conspiracy.

Estifania. Cry ye mercy, husband, you are jealous then,

And happily suspect me.

Perez. No indeed, wife.

Estifania. Methinks you should not till you have more cause,

And clearer too: I am sure you have heard say, husband,

A woman forced will free herself through iron;

A happy, calm, and good wife discontented

May be taught tricks.

Perez. No, no, I do but jest with ye.

Estifania. [To Clara] Tomorrow, friend, I’ll see you.

Clara. I shall leave ye

Till then, and pray all may go sweetly with ye. Exit.

Knock[ing within].

53 jugglers ] A juggler is one “who deceives by trickery” (OED 3).

58 woman . . . iron ] A striking formulation of the proverb “women will have their wills” (Tilley W723).
Estifania. Why where’s this girl, who’s at the door?

Perez. Who knocks there?

Is’t for the king ye come, you knock so boisterously?

Look to the door.

Enter Maid.

Maid. [apart to Estifania] My lady, as I live, mistress, my lady’s come;

She’s at the door, I peeped through and I saw her,

And a stately company of ladies with her.

Estifania. [apart to Maid] This was a week too soon, but I must meet with her,

And set a new wheel going, and a subtle one;

Must blind this mighty Mars, or I am ruined.

Perez. What are they at door?

Estifania. Such, my Michael,

As you may bless the day they entered here,

Such for our good.

Perez. ’Tis well.

Estifania. Nay, ’twill be better

71 mighty Mars ] An ironic comment on Perez’s (abandoned) military career.

This reference could call to mind Ovid’s story of Mars’s marriage in which he was deceived: he thought he married Minerva, but it was Anna Perenna, festive goddess of the Ides of March, in a veil (Fasti, bk. 3; See “Anna Perenna,” OCD). The element of the veil explicitly links Estifania to Anna Perenna.
If you will let me but dispose the business,
And be a stranger to it, and not disturb me:
What have I now to do but to advance your fortune?

Perez. Do, I dare trust thee, I am ashamed I am angry,
I find thee a wise young wife.

Estifania. [aside] I’ll wise your worship
Before I leave ye—pray ye walk by and say nothing,
Only salute ’em, and leave the rest to me, sir;
I was born to make ye a man. [Exit Estifania and Maid.]

Perez. The rogue speaks heartily,
Her good will colours in her cheeks, I am born to love her.
I must be gentler to these tender natures,
A soldier’s rude harsh words befit not ladies,
Nor must we talk to them as we talk to
Our officers; I’ll give her way, for ’tis for me she

78 am angry ] Q1; was ~ Seward 81 ’em ] Williams (um); him Q1; them F2
82 SD ] this ed.; Exit Weber (Estifania only)

82 SD ] Weber provides an exit for Estifania well, as long as Perez is left alone (or
here, and this edition includes the Maid apart) for ll. 82-88.
as well. Dyce directs the Maid to exit 86-91 See Appendix A for lineation
at line 68. Both stagings work equally adjustments to this passage. Q1’s
enjambed arrangement does scan.
Works now: I am husband, heir, and all she has.

Enter Margarita, Estifania, Leon, Altea, and Ladies.

Who are these, what flaunting things? A woman

Of rare presence, excellent fair; this is too big

For a bawdy house, too open-seated too.

Estifania. My husband, lady.

Margarita. You have gained a proper man.

Perez. Whate’er I am, I am your servant, lady. [He kisses [Margarita].

[Estifania and Perez walk apart.]

Estifania. Sir, be ruled now, and I shall make ye rich;

This is my cousin, that gentleman dotes on her

Even to death, see how he observes her.

Perez. She is a goodly woman.

93.1 SD ] Williams (subst.)

93-134 The staging of this dialogue can be taking place around him. 1811 changes awkward, though there is comic the dynamic of this scene by directing potential in Perez’s distraction as he everyone but Perez and Estifania to exit listens to Estifania while watching at l. 103 (and eliminating the final five Margarita and her retinue settle lines of the scene).

comfortably into the house. Estifania 96 observes ] Shows respectful and obsequious produces the paper in order to distract attention (OED v. 4).

Perez’s attention from the activity
Estifania.  She is a mirror,

But she is poor, she were for a prince’s side else;

This house she has brought him to as to her own,

And presuming upon me, and upon my courtesy—

Conceive me short, he knows not but she is wealthy,

Or if he did know otherwise, ’twere all one,

He is so far gone.

Perez.  Forward, she has a rare face.

Estifania.  This we must carry with discretion, husband,

And yield unto her for four days.

Perez.  Yield our house up,

Our goods and wealth?

Estifania.  All this is but in seeming,

To milk the lover on.  [She shows him the paper] Do you see this writing?

Two hundred pound a year, when they are married,

Has she sealed to for our good—[She puts away the paper] the time’s unfit now,

I’ll show it you tomorrow.

102 he ] F2; she Q1  107 SD ] Dyce (subst.)  108 Two hundred pound ] Q1 (200)

109 SD ] this ed.

97 mirror ] example  very kind of deception of which he is

99-103 With Perez’s (reluctant) agreement,  the victim.

Estifania makes him complicit in the
Perez. All the house?

Estifania. All, all, and we’ll remove too, to confirm him.

They’ll int’th’ country suddenly again

After they are matched, and then she’ll open to him.

Perez. The whole possession wife? Look what you do;

A part o’th’ house.

Estifania. No, no, they shall have all,

And take their pleasure too, ’tis for our ’vantage;

Why, what’s four days? Had you a sister, sir,

A niece or mistress that required this courtesy,

And should I make a scruple to do you good?

Perez. If easily it would come back—

Estifania. I swear, sir,

As easily as it came on; is’t not pity

To let such a gentlewoman for a little help?

You give away no house.

22 let ] hinder conveyed very insidiously and forcibly

123 You . . house ] Estifania’s statement is to the audience, though unperceived by

true since it is not Perez’s house in the Perez, the latent double meaning of the

first place. In a review of an early author. The arch imposter was

nineteenth-century Boston production, laughing at the cozened captain through

Robert Treat Paine praised the way the thin veil of the equivocal sense”

Mrs. Stanley’s delivery of this “line (364).
Perez. Clear but that question.

Estifania. I'll put the writings into your hand.

Perez. Well then.

Estifania. And you shall keep them safe.

Perez. I am satisfied;

Would I had the wench so too.

Estifania. When she has married him,

So infinite his love is linked unto her,

You, I, or any one that helps at this pinch

May have heaven knows what.

Perez. I'll remove the goods straight,

And take some poor house by, 'tis but for four days.

Estifania. I have a poor old friend, there we'll be.

Perez. 'Tis well then.

Estifania. Go handsome off, and leave the house clear.

Perez. Well.

Estifania. That little stuff we'll use shall follow after,

And a boy to guide ye; peace, and we are made both.

---

126 Would . . . too ] Williams marks this line as an aside, perhaps taking “the wench” to refer to Estifania (otherwise there is no reason for her not to hear), but “the wench” is Margarita: Perez wishes that Margarita were satisfied so that there would be no need for him to vacate the house.
Margarita. Come, let’s go in—[To Estifania] are all the rooms kept sweet, wench.

Estifania. They are sweet and neat. Exit Perez.

Margarita. Why, where’s your husband?

Estifania. Gone, madam.

When you come to your own he must give place, lady.

Margarita. Well, send you joy; you would not let me know’t,

Yet I shall not forget ye.

Estifania. Thank your ladyship. Exeunt.

139 Yet . . . ye] This promise implies that servant, for not informing her earlier of
Margaret will give Estifania a wedding her plans to marry.
gift, though she chides Estifania, her
Enter Margarita, Altea, and Boy.

Altea. Are you at ease now, is your heart at rest,
Now you have got a shadow, an umbrella,
To keep the scorching world’s opinion
From your fair credit?

Margarita. I am at peace, Altea.
If he continue but the same he shows,
And be a master of that ignorance
He outwardly professes, I am happy;
The pleasure I shall live in, and the freedom,
Without the squint-eye of the law upon me,
Or prating liberty of tongues that envy—

Altea. You are a made woman.

Margarita. But if he should prove now
A crafty and dissembling kind of husband,
One read in knavery, and brought up in the art
Of villainy concealed—

Altea. My life, an innocent.

Margarita. That’s it I aim at;

3.1 | Q1 (ACTUS 3. SCENA 1.) | 11 Altea. | F2; 4. Q1 (throughout scene)

3.1 | Location: a room in the town house.
That’s it I hope too, then I am sure I rule him.

For innocents are like obedient children
Brought up under a hard mother-in-law, a cruel,
Who, being not used to breakfasts and collations,
When they have coarse bread offered ’em, are thankful,
And take it for a favour too. Are the rooms
Made ready to entertain my friends? I long to dance now,
And to be wanton—let me have a song. [Boy sings.]

Is the great couch up, the Duke of Medina sent?

Altea. ’Tis up and ready.

Margarita. And day-beds in all chambers?

Altea. In all, lady,

Your house is nothing now but various pleasures;

24 SD ] Dyce (subst.)

15 innocent ] A person without knowledge of evil (OED n. B1a), or guileless to the point of idiocy (OED n. B3).
19 collations ] Light meals, or snacks between regular meals, with a possible pun on the sense of sexual intercourse (DSLI 274).
24 SD ] See Appendix D for the text to Henry Purcell’s song, “There’s not a Swain on

25 great couch ] large bed
The gallants begin to gaze too.

*Margarita.*

Let ’em gaze on,

I was brought up a courtier, high and happy,

And company is my delight, and courtship,

And handsome servants at my will. Where’s my good husband,

Where does he wait?

*Altea.*

He knows his distance, madam;

I warrant ye, he is busy in the cellar

Amongst his fellow servants, or asleep

Till your command awake him.

*Margarita.*

’Tis well, Altea,

Enter Leon [and Servant].

---

30 *gallants . . . gaze* | News of Margarita’s marriage, and hence her sexual availability, has spread and achieved the desired effect. The image is of eager gallants gathering around her house to try to catch a peek.

31 *courtier* | Finkelpearl and McMullan have emphasized the critical view of courtly behaviour found in Fletcher’s plays. The depravity Leon accuses Margarita of was learned during her time at court.

34 *he . . . distance* | He maintains a respectful distance like a good servant, not coming till called. Proverbial; see also *Mad Lover* 1.1.123 (A. Taylor, “Phrases” 45).

37.1 SD | All later editors follow Dyce in moving this SD to follow l. 38, which eliminates the irony when the audience sees Leon before Margarita does, while she is praising his obedience.
It should be so, my ward I must preserve him—

[She sees Leon] Who sent for him, how dare he come uncalled for,
His bonnet on too?

Altea. Sure he sees you not.  

Margarita. How scornfully he looks.

[Leon and Servant talk apart.]

Leon. Are all the chambers

Decked and adorned thus for my lady’s pleasure,

New hangings every hour for entertainment,

And new plate bought, new jewels to give luster?

Servant. They are, and yet there must be more and richer;

It is her will.

Leon. Hum, is it so? ’Tis excellent;

It is her will too, to have feasts and banquets,

Revels and masques?

38 my ward ] Margarita asserts figuratively that she is Leon’s guardian, placing him in an inferior position. The wardship system (in which the crown controlled estates of heirs not yet of age, and awarded the revenues to courtiers) was a constant source of friction in Tudor and Stuart England. Some young men in the audience at Blackfriars would be able to laugh bitterly at anyone professing concern for a ward.
Servant. She ever loved 'em dearly,
And we shall have the bravest house kept now, sir;
I must not call ye master, she has warned me,
Nor must not put my hat off to ye.

Leon. 'Tis no fashion,
What, though I be her husband, I am your fellow;
I may cut first.

Servant. That's as you shall deserve, sir.

Leon. And when I lie with her—

Servant. Maybe I'll light ye;
On the same point you may do me that service.

Enter 1 Lady.

1 Lady. Madam, the Duke Medina with some captains
Will come to dinner, and have sent rare wine
And their best services.

Margarita. They shall be welcome,

53 cut first ] “Carve first at the servants table”  
55 On ... service ] In another attempt to
(Weber), with a bawdy innuendo that
he will be the first to have sex with
the other servants (cf. l. 50, 53), this
remind Leon that he is no better than
Margarita (see DSLI, “cut” 357-58).

54 light ye ] Carry a candle for Leon as he goes
to Margarita’s bedchamber.
the only servant to sleep with
Margarita.
See all be ready in the noblest fashion,
The house perfumed.  
[Exit 1 Lady]

Now I shall take my pleasure,
And not my neighbour justice maundr at me—

[To Leon] Go, get your best clothes on, but till I call ye
Be sure you be not seen; dine with the gentlewomen,
And behave yourself cleanly, sir, ’tis for my credit.

Enter 2 Lady.

2 Lady. Madam, the Lady Julia—

Leon.  
[aside] That’s a bawd,
A three-piled bawd, bawd major to the army.

2 Lady. Has brought her coach to wait upon your ladyship,
And to be informed if you will take the air this morning.

59 SD ] Dyce

64-65, 68 This edition follows Dyce in marking Leon’s comments as asides, but they may also be spoken apart to the Servant (if Margarita’s directions at ll. 58-59 are indeed spoken to 1 Lady, and not to this servant). Dyce and later editors direct the servant to exit at l. 55, but Leon’s comments could indicate that he remains onstage.

65 three-piled ] Three-piled velvet is the richest type; “A three-piled bawd, therefore, is one of the first order, one supremely excellent in her trade” (Weber). Fletcher was fond of the adjective; Bond points out that it appears in Philaster (5.4.16), Woman’s Prize (2.3.81), and Scornful Lady (3.1.93).
Leon. [aside] The neat air of her nunnery.

Margarita. Tell her no,

I’th’ afternoon I’ll call on her.

2 Lady. I will, madam. Exit.

Margarita. [To Leon] Why are not you gone to prepare yourself,

Maybe you shall be sewer to the first course?—

A portly presence? Altea, he looks lean,

’Tis a wash knave, he will not keep his flesh well.

Altea. A willing, madam, one that needs no spurring.

Leon. Faith, madam, in my little understanding,

You had better entertain your honest neighbours,

Your friends about ye, that may speak well of ye,

--Q1; fire F2 presence? ) this ed.; ~, Q1

68 nunnery i.e., brothel (DSLI 963-67) his behaviour leads her to diminish his

72 A portly presence? ] Editors since Colman his behaviour leads her to diminish his

punctuate this as an exclamation (which his behaviour leads her to diminish his

may or may not clearly convey its now be small because Margarita says

irony), but this edition points it as a he is so. Possibly, again recalling

rhetorical question (clarifying the Taming of the Shrew, she threatens to

irony), as Margarita begins to starve him.

reevaluate Leon. Until now, Leon’s 73 wash weak, tender (OED a., citing this
physical impressiveness has been passage and Bonduca: “bodies of so
emphasized, but Margarita’s anger at weak and wash a temper” [4.1.34]).
And give a worthy mention of your bounty.

Margarita. How now, what’s this?

Leon. ’Tis only to persuade ye

Courtiers are but tickle things to deal withal,

A kind of marzipan men that will not last, madam;

An egg and pepper goes further than their potions,

80 tickle ] Q1; fickle Q2 81 marzipan ] Q1 (march-pane)

81 marzipan men ] Insubstantial men; like the confection, rich but not nutritious.

82-84 egg and pepper . . . potables ] These lines are a riot of sexual punning with foodstuffs. “Egg and pepper” plays on the sense of a spiced aphrodisiac, and testicle-shaped eggs could refer to the phallus in general (“pepper” does not carry the sense here of “pox;” see DSLI, “pepper” 1011-12). Gordon Williams cites Fletcher’s bawdy use of “egg” (DSLI 433) in Rollo, Duke of Normandy, where one character “feeds / With lechery, and lives upon th’exchange / Of his two eggs and puddings, with the market-woman” (4.2.14-16), and in The Woman’s Prize, where the men say of Maria, “may all she eate be Eggs, / Till she run kicking mad for men” (5.2.60-61). A “parsnip,” thought to “provoke venery,” is also a bawdy quibble on “penis” (DSLI 995-96). Fletcher associates these foodstuffs with sexual potency in The Woman’s Prize, when Petruchio says “I shall rise again, if there be truth / In Egges, and butter’d Pa[r]snips” (1.3.15-16). “Potion” could also refer to semen, as well as aphrodisiacs (DSLI 1080). Leon compares the hardy plain fare of peppered eggs and parsnips with . . .
And in a well-built body a poor parsnip
Will play his prize above their strong potables.

Margarita. The fellow’s mad.

Leon. He that shall counsel ladies,

That have both lickerish and ambitious eyes,
Is either mad or drunk, let him speak gospel.

Altea. He breaks out modestly.

Leon. Pray ye, be not angry,

My indiscretion has made bold to tell ye

What you’ll find true.

Margarita. Thou darest not talk.

Leon. Not much, madam,

You have a tie upon your servant’s tongue,

He dares not be so bold as reason bids him;

86 lickerish ] Q1 (licorish); liquorish F2

. . . thin aristocratic potions; that is, his down-to-earth virility bests impotent courtiers who, even with the assistance of “strong potables,” cannot compete with his “well-built body.” phrase is most often used in the context of fencing only adds to the phallic imagery of the preceding lines.

86 lickerish ] Eagerly desirous, greedy; also, lecherous. F2’s spelling is a legitimate variant but somewhat misleading (see collations).

84 play his prize ] Compete in a sporting contest (OED “prize” n.3 2a). That this
’Twere fit there were a stronger on your temper.

Ne’er look so stern upon me, I am your husband,

But what are husbands? Read the new world’s wonders

And you will scarce find such deformities,

Such husbands, as this monstrous world produces;

They are shadows to conceal your venial virtues,

Sails to your mills that grind with all occasions,

Balls that lie by you to wash out your stains,

And bills nailed up with horn before your stories

95-96 But . . . deformities ] Dyce (conj. Mason); Q1 transposes these lines

horns 1711

98 venial virtues ] An ironic periphrasis for vice or sin: “slight or unimportant virtues.”

grinds a both sides” (Mad Lover 3.6.7-8) (“Phrases” 49).

99 Sails . . . occasions ] Bawdy pun on “grind” (DSLI 61).

as “copulate with” (DSLI 624-25).

Fletcher sexualizes the proverbial critique of hypocrites and dissemblers,

“his mill will go with all winds” (Tilley M942). A. Taylor cites the parallel “a rancke bawde by this hand too, / She

100 bills nailed up with horn ] The cuckold’s horns advertise the infidelity of the wife as posted bills advertise wares for sale or rooms for rent. As a metonym, “horn” refers to nails made of horn.

101 stories ] Synecdoche for “building” or “edifice.”
To rent out lust.

Margarita. Do you hear him talk?

Leon. I have done, madam.

An ox once spoke, as learned men deliver,

Shortly I shall be such, then I’ll speak wonders;

Till when, I tie myself to my obedience. Exit.

Margarita. First I’ll untie myself. Did you mark the gentleman,

How boldly and how saucily he talked,

To rent out lust. [Seward; last Q1]

To rent out lust] This is a striking image for prostitution.

ox once spoke] Speaking oxen occur relatively often in Livy’s history of Rome, as when a consul’s ox speaks the words, “Roma, caue tibi,” i.e., “Rome, take care of thyself” (Bk. 35.21). In Philemon Holland’s translation of Livy, printed in 1600, the ox’s words are distinguished by small capitals in a summary headnote to Bk. 35 (888). Speaking oxen or cows are also reported in Bks. 3.10, 24.10, 27.11, 28.10, 41.13, 41.21, 43.13, but their words are not given. To the Romans speaking oxen were fearful prodigies, usually appearing in times of civil strife when the internal weaknesses of Rome opened it to foreign threats, much as the struggle between Leon and Margarita paves the way for the intrusive Duke. In likening himself to an ox, Leon adopts the beast-of-burden imagery others have applied to him, and as a monstrous prodigy, it is another illustration of husbands as “deformities.”
And how unlike the lump I took him for,
The piece of ignorant dough? He stood up to me
And mated my commands; this was your providence,
Your wisdom, to elect this gentleman,
Your excellent forecast in the man, your knowledge;
What think ye now?

*Altea.*  I think him an ass still.

This boldness some of your people have blown into him,
This wisdom too, with strong wine: ’tis a tyrant
And a philosopher also, and finds out reasons.

*Margarita.*  I’ll have my cellar locked, no school kept there,
Nor no discovery. I’ll turn my drunkards
(Such as are understanding in their draughts,
And dispute learnedly the whys and wherefores)
To grass immediately; I’ll keep all fools,
Sober or drunk, still fools, that shall know nothing;
Nothing belongs to mankind but obedience,

110  *mated* ] rendered powerless (*OED* v. IV 2)
117-18  *I’ll . . . discovery* ] Picking up on
114-16  *This . . . reasons* ] Wine is the tyrant and philosopher which engenders boldness and wisdom. Compare “good wine breed good counsel” (1.4.23).

Altea’s image of wine as a philosopher, Margarita threatens to end her servants’s drinking privileges so that their philosophical “school” cannot discover reasons for disobedience.
And such a hand I’ll keep over this husband.

*Altea.* He will fall again, my life he cries by this time;

Keep him from drink, he has a high constitution.

*Enter Leon.*

*Leon.* Shall I wear my new suit, madam?

*Margarita.* No, your old clothes,

And get you into the country presently,

And see my hawks well trained; you shall have victuals,

Such as are fit for saucy palates, sir,

And lodgings with the hinds, it is too good too. 130

*Altea.* Good madam, be not so rough with repentance,

You see now he’s come round again.

*Margarita.* I see not

What I expect to see.

*Leon.* You shall see, madam,

If it shall please your ladyship.

*Altea.* He’s humbled;

Forgive, good lady.

*Margarita.* Well, go get you handsome,

And let me hear no more.

127 *new suit* ] The clothes promised him at 2.3.67.

131 *Good . . . repentance* ] Seward gives this line to Leon, a reassignment adopted in the acting editions 1763 and 1776.
Leon. [aside] Have ye yet no feeling?

I’ll pinch ye to the bones then my proud lady. Exit.

Margarita. See you preserve him thus upon my favour,

You know his temper, tie him to the grindstone.

The next rebellion I’ll be rid of him,

I’ll have no needy rascals I tie to me

Dispute my life. Come in and see all handsome.

Altea. [aside] I hope to see you so too, I have wrought ill else.

Exeunt.
Enter Perez.

Perez. Shall I never return to mine own house again?

We are lodged here in the miserablest dog-hole,

A conjurer’s circle gives content above it,

A hawk’s mew is a princely palace to it.

We have a bed no bigger than a basket,

And there we lie like butter clapped together,

And sweat ourselves to sauce immediately.

The fumes are infinite inhabit here too,

And to that so thick they cut like marmalade,

So various too, they’ll pose a gold-finder.

---

3.2 ] Location: a room in the poor house.  
Marmalade / No bigger then a Pease”

This scene, set as prose and combined with 3.4 (5.1.118-119).  
and the first part of 4.1, constitute An Equal Match, a droll printed in The Wits, or Sport upon Sport (1662).

10 pose ] To place in a difficult situation (OED v2 2).

10 gold-finder ] A scavenger, usually associated with filth and excrement (OED 2).  Perez claims that the fumes in his lodgings are so thick and various they would perplex even one accustomed to sifting through dunghills. The term occurs in The Spanish Gypsy (2.2.166), where. . .

4 mew ] A cage or other quarters for hawks (OED n2 3a).

9 marmalade ] In the seventeenth century, marmalade was solid, and cut into squares for eating, rather than the spread more familiar today (OED n1a).  Cf. Double Marriage: “A bit of
Never return to mine own paradise?

Why wife, I say, why Estifania?

Estifania. (within) I am going presently.

Perez. Make haste, good jewel,

I am like the people that live in the sweet islands:

I die, I die, if I stay but one day more here.

My lungs are rotten with the damps that rise,

And I cough nothing now but stinks of all sorts.

3.2 14 sweet ] Q1; sweat Theobald (conj.)

... Bullen, in his edition of Middleton, notes,

“A person who cleaned a jakes was

jocularly styled a gold-finder.” Bond,

less convincingly, suggests “an

alchemist, trying to detect the presence

of gold substances by their gases.”

11 paradise ] Perez’s references to the garden

of the town house (2.4.36, etc.) allude to the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve

were cast out from the Garden for eating the fruit of the tree of

knowledge. Perez is cast out of his garden when he gains the knowledge

that the house belongs to Margarita.

Once he is out, he would much rather live there in ignorance, which is why he wants so desperately to believe Estifania’s lies in 4.1, though he has already confronted Margarita in 3.5 and learned the true ownership of the house.

“I am fooled, yet dare not find it” he says at 4.1.118, attempting to disown the knowledge he possesses so that he can return to his paradise.

14 sweet islands ] The sugar-producing islands of the West Indies, feared by the English for their inhospitable climate.
The inhabitants we have are two starved rats,
For they are not able to maintain a cat here,
And those appear as fearful as two devils;
They have eat a map of the whole world up already,
And if we stay a night we are gone for company.
There’s an old woman that’s now grown to marble,
Dried in this brick-kiln, and she sits i’th’ chimney,
Which is but three tiles raised like a house of cards,
The true proportion of an old smoked sibyl.
There is a young thing too that nature meant
For a maid servant, but ’tis now a monster;
She has a husk about her like a chestnut,

24 brick-kiln ] Q1 (brick hill)
24 brick-kiln ] There is no separate OED entry for Q1’s “brick-hill,” so the variant spelling is modernized.  
26 Sibyl ] Equal Match reads “hovill” (“hovel”).
29 like a chestnut ] The maid’s skin is both of a dark colour and rough (or hairy?) like the husk of a chestnut.
With laziness and living under the line here,

And these two make a hollow sound together

Like frogs, or winds between two doors that murmur—

Enter Estifania.

Mercy deliver me. Oh, are you come, wife,

Shall we be free again?

Estifania. I am now going,

30 laziness] Equal Match (lasiness) 1711; basinesse Q1; business Q2

30 laziness] Bond notes that this reading first appeared in Equal Match, though most editors credit 1711. Just as the Old Woman has grown immobile like marble from sitting in the chimney, the Maid’s laziness in the hot lodging has given her a chestnut-like hue. Coincidental support for the emendation comes from Fletcher’s habit of alliterating his use of “laziness,” as in The Chances: “A lump got out of laziness” (1.5.11), and Monsieur Thomas: “Leaning to laziness, and loss of spirit” (2.3.24). “Baseness” (spelled “basinesse” in Q1) is not a likely reading, as Fletcher tends to use this word in an explicit contrast with nobility or noble behaviour. Near the equator (OED, line n.² 10b). Perez attributes the indolence of the Old Woman and the Maid to their hot lodgings.
And you shall presently to your own house, sir.
The remembrance of this small vexation
Will be argument of mirth forever;
By that time you have said your orisons
And broke your fast, I shall be back and ready
To usher you to your old content, your freedom.

_Perez._ Break my neck rather, is there anything here to eat
But one another, like a race of cannibals?
A piece of buttered wall you think is excellent.
Let’s have our house again immediately,
And pray ye take heed unto the furniture,
None be embezzled.

_Estifania._ Not a pin, I warrant ye.

_Perez._ And let ’em instantly depart.

_Estifania._ They shall both,
There’s reason in all courtesies, they must both,
For by this time I know she has acquainted him

35 _presently_ ] Immediately. Compare _OED_ that early examples, esp. before c.1650, _adv._ 3, “at the very time,” and 4, “in the space of time that immediately follows.” _OED_ notes that sense 4 was “gradual weakened” from sense 3: “the growth of this was so imperceptible, 46 _not a pin_ ] Modified form of the proverbial “not worth a pin” (A. Taylor, “Phrases” 55; Tilley P334).
And has provided too. She sent me word, sir,
And will give over gratefully unto you.

Perez. I’ll walk i’th’ churchyard,
The dead cannot offend more than these living;
An hour hence I’ll expect ye.

Estifania. I’ll not fail, sir.

Perez. And do you hear, let’s have a handsome dinner,
And see all things be decent as they have been,
And let me have a strong bath to restore me:
I stink like a stall-fish, shambles, or an oil-shop.

58 stall-fish, shambles] Colman; stall-fish_shambles Q1; stale fish-shambles Seward (in his note, but not in his text, which reads stale-fish shambles); fish-stall shambles Williams

58 stall-fish, shambles] Williams notes that the Q1 reading has “caused considerable editorial pain.” This edition adopts Colman’s solution, so that Perez cites a series of three sources of unpleasant smells: fish, butchers, and oil production. See collation and following notes.

58 stall-fish] Not found in the OED, or on LION. Weber’s definition is the closest to satisfactory: “a fish which has long lain upon a stall for show, and has not been kept fresh in water.” Seward’s suggestion, “stale,” is tempting. Another possibility is that “stall-fish” is an error for “stock-fish,” which occurs six times in Fletcher’s plays.

58 shambles] Either a place where meat (or occasionally fish) is sold (OED n.1 3a), or a slaughter-house (OED n.1 4a). Fletcher uses the second sense...
Estifania. You shall have all—[aside] which some interpret nothing—

I’ll send ye people for the trunks aforehand, 60

And for the stuff.

Perez. Let ’em be known and honest,

And do my service to your niece.

Estifania. I shall, sir,

But if I come not at my hour, come thither,

That they may give you thanks for your fair courtesy,

And pray ye be brave for my sake.

Perez. I observe ye.

Exeunt [severally].

...in Island Princess, alluding to sacrifices in pagan temples: “Nay I will out of vengeance search your Temples, / And with those hearts that serve my God, demolish / Your shambles of wild worships” (4.5.116-8), and in Cupid’s Revenge: “I care not if my throat were next: for to live still, and live here, were but to grow fat for the Shambles” (4.4.9-10).

58 oil-shop ] According to The London Tradesman (1747), these were “furnished with Oils, Pickles, Soap, Salt, Hams, and several other Family Necessaries” (Campbell 281). In this noisome context, Perez probably refers to a chandler’s shop where tallow and other oils were rendered.

64 brave ] Well-dressed, but also bold. Estifania’s joke hits homes when Perez realizes she has left him with only “one civil suit” (3.4.53).
Enter Juan de Castro, Sanchio, and Cacafogo.

Sanchio. Thou art very brave.

Cacafogo. I have reason: I have money.

Sanchio. Is money reason?

Cacafogo. Yes, and rhyme too, captain,

If ye have no money y’are an ass.

Sanchio. I thank ye.

Cacafogo. Ye have manners; ever thank him that has money.

Sanchio. Wilt thou lend me any?

Cacafogo. Not a farthing, captain,

Captains are casual things.

Sanchio. Why, so are all men;

Thou shalt have my bond.

Cacafogo. Nor bonds nor fetters, captain,

My money is mine own, I make no doubt on’t.

Juan. What dost thou do with it?

Cacafogo. Put it to pious uses,
Buy wine and wenches, and undo young coxcombs
That would undo me.

Juan. Are those hospitals?

Cacafogo. I first provide to fill my hospitals
With creatures of mine own that I know wretched,
And then I build; those are more bound to pray for me,
Besides I keep th’inheritance in my name still.

Juan. A provident charity. Are you for the wars, sir?

Cacafogo. I am not poor enough to be a soldier,
Nor have I faith enough to ward a bullet;
This is no lining for a trench I take it.

Juan. Ye have said wisely.

Cacafogo. Had you but my money,
You would swear it, colonel; I had rather drill at home
A hundred thousand crowns, and with more honour,
Than exercise ten thousand fools with nothing:

10-11 Buy . . . me ] These words could be spoken aside.
15 Besides . . . still ] This line could be spoken aside.
17 I . . . soldier ] This seems to contradict his claim to be a man of war at 1.5.33, but in both cases he is something of a financier or war profiteer.
21 drill at home ] i.e., put to usury
A wise man safely feeds, fools cut their fingers.

_Sanchio._ A right state-usurer; why dost thou not marry,

And live a reverend justice?

_Cacafogo._ Is’t not nobler

To command a reverend justice, than to be one?

And for a wife, what need I marry, captain,

When every courteous fool that owes me money

Owes me his wife too, to appease my fury?

_Juan._ Wilt thou go to dinner with us?

_Cacafogo._ I will go,

And view the pearl of Spain, the orient fair one,

The rich one too, and I will be respected.

I bear my patent here, I will talk to her,

And when your captainships shall stand aloof

And pick your noses, I will pick the purse

Of her affection.

35 captainships] Q2; Captaines ships Q1; Captain’s Ships F2

24 _A . . . fingers_] The line has a proverbial ring, but the closest analogues found in Tilley are “He is a fool that cuts himself with his own knife” (F479), and “Fools make feasts and wise men eat them” (F540).

34 _my patent_] Cacafogo has purchased a coat of arms, and carries the patent certifying his gentility with him, like Sogliardo in Jonson’s _Every Man Out of His Humour_ (3.1).
Juan The Duke dines there today too,
The Duke of Medina.

Cacafogo. Let the king dine there,
He owes me money and so far’s my creature,
And certainly I may make bold with mine own, captain.

Sanchio. Thou wilt eat monstrously.

Cacafogo. Like a true-born Spaniard,
Eat as I were in England, where the beef grows,
And I will drink abundantly, and then
Talk ye as wantonly as Ovid did
To stir the intellectuals of the ladies;
I learned it of my father’s amorous scrivener.

Juan. If we should play now, you must supply me.

Cacafogo. You must pawn a horse troop,
And then have at ye, colonel.

40 own, ] F2; ~ _ Q1

41 Like a true-born Spaniard ] This echoes of a usurer on the early modern English well-known Spanish anxieties about stage.) purity of blood. Cacafogo asserts his 44 Ovid ] In erotic works such as the Amores Spanishness as if to counter suspicions (translated by Marlowe in the 1590s) that he is Jewish (suspicions not raised and Ars Amatoria. Thomas Heywood’s in the play, but relevant to the portrayal translation of the latter work was published c.1625 (STC 18935).
Sanchio.  
Come, let’s go.

[apart to Juan] This rascal will make rare sport, how the ladies
Will laugh him lean again.

Juan.  
If I light on him
I’ll make his purse sweat too.

Cacafogo.  
Will ye lead, gentlemen?  Exeunt.

51 him lean again ] Bond; him, leave ager Q1 uncorr.; at him Q1 corr.; at him! Leave anger! Weber

51 lean again ] This reading, as emended by Bond, could easily have been misread
by Q1’s compositors as “leave ager” (v/n and r/n minim errors; Williams’s
old-spelling edition reads “leane agen”). The misreading was changed
during the press run to the less descriptive “at him,” adopted by F2
and subsequent editions until Weber
combined both Q1 readings. The joke
refers to Cacafogo’s girth. The soldiers
do not take Cacafogo seriously enough
in this scene to be angry at him, so
there is no need for Sanchio to advise
Juan to “leave anger.”
Enter Perez, an Old Woman, and Maid.

Perez. Nay, pray ye come out, and let me understand ye,

And tune your pipe a little higher, lady,

I’ll hold ye fast. Rub, how came my trunks open

And my goods gone, what picklock spirit?

Old Woman. Ha, what would ye have?

Perez. My goods again. How came my trunks all open?

Old Woman. Are your trunks open?

Perez. Yes, and clothes gone,

And chains and jewels—[aside] how she smells like hung beef.

The palsy and pick locks? Fie, how she belches

3.4 9 pick locks? ] Seward; picklocks, Q1

3.4 ] Location: a room in the poor house. condition. Q1’s error was probably

2 tune your pipe a little higher ] A reference to

the male actor’s voice. The joke

continued to be appropriate, as the Old

Lady was often played by a male

comedian in later productions.

9 The palsy and pick locks? ] Perez, suspicious

of the Old Woman, asks himself how

she could pick the locks to his trunk,
given her tremulous or arthritic

9 how she belches ] The Old Woman shares

bad breath with Cassandra, the old

bawd in Fletcher’s Wife for a Month

(also written in 1624): “Her breath

stinks like a Fox, her teeth are

contagious, / The old women are all

Elder-pipes” (4.2.16-17).
The spirit of garlic.

*Old Woman.* Where’s your gentlewoman, 10

The young fair woman?

*Perez.* What’s that to my question?

She is my wife, and gone about my business.

*Maid.* Is she your wife, sir?

*Perez.* Yes, sir, is that wonder?

Is the name of wife unknown here?

*Old Woman.* Is she truly,

Truly your wife?

*Perez.* I think so, for I married her;

It was no vision sure.

*Maid.* She has the keys, sir?

*Perez.* I know she has, but who has all my goods, spirit?

*Old Woman.* If you be married to that gentlewoman

You are a wretched man; she has twenty husbands.

*Maid.* She tells you true.

*Old Woman.* And she has cozened all, sir. 20

*Perez.* The devil she has, I had a fair house with her

That stands hard by, and furnished royally.

*Old Woman.* You are cozened too, ’tis none of hers, good gentleman,
It is a lady’s—what’s the lady’s name, wench?

*Maid.* The Lady Margarita. She was her servant

And kept the house, but going from her, sir,

For some lewd tricks she played.

*Perez.*  
Plague o’th’ devil,

Am I i’th’ full meridian of my wisdom

Cheated by a stale quean? What kind of lady

Is that that owes the house?

*Old Woman.*  
A young sweet lady.

*Perez.* Of a low stature?

*Old Woman.* She is indeed but little,

But she is wondrous fair.

*Perez.* I feel I am cozened.

Now I am sensible I am undone;

This is the very woman sure, that cousin

She told me would entreat but for four days,

To make the house hers; I am entreated sweetly.

*Maid.* When she went out this morning, that I saw, sir;

She had two women at the door attending,
And there she gave 'em things, and loaded 'em,

But what they were—I heard your trunks to open,

If they be yours.

Perez. They were mine while they were laden,

But now they have cast their calves they are not worth owning;

Was she her mistress say you?

Old Woman. Her own mistress,

Her very mistress, sir, and all you saw

About and in that house was hers.

Perez. No plate,

No jewels, nor no hangings?

Maid. Not a farthing;

She is poor, sir, a poor shifting thing.

Perez. No money?

Old Woman. Abominable poor, as poor as we are,

Money as rare to her, unless she steal it.
But for one civil gown her lady gave her
She may go bare, good gentlewoman.

Perez. I am mad now,
I think I am as poor as she, I am wide else;
One civil suit I have left too, and that’s all,
And if she steal that she must flay me for it;
Where does she use?

54 flay } Q1 (flea)

50, 53 civil gown; civil suit ] The clothes they have left are those befitting citizens rather than gallants or courtiers, apparel that is “not gay or showy; sober, decent, grave” (OED “civil” a. 10). Cf. Woman’s Prize: “That fourteen yards of satten give my woman; I do not like the colour—’tis too civill” (3.3.61-62). Estifania with her one dress, but if the underlying copy read “gent.” it could be an incorrect expansion of “gentleman.” For other “gentleman” errors in the text, see 4.3.130 and 5.5.163.

52 wide ] Mistaken (OED a. 10b). Perez says he is in error if he is not now as poor as Estifania (specifically, they both have only one outfit (3.2.64). 1763, 1811 alter “civil” to “single.”

51 gentlewoman ] The Old Woman blesses Margarita’s charity for providing
Old Woman. You may find truth as soon.

Alas, a thousand concealed corners, sir, she lurks in,

And here she gets a fleece, and there another,

And lives in mists and smokes where none can find her.

Perez. Is she a whore too?

Old Woman. Little better, gentleman.

I dare not say she is so, sir, because she is yours, sir,

But these five years she has firked a pretty living,

Until she came to serve—[aside] I fear he will knock my

Brains out for lying.

63 for lying ] Q1; om. Seward

61 firked ] Dutton glosses “firk” as “cheat; beat; fuck” (Women 465).

62-3 ] The Old Woman’s last words could also be spoken to the Maid, instead of aside.

63 for lying ] Seward omits these words and claims that “most of the things spoke of Estifania are true with only a little exaggeration, and as the words ‘for lying,’ totally destroy all appearance of measure, I have ventured to discard them.” Mason objects that “no measure was intended, and exaggeration is lying. Some part of the old woman’s story was true; but it does not appear that Estifania was a whore, or had twenty husbands.” Coleridge (as quoted by Dyce) exclaims, “Mr. Seward had his brains out. The humour lies in Estefania’s having ordered the Old Woman to tell those tales of her; for though an intriguer, she is not represented as other than chaste; and as to the metre, it is perfectly correct.” Bond observes that Coleridge. . .
Perez. She has served me faithfully,

A whore and thief, two excellent moral learnings

In one she-saint. I hope to see her legend.

Have I been feared for my discoveries,

And courted by all women to conceal ’em?

Have I so long studied the art of this sex,

And read the warnings to young gentlemen?

Have I professed to tame the pride of ladies,

And make ’em bear all tests, and am I tricked now,

. . . “is thinking, no doubt, of [4.1.110], which

is merely Estefania’s ready invention.

But all this is beside the point. True or

false, the old woman fears the husband

won’t believe it.” The play leaves

unanswered the extent, if any, of

collusion between the Old Woman and

Estifania. 68-72 Have I . . . noose ] Compare The

65 legend ] The story of a saint’s life, apropos

of Perez’s bitterly ironic

characterization of Estifania as a “she-
saint” practised in the “moral

learnings” of whoredom and thievery.

66-67 Have I . . . conceal ’em ] Perez alludes to

his discretion concerning past romantic

or sexual encounters (with “discover”

possibly meant in the sense of

“undress”). Discretion is a trait he

emphasized to Estifania: “I know how

tender reputation is, / And with what

guards it ought to be preserved”

(1.1.78-79).

68-72 Have I . . . noose ] Compare The

Chances: “have I / Knowne Wenches

thus long, all the wayes of wenches, / Their snares and subtilities? have I read

over / All their Schoole learnings, div’d

into their quiddits, / And am I now

bum-fiddled with a bastard?” (1.5.15-

19).
Caught in mine own noose? [To the Old Woman] Here’s a rial left yet,

There’s for your lodging and your meat for this week. [He gives her money.]

A silkworm lives at a more plentiful ordinary,

And sleeps in a sweeter box. Farewell, great grandmother;

If I do find you were an accessory,

’Tis but the cutting off two smoky minutes,

I’ll hang ye presently.

72 rial ] 1711 (Ryal); royal Q1

73 SD ] Dyce (subst.)

72 rial ] A Spanish coin worth sixpence (cf. 1.6.45n.). Though spelled “royall” in Q1, 1711’s spelling change is necessary to distinguish it from the English royal, a fifteenth-century coin originally worth ten shillings (OED n. 3a). Bond, departing from the editorial tradition, thinks the 10 shilling coin was intended here and at 1.6.45. Ten shillings (even four or five shillings, if the Spanish royal of eight is intended [OED n. 2d]) is far more than enough for a week’s food and lodging, deflating the joke.

Sixpence, on the other hand, indicates just how meagrely the Old Woman and her daughter live. (The irony of 1.6.45 is also diminished if a larger amount is meant.) It is possible that the different spellings are compositorial in origin, as 1.6.45 was set by Compositor P and 3.4.72 by Compositor Q.

77 minutes ] small or unimportant things (OED n. 3b)
Old Woman. And I deserve it,

I tell but truth.

Perez. Nor I, I am an ass, mother. Exeunt [severally].
Enter the Duke Medina, Juan de Castro, Alonzo, Sanchio, Cacafogo, [and] Attendants.


Juan. And richly furnished too, sir.

Alonzo. Hung wantonly, I like that preparation,

It stirs the blood unto a hopeful banquet,

And intimates the mistress free and jovial;

I love a house where pleasure prepares welcome.

Duke. Now, Cacafogo, how like you this mansion?

'Twere a brave pawn.

Cacafogo. I shall be master of it.

'Twas built for my bulk, the rooms are wide and spacious,

Airy and full of ease, and that I love well;

I’ll tell you when I taste the wine, my lord,

And take the height of her table with my stomach,

How my affections stand to the young lady.

Enter Margarita, Altea, Ladies, and Servants.

Margarita. All welcome to your grace, and to these soldiers,

You honour my poor house with your fair presence.

3.5 0.1 Duke Medina ] Colman; Duke, Medina Q1; Duke of Medina F2

3.5 ] Location: a room in the town house.
Those few slight pleasures that inhabit here, sir,
I do beseech your grace command, they are yours;
Your servant but preserves ’em to delight ye.

Duke. I thank ye, lady, I am bold to visit ye
Once more to bless mine eyes with your sweet beauty;
’Tas been a long night since you left the court,
For till I saw you now, no day broke to me.

Margarita. Bring in the Duke’s meat. [Exit Servant.]

Sanchio. She is most excellent.

Juan. Most admirable fair as e’er I looked on,
I had rather command her than my regiment.

Cacafogo. I’ll have a fling, ’tis but a thousand ducats,
Which I can cozen up again in ten days,
And some few jewels to justify my knavery.
Say I should marry her, she’ll get more money
Than all my usury, put my knavery to it,
She appears the most unfallible way of purchase.
I could wish her a size or two stronger for the encounter,
For I am like a lion where I lay hold,
But these lambs will endure a plaguy load,
And never bleat neither: that, sir, time has taught us—

[He attempts to speak to Margarita.]

[aside] I am so virtuous now, I cannot speak to her;
The arrant’st shamefaced ass, I broil away too.

Enter Leon.

Margarita. Why, where’s this dinner?
Leon. ’Tis not ready, madam,

34.1 SD ] this ed.

28-30 Say . . . purchase ] Cacafogo considers the profit to be had from marrying Margarita and then acting as her pimp.

“Purchase” means “A means of making a living; an occupation” (OED n. 4b). The meaning of “purchase” then shifts to that of “grip” (OED 15a) as he imagines an animalistic sexual encounter in which he is “like a lion where [he] lay[s] hold” (l. 32).

33 load ] Plays on the senses of both the “burden of a man’s body” and “semen” (Partridge 145).

34 time has taught us ] Proverbial, but the closest analogue in Tilley is “in time one gets experience” (T302).
Nor shall not be until I know the guests too,
Nor are they fairly welcome till I bid ’em.

Juan. Is not this my alférez? He looks another thing;

Are miracles afoot again?

Margarita. Why sirrah,

Why sirrah you—

Leon. I hear you, saucy woman,

And as you are my wife command your absence,

And know your duty, ’tis the crown of modesty.

Duke. Your wife?

Leon. Yes, good my lord, I am her husband,

And pray take notice that I claim that honour

And will maintain it.

Cacafogo. If thou beest her husband,

I am determined thou shalt be my cuckold;

I’ll be thy faithful friend.

Leon. Peace, dirt and dunghill,

I will not lose my anger on a rascal;

Provoke me more, I’ll beat thy blown body

*48* shalt [*Q1*]; shall [*F2*]

*50* lose [*Q1*]’s “loose” also makes sense: “I will not let loose my anger.” Throughout [*Q1*], “lose” is spelled “loose.”
Till thou reboundst again like a tennis ball.

Alonzo. This is miraculous.

Sanchio. Is this the fellow

That had the patience to become a fool,

A flirted fool, and on a sudden break,

As if he would show a wonder to the world,

Both into bravery and fortune too?

I much admire the man, I am astonished.

Margarita. I’ll be divorced immediately.

Leon. You shall not.

You shall not have so much will to be wicked.

I am more tender of your honour, lady,

And of your age. You took me for a shadow,

50 lose ] Q1 (loose)

52 ] 1763 and later acting editions supply an exit for Cacafogo following Leon’s threat, with the weak response, “I’ll talk with you another time.” This change produces a very different effect from the original staging in which Cacafogo remains onstage, silent and humiliated.

53-58 Williams directs Sanchio and Alonzo to speak these lines apart. While this is a legitimate possibility, there is no over-riding reason why these observations may not be shared with the group.

55 flirted ] beaten or scoffed at (OED flirt, v. 2 and 4)

56 age ] Her young age (cf. l. 86: “a young proud woman”).
You took me to gloss over your discredit,
To be your fool. You had thought you had found a coxcomb;
I am innocent of any foul dishonour I mean to ye.
Only I will be known to be your lord now,
And be a fair one too, or I will fall for’t.

Margarita. I do command ye from me, thou poor fellow,
Thou cozened fool.

Leon. Thou cozened fool? ’Tis not so,
I will not be commanded; I am above ye.

You may divorce me from your favour, lady,
But from your state you never shall, I’ll hold that,

69 fool? ] F2, ~, Q1

64 you had . . . you had ] Both should be elided would be emending “I mean to ye” to
when spoken. “ye meant to me.” The line is
65 I . . . ye ] The syntax of this line is unclear. metrically long, and there may be some
The sense is something like, “I am other error.
innocent of the foul dishonour I would 66 Only I ] i.e., I alone
have been guilty of if I had let you 72 state ] Estate, property. Leon claims
cuckold me (an act which would have possession of all her belongings, and so
been dishonourable to you).” Perhaps Margarita loses the very things that her
Q1’s “meane” should be emended to marriage was intended to preserve (cf.
“meant.” A more radical solution 2.1.3-7).
And hold it to my use, the law allows it;
And then, maintain your wantonness, I’ll wink at it.

Margarita. Am I braved thus in mine own house?

Leon. ’Tis mine, madam,
You are deceived. I am lord of it, I rule it
And all that’s in’t; you have nothing to do here, madam,
But as a servant to sweep clean the lodgings,
And at my further will to do me service,
And so I’ll keep it.

Margarita. As you love me give way,

It shall be better.

Leon. I will give none, madam,
I stand upon the ground of mine own honour
And will maintain it. You shall know me now

73 And hold . . . it ] Q1; om. F2 81 It . . . better. / Leon. I ] Seward; Leon. It . . . I Q1

73 use ] Profit. Cacafogo, earlier in this scene, daydreams of putting Margarita’s physical charms to his use as her bawd (ll. 28-30). Cacafogo’s desire for Margarita serves to put Leon’s mercenary desires in a better light because his plan includes her moral redemption. One wonders whether F2’s omission of this line is entirely accidental. It shall be better ] This half-line is erroneously assigned to Leon in Q1, giving him a speech which begins with two half-lines. Williams notes the similarity to Perez and Estifania’s exchange at 2.4.74.
To be an understanding feeling man,
And sensible of what a woman aims at,
A young proud woman that has will to sail with,
An itching woman, that her blood provokes too.
I cast my cloud off and appear myself,
The master of this little piece of mischief,
And I will put a spell about your feet, lady:
They shall not wander but where I give way now.

Duke. Is this the fellow that the people pointed at
For the mere sign of man, the walking image?
He speaks wondrous highly.

Leon As a husband ought, sir,
In his own house, and it becomes me well too;
I think your grace would grieve if you were put to it,
To have a wife or servant of your own,
For wives are reckoned in the rank of servants,
Under your own roof to command ye.

Juan. Brave,
A strange conversion, thou shalt lead in chief now.

89 little piece of mischief] Refers either to his sword, but it is unlikely that Leon subterfuge or to Margarita herself. would make the first aggressive move
Bond suggests that Leon refers to his toward the Duke.
Duke. Is there no difference betwixt her and you, sir?

Leon. Not now, lord, my fortune makes me even,

And as I am an honest man, I am nobler.

Margarita. Get me my coach.

Leon. Let me see who dare get it

Till I command, I’ll make him draw your coach,

And eat your coach too (which will be hard diet)

That executes your will. Or, take your coach, lady,

I give you liberty, and take your people,

Which I turn off, and take your will abroad with ye,

Take all these freely, but take me no more,

And so farewell.

Duke. Nay, sir, you shall not carry it

So bravely off, you shall not wrong a lady

In a high huffing strain and think to bear it;

We stand not by as bawds to your brave fury,

To see a lady weep.

Leon. They are tears of anger,

I beseech ye note ’em not worth pity,

105-106 coach . . . coach too ] Seward (subst.); coach too . . . Coach  Q1

101 difference ] The Duke means social and/or economic difference.
Wrung from her rage because her will prevails not;
She would swound now if she could not cry,
Else they were excellent and I should grieve too,
But falling thus they show nor sweet nor orient.

[The Duke draws his sword.]

Put up, my lord, this is oppression,
And calls the sword of justice to relieve me,
The law to lend her hand, the king to right me,

118  swound  ] F2;  sownd  Q1 corr.;  sound  Q1 uncorr.;  swoon  1711
120.1  SD ] this ed.;  after l. 111  Weber (subst.)

118  swound ] Faint.  The spelling “sound,”
found in one copy of Q1, was
found in one copy of Q1, was
disambiguated during press correction.
disambiguated during press correction.
1711’s spelling is also an acceptable
modernization (see collations).  It is
possible that this is a miscorrection and
that Leon means Margarita would make
a great noise if she could not cry
(which would indicate a subtly different
attitude towards her on his part), but
there are no convincing parallel
instances in the Fletcher canon and
“sound” is a common spelling variant.

120  orient ] With a pearl-like lustre, again
playing on the etymology of
Margarita’s name.

120.1  SD ] Weber and all later editors place a
direction for the Duke to draw his
sword at l. 111, but it is more likely that
the Duke does not draw until he is
infuriated by Leon’s continuing
denigration of Margarita’s tears, and
that Leon immediately demands that
the Duke “put up” his sword.
All which shall understand how you provoke me.

In mine own house to brave me, is this princely?

Then to my guard, [Leon draws his sword] and if I spare your grace

And do not make this place your monument,

Too rich a tomb for such a rude behaviour,

(I have a cause will kill a thousand of ye)

Mercy forsake me.


[To the Duke] The gentleman but pleads his own right nobly.

Leon. He that dares strike against the husband’s freedom,

The husband’s curse stick to him: a tamed cuckold,

His wife be fair and young but most dishonest,

Most impudent, and have no feeling of it,

No conscience to reclaim her from a monster.

Let her lie by him like a flattering ruin,

And at one instant kill both name and honour;

Let him be lost, no eye to weep his end,

Nor find no earth that’s base enough to bury him.

Now, sir, fall on, I am ready to oppose ye.

126 SD ] Weber (subst.)

133 husband’s curse ] The curse Leon describes contains all the terms and circumstances he agreed to in order to marry Margarita.
**Duke.** I have better thought; I pray, sir, use your wife well.

**Leon.** Mine own humanity will teach me that, sir.

* [They put up their swords.]*

And now you are all welcome, all, and we’ll to dinner;

This is my wedding day.

**Duke.** [aside] I’ll cross your joy yet.

**Juan.** I have seen a miracle, hold thine own soldier;

Sure they dare fight in fire that conquer women.

**Sancho.** Has beaten all my loose thoughts out of me,

As if he had threshed ’em out o’th’ husk.

* Enter Perez.*

**Perez.** Save ye,

Which is the lady of the house?

**Leon.** That’s she, sir,

That pretty lady, if you would speak with her.

---

143.1 SD] *Williams (subst.)*

143  *Mine . . . that*] This moment was an important point in Garrick’s performances. “Garrick’s sheathing of his sword, and most expressive look and action, as he replied, with a mixture of high courtesy, delicate reproof, and self-respect . . . was a new revelation to the audiences of the day” (Fitzgerald 2: 100). Davies reports that Garrick used “his most expressive look and action” when sheathing his sword while speaking this line (410).
Juan. Don Michael!—Leon, another darer come?

Perez. [To Juan] Pray do not know me, I am full of business,

When I have more time I’ll be merry with ye—

It is the woman. [To Margarita] Good madam, tell me truly,

Had you a maid called Estifania?

Margarita. Yes, truly, had I.

Perez. Was she a maid do you think?

Margarita. I dare not swear for her,

For she had but a scant fame.

Perez. Was she your kinswoman?

Margarita. Not that I ever knew. Now I look better

I think you married her, give you much joy, sir,

You may reclaim her; ’twas a wild young girl.

Perez. [aside] Give me a halter—is not this house mine, madam,

Was not she owner of it? Pray, speak truly.

---

152 Don Michael!—Leon ] F2 (subst.); Don Michael Leon Q1; Don Micheal! / Leon. Dyce (conj. Heath)

152 Don . . . Leon ] F2 inserts a comma after that another man has come for “Michael” and this emendation is substantially the solution adopted here: Margarita. Dyce treats “Leon” as a speech prefix, and is followed by Bond and Williams, who mark “Another darer come” as an aside.
Margarita. No, certainly, I am sure my money paid for it,

And I ne’er remember yet I gave it you, sir.

Perez. The hangings and the plate too?

Margarita. All are mine, sir,

And everything you see about the building;

She only kept my house when I was absent,

And so ill kept it, I was weary of her.

Sanchio. [apart to Juan] What a devil ails he?

Juan. [apart to Sanchio] Is possessed, I’ll assure you. 170

Perez. Where is your maid?

Margarita. Do not you know that have her?

She is yours now, why should I look after her?

Since that first hour I came I never saw her.

Perez. I saw her later—would the devil had had her;

It is all true I find, a wildfire take her.

Juan. Is thy wife with child, Don Michael, thy excellent wife?

Art thou a man yet?

Alonzo. When shall we come and visit thee?

Sanchio. And eat some rare fruit? Thou hast admirable orchards.

You are so jealous now, pox o’ your jealousy,

How scurvily you look.

Perez. Prithee leave fooling, 180

I am in no humour now to fool and prattle—

Did she ne’er play the wag with you?
Margarita. Yes, many times,

So often that I was ashamed to keep her,

But I forgave her, sir, in hope she would mend still,

And had not you o’th’ instant married her,

I had put her off.

Perez. I thank ye, I am blest still—

[aside] Which way soe’er I turn I am a made man,

Miserably gulled beyond recovery.

Juan. You’ll stay and dine.

Perez. Certain I cannot, captain,

[apart to Juan] Hark in thine ear, I am the arrant’st puppy,

The miserablest ass, but I must leave ye,

I am in haste, in haste—bless ye, good madam,

And you prove as good as my wife. Exit.

Leon. Will you

Come near, sir, will your grace but honour me,

And taste our dinner? You are nobly welcome,

All anger’s past I hope, and I shall serve ye.

Juan. Thou art the stock of men, and I admire thee. Exeunt.

189 captain ] An error by Fletcher; Juan is a colonel.

194 your grace ] Williams points out that Leon addresses the Duke, whose “anger is not past (see 4.2), [and] does not reply. Juan, the good soldier, ‘covers’ the Duke’s discourtesy.”
Enter Perez.

Perez. I’ll go to a conjurer but I’ll find this pole-cat,

This pilfering whore; a plague of veils, I cry,

And covers for the impudence of women,

Their sanctity in show will deceive devils—

Enter Estifania with a [concealed] casket.

It is my evil angel, let me bless me.

Estifania. [aside] ’Tis he, I am caught. I must stand to it stoutly,

And show no shake of fear; I see he is angry,

Vexed at the uttermost.

Perez. My worthy wife,

I have been looking of your modesty

All the town over.

Estifania. My most noble husband,

I am glad I have found ye, for in truth I am weary,

Weary and lame with looking out your lordship.
Perez. I have been in bawdy houses—

Estifania. I believe ye,

And very lately too.

Perez. Pray ye, pardon me,

To seek your ladyship. I have been in cellars,

In private cellars, where the thirsty bawds

Hear your confessions; I have been at plays

To look you out amongst the youthful actors,

At puppet shows, you are mistress of the motions;

At gossipings I hearkened after ye,

But amongst those confusions of lewd tongues

There’s no distinguishing beyond a Babel.

I was amongst the nuns because you sing well,

But they say yours are bawdy songs, they mourn for ye;

15 ladyship. ] Colman; ~, Q1

15 private cellars ] As opposed to drinking in public houses.

17 at plays ] “[T]he assumption that female playgoers were motivated by sex, whether for pleasure or money, remained a male prejudice throughout the period” (Gurr, Playgoing 64).

19 motions ] Puppets, with a pun on sexual intercourse.

20 gossipings ] Meetings of (usually female) friends for talk and merry-making (OED vbl. n. 2 and 3).
And last I went to church to seek you out,

'Tis so long since you were there they have forgot ye.

*Estifania.* You have had a pretty progress, I’ll tell mine now:

To look you out, I went to twenty taverns—

*Perez.* And are you sober?

*Estifania.* Yes, I reel not yet, sir—

Where I saw twenty drunk, most of ’em soldiers,

There I had great hope to find you disguised too.

From hence t’th’ dicing house, there I found quarrels

Needless and senseless, swords and pots and candlesticks,

Tables and stools, and all in one confusion,

And no man knew his friend. I left this chaos,

And to the surgeon’s went; he willed me stay,

“For,” says he learnedly, “if he be tippled,

Twenty to one he whores, and then I hear of him.

If he be mad, he quarrels, then he comes too.”

I sought ye where no safe thing would have ventured,

Amongst diseases base and vile, vile women,

*surgeon’s* ] Q1 (Chyrurgions)

*I’ll tell mine now* ] Estifania makes it clear

*disguised* ] drunk (*OED* *ppl. a.* 6)

that this argument is a contest of

rhetorical skill.
For I remembered your old Roman axiom:

“The more the danger, still the more the honour.”

Last to your confessor I came, who told me

You were too proud to pray, and here I have found ye.

Perez. [aside] She bears up bravely, and the rogue is witty,

But I shall dash it instantly to nothing—

Here leave we off our wanton languages,

And now conclude we in a sharper tongue:

Why am I cozened?

Estifania. Why am I abused?


42-43 Roman . . . honour ] A proverb often used by Fletcher; see Women Pleased 3.2.66, Mad Lover 1.1.275, and Island Princess 1.1.100 (A. Taylor, “Proverbs” 80; Tilley D35). Bond suggests as the source a line from Terence’s Heautontimorumenos: “Non fit sine periculo facinus magnum et memorabile” (2.3.73). The sentiment goes back at least to Thucydides’s first Periclean oration: “Remember too that for states and individuals alike the greatest dangers give rise to the greatest glory” (Bk. 1.144; trans. Hammond).

50 Why . . . abused ] Q1 assigns all of l. 51 to Estifania. Colman was the first editor in the main line of textual transmission to split the line between the two speakers, but he was preceded in this by the acting editions 1763 and 1776 (cf. 5.5.159n.).
Perez. Thou most vile, base, abominable—

Estifania. Captain.

Perez. Thou stinking, overstewed, poor, pocky—

Estifania. Captain.

Perez. Do you echo me?

Estifania. Yes, sir, and go before ye,

And round about ye. Why do you rail at me

For that that was your own sin, your own knavery?

Perez. And brave me too?

Estifania. You had best now draw your sword, captain,

Draw it upon a woman, do, brave captain,

Upon your wife, oh most renownèd captain.

Perez. A plague upon thee, answer me directly:

Why didst thou marry me?

Estifania. To be my husband.

I had thought you had had infinite, but I’m cozened.

Perez. Why didst thou flatter me and show me wonders,

A house and riches, when they are but shadows,

Shadows to me?

Estifania. Why did you work on me

(It was but my part to requite you, sir)

Estifania offers a retrospective justification for her deception.
With your strong soldier’s wit, and swore you would bring me
So much in chains, so much in jewels, husband,
So much in right rich clothes?

Perez. Thou hast ’em, rascal.

I gave ’em to thy hands, my trunks and all,
And thou hast opened ’em, and sold my treasure. 70

Estifania. [She reveals the casket] Sir, there’s your treasure, sell it to a tinker
To mend old kettles. Is this noble usage?
Let all the world view here the captain’s treasure,
A man would think now these were worthy matters:
Here’s a shoeing-horn chain, gilt over, how it scenteth
Worse then the mouldy dirty heel it served for;
And here’s another of a lesser value,
So little, I would shame to tie my dog in’t.
These are my jointure; blush and save a labour,
Or these else will blush for ye.

Perez. A fire subtle ye, 80

71 SD ] Williams (subst.); after l. 75 Weber

78 dog ] Beginning with 1763, this was changed to the more modish, and lecherous, “monkey.” 80 subtle ] Rarefy, refine (OED “subtilize” v. 1), though the OED queries whether this is a nonce-use meaning “pulverize, reduce to ashes.”
Are ye so crafty?

*Estifania.* Here’s a goodly jewel,

Did not you win this at Goletta, captain,

Or took it in the field from some brave bashaw?

How it sparkles like an old lady’s eyes,

And fills each room with light like a close lantern;

This would do rarely in an abbey window

To cozen pilgrims—

*Perez.* Prithée leave prating.

*Estifania.* And here’s a chain of whiting’s eyes for pearls,

A mussel-monger would have made a better.

*Perez.* Nay, prithée wife, my clothes, my clothes.

*Estifania.* I’ll tell ye, your clothes are parallels to these, all counterfeit.

---

82 *Goletta*] La Goulette, Tunisia (also known as Halq al-Wadi) near Tunis and just south of the ruins of Carthage. Emperor Charles V briefly captured it in 1535, and Cervantes includes an account of the 1574 siege of Goletta in the first part of *Don Quixote* as part of “The Captive’s Tale” (bk. 4, ch. 12).

83 *bashaw*] Variant spelling of “pasha,” a high-ranking Ottoman or Turkish official.

84 *like . . . eyes*] I.e., not at all. The similes in this and the next line emphasize that Perez’s jewels are fakes: they should sparkle and cast light, but do not.

85 *close*] closed, covered, dim
Put these and them on, you are a man of copper,

A kind of candlestick; these you thought, my husband,

To have cozened me withal, but I am quit with you.

Perez. Is there no house then, nor no grounds about it?

No plate nor hangings?

Estifania. There are none, sweet husband;

Shadow for shadow is an equal justice.

Can you rail now? Pray put your fury up, sir,

And speak great words: you are a soldier, thunder!

Perez. I will speak little. I have played the fool,

And so I am rewarded.

98 your fury up] Q1; up your fury F2

92 copper] base, spurious, worthless (OED n.1) 1811 (see Appendix D). Their passions rise to the level of dueling incoherent song.

9c. Perez’s clothes are counterfeit because he wears copper-lace, rather than gold-lace, on his garments. Jones and Stallybrass discuss the importance of copper-lace garments in the theatre (190-191).

97 justice. The acting editions beginning with 1763 provide directions for Perez and Estifania to sing here, but no song is supplied until the nonsense lyrics of

98 put your fury up] Increase your fury. Seward notes that F2’s reading “signif[ies] the reverse.”

100 speak little] He will say few words (see 1.1.17n.), or he will speak quietly, instead of thundering as Estifania dares him to do.
Estifania. You have spoke well, sir,
And now I see you are so conformable,
I’ll heighten you again. Go to your house,
They are packing to be gone, you must sup there;
I’ll meet ye, and bring clothes and clean shirts after,
And all things shall be well—[aside] I’ll colt ye once more,
And teach ye to bring copper.

Perez. Tell me one thing,
I do beseech thee tell me, tell me truth, wife,
However I forgive thee: art thou honest?
The beldam swore—

Estifania. I bid her tell you so, sir, 110
It was my plot. Alas, my credulous husband,
The lady told you too—

Perez. Most strange things of thee.

103 go to your house ] Neither Estifania nor Leon are satisfied with the initial submissions of their spouses, as though multiple humiliations are necessary to prove their dominance. Estifania expresses a more vengeful motivation than Leon does.
109 honest ] chaste
110 The beldam ] the Old Woman I bid her tell you so ] Bond interprets this as an improvised invention (cf. 3.4.63n.). The question of whether Estifania is telling the truth or not is not resolved in the play.
112 The lady ] Margarita
colt ] deceive, cheat (OED v. 2)
Estifania. Still 'twas my way, and all to try your sufferance;

And she denied the house?

Perez. She knew me not,

No, nor no title that I had.

Estifania. 'Twas well carried;

No more, I am right and straight.

Perez. I would believe thee,

But heaven knows how my heart is. Will ye follow me?

Estifania. I’ll be there straight.

Perez. I am fooled, yet dare not find it.

Exit Perez.

Estifania. Go, silly fool, thou mayst be a good soldier

In open field, but for our private service

Thou art an ass; I’ll make thee so or miss else.

Enter Cacafogo.

Here comes another trout that I must tickle,

And tickle daintily, I have lost my end else—

May I crave your leave, sir?

124 May ] F2; Estif. ~ Q1

118 find it ] admit it to himself 124, 136 Estifania’s two initial addresses to Cacafogo are half-lines. His refusal to talk with her is represented in the verse by his refusal to complete her lines.

122 trout ] Another of Estifania’s fishing metaphors.
Cacafogo. Prithee be answered, thou shalt crave no leave,

I am in my meditations, do not vex me—

[aside] A beaten thing, but this hour a most bruised thing

That people had compassion on, it looked so.

The next Sir Palmerin, here’s fine proportion:

An ass, and then an elephant, sweet justice!

There’s no way left to come at her now, no craving.

If money could come near, yet I would pay him;

I have a mind to make him a huge cuckold

And money may do much. A thousand ducats?

’Tis but the letting blood of a rank heir.

Estifania. Pray ye, hear me.

129 Sir Palmerin ] Palmerin de Oliva or Palmerin of England, heroes of chivalric romances. Rafe recites a passage purportedly from Palmerin of England in Knight of the Burning Pestle (1.209-24), but Zitner notes in his edition that it is actually from Palmerin de Oliva (1.212.2n.).

130 ass . . . elephant ] Cacafogo describes Leon’s change of behaviour using the traditional qualities associated with these animals: he shifts from foolish and stubborn to strong and quick to anger. The passage Rafe reads in Knight of the Burning Pestle features an elephant, but Zitner notes that in the original romance the animal in question is a horse (1.223n.).

135 letting blood of a rank heir ] Cacafogo describes his usury in the therapeutic terms of blood-letting.
Cacafogo. I know thou hast some wedding ring to pawn now,

Of silver and gilt with a blind posy in’t,

“Love and a mill-horse should go round together,”

Or thy child’s whistle, or thy squirrel’s chain,

I’ll none of ’em—[aside] I would she did but know me,
Or would this fellow had but use of money
That I might come in any way.

*Estifania.*

I am gone, sir,
And I shall tell the beauty sent me to ye,
The Lady Margarita—*[She starts to leave.]*

*Cacafogo.*

Stay, I prithee,
What is thy will? I turn me wholly to ye,
And talk now till thy tongue ache, I will hear ye.

*Estifania.* She would entreat ye, sir—

*Cacafogo.*

She shall command, sir,
Let it be so I beseech thee, my sweet gentlewoman,
Do not forget thyself.

*Estifania.*

She does command, then,
This courtesy, because she knows you are noble—

*Cacafogo.* Your mistress, by the way?

*Estifania.*

My natural mistress—

145 *SD* ] *this ed.*

145 *Margarita* ] Estifania has not met
152 *Your . . . way* ] Cacafogo asks whether

Cacafogo yet, but from overhearing his
speech, she guesses the object of his
desire. This is another example of her
cunning and intelligence.
Upon these jewels, sir, they are fair and rich,
And view ’em right. [He takes the casket.]

Cacafogo. To doubt ’em is an heresy.

Estifania. A thousand ducats, ’tis upon necessity
Of present use; her husband, sir, is stubborn.

Cacafogo. Long may he be so.

Estifania. She desires withal
A better knowledge of your parts and person,
And when you please to do her so much honour—

Cacafogo. Come let’s dispatch.

Estifania. In troth, I have heard her say, sir,
Of a fat man she has not seen a sweeter,
But in this business, sir—

Cacafogo. Let’s do it first,
And then dispute; the lady’s use may long for’t.

Estifania. All secrecy she would desire; she told me
How wise you are.

154 SD ] Williams

154 right ] genuine, not counterfeit (OED a.) Cacafogo name at l. 135, and that Perez
17c) claims he could “presume on” a

155 thousand ducats ] Bond notes that thousand ducats at 1.6.61.

Estifania demands the amount she hears 163 use ] A pun on usury and sexual activity.
Cacafogo. We are not wise to talk thus. [He gives her money.]

Carry her the gold, I’ll look her out a jewel

Shall sparkle like her eyes, and thee another;

Come, prithee, come, I long to serve thy lady,

Long monstrously—[aside] now, valour, I shall meet ye,

You that dare dukes.

Estifania. [aside] Green goose, you are now in sippets. 170

Exeunt [severally].
Enter the Duke, Sanchio, Juan, [and] Alonzo.

Duke. He shall not have his will, I shall prevent him;

I have a toy here that will turn the tide,

And suddenly and strangely.

[He gives Juan the commission.]

Here, Don Juan,

Do you present it to him.

Juan. I am commanded. Exit.

Duke. A fellow founded out of charity,

And moulded to the height, contemn his maker,

Curb the free hand that framed him? This must not be.

Sanchio. That such an oyster shell should hold a pearl,

And of so rare a price, in prison; was she made

Location: unspecified. Either a public space or a room, in Juan’s or the Duke’s residence.

4.2 3 SD | Weber (subst., after l. 1) 3 Here ] Q1 (heere); hear F2

4.2 ] Location: unspecified. Either a public space or a room, in Juan’s or the Duke’s residence.

5 founded out of charity ] Leon was a poor soldier so Margarita’s marriage to him was an act of charity. The Duke, Sanchio, and Alonzo see Leon’s control of Margarita as an act of ingratitude.

7 free ] liberal, unfettered
To be the matter of her own undoing,
To let a slovenly unwieldy fellow,
Unruly and self-willed, dispose her beauties?

*Alonzo.* We suffer all, sir, in this sad eclipse;
She should shine where she might show like herself,
An absolute sweetness, to comfort those admire her,
And shed her beams upon her friends.

*Sanchio.*

We are gulled all,

And all the world will grumble at your patience
If she be ravished thus.

*Duke.*

Ne’er fear it, Sanchio,
We’ll have her free again, and move at court
In her clear orb; but one sweet handsomeness

13 *Alonzo.*] *Williams; om. Q1* 16 *Sanchio.*] *Q1; om. F2*

10 *matter*] Seward suggests “maker” and that it is likelier that the compositor

Williams queries “master,” but the overlooked a prefix at line 13 than that

sense here is “grounds, reason or he invented one in the middle of line 16

cause” (*OED n.¹ 11a*). Margarita, by and divided that line on two lines of

choosing Leon, is herself the cause type” (*Williams*).

(and, by extension, her property is the 13 *sad eclipse*] Compare the Duke’s greeting

means) of her own undoing.

to Margarita at 3.5.20-21.

13 *Alonzo.*] “The addition of the prefix for

Alonzo here is based on the assumption
To bless this part of Spain, and have that slubbered?

Alonzo. 'Tis every good man’s cause, and we must stir in it.

Duke. I’ll warrant he shall be glad to please us,

And glad to share too; we shall hear anon

A new song from him, let’s attend a little. Exeunt.
[4.3]

Enter Leon and Juan[, who presents Leon] with a commission.

Leon. Colonel, I am bound to you for this nobleness.

I should have been your officer, ’tis true, sir,

And a proud man I should have been to have served you.

[Leon silently reads the commission.]

’Tas pleased the king, out of his boundless favours,

To make me your companion; this commission

Gives me a troop of horse.

Juan. I rejoice at it,

And am a glad man we shall gain your company;

4.3 0.1 SD ] this ed. 3.1 SD ] this ed.

4.3 ] Location: a room in the town house.

0.1 SD ] Dyce, Bond and Williams rearrange Q1’s direction so that Leon enters already in possession of the commission.

6 troop of horse ] Mansfields Directions say of the captain of horse, “In all occasions he is to be first on Horsebacke, to see his Company kept vp in their full number, and replenished with all able Souldiers, to bee able to distinguish from the rest, that are of most valour and courage, as also to bee ready to assist and advance them in all occasions: so also is he to cashere and dismiss from the Company, such Souldiers as hee findes fearefull, lazie, and vnfit for Service” (19-20). Leon, at the beginning of the play, is at pains to demonstrate that he possesses the opposite of these qualities.
I am sure the king knows you are newly married,
And out of that respect gives you more time, sir.

Leon. Within four days I am gone, so he commands me,
And ’tis not mannerly for me to argue it;
The time grows shorter still, are your goods ready?

Juan. They are aboard.

Leon. [calling offstage] Who waits there?

Enter Servant.

Servant. Sir.

Leon. Do you hear, ho,
Go carry this unto your mistress, sir,
And let her see how much the king has honoured me;
Bid her be lusty, she must make a soldier.

Exit [Servant with the commission].

[calling offstage] Lorenzo.

Enter Lorenzo.

Lorenzo. Sir.

Leon. Go take down all the hangings

17  Lorenzo. ] F2 Seward Colman; om. Q1 Q2 17  Lorenzo. ] Q1 Q2 Seward Colman; om. F2
17  Leon. ] Q2 Colman; om. Q1 F1 F2 Seward
17  Lorenzo . . . Go ] The collation here gives because the history of the treatment of
more detail than usual in this edition, this crux has been misrepresented in. . .
And pack up all my clothes, my plate and jewels,
And all the furniture that’s portable;
Sir, when we lie in garrison ’tis necessary
We keep a handsome port for the king’s honour;
And do you hear, let all your lady’s wardrobe
Be safely placed in trunks, they must along too.

Lorenzo. Whither must they go, sir?

Leon. To the wars, Lorenzo,

... other editions. Most editors attribute to Seward the addition of “Lorenzo” to Leon’s dialogue (Seward credits the conjecture to his co-editor Symson). F2 prints “Lorenzo” in full, flush with the left margin and followed by a comma, indicating that the word is spoken by Leon. (Lorenzo himself speaks only three times, and in each case his speech heading is abbreviated and indented.) This F2 reading is what Seward’s note attributes to “Former Editions,” and it is the insertion of a speech heading for Lorenzo (although this is the Q1 reading) which he attributes to Symson. Seward conflates the Q1 and F2 readings, an emendation adopted in all other editions; however, he omits a speech heading for Leon following Lorenzo’s “Sir,” a clear error which, like Q1, gives the next seven lines to Lorenzo. Q2 first supplied this missing speech heading, and Colman was the first to conflate Q2’s and Seward’s readings. F2’s reading is valid and less disruptive to the text as it stands in Q1, but Colman’s solution is justified because it repairs the metre while making sense of Q1’s line division.

21 port ] style of living (OED n.4 2a)
And you and all; I will not leave a turnspit

That has one dram of spleen against a Dutchman.

Lorenzo. Why, then St. Jacques, hey, you have made us all, sir!

And if we leave ye, does my lady go too?

Leon. The stuff must go tomorrow towards the sea, sir,

All, all must go.

Lorenzo. [calling offstage] Why Pedro, Vasco, Diego!

Come help me, come come boys, soldadoes, comrades;

We’ll flay these beer-bellied rogues, come away quickly. Exit.

Juan. [aside] Has taken a brave way to save his honour

And cross the Duke; now I shall love him dearly—

By the life of credit, thou art a noble gentleman.
Enter Margarita, led by two Ladies.

Leon. Why, how now, wife; what, sick at my preferment?

This is not kindly done.

Margarita. No sooner love ye,

Love ye entirely, sir, brought to consider

The goodness of your mind and mine own duty,

But lose you instantly, be divorced from ye?

This is a cruelty, I’ll to the king

And tell him ’tis unjust to part two souls,

Two minds, so nearly mixed.

Leon. By no means, sweetheart.

Margarita. If he were married but four days as I am—

Leon. He would hang himself the fifth or fly his country—

Margarita. He would make it treason for that tongue that durst

But talk of war, or anything to vex him.

You shall not go.

Leon. Indeed I must, sweet wife.

What, shall I lose the king for a few kisses?

We’ll have enough.

Margarita. I’ll to the Duke, my cousin,

He shall t’th’ king.

45 He . . . country ] Most editors mark this as Margarita hears it and chooses to

an aside, but the line is also effective if ignore it.
Leon. He did me this great office,

I thank his grace for’t; should I pray him now

To undo’t again, fie, ’twere a base discredit.

Margarita. Would I were able, sir, to bear you company,

How willing should I be then and how merry;

I will not live alone.


Margarita. What knocking’s this? Oh heaven, my head; why rascals,

I think the war’s begun i’th’ house already.

Leon. The preparation is. They are taking down

And packing up the hangings, plate, and jewels,

And all those furnishings that shall befit me

When I lie in garrison.

Enter Coachman.

Coachman. Must the coach go too, sir?

Leon. How will your lady pass t’th’ sea else easily?

We shall find shipping for’t there to transport it. [Exit Coachman.]

Margarita. I go, alas?

Leon. I’ll have a main care of ye;

64 SD ] this ed.

65 main ] great in degree, considerable (OED

a.² 4a)
I know ye are sickly, he shall drive the easier,

And all accommodation shall attend ye.

Margarita. Would I were able.

Leon. Come, I warrant ye,

Am not I with ye, sweet? [To Servant] Are her clothes packed up,

And all her linens? [To Margarita] Give your maids direction,

You know my time’s but short, and I am commanded.

Margarita. Let me have a nurse,

And all such necessary people with me,

And an easy bark.

Leon. It shall not trot, I warrant ye;

Curvet it may sometimes.

Margarita. I am with child, sir.

Leon. At four days warning, this is something speedy;

Do you conceive as our jennets do, with a west wind?

75 Curvet ] Leap like a horse. Leon speaks of the ship as a horse, shortly before comparing Margarita to a horse. “Trot” and “curvet” are both “expressive of coital movement” (DSLI 356, 1425-26), an apt segue into the discussion of Margarita’s pregnancy and virginity. 2.1) first located wind-impregnated mares in Spain. Zirkle collects references to the phenomenon ranging from Homer to the seventeenth century (97-104). Fletcher alludes to the belief also in The Woman’s Prize (2.4.49-50), Valentinian (4.1.51-52), and The Chances (3.3.25).

77 conceive . . . west wind ] A belief with classical origins. Varro (De re rustica
My heir will be an arrant fleet one, lady;
I’ll swear you were a maid when I first lay with ye.

*Margarita.* Pray do not swear, I thought I was a maid too,
But we may both be cozened in that point, sir.

*Leon.* In such a strait point, sure, I could not err, madam.

*Juan.* [aside] This is another tenderness to try him,
Fetch her up now.

*Margarita.* You must provide a cradle,
And what a trouble’s that.

*Leon.* The sea shall rock it,
’Tis the best nurse, ’twill roar and rock together;
A swinging storm will sing you such a lullaby.

*Margarita.* Faith, let me stay, I shall but shame ye, sir.

*Leon.* And you were a thousand shames you shall along with me,
At home I am sure you’ll prove a million;
Every man carries the bundle of his sins

78 *My heir . . . one* ] The heir will be a notorious fast-mover, given the speed of Margarita’s alleged conception, but cf. l. 74 and the proverb about the inheritance of sexual behaviour: “If the mother trot how can the daughter amble” (Tilley F408, qtd. in *DSLI* 1525).

82 *strait* ] Strict, rigourous, but with a bawdy quibble on “narrow,” referring to her vagina.

Upon his own back: you are mine, I’ll sweat for ye.

Enter Duke, Alonzo, [and] Sanchio.

Duke. What, sir, preparing for your noble journey?

’Tis well and full of care.

I saw your mind was wedded to the war,

And knew you would prove some good man for your country,

Therefore, fair cousin, with your gentle pardon,

I got this place. [To Margarita] What, mourn at his advancement?

You are to blame, he will come again, sweet cousin;

Meantime, like sad Penelope and sage,

Amongst your maids at home, and huswifely.

Leon. No, sir, I dare not leave her to that solitariness;

She is young, and grief or ill news from those quarters

May daily cross her. She shall go along, sir.

Duke. By no means, captain.

100 Penelope ] Penelope, Odysseus’s wife, was renowned for her faithfulness despite a twenty-year separation from her husband. The Duke’s reference is ironic, given the counter-tradition that Penelope was unfaithful. Compare Petruccio’s response in The Woman’s Prize when Maria compares herself to Penelope: she “must have / As many lovers as I languages, / And what she do’s with one i’th day, i’th night / Undoe it with an other” (4.5.173-176). If Margarita is as faithful as Penelope, in this sense, she will have sex with the Duke.
Leon. By all means, an’t please ye.

Duke. What, take a young and tender-bodied lady,

And expose her to those dangers and those tumults,

A sickly lady too?

Leon. ’Twill make her well, sir,

There’s no such friend to health as wholesome travel.

Sanchio. Away, it must not be.

Alonzo. It ought not, sir;

Go hurry her? It is not human, captain.

Duke. I cannot blame her tears; fright her with tempests,

With thunder of the war?

I dare swear, if she were able—

Leon. She is most able.

And pray ye swear not, she must go. There’s no remedy,

Nor greatness, nor the trick you had to part us

(Which I smell too rank, too open, too evident,

And I must tell you, sir, ’tis most unnoble)

Shall hinder me. Had she but ten hours life,

109 There’s . . . travel ] Leon turns the

conventional wisdom about the

unhealthy dangers of travel on its head.
Nay less, but two hours, I would have her with me;
I would not leave her fame to so much ruin,
To such a desolation and discredit
As her weakness and your hot will would work her to.

Enter Perez.

What masque is this now?
More tropes and figures to abuse my sufferance,
What cousin’s this?

Juan. Michael van Owl, how dost thou?

In what dark barn or tod of aged ivy
Hast thou lain hid?

Perez. Things must both ebb and flow, colonel,
And people must conceal and shine again.
You are welcome hither, as your friend may say, gentlemen;
A pretty house ye see, handsomely seated,
Sweet and convenient walks, the waters crystal.

124 What ] F2; Leon. ~ Q1 125 tropes ] Q1; Troops Q2 129 lain ] Q1 (lyen)
130 gentlemen ] Q2; Gentlemã Q1

123 to ] Leon’s speech could be interrupted by Perez’s entrance, or a silence could indicate that he has finished his harangue and the others are stunned by the outburst.

126-27 Owl . . . ivy ] Perez’s sleeplessness is apparent. “To look like an owl in an ivy bush” is proverbial (Tilley O96; A. Taylor, “Phrases” 54).
Alonzo. He’s certain mad.

Juan. As mad as a French tailor

That has nothing in’s head but ends of fustians.

Perez. [To Margarita] I see you are packing now, my gentle cousin,

And my wife told me I should find it so;

’Tis true, I do. You were merry when I was last here,

But ’twas your will to try my patience, madam.

I am sorry that my swift occasions

Can let you take your pleasure here no longer,

Yet I would have you think, my honoured cousin,

This house and all I have are all your servants.

Leon. What house, what pleasure, sir, what do you mean?

Perez. You hold the jest so stiff, ’twill prove discourteous;

This house I mean, the pleasures of this place.

Leon. And what of them?

Perez. They are mine, sir, and you know it,

My wife’s I mean, and so conferred upon me.

The hangings, sir, I must entreat your servants,

That are so busy in their offices,

Again to minister to their right uses;

I shall take view o’th’ plate anon, and furnitures

That are of under place. You are merry still, cousin,

147 wife’s ] Q1 (wives)
And of a pleasant constitution:

Men of great fortunes make their mirths *ad placitum*.

*Leon.* Prithee, good stubborn wife, tell me directly,

Good evil wife, leave fooling and tell me honestly,

Is this my kinsman?

*Margarita.* I can tell ye nothing.

*Leon.* I have many kinsmen, but so mad a one,

And so fantastic—all the house?

*Perez.* All mine

And all within it, I will not bate ye an ace on’t;

Can you not receive a noble courtesy,

And quietly and handsomely as ye ought, coz,

But you must ride o’th’ top on’t?

*Leon.* Canst thou fight?

*Perez.* I’ll tell ye presently, I could have done, sir.

*Leon.* For ye must law and claw before ye get it.

*Juan.* Away, no quarrels.

*Leon.* Now I am more temperate.

154 *ad placitum*] to their pleasure; as it pleases me an ace, quoth Bolton,” which Tilley defines as “an expression of incredulity, implying that an assertion is too strong” (Tilley A20; Taylor, “Phrases” 40).

160 *bate ye an ace*] Make the slightest abatement (*OED* “ace” *n*. 3b). A negative form of the proverbial “bate
I’ll have it proved if you were never yet in Bedlam,

Never in love, for that’s a lunacy;

No great state left ye that you never looked for

Nor cannot manage, that’s a rank distemper;

That you were christened, and who answered for ye,

And then I yield.

Perez. [aside] Has half persuaded me I was bred i’th’ moon;

I have ne’er a bush at my breech. Are not we both mad,

And is not this a fantastic house we are in,

And all a dream we do? [To Leon] Will ye walk out, sir,

And if I do not beat thee presently

Into a sound belief as sense can give thee,

Brick me into that wall there for a chimney-piece,

And say I was one o’th’ Caesars, done by a seal-cutter.

Leon. I’ll talk no more—come, we’ll away immediately.

Margarita. Why then, the house is his and all that’s in it—

170 distemper, ] Williams; _ Q1; _ : F2

173 bred i’th’ moon ] i.e., that he is mad, a the man i’th’ moon, this thorn-bush my lunatic; cf. “lunacy” (l. 168), from thorn-bush, and this dog my dog”

Latin “luna,” for moon. (5.1.258-259).

174 bush] An attribute of the man on the moon. 180 seal-cutter ] engraver

Cf. Midsummer Night’s Dream: “I am
[aside] I’ll give away my skin but I’ll undo ye—

I gave it to his wife; you must restore, sir,

And make a new provision.

Perez. Am I mad now

Or am I christened? You, my pagan cousin,

My mighty Mahound kinsman, what quirk now?

You shall be welcome all. I hope to see, sir,

Your grace here, and my coz; we are all soldiers

And must do naturally for one another.

Duke. [To Leon] Are ye blank at this? Then I must tell ye, sir,

Ye have no command, now ye may go at pleasure

And ride your ass troop; ’twas a trick I used

To try your jealousy, upon entreaty

And saving of your wife.

Leon. All this not moves me,

Nor stirs my gall, nor alters my affections;

You have more furniture, more houses, lady,

And rich ones too. I will make bold with those,

And you have land i’th’ Indies, as I take it;

193 used ] F2 (us’d); use Q1

187 Mahound ] Heathen, pagan (a corruption of Muhammad). Here and below (5.5.136) are the only examples OED gives for this word as an adjective.
Thither we’ll go and view awhile those climates,

Visit your factors there that may betray ye.

‘Tis done, we must go.

Margarita. Now thou art a brave gentleman,

And by this sacred light I love thee dearly—

[To Perez] The house is none of yours, I did but jest, sir,

Nor you are no coz of mine, I beseech ye vanish;

I tell you plain, you have no more right than he has;

That senseless thing, your wife, has once more fooled ye:

Go ye and consider.

McMullan cites this line as an example of the tendency of Fletcher’s plays to “voice a sense of unease about the outcome of the various tribulations of colonization” (207).

The sincerity of Margarita’s declaration here is debatable. There are two questions which must be answered: who is “he” and to whom (or to what) does “senseless thing” apply? Seward omits “he” and interprets “That senseless thing” as a stage direction for Margarita to point “to a chair, table, or any thing near her.” Colman (followed by Weber and Dyce) retains “he” and alters the punctuation so that “senseless thing” refers to Perez, suggesting that “he” was a direction to point at.
Mason conjectures “That” should read “Thou” and agrees that “he” refers to some uninterested person of the company.” Bond and Williams adopt Mason’s conjecture, but note that it is not completely satisfactory. Bond “suspect[s] her volte face here merely as the abandonment of a ruse she sees is useless,” and suggests that “he” refers to the Duke, part of Margarita’s attempt “to lull Leon’s suspicion.” Williams thinks that this would “seem a discourtesy to the Duke” and suggests that Bond’s unadopted conjecture (that “he” is a misprint for “she”) may be correct. This edition adopts the solution found in Darley, and places “that senseless thing” and “your wife” in apposition. Williams objects that this reading is “untenable since Margarita would not call Estifania ‘senseless’ (in fact, we know her to be shrewd and ingenious).” Margarita’s previous references to Estifania are unflattering (cf. 3.5.159, 161, 183-6) and while the audience may know that Estifania is shrewd, Margarita tells Perez that “She only kept my house when I was absent, / And so ill kept it, I was weary of her” (3.5.168-9). “Senseless” here means “having no sense, feeling, or consciousness of something” (OED a.2). Margarita points out that Estifania has no sensible concern for Perez. A more intrusive solution, assuming that the compositor misunderstood the line as it stood in his copy, would turn Margarita’s comment into a question: “Has that senseless thing, your wife, once more fooled ye?” The omission of a word is necessary, but the change would make sense of Q1’s lineation. This edition does not specify to whom Margarita refers. If she points to Juan, Sanchio or Alonzo, she indicates that Perez has no more right than any other guest (Colman’s solution). This is also true if she points to the Duke, with the added effect of placating Leon, as Dyce notes. If “he” refers to Leon, then Margarita must speak it either apart...
Leon.

Good morrow, my sweet cousin,

I should be glad, sir—

Perez.

By this hand, she dies for’t,

Or any man that speaks for her. Exit Perez.

Juan.

These are fine toys.

Margarita. Let me request you stay but one poor month;

You shall have a commission and I’ll go too,

Give me but will so far.

Leon.

Well, I will try ye.

Good morrow to your grace, we have private business.

Duke. [aside] If I miss thee again, I am an arrant bungler.

Juan. Thou shalt have my command and I’ll march under thee,

Nay, be thy boy before thou shalt be baffled,

. . . to Perez or aside, because Leon does not challenge this action. In this case, Margarita gives the audience a clear signal that her immediately preceding profession of love for Leon (ll. 202-3) was as insincere as her profession earlier in the scene (ll. 37-40).

210 for her ] in defence of her

210 for her ] in defence of her

214 private business ] Leon mocks the Duke by advertising his own sexual access to Margarita.

215 Williams gives the Duke an early exit after his last line, reinforcing his resentment; if the Duke leaves early and in clear anger, there is no need for him to speak his line aside. “The Duke recognizes that her request of a month’s delay has given him a new chance” (Bond).
Thou art so brave a fellow.

_Alonzo._ I have seen visions. _Exeunt._
Enter Leon with a letter, and Margarita.

Leon. Come hither, wife; do you know this hand?

Margarita. I do, sir,

'Tis Estifania’s, that was once my woman.

Leon. She writes to me here that one Cacafogo,

A usuring jeweler’s son (I know the rascal),

Is mortally fallen in love with ye—

Margarita. Is a monster, deliver me from mountains.

Leon. [aside] Do you go a-birding for all sorts of people?—

And this evening will come to ye and show ye jewels,

And offers anything to get access to ye.

If I can make or sport or profit on him,

(For he is fit for both) she bids me use him.

And so I will, be you conformable

And follow but my will.

5.1 Q1 (ACTUS. 5. SCENA. 1.)

5.1 Location: a room in the town house. with Leon or Margarita since 2.4, and

This scene is cut in 1763, 1776, 1811 and

nearly all other acting editions.

6 Is He’s

0.1 letter Estifania’s letter knits the two plots
closer together. She has not appeared
Margarita. I shall not fail, sir.

Leon. Will the Duke come again, do you think?

Margarita. No, sure, sir; Has now no policy to bring him hither.

Leon. Nor bring you to him, if my wit hold fair, wife.

Let’s in to dinner. Exeunt.
Enter Perez.

Perez. Had I but lungs enough to bawl sufficiently
That all the queans in Christendom might hear me,
That men might run away from contagion,
I had my wish. Would it were most high treason,
Most infinite high, for any man to marry—
I mean for any man that would live handsomely
And like a gentleman, in his wits and credit.
What torments shall I put her to? Phalaris’s bull now?
Pox, they love bulling too well, though they smoke for’t.
Cut her a-pieces? Every piece will live still,
And every morsel of her will do mischief.

5.2] Location: unspecified. A street or public space.

5 Phalaris’s bull] The Sicilian tyrant roasted his enemies in a brazen bull (“Phalaris” OCD).

9 bulling] sexual intercourse

9 smoke for’t] Perez mixes his classical allusions here, as he combines Phalaris’s bull with the artificial cow built by Daedalus to enable Pasiphae to have sex with the white bull of Crete (the coupling which produced the Minotaur). These allusions shift the term “bulling” from metaphoric to literal bestiality.

10 Cut her a-pieces] As Perez’s fury and humiliation at having been fooled by Estifania shifts register to sexual jealousy, he echoes Othello’s “I’ll tear her all to pieces” (3.3.431) and “I will chop her into messes” (4.1.200).
They have so many lives, there’s no hanging of ’em;
They are too light to drown, they are cork and feathers;
To burn too cold, they live like salamanders.
Under huge heaps of stones to bury her,
And so depress her as they did the Giants?
She will move under more than built old Babel.
I must destroy her.

Enter Cacafogo with a casket.

Cacafogo. Be cozened by a thing of clouts, a she-moth
That every silkman’s shop breeds; to be cheated,

14 salamanders ] Thought to live in fire. Pliny says that they extinguish fire because of their extremely cold body temperature (Naturalis Historia, bk. 10).

16 Giants ] In the mythological Gigantomachy, the Giants were buried under volcanoes after their defeat by the Greek gods and Heracles (“Giants” OCD). Perez mixes his allusions, as the Giants, to assail Olympus, also built a tower (see, for example, Ovid’s retelling in The Metamorphoses, bk. 1).

17 move . . . Babel ] She will continue to live under more stones than were used to build the tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 4-9); also, she will move under (have sex with) more men than were necessary to build the tower. Again

19 clouts ] small or worthless pieces of cloth (OED n.1 4).
And of a thousand ducats, by a whim-wham.

_Perez_. Who’s that is cheated? Speak again, thou vision,

But art thou cheated? Minister some comfort,

Tell me directly, art thou cheated bravely?

Come, prithee come, art thou so pure a coxcomb

To be undone, do not dissemble with me,

Tell me I conjure thee.

_Cacafogo_. Then keep thy circle,

For I am a spirit wild that flies about thee,

And whoe’er thou art, if thou be’st human,

I’ll let thee plainly know, I am cheated damnably.

_Perez_. Ha, ha, ha.

_Cacafogo_. Dost thou laugh? Damnably, I say, most damnably!

_Perez_. By whom, good spirit? Speak, speak, ha, ha, ha.

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21 _whim-wham_ ] “a trifle . . . chiefly, a trifling ornament of dress” (_OED_ 1). Cacafogo uses textile imagery to insult Estifania: she is either made of rags and trifles, or she is an insect that feeds on silk scraps. Fletcher uses this word also in _Beggar’s Bush_ (3.1.82), _Night Walker_ (1.5.27), _Wild-Goose Chase_ (3.1.164), and _Woman’s Prize_ (4.1.5).

27 _circle_ ] The protective circle from which sorcerers conjured spirits. Surprisingly enough, “circle” and “spirit” do not carry the sexual connotations here they often do elsewhere in early modern drama (cf. _Romeo and Juliet_ 2.1.24).
Cacafogo.
I will utter,

Laugh till thy lungs crack, by a rascal woman,

A lewd, abominable, and plain woman.

Dost thou laugh still?

Perez.
I must laugh, prithee pardon me,

I shall laugh terribly.

Cacafogo.
I shall be angry,

Terrible angry, I have cause.

Perez.
That’s it,

And ’tis no reason but thou shouldst be angry,

Angry at heart, yet I must laugh still at thee;

By a woman cheated, art sure it was a woman?

Cacafogo. I shall break thy head, my valour itches at thee.

Perez. It is no matter; by a woman cozened,

A real woman.

Cacafogo. A real devil;

Plague of her jewels and her copper chains,

How rank they smell.

Perez. Sweet cozened sir, let me see them;

I have been cheated too, I would have you note that,

46 rank they smell ] Clothes that look like gold

but “smell of Copper” feature in the

Elder Brother (3.5.151).
And lewdly cheated, by a woman also,
A scurvy woman; I am undone, sweet sir,
Therefore I must have leave to laugh.

_Cacafogo_. Pray ye take it,

You are the merriest undone man in Europe.
What need we fiddles, bawdy songs, and sack
When our own miseries can make us merry.

_[He offers Perez the casket]_

_Perez._ Ha, ha, ha.

I have seen these jewels, what a notable pennyworth
Have you had next your heart; you will not take, sir,
Some twenty ducats.

_Cacafogo._ Thou art deceived, I will take—

_Perez._ To clear your bargain now—

53.1 SD ] Weber (subst., at l. 50)

50 take it ] I.e., permission to laugh. Weber 54 Ha, ha, ha ] Perez’s laughter was

50 took “it” to be the casket, which Perez does accept at some point, completing the circuit of its exchange as it returns to its original owner.

52 sack ] 1763 changes this to “sherry” for the rhyme, a change Colman later conjectured in his notes.

traditionally one of the high “points” of the role in performance. Garrick at first wanted to play Perez, “the test for every comedian,” and rehearsed it several times, but “he could not do [this laugh] to his own satisfaction” (Fitzgerald 2: 99-101).
Cacafogo. I’ll take some ten,
Some anything, some half ten, half a ducat.

Perez. An excellent lapidary set these stones, sure,
Do you mark their waters?
Cacafogo. Quicksand choke their waters,
And hers that brought ’em too, but I shall find her.

Perez. And so shall I, I hope, but do not hurt her;
You cannot find in all this kingdom
(If you had need of cozening, as you may have,
For such gross natures will desire it often,
’Tis at some time too a fine variety)
A woman that can cozen ye so neatly.
She has taken half mine anger off with this trick. Exit.

Cacafogo. If I were valiant now, I would kill this fellow;
I have money enough lies by me at a pinch
To pay for twenty rascals’ lives that vex me.
I’ll to this lady, there I shall be satisfied. Exit.

62 brought ] Q2; bought Q1

72 vex ] Williams’s reading “wax” (unnoted in his textual apparatus) is evidently a printing error.
Enter Leon and Margarita.

Leon. Come, we’ll away unto your country house,
And there we’ll learn to live contentedly;
This place is full of charge and full of hurry,
No part of sweetness dwells about these cities.

Margarita. Whither you will, I wait upon your pleasure;
Live in a hollow tree, sir, I’ll live with ye.

Leon. Ay, now you strike a harmony, a true one,
When your obedience waits upon your husband,
And your sick will aims at the cure of honour;
Why now I dote upon ye, love ye dearly,
And my rough nature falls, like roaring streams,
Clearly and sweetly into your embraces.

5.3 2 contentedly ] 1711; contently Q1 5 Whither ] Q1 (Whether) 9 cure ] Seward; care Q1

5.3 ] Location: a room in the town house.

9 cure ] Williams glosses Seward’s emendation: her sick will “aim[s] at the former pursuits, aims to take care of your honour.”

10 Why now I dote upon ye ] Like Margarita’s professions of love, the sincerity of Leon’s speech here is ambiguous.
Oh, what a jewel is a woman excellent,
A wise, a virtuous, and a noble woman;
When we meet such, we bear our stamps on both sides,
And through the world we hold our current virtues;
Alone we are single medals, only faces,
And wear our fortunes out in useless shadows.
Command you now and ease me of that trouble,
I’ll be as humble to you as a servant;
Bid whom you please, invite your noble friends,
They shall be welcome all; visit acquaintance,
Go at your pleasure, now experience
Has linked you fast unto the chain of goodness—

Clashing swords. A cry within: “Down with their swords.”
What noise is this, what dismal cry?

*Margarita.* 'Tis loud too.

Sure there’s some mischief done i’th’ street—

*[calling to a Servant]* look out there.

*Leon.* *[to Servant]* Look out and help.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Servant.* Oh sir, the Duke Medina—

*Leon.* What of the Duke Medina?

*Servant.* Oh, sweet gentleman, is almost slain.

*Margarita.* Away, away and help him, all the house help.

*Exit [Margarita and] Servant.*

*Leon.* How slain? Why Margarita, why wife? Sure,

---

26–27 There is no entrance direction for a servant earlier in the scene, so Margarita probably calls offstage for a servant, who may or may not enter to be directed by Leon to follow Margarita’s command. A director could use this moment to indicate Margarita’s reaction to the servant’s having ignored her order to investigate the noise. To speed up the comic pace of the scene, a different servant could enter just after or before the other exits. Or, Margarita and Leon could be left alone onstage while noise proceeds from backstage.

30–31 Most editors relineate unnecessarily (see Appendix A). Seward’s arrangement smooths the metre, but the staccato rhythm reflects the confused, hurried action.
Some new device they have afoot again,
Some trick upon my credit; I shall meet it.
I had rather guide a ship imperial
Alone, and in a storm, than rule one woman.

Enter Duke, Margarita, Sanchio, Alonzo, [and] Servants.

Margarita. How came ye hurt, sir?

Duke. I fell out with my friend, the noble colonel;
My cause was naught, for 'twas about your honour,
And he that wrongs the innocent ne’er prospers,
And he has left me thus for charity.
Lend me a bed to ease my tortured body,
That ere I perish I may show my penitence.
I fear I am slain.

Leon. Help, gentlemen, to carry him—
There shall be nothing in this house, my lord,
But as your own.

39 naught ] Evil, wicked. The Duke’s cause left him with a mortal wound. All
was wicked because he offered to editors since Colman have inserted
wrong Margarita’s honour.
either a semi-colon or period after

41 thus for charity ] A bitterly ironic remark: “thus” to make “for charity” a preface
the Duke claims Juan’s “charity” has to the Duke’s request for a bed.
Duke. I thank ye, noble sir.

Leon. To bed with him; and wife, give your attendance.

Enter Juan.

Juan. Doctors and surgeons!

Duke. Do not disquiet me,

But let me take my leave in peace.


Leon. Afore me,

'Tis rarely counterfeited.

Juan. True, it is so, sir,

And take you heed this last blow do not spoil ye;

He is not hurt, only we made a scuffle

As though we purposed anger; that same scratch

On’s hand he took to colour all and draw compassion,

That he might get into your house more cunningly.

I must not stay; stand now, and y’are a brave fellow.

Leon. I thank ye, noble colonel, and I honour ye. Exit Juan.

49 Servants } Q1; Servant F2

50 True, it is so } Juan reveals the subterfuge

with little prompting.
Never be quiet.

Enter Margarita.

Margarita. He’s most desperate ill, sir,

I do not think these ten months will recover him.

Leon. Does he hire my house to play the fool in,

Or does it stand on fairy ground we are haunted?

Are all men and their wives troubled with dreams thus?

Margarita. What ail you, sir?

Leon. Nay, what ail you, sweet wife,

To put these daily pastimes on my patience?

What dost thou see in me that I should suffer thus?

Have not I done my part like a true husband,

And paid some desperate debts you never looked for?

Margarita. You have done handsomely I must confess, sir.

61 ground_ ] Q1; ~, F2; ~? 1711 61 haunted? ] Dyce; ~, Q1

61 does . . . haunted ] Are we haunted because the play. Leon may claim that by
it stands on fairy ground? Many editors redeeming Margarita he has paid a debt
follow 1711’s insertion of a question to honour; or, given the sex-as-currency
mark after “ground” so that “we are metaphor in the next few lines, he may
haunted” is a statement. claim that the debt he paid was to
67 desperate debts ] A puzzling statement; no pleasure.
such debts are mentioned elsewhere in
Leon. Have I not kept thee waking like a hawk, 70
And watched thee with delights to satisfy thee,
The very tithes of which had won a widow?

Margarita. Alas, I pity ye.

Leon. Thou wilt make me angry,
Thou never sawst me mad yet.

Margarita. You are always,
You carry a kind of bedlam still about ye.

Leon. If thou pursuest me further, I run stark mad;
If you have more hurt dukes or gentlemen
To lie here on your cure, I shall be desperate.
I know the trick and you shall feel I know it;
Are ye so hot that no hedge can contain ye?
I’ll have thee let blood in all the veins about thee, 80
I’ll have thy thoughts found too, and have them opened,

69-71  *Have . . . thee*  ] “Watch” means, in the jargon of falconry, “To prevent (a hawk) from sleeping, in order to tame it” (*OED* v. 16). Leon’s lines recall Petruchio’s soliloquy in which he clarifies his plan for taming Katherine (*Taming of the Shrew* 4.1.188-211).

71  *tithes*  ] Portions of one-tenth. Leon claims that one-tenth of his sexual performance would be enough to satisfy a stereotypically lusty widow.
Thy spirits purged, for those are they that fire ye.

Thy maid shall be thy mistress, thou the maid,
And all those servile labours that she reach at,

{}  

And go through cheerfully, or else sleep empty;

That maid shall lie by me to teach you duty,

83 maid, ] Q1; ~ _ Weber  
84 And . . . reach ] Q1; To . . . reaches Weber; ~ . . . reach’d Dyce  
84 those . . . that she ] Q1; her . . . thou shalt Seward  
85 {. . . } line missing Q1  
86 And ] Q1; Shalt Bond

84 reach at ] Strive to perform, aim at. Bond suggests that “reach” could mean “retch” (OED “reach” v.² 2).  
85 {. . . } Weber and Dyce suggest that a line is missing here, but though later editors agree that the speech is corrupt, they do not all mark a missing line. Leon’s speech is clearly garbled, either by a missing line (as at 2.4.23) or because of transposed lines (as at 3.1.95-6). Unlike the missing line at 2.4.23, commentators have not offered alternatives, but something like “Her duties and offices, I’ll have ye do,” might serve for performance. It is unfortunate that the text is corrupt for this crucial speech.

86-87 sleep . . . duty ] Leon threatens to deprive Margarita of both food (“empty”) and the sexual satisfactions he boasted of in ll. 69-71, and also to force Margarita to watch him sleeping with the maid. Like Margarita (2.3.45), he makes sex contingent on good behaviour. That Leon specifies a household servant perhaps reflects his memory of the presumptuous servant who told Leon of his hopes to bed Margarita (3.1.54-54).
You in a pallet by to humble ye,
And grieve for what you lose.

Margarita. I have lost myself, sir,
And all that was my base self; disobedience, [She kneels.] 90
My wantonness, my stubbornness I have lost too,
And now by that pure faith good wives are crowned with,
By your own nobleness—

Enter Altea.

Leon. I take ye up [He raises her.]
And wear ye next my heart, see you be worth it.
Now what with you?

Altea. I come to tell my lady
There is a fulsome fellow would fain speak with her.

Leon. ’Tis Cacafogo; go and entertain him,
And draw him on with hopes.

Margarita. I shall observe ye.

93 SD ] Dyce (subst.)
Leon. I have a rare design upon that gentleman—

[To Altea] And you must work too.

Altea. I shall, sir, most willingly. 100

Leon. Away then, both, and keep him close in some place

From the Duke’s sight, and keep the Duke in too.

Make ’em believe both I’ll find time to cure ’em. Exeunt.
Enter Perez, and [from another door] Estifania with a pistol and a dag[, concealed].

Perez. Why, how dar’st thou meet me again, thou rebel,
And knowst how thou hast used me thrice, thou rascal?
Were there not ways enough to fly my vengeance,
No holes nor vaults to hide thee from my fury,
But thou must meet me face to face to kill thee?

---

5.4 0.1-2 with a pistol and a dag ] om. Seward 0.2 dag ] Q1 (Dagge); Dagger Q2
1 how ] Q1; now Williams

5.4 ] Location: unspecified. A street or public space.

0.1 dag ] A heavy pistol. Q2’s “dagger” (an errant guess based on Q1’s “dagge”) is adopted by Waller. Dessen and Thomson point out that characters entering with pistols “are common in the Fletcher canon” (164).

1 rebel ] Weber and some later editors give Perez a direction to draw his sword at this point. Perez threatens to kill Estifania, but his words could work either as empty bluster or actual physical threats; the decision depends on the tone a director or reader desires.

The stabbing of women is a common feature in Fletcher’s tragicomedies, and Estifania’s refusal to let Perez stab her (if that was the way the scene was originally staged) may have surprised early audiences familiar with Fletcher’s work.

2 used me thrice ] She fooled him first with the marriage, then the two times she sent him to Margarita’s house.
I would not seek thee to destroy thee willingly,
But now thou comest to invite me, and comest upon me;
How like a sheep-biting rogue, taken i’th’ manner
And ready for the halter, dost thou look now.
Thou hast a hanging look, thou scurvy thing.
Hast ne’er a knife,
Nor never a string to lead thee to Elysium?
Be there no pitiful ’pothecaries in this town
That have compassion upon wretched women
And dare administer a dram of ratsbane,
But thou must fall to me?

Estifania. I know you have mercy.

Perez. If I had tuns of mercy thou deserv’st none.

What new tricks is now afoot, and what new houses
Have you i’th’ air, what orchards in apparition?
What canst thou say for thy life?

Estifania. Little or nothing.

I know you’ll kill me, and I know ’tis useless

8  
i’th’ manner ] in the act because the suicide he counsels for

12  string . . . Elysium ] Periphrasis for “halter.” Estifania would damn her to hell.
Elysium, in Greek mythology, was the dwelling place of the blessed after death. Perez’s allusion is ironic
To beg for mercy; pray let me draw my book out,

And pray a little.

_Perez._ Do, a very little,

For I have further business than thy killing;

I have money yet to borrow, speak when you are ready.

_Estifania._ Now now, sir, now,            [She] shows a pistol [and a dag].

Come on, do you start off from me?

Do you sweat, great captain, have you seen a spirit?

_Perez._ Do you wear guns?

_Estifania._ I am a soldier’s wife, sir,

And by that privilege I may be armed;

Now what’s the news, and let’s discourse more friendly,

And talk of our affairs in peace.

_Perez._ Let me see,

Prithee, let me see thy gun, ’tis a very pretty one.

_Estifania._ No no, sir, you shall feel—

---

23 pray ] Q1; prey  Williams 26 SD ] Williams 27 sweat ] 1711; swear Q1

27 sweat ] See collation. Perez retreats (“starts”) from Estifania, he does not swear at her. Fletcher associates sweat with cowardice in _The Humourous_ Lieutenant: “There’s no such damnable smell under heaven, / As the faint sweat of a Coward” (3.3.77-8).
*Perez.*

Hold, ye villain.

What, thine own husband?

*Estifania.*

Let mine own husband then

Be in’s own wits. [She shows a purse] There, there’s a thousand ducats;

Who must provide for you, and yet you’ll kill me?

*Perez.* I will not hurt thee for ten thousand millions.

*Estifania.* When will you redeem your jewels? I have pawned ’em,

You see for what; we must keep touch.

*Perez.*

I’ll kiss thee,

And get as many more, I’ll make thee famous.

Had we the house now—

33 *Hold, ye villain* With these words Perez might forcibly take the pistol and dag from Estifania, so that she offers the money to him as a plea; or, this may be Perez’s plea as she refuses to give him the weapons and, with the threat “you shall feel,” moves to shoot him. Q1 lacks a stage direction here so it is up to the director or actors to decide whether Estifania bargains from a position of power or not, and whether to give Perez a small amount of redemption (by an exercise of his soldierly prowess by disarming his wife) after his continual humiliations.

38 *redeem your jewels* Perez neglects to mention that he already has the jewels.

39 *keep touch* keep our promises (*OED* “touch” n. 24)
Estifania. Come along with me,

If that be vanished, there be more to hire, sir.

Perez. I see I am an ass when thou art near me. [Exeunt.]
Enter Leon, Margarita, and Altea with a taper.

Leon. Is the fool come?

Altea. Yes, and i’th’ cellar fast,

And there he stays his good hour till I call him;

He will make dainty music among the sack-butts.

I have put him just, sir, under the Duke’s chamber.

Leon. It is the better.

Altea. Has given me royally,

And to my lady a whole load of portagues.

Leon. Better and better still—go, Margarita,

Now play your prize; you say you dare be honest,

I’ll put ye to your best.

Margarita. Secure yourself, sir—

Give me the candle, pass away in silence. Exit Leon and Altea.

Location: a room in the town house.

The situation in this scene loosely echoes Fletcher and Massinger’s The Little French Lawyer 3.3-4: a night scene in which a chaste wife teases and humiliates a man who attempts to seduce her after she has invited him into her house.

Fletcher and Massinger’s The Little French Lawyer 3.3-4: a night scene in which a chaste wife teases and humiliates a man who attempts to seduce her after she has invited him into her house.

6 portagues ] Portuguese gold coins, worth between £3.5s. to £4.10s.

3 sack-butts ] casks of wine, with a pun on the musical instrument.

9 I’ll . . . best ] I will see how well you can do.
She knocks.


Margarita. My lord.

Duke. (within) Have ye brought me comfort?

Margarita. I have, my lord.

Come forth, ’tis I, come gently out, I’ll help ye,

Come softly too.

Enter Duke in a gown.

How do you?

Duke. Are there none here?

Let me look round; we cannot be too wary. Noise below.

Oh, let me bless this hour, are you alone, sweet friend?

Margarita. Alone to comfort you. Cacafogo makes a noise below.

14 SD ] Q1 (in margin of l. 11) 17 that, ] this ed.; ~ _ Q1

10-115 ] In 1763 this confrontation is cut to only 30 lines (see Appendix D). The omissions make the action abrupt, but the general dramatic pattern of the original scene remains intact, unlike the more radical revision of this confrontation (and Act 5 as a whole) in 1776. The exclamations are extrametrical. 11 Oh, oh ] These exclamations are 13 in a gown ] The nightgown indicates that the Duke comes from bed, though it becomes apparent that he has not been sleeping.
Duke. What’s that, you tumble?

I have heard a noise this half-hour under me,

A fearful noise.

Margarita. [aside] The fat thing’s mad i’th’ cellar

And stumbles from one hogshead to another,

Two cups more and he ne’er shall find the way out—

What do you fear? Come, sit down by me cheerfully,

My husband’s safe. How do your wounds?

Duke. I have none, lady,

My wounds I counterfeited cunningly,

And feigned the quarrel too, to enjoy you, sweet,

Let’s lose no time—(noise below) hark, the same noise again.

Margarita. What noise, why look ye pale? I hear no stirring—

[aside] This goblin in the vault will be so tippled—

You are not well, I know by your flying fancy,

Your body’s ill at ease, your wounds—

Duke. I have none,

I am as lusty and as full of health,

17 What’s that, you tumble? ] The taper indicates darkness, so the Duke, who cannot see her well, asks if she has fallen (hoping in vain that this would explain the noises he has heard).
High in my blood—

Margarita. Weak in your blood you would say.

How wretched is my case, willing to please ye,

And find you so disable—

Duke. Believe me, lady—

Margarita. I know you will venture all you have to satisfy me,

Your life, I know, but is it fit I spoil ye,

Is it my love do you think?

Cacafogo. (below) Here’s to the Duke!

Duke. It named me certainly,

I heard it plainly sound.

Margarita. You are hurt mortally,

And fitter for your prayers, sir, than pleasure;

What starts you make. I would not kiss you wantonly

For the world’s wealth. Have I secured my husband

And put all doubts aside to be deluded?

Cacafogo. (below) I come, I come.

Duke. Heaven bless me.

33 case ] Situation, predicament, with (yet another) pun on vagina. (Not in OED, that’s a law-point” (2.2.141-143).

but see Spanish Curate: “Lopez. If the young Foole now / Should chance to chop upon his faire Wife (Diego?) /
Margarita. And bless us both, for sure this is the devil.

I plainly heard it now, he will come to fetch ye,

A very spirit, for he spoke underground,

And spoke to you just as you would have snatched me.

You are a wicked man, and sure this haunts ye;

Would you were out o’th’ house.

Duke. I would I were;

O’ that condition, I had leapt a window.

Margarita. And that’s the least leap if you mean to ’scape, sir.

Why, what a frantic man were you to come here,

What a weak man to counterfeit deep wounds,

To wound another deeper.

Duke. Are you honest, then?

Margarita. Yes, then and now and ever, and excellent honest,

And exercise this pastime but to show ye

Great men are fools sometimes as well as wretches.

Would you were well hurt, with any hope of life,

Cut to the brains, or run clean through the body,

To get out quietly as you got in, sir.

I wish it like a friend that loves ye dearly,

For if my husband take ye, and take ye thus,

57-59 To take Margarita at her word here very beginning was intended solely for
would mean that her marriage from the the purpose of humiliating the Duke.
A counterfeit, one that would clip his credit,
Out of his honour he must kill ye presently.
There is no mercy nor an hour of pity,
And for me to entreat in such an agony
Would show me little better than one guilty.
Have you any mind to a lady now?

_Duke_.

Would I were off fair,

If ever lady caught me in a trap more—

_Margarita_. If you be well and lusty, fie fie, shake not.
You say you love me: come, come bravely now,
Despise all danger, I am ready for ye.

_Duke_. [aside] She mocks my misery—thou cruel lady.

_Margarita_. Thou cruel lord, wouldst thou betray my honesty,
Betray it in mine own house, wrong my husband
Like a night-thief thou dar’st not name by daylight.

_Duke_. I am most miserable.

_Margarita_. You are indeed,
And like a foolish thing you have made yourself so.
Could not your own discretion tell ye, sir,
When I was married I was none of yours?

Your eyes were then commanded to look off me,

And I now stand in a circle and secure;

Your spells nor power can never reach my body.

Mark me but this, and then, sir, be most miserable:

’Tis sacrilege to violate a wedlock.

You rob two temples, make yourself twice guilty;

You ruin hers, and spot her noble husband’s.

Duke. Let me be gone, I’ll never more attempt ye.

Margarita. You cannot go, ’tis not in me to save ye;

Dare ye do ill, and poorly then shrink under it?

Were I the Duke Medina, I would fight now,

For you must fight, and bravely, it concerns you.

You do me double wrong if you sneak off, sir,

And all the world would say I loved a coward,

And you must die too, for you will be killed,

And leave your youth, your honour, and your state,

And all those dear delights you worshiped here. Noise below.

Duke. The noise again.

Cacafogo. (below) Some small beer if you love me.

Margarita. The devil haunts you sure, your sins are mighty,
A drunken devil too, to plague your villainy.

_Duke_. Preserve me but this once.

_Margarita._ There’s a deep well

In the next yard; if you dare venture drowning,

It is but death.

_Duke._ I would not die so wretchedly.

_Margarita._ Out of a garret window I’ll let you down then;

But say the rope be rotten? ’Tis huge high too.

_Duke._ Have you no mercy?

_Margarita._ Now you are frighted throughly,

And find what ’tis to play the fool in folly,

And see with clear eyes your detested folly,

I’ll be your guard.

_Duke._ And I’ll be your true servant,

Ever from this hour virtuously to love ye,

Chastely and modestly to look upon ye,
And here I seal it. [He kisses Margarita.]

Margarita. I may kiss a stranger,
For you must now be so.

Enter Leon, Juan, Alonzo, [and] Sanchio.

Leon. How do you, my lord?
Methinks you look but poorly on this matter.
Has my wife wounded ye? You were well before.
Pray, sir, be comforted, I have forgot all,
Truly forgiven too—wife, you are a right one,
And now with unknown nations I dare trust ye.

Juan. No more feigned fights, my lord, they never prosper.

[Enter Altea, Cacafogo, and Servant.]

Leon. Who’s this, the devil in the vault?
Altea. ’Tis he, sir,
And as lovingly drunk as though he had studied it.
Cacafogo. Give me a cup of sack, and kiss me, lady,
Kiss my sweet face, and make thy husband cuckold;
An ocean of sweet sack, shall we speak treason?

114 SD ] Weber (subst.)
121.1 SD ] Weber (subst.)

117 you were well before ] Leon lets the Duke
know that he was not fooled by his subterfuge.
Leon. He is devilish drunk.

Duke. I had thought he had been a devil;  
    He made as many noises and as horrible.

Leon. Oh, a true lover, sir, will lament loudly—  
    Which of the butts is your mistress?

Cacafogo. Butt in thy belly.

Leon. There’s two in thine, I am sure, ’tis grown so monstrous.

Cacafogo. Butt in thy face.

Leon. [To the Servant] Go carry him to sleep.
    A fool’s love should be drunk; he has paid well for’t too.
    When he is sober let him out to rail,
    Or hang himself, there will be no loss of him.

Exit Cacafogo and Servant.

Enter Perez and Estifania.

Who’s this, my Mahound cousin?

Perez. Good sir, ’tis very good, would I had a house too,
    For there is no talking in the open air.
    My Termagant coz, I would be bold to tell ye,
I durst be merry too, I tell you plainly

You have a pretty seat, you have the luck on’t,

A pretty lady too. I have missed both.

My carpenter built in a mist, I thank him.

Do me the courtesy to let me see it,

See it but once more, but I shall cry for anger.

I’ll hire a chandler’s shop close under ye,

And for my foolery sell soap and whipcord—

Nay if you do not laugh now and laugh heartily

You are a fool, coz.

Leon. I must laugh a little.

And now I have done, coz, thou shalt live with me,

My merry coz, the world shall not divorce us;

Thou art a valiant man and thou shalt never want,

Will this content thee?

Perez. I’ll cry, and then I’ll be thankful,

Indeed I will, and I’ll be honest to ye;

I would live a swallow here, I must confess.
Wife, I forgive thee all if thou be honest;

At thy peril, I believe thee excellent.

_Estifania._ If I prove otherwise, let me beg first.

_Margarita._ Hold, this is yours, some recompense for service.

_[She gives Estifania money._]

Use it to nobler ends than he that gave it. 160

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157 thy ] Q1; my _Mason_ (conj.) 159 _Margarita._ ] _1776ab Bond_; om. Q1; _Leon. Seward_

159.1 SD ] _Weber_ (subst.)

156-57 _honest . . . peril _] Estifania does not emendation at 4.1.50, however, this directly answer Perez’s question, but change was first made in the theatre, as pledges her future good behaviour. His shown by _1776_ and _1811_. It is possible threat, after his clear inability to control that Coleridge was not proposing an her in any way throughout the play, is emendation, but correcting _F2_ comical (missing the joke, Mason according to the theatrical practice of suggests “At my peril”). his day. Williams notes that it is

159 _Margarita._ ] All editors since Seward agree “dramatically effective to have a speech heading is missing here. All Margarita give Estifania something editors except Bond and Williams give after Leon has given Perez something the lines to Leon. Bond assigns the line —the two couples thus balance.”

160 _he that gave it _] Margarita gives Estifania to a marginal note by Samuel Taylor some of the “load of portagues” given to her and Altea by _Cacafogo_ (5.5.6).

Coleridge in Charles Lamb’s copy of F2 (reproduced on _EEBO_). Like the
Duke. And this is yours, your true commission, sir.

[He gives Leon the commission.]

Now you are a captain.

Leon. You are a noble prince, sir,

And now a soldier.

Gentlemen. We all rejoice in’t.

Juan. Sir, I shall wait upon you through all fortunes.

Alonzo. And I.

Altea. And I must needs attend my mistress.

Leon. Will you go, sister?

Altea. Yes indeed, good brother.

I have two ties: mine own blood, and my mistress.

Margarita. Is she your sister?

Leon. Yes indeed, good wife,

And my best sister, for she proved so, wench,

When she deceived you with a loving husband.

170

161.1 SD ] Dyce (subst.)

163 Gentlemen. ] Seward; Gentleman Q1 (as dialogue); gentlemen. / Omnes. 1776b Colman

163 Gentlemen. ] Williams suggests “the

manuscript form in the line was ‘Gent’,

abbreviated as for a prefix, and that the

compositor mistook it for dialogue and

expanded it, producing the erroneous

singular ‘Gentleman’ in the process.”

Seward had already pointed out that

retaining “Gentlemen” in Leon’s
dialogue produced a hypermetrical line.
**Altea.** I would not deal so truly for a stranger.

**Margarita.** Well I could chide ye,

But it must be lovingly and like a sister—

[To Leon] I’ll bring you on your way, and feast ye nobly,

For now I have an honest heart to love ye,

And then deliver you to the blue Neptune.

**Juan.** Your colours we must wear, and wear ’em proudly,

Wear ’em before the bullet, and in blood too,

And all the world shall know we are virtue’s servants.

---

177 we ] *Dyce (conj. Mason)*; you Q1

176 And . . . Neptune ] Margarita promises to accompany Leon as far as the sea, as if she will stay behind in Spain, rather than accompany him anywhere, as she promised (falsely?) at 4.3.212 and 5.3.5-6. Altea says that she will attend Margarita on the journey (l. 164), but Margarita does not confirm that she has agreed to the journey, though she has submitted to Leon’s rule. Readers or directors who want to inject a bit of last-minute nastiness in the play could read this line as an aside, delivered bitterly, as if Margarita hopes that Leon drowns in the sea.

177 we ] See collations; as Mason points out, it would be awkward if Juan’s lines, clearly addressed to Margarita, direct her to wear her own colours “before the bullet, and in blood too.”
Duke. And all the world shall know, a noble mind

Makes women beautiful and envy blind.

Exeunt.

FINIS.

181] A final couplet spoken by Leon is added in 1763: “You who would lead a happy marry’d Life, / Learn first to rule and then to have a Wife.” The first line is slightly revised in 1776: “All you who mean to lead a happy life,” the version which appears in most acting editions, though 1811 reverts to the earlier wording. Giving Leon the closing lines, at the expense of the higher-ranking Duke, clarifies the power dynamics of the conclusion and emphasizes Leon’s triumph. It also has the practical advantage of giving the star the final word.
Epilogue

Good night, our worthy friends, and may you part
Each with as merry and as free a heart
As you came hither. To those noble eyes
That deign to smile on our poor faculties,
And give a blessing to our labouring ends,
As we hope many, to such Fortune sends
Their own desires: wives fair as light, as chaste;
To those that live by spite, wives made in haste.

6  As we hope many  ] We hope many of you in
    the audience bless us.
Appendix A - Alterations to Lineation

These notes record all alterations to Q1 verse lineation. They also include a selection of alternate line divisions proposed by earlier editors but not adopted in this edition. The format is adopted from the Oxford Shakespeare series. End-line punctuation and spelling variations are ignored. Only variant line-divisions are recorded, not variant readings.

1.1

3-6 How . . . unexperienced ] Seward; Q1 divides after “command”, “out”, “think”, “go”
42 Sir . . . ye ] Dyce; Q1 divides after “speak”
49-50 Say honest / What . . . then ] Seward; as one line Q1
56-57 Maybe . . . preludium ] Q1; Seward divides after “‘em”
58 With . . . lady ] Seward; Q1 divides after “gentleman”
80-81 You may . . . myself ] Q1; Colman divides after “señor”
81-82 As . . . soldier ] Colman; as one line Q1

1.2

8-9 Of . . . whoring ] Q1; Weber divides after “never”; as one line Dyce
13-14 Dost . . . points ] Q1; 1711 divides after “thee”, Colman divides after “pull’st”
41-43 And . . . first ] Q1; Williams divides after “her”, “fortune”
44 I . . . not ] this ed.; Q1 divides after “soldier”
1.4
1 What . . . for ] Seward; Q1 divides after “haste”
23 And . . . ye ] Seward; Q1 divides after “counsel”

1.5
12-13 I . . . sir ] Seward; as one line Q1
29-32 The spirit . . . spoonfuls ] Dyce; Q1 divides after “wars”, “pumpkin”, “son”,
“buttered” 34 Monies . . . captains ] Seward; Q1 divides after “too”
47 You . . . fellow ] Seward; Q1 divides after “beat”
50-51 I . . . maestro ] this ed.; Q1 divides after “vuestra”

1.6
8-9 ’Tis . . . place ] Seward; as one line Q1
41-42 I am . . . commanded ] Seward; Q1 divides after “well”
59-64 ’Tis . . . lady ] Q1; Seward divides after “ye”, “me”, “on”, “it”
67-68 Pray . . . sudden ] Seward; as one line Q1
68-69 And . . . too ] Seward; as one line Q1
70-71 But . . . fancy ] Q1; Colman divides after “first”

2.1
7-8 But . . . all ] Dyce; Q1 divides after “shall”, “me”
19-20 Yes . . . woman ] Seward; as one line Q1
30-31 Yes . . . perfection ] Seward; Q1 divides after “rare”
53-54 No . . . him ] Colman; as one line Q1
2.2

27 If . . . thee] Seward; Q1 divides after “less”

2.3

5-6 Is . . . likely man] Dyce; as one line Q1

10 Fit . . . done] Seward; Q1 divides after “harm”

50-51 I . . . sufficiently] Colman; as one line Q1

58-59 No . . . contented] Seward; as one line Q1

61-62 ’Tis . . . speak] Seward; as one line Q1

65-66 But . . . laws] Seward; Q1 divides after “wait”

2.4

86-88 Nor . . . has] Q1; Colman divides after “officers”, “now”; Seward divides after “to”, “’tis”, “heir”

89-91 Who . . . too] Q1; Seward divides after “things”, “fair”, “house”; Dyce divides after “these”, “presence”, “house”; Williams divides after “things”, “fair”

94-96 Sir . . . observes her] Colman; Q1 divides after “now”, “cousin”

105-6 Yield . . . wealth] Seward; as one line Q1

125-26 I am . . . too] Weber; as one line Q1

3.1

24-25 And . . . sent] Dyce; Q1 divides after “up”

68-69 Tell . . . on her] Seward; as one line Q1
114-16 This . . . reasons] Seward; Q1 divides after “blown”, “wine”, “finds”

132-34 I see . . . ladyship] Dyce; Q1 divides after “to see”

3.3

6-7 Why . . . bond] Colman; as one line Q1

26-27 Is’t . . . one] Seward; as one line Q1

31-33 I . . . respected] Seward; Q1 divides after “orient”

37-38 The . . . Medina] Seward; as one line Q1

51-52 If . . . too] Seward; as one line Q1

3.4

14-15 Is . . . wife] Colman; as one line Q1

31-32 She . . . fair] Seward; as one line Q1

42-43 But . . . you] Seward; Q1 divides after “worth”

43-44 Her . . . saw] Seward; as one line Q1

45-46 No . . . hangings] Seward; as one line Q1

46-47 Not . . . thing] Seward; as one line Q1

59-61 Little . . . living] Dyce; Q1 divides after “because”, “firked”

77-78 And . . . truth] Colman; as one line Q1

3.5

41-42 Why . . . you] Colman; as one line Q1

76-77 You . . . madam] Seward; Q1 divides after “in’t”

99-100 Brave . . . now] Seward; Q1 divides after “lead”
115-16 They . . . pity ] Seward; as one line Q1
129-30 I . . . me ] Colman; as one line Q1
149-50 Save . . . house ] Seward; as one line Q1
150-51 That’s . . . her ] Seward; Q1 divides after “lady”
182-83 Yes . . . her ] Seward; as one line Q1
193-94 Will . . . me ] Seward; as one line Q1

4.1

13-14 I believe . . . too ] Seward; as one line Q1
32-33 From . . . candlesticks ] Seward; Q1 divides after “found”
80-81 A . . . crafty ] Colman; as one line Q1
157-58 She . . . person ] Seward; as one line Q1

4.2

9-10 And . . . undoing ] Weber; Q1 divides after “prison”

4.3

13-14 Do . . . sir ] Colman; as one line Q1
50-51 I’ll . . . king ] Seward; as one line Q1
84-85 You . . . that ] Seward; as one line Q1
113-14 With . . . were able ] Q1; as one line Williams
185-86 Am . . . cousin ] Seward; as one line Q1
206-7 I . . . ye ] Seward; Q1 divides after “he”
208-9 Good . . . sir ] Seward; as one line Q1
5.1

12-13 And so . . . my will ] Seward; as one line Q1

5.2

33-34 I . . . woman ] Williams; as one line Q1

37-38 I shall be . . . cause ] Seward; as one line Q1

38-39 That’s . . . angry ] Seward; as one line Q1

58-59 I’ll . . . ducat ] Seward; Q1 divides after “half ten”

5.3

30 Oh . . . slain ] Q1; Seward divides after “gentleman”

31 Away . . . house help ] Q1; Seward divides after “him”

32-33 How . . . again ] Dyce; Q1 divides after “Margarita”

53-54 As . . . compassion ] Q1; Dyce divides after “hand”

93-95 I . . . with you ] Seward; Q1 divides after “heart”

5.4

7 But . . . upon me ] Seward; Q1 divides after “invite me”

10-11 Hast . . . Elysium ] Seward; as one line Q1

26 Now . . . me ] Seward; Q1 divides after “now”

33-34 Hold . . . thine own husband ] Seward; as one line Q1
5.5

9-10 Secure . . . silence ] Seward; Q1 divides after “candle”

30-31 I . . . health ] Seward; as one line  Q1

64-66 For . . . presently ] Seward; Q1 divides after “counterfeit”, “honour”

114-15 I may . . . so ] Seward; as one line  Q1

122-23 ’Tis . . . it ] Seward; as one line  Q1

167 I . . . mistress ] Seward; Q1 divides after “blood”

169 And . . . wench ] Seward; Q1 divides after “sister”

179 And . . . servants ] Seward; Q1 divides after “know”

Epilogue

8 To . . . haste ] F2; Q1 divides after “spite”
1. Press-Variants in Q1

The variants below are listed by forme, signature, and act-scene-line number. Rather than classifying variants as “corrected” and “uncorrected” or “first state” and “second state,” this list contrasts readings as more or less common. The reading most often found in the copies examined is to the left of the bracket; the less common reading is to the right of the bracket and is followed by the sigla of those copies which contain the less common reading. (The one exception is the variants of the inner forme of sheet E, in which the variant state exists in six of the twelve copies collated. The sigla indicate the copies which contain the reading to the right of the bracket.) An asterisk precedes variants not present in copies collated by Williams. I examined the University of Texas at Austin copies from digital photographs, the Newberry copy on microfilm, the British Library copy from EEBO, and the Folger copy in person. Williams describes the title page of the Folger copy as variant (“Gent:” for “Gent.”), but what appears to be the upper point of a colon is a discolouration of the paper. Williams does not address the fact that such a variant would have damaged his argument that the title page for Rollo was printed first.

Copies collated by Williams:
BL – British Library 644.b.30
CSmH – Henry Huntington Library C11073/59779
DFo – Folger Shakespeare Library
NeWiW – Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 151664
Copies collated for this edition:

Ah – University of Texas at Austin, Ah F635 640r

N – Newberry Library, Case Y 135.F63049

Pforz1 – University of Texas at Austin, Pforz 372

Pforz2 – University of Texas at Austin, Pforz 372 c. 2

Wh – University of Texas at Austin, Wh F635 640r

B (outer)

B2v

1.5.0.1  Le n ] Leon  Pu  Ah

E (inner)

E1v

3.3.2  rime ] ruine  BL  DFo  NcWiW  N  Pforz2  Wh

E2'

3.3.51  laugh at him ] laugh him, leave ager  BL  DFo  NcWiW  N  Pforz2  Wh

F (outer)
2. Proof-Corrections to Sheet G (outer)

The following is a record of proof-reader marks on a fragment of Q1 reproduced in Moore (Plate 57). The reading of the proof-sheet is to the left of the bracket, and the reading indicated by the corrector is to the right of the bracket. Corrections which were ignored are indicated in parentheses, and descriptive notes are given in curly brackets.
G2v
4.3.30  All all  ] All, all  (ignored)
4.3.48  fwe et  ] fweet
4.3.50  Marg  ] Marg.  (ignored)

G3v
4.3.64  fort  ] for’t  (ignored)
4.3.68  Marg  ] Marg.
4.3.68  Leon  ] Leon.
4.3.69  cloaths,  ] cloaths  {The deletion mark obscures the punctuation; it could be a period.}
4.3.84  Ma  ] You  ] Mar. You  {The corrector’s mark is a short thick pen-stroke. The expansion of the speech heading by one letter was done on the compositor’s initiative.}
4.3.87  A  ] swinging  ] A  swinging

G4v
4.3.170  mannage  ] mannage,
4.3.173  moone  ] Moone  (ignored)
Appendix C – A Calendar of Performances

of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife.

This list complements the stage history in the introduction. It is based on published performance calendars for theatres in England, Ireland, Scotland, and North America; electronic and microform collections of relevant periodicals; and other accounts of productions of Rule a Wife. The London Stage 1660-1800 is the source unless otherwise noted. The lack of a similarly comprehensive record of nineteenth-century London performances means that this record is unavoidably incomplete (and of course the record provided by LS is spotty until the 1720s), but the impression the list gives of the general patterns of performances is accurate. It should be noted that the English performances in the 1850s and 1860s, except at Sadler’s Wells, were of a two- or three-act version sometimes called Leon of Aragon.

1624
Oct. 19. Licensed for performance (JCS)
Nov. 2. At Court (JCS)
Dec. 26. At Court (JCS)

1634/5
Feb. Blackfriars (JCS)

1659-1660
Cockpit in Drury Lane, John Rhodes’s Co.

1661

1662
Jan. 28. Vere St., King’s Co.

1664
Feb. 5. Vere St., King’s Co.
Feb. 11. Vere St., King’s Co.

1667
Feb. 14. At Court, King’s Co. [Possibly an error: one source names Rule, another names Flora’s Vagaries for this night.]

1682
Nov. 1. Inner Temple, Inns of Court, Duke’s Co.
Nov. 15. At Court, United Co.

1685
Nov. 4. At Court, United Co.

1691
Date(s) unknown. Queen’s Theatre (Langbaine, Account)

1693
Dec. Drury Lane or Dorset Garden, United Co.

1699
Date(s) and Theatre unknown (Langbaine, Lives)

1700
Dec. 6. Drury Lane

1701
Mar 24. Drury Lane

1702
Oct 16. Drury Lane

1703
Nov 29. Drury Lane

1704
Feb 19. Drury Lane

1705
June 8. Queen’s
June 15. Queen’s
Oct. 16. Drury Lane
Nov. 3. Drury Lane

1706
Jan. 21. Drury Lane
Oct. 28. Queen’s
Nov. 20. Queen’s

1707
Feb. 12. Queen’s
Dec. 17. Drury Lane

1708
Jan. 8. Queen’s
Sept. 21. Drury Lane

1709
Nov. 5. Queen’s

1710
Feb 25. Queen’s

1711-1750
Norwich, consistent performances throughout the period (Rosenfeld)

1711
Feb. 8. Drury Lane

1712
Jan. 5. Drury Lane
Apr. 26. Drury Lane
Oct. 2. Drury Lane
Dec. 31. Drury Lane

1713
Mar. 17. Drury Lane
Oct. 28. Drury Lane

1714
Jan. 12. Drury Lane
April 8. Drury Lane
Oct. 25. Drury Lane
Dec. 10. Drury Lane

1715
Feb 24. Drury Lane
Mar 12. Drury Lane
Apr. 28. Drury Lane
Oct. 26. Drury Lane

1716
Jan. 14. Drury Lane
May 3. Drury Lane
Oct. 25. Drury Lane

1717
Feb. 16. Drury Lane
May 14. Drury Lane
Dec. 3. Drury Lane

1718
Apr. 14. Drury Lane
May 30. Drury Lane
Oct. 23. Hampton Court Palace, by Drury Lane Co.

1719
May 9. Drury Lane
Oct. 20. Drury Lane

1720
Jan. 8. Drury Lane
Mar. 15. Drury Lane
May 25. Drury Lane

1721
Jan. 3. Drury Lane
Mar. 18. Drury Lane

1722
Jan. 19. Drury Lane
Apr. 4. Drury Lane
May 24. Drury Lane
Oct. 5. Drury Lane

1723
Jan. 4. Drury Lane
Apr. 16. Drury Lane
Oct. 18. Drury Lane
Nov. 26. Drury Lane
Dec. 27. Drury Lane

1724
Mar. 5. Drury Lane
Oct. 19. Drury Lane

1725
Jan. 8. Drury Lane
Feb. 27. Drury Lane
Apr. 30. Drury Lane
Oct. 12. Drury Lane
Nov. 25. Drury Lane

1726
Jan. 28. Drury Lane
Mar. 12. Drury Lane
Apr. 22. Drury Lane
Sept. 20. Drury Lane
Nov. 22. Drury Lane
Dec. 30. Drury Lane

1727
May 24. Drury Lane
Oct. 17. Drury Lane
Dec. 12. Drury Lane

1728
Feb. 27. Drury Lane
Oct. 10. Drury Lane
Dec. 4. Drury Lane

1729
Jan. 27. Drury Lane
Apr. 19. Drury Lane

1729
Oct. 4. Drury Lane
Nov. 15. Drury Lane

1730
Apr. 7. Goodman’s Fields
Apr. 23. Drury Lane
July 8. Goodman’s Fields
Nov. 2. Goodman’s Fields

1731
Date(s) unknown. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Jan. 4. Drury Lane
Mar. 15. Drury Lane
Apr. 1. Goodman’s Fields
Apr. 24. Drury Lane

Oct. 2. Drury Lane
Nov. 12. Goodman’s Fields
Nov. 18. Drury Lane
Dec. 15. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Dec. 16. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Dec. 18. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Dec. 21. Lincoln’s Inn Fields

1732
Jan. 14. Drury Lane
Feb. 9. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Mar. 9. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Mar. 25. Drury Lane
Apr. 22. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Apr. 27. Goodman’s Fields
May 1. Drury Lane
May 24. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Oct. 21. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Nov. 29. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
Dec. 12. Covent Garden
Dec. 29. Goodman’s Fields

1733
Jan. 2. Drury Lane
Jan. 4. Goodman’s Fields
Jan. 11. Goodman’s Fields
Feb. 15. Drury Lane
Mar. 5. Goodman’s Fields
Mar. 29. Covent Garden
Apr. 10. Goodman’s Fields
May 9. Drury Lane
May 24. Covent Garden
Sept. 20. Goodman’s Fields
Oct. 1. Drury Lane
Oct. 3. Drury Lane
Oct. 8. Haymarket
Oct. 31. Covent Garden
Nov. 14. Haymarket
Nov. 27. Covent Garden
Nov. 27. Goodman’s Fields
Dec. 14. Drury Lane

1734

Jan. 21. Haymarket
Feb. 2. Covent Garden
Feb. 7. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Feb. 9. Drury Lane
Feb. 16. Drury Lane
Feb. 16. Goodman’s Fields
Mar. 23. Covent Garden
May 9. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
May 14. Goodman’s Fields
Sept. 18. Goodman’s Fields
Oct. 23. Drury Lane
Nov. 25. Covent Garden
Dec. 17. Drury Lane

1735

Jan. 2. Covent Garden
Feb. 6. Covent Garden
Feb. 11. Goodman’s Fields
Mar. 13. Aungier St., Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Apr. 24. Covent Garden
June 12. Lincoln’s Inn Fields
June 30. Aungier St., Dublin (Green and Clark)
Sept. 24. Covent Garden
Oct. 9. Drury Lane
Nov. 17. Covent Garden
Dec. 31. Drury Lane

1736

Jan. 15. Aungier St., Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Jan. 24. Covent Garden
Mar. 2. Drury Lane
Apr. 12. Covent Garden
Apr. 28. Drury Lane
Apr. 28. Goodman’s Fields
Sept. 20. Covent Garden
Nov. 8. Drury Lane
Nov. 18. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)

1737

Jan. 17. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Mar. 28. Covent Garden
Sept. 3. Drury Lane

1738

Jan. 13. Covent Garden
Feb. 18. Covent Garden
Mar. 23. Covent Garden
Apr. 25. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)  May 12. Covent Garden
May 6. Covent Garden  Oct. 7. Covent Garden
Sept. 18. Covent Garden  Oct. 10. Drury Lane
Oct. 21. Drury Lane  Nov. 17. Covent Garden
Nov. 25. Covent Garden  Dec. 16. Goodman’s Fields
Dec. 11. Drury Lane

1739
Feb. 5. Covent Garden  Feb. 5. Covent Garden
May 23. Drury Lane  Nov. 3. Drury Lane
Sept. 10. Covent Garden  Jan. 28. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)
Oct. 16. Drury Lane  Sept. 30. Covent Garden
Dec. 7. Covent Garden

1740
Jan. 21. Drury Lane  July. Canterbury (Rosenfeld)
Feb. 14. Covent Garden
Mar. 11. Drury Lane  Dec. 11. Goodman’s Fields
Apr. 28. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)  Mar. 15. Covent Garden
May 3. Smock Alley, Dublin (Greene and Clark)  1747
Aug. 25. Drogheda, Ireland (Clark)  Mar. 16. Smock Alley, Dublin (Sheldon)
Oct. 10. Covent Garden  1748
Nov. 11. Goodman’s Fields  Feb. 10. Covent Garden
Dec. 8. Covent Garden  Mar. 5. Covent Garden

1741
Apr. 4. Covent Garden  Mar. 8. Smock Alley, Dublin (Sheldon)
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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1760
Jan. 19. Drury Lane
Jan. 22. Drury Lane
Apr. 25. Drury Lane

1761
Mar. 25. Covent Garden
May 15. Covent Garden
Oct. 5. Covent Garden
Nov. 18. Drury Lane
Nov. 26. Drury Lane
Dec. 9. Drury Lane

1762
May 22. Drury Lane
Dec. 11. Drury Lane
Dec. 21. Drury Lane

1763
Feb. 12. Bath (Hare)
May 10. Drury Lane
Oct. 28. Covent Garden
Nov. 2. Covent Garden
Nov. 8. Covent Garden
Nov. 11. Covent Garden
Dec. 2. Covent Garden

1764
Jan. 12. Covent Garden
Mar. 6. Covent Garden

1765
May 11. Drury Lane
Sept. 20. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
Oct. 16. Covent Garden
Oct. 18. Covent Garden
Oct. 21. Covent Garden
Oct. 24. Covent Garden
Dec. 3. Drury Lane

1766
Mar. 21. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Apr. 8. Drury Lane
June 6. Newcastle, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Sept. 15. Beverly, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Sept. 29. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
Nov. 27. Covent Garden

1767
Mar. 7. Drury Lane
Mar. 16. Drury Lane
May 23. Drury Lane
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<td>Haymarket</td>
<td>Oct. 7. Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Cork, Ireland (Clark)</td>
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<td>Dec. 9</td>
<td>Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Jan. 14</td>
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<td>Newcastle, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Covent Garden</td>
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<td>Covent Garden</td>
<td>Jan. 21. Bath (Hare)</td>
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<td>Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Covent Garden</td>
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<td>Oct. 27. Covent Garden</td>
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<td>Oct. 28. Covent Garden</td>
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<td>Belfast, Ireland (Greene; Clark).</td>
<td>Oct. 31. Covent Garden</td>
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<td>June 1</td>
<td>Drury Lane</td>
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<td>1772</td>
<td>Jan. 21</td>
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<td>June 24. Kilkenny, Ireland (Clark)</td>
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<td>Aug. 6. Haymarket</td>
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<td>Aug. 21. York, Wilkinson's Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Oct. 23. Belfast (Greene; Clark)</td>
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<td>Nov. 18. Drury Lane</td>
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<td>March 20. Bath (Hare)</td>
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<td>June 25. Leeds, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>Jan. 25. Covent Garden</td>
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<td>Aug. 23. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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<td>1781</td>
<td>Sept. 30. Cork, Ireland (Clark)</td>
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<td>Oct. 24. Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)</td>
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Jan. 17. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Feb. 15. Drury Lane
Mar. 26. Bath (Hare)
Mar. 31. Bath (Hare)
Apr. 18. Bath (Hare)
Sept. 10. Wakefield, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Sept. 29. Doncaster, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Oct. 12. Doncaster, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Oct. 21. Bath (Hare)
Oct. 30. Drury Lane
Dec. 12. Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)

Jan. 15. Drury Lane
Mar. 6. Covent Garden
Mar. 11. Covent Garden
Mar. 15. Covent Garden
Apr. 21. Kilkenny, Ireland (Clark)
Apr. 22. Covent Garden
Oct. 27. Covent Garden
Nov. 6. Bath (Hare)
Nov. 15. Bath (Hare)
Nov. 25. Drury Lane

1782
Feb. 28. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
April 25. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
July 19. Leeds, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Sept. 13. Cork, Ireland (Clark)

1783
Sept. 8. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
Nov. 27. Drury Lane

1784

1785
Feb. 2. Covent Garden
May 11. Covent Garden
Oct. 27. Covent Garden
Nov. 7. Bath (Hare)
Dec. 13. Covent Garden

1786
Feb. 2. Covent Garden
Mar. 4. Bath (Hare)
Mar. 6. Bath (Hare)
Mar. 11. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and McDonald)
Oct. 20. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
Oct. 23. Belfast, Ireland (Greene; Clark) Dec. 4. Drury Lane
Oct. 28. Drury Lane

1787 Jan. 23. Covent Garden
Jan. 10. Drury Lane Mar. 19. Covent Garden
Jan. 20. Bath (Hare) May 12. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and
Jan. 31. Covent Garden McDonald)
Feb. 2. Drury Lane June 19. Leeds, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons
Feb. 19. Drury Lane and McDonald)
Mar. 22. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and
Oct. 24. Bath (Hare) Sept. 23. Bath (Hare)
Oct. 27. Bath (Hare) Oct. 3. Bath (Hare)
Nov. 9. Hull, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and
Nov. 20. Covent Garden Nov. 26. Covent Garden
McDonald) 1790

1788 Feb. 4. Covent Garden
Apr. 17. York, Wilkinson’s Co. (Fitzsimmons and
McDonald)
May 3. Bath (Hare) Jan. 15. Kilkenny, Ireland (Clark)
Sept. 10. Wakefield, Wilkinson’s Co. 1792
Sept. 4. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
( Fitzsimmons and McDonald) Oct. 5. Covent Garden
Oct. 29. Covent Garden

1790
Nov. 1. Bath (Hare) Apr. 17. Covent Garden
Nov. 3. Bath (Hare) July 15. Bath (Hare)
Nov. 5. Drury Lane Aug. 21. Galway, Ireland (Clark)
Sep. 17. Covent Garden

1794
Aug. 27. Cork, Ireland (Clark)
Dec. 2. Bath (Hare)
Dec. 17. Belfast, Ireland (Greene; Clark)

1795
June 20. Bath (Hare)

1796
May 4. Belfast, Ireland (Greene; Clark)
Aug. 5. Baltimore, Maryland (Ritchey)

1797
Feb. 1. Drury Lane
Feb. 4. Drury Lane
Mar. 13. Drury Lane
Apr. 3. Drury Lane
Apr. 22. Charleston, South Carolina (Willis)

1799
Feb. 4. Drury Lane
May 14. Drury Lane
Sept. 28. Drury Lane
Oct. 14. Drury Lane
Nov. 13. Drury Lane

1800-1810
Chestnut St. Theatre, Philadelphia, Penn. At least five performances in this period (James, *Cradle*)

1800
Jan. 3. Drury Lane
Feb. 6. Drury Lane
Apr. 3. Bath (Hare)

1801
March 19. Drury Lane (*Morning Chronicle*)
June 11. Drury Lane (*Morning Chronicle*)
June 26. Bayswater, England (*Morning Chronicle*)

1802
Jan. 5. Drury Lane (*Morning Chronicle*)
Mar. 31. Edinburgh (*Caledonian Mercury*)
May 7. Drury Lane (*Morning Chronicle*)

1803
Feb. 4. Bath (Hare)
Apr. 30. Bath (Hare)
Dec. 6. Covent Garden (Genest)

1804
Sept. 26. Covent Garden (*Morning Chronicle*)
Dec. 12. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
Dec. 21. Drury Lane (Morning Chronicle)  
1805  
Feb. 13. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
Feb. 18. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
Feb. 21. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
Feb. 22. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
Oct. 23. Covent Garden (Morning Chronicle)  
1806  
Mar. 12. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
Apr. 30. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
Nov. 17. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
1807  
Jan. 28. Covent Garden (Morning Chronicle)  
Apr. 20. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
1808  
Sept. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
1809  
Feb. 18. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
Mar. 29. Edinburgh (Caledonian Mercury)  
May 29. Covent Garden (Genest)  
June 5. Haymarket (Rulfs)  
1810  
Mar. 6. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)  
Apr. 18. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
June 19. Haymarket (Genest)  
June 27. Haymarket (Morning Chronicle)  
1811  
Apr. 17. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
June 12. Covent Garden (Genest)  
Aug. 2. Quebec City (Bains)  
Aug. 15. Haymarket (Brown)  
Sept. 19. Haymarket (Morning Chronicle)  
Oct. 12. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)  
Oct. 16. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
1812  
Jan. 10. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)  
May 16. Baltimore, Maryland (James, Old Drury)  
June 19. Washington, DC (James, Old Drury)  
Aug. 1. Haymarket (Morning Chronicle)  
Aug. 12. Haymarket (Morning Chronicle)  
Oct. 12. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)  
Nov. 17. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)  
Dec. 9. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)  
1813  
Jan. 27. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)  
May 1. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)  
Sep.-Oct. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)  
Sept. 8. Covent Garden (Rulfs)  
Sept. 16. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)  
Oct. 8. Baltimore, Maryland (James, Old Drury)  
1814
Jan. 10. Edinburgh (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Jan. 14. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)
April 12. Edinburgh (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Aug. 8. Haymarket (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Oct. 8. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Nov. 2. Baltimore, Maryland (James, Old Drury)
Dec. 6. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
1815
Feb. 1. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)
June 20. Drury Lane (Genest)
June 22. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
June 24. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
June 27. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
June 29. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Nov. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Dec. 8. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Dec. 26. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
1816
Feb. 2. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)
Apr. 27. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Oct. 21. Baltimore, Maryland (James, Old Drury)
1817
Jan. 31. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)
Mar. 3. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
1818
Aug. 13. Haymarket (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Apr. 4. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
July 17. Haymarket (Rulfs)
July 18. Haymarket (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Sept.-Oct. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
1819
Feb. 27. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Mar. 4. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Mar. 25. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
July 26. Haymarket (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Sept. 16. Haymarket (Theatrical Inquisitor)
Nov. 5. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
1820
Mar. 24. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Mar. 25. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
June 6. Drury Lane (Theatrical Inquisitor)
June 9. Baltimore, Maryland (James, Old Drury)
June 20. Dublin (Freeman's Journal)
Sept. 9. Drury Lane (Nelson and Cross)
1821
Nov. 5. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Jan. 3. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Jan. 24. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, Old Drury)
1822
Feb. 10. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
Mar. 26. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
July 12. Haymarket (Rulfs)
July 27. Haymarket (*Morning Chronicle*)
Dec. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)

**1822**
Feb. New Orleans, Louisiana (Dorman; Ludlow)

**1823**
Apr. Natchez, Mississippi. (Ludlow)
May 24. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
June 6. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Aug. 12. Washington, DC (James, *Old Drury*)
Dec. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)

**1824**
Jan. 5. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
Mar. 2. Bristol (*Bristol Mercury*)
July 9. Drury Lane (*Examiner*)
Dec. 9. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)

**1825**
Mar. 8. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
May 12. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Oct. 25. Covent Garden (Genest)
Oct. 30. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Nov. 3. Covent Garden (Brown)
Nov. 8. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Nov. 29. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Dec. 27. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)

**1826**
Jan. 5. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Mar. 2. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Apr. 12. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
Oct. 20. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Nov. 29. Bowery Theatre, New York City (Odell)

**1827**
Feb. 14. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Mar. 17. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Apr. Mobile, Alabama (Ludlow)
May 1. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Jun. 29. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Aug. 23. St. Louis, Missouri (Carson)

**1828**
Apr. 9. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
May 15. Bowery Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. 20. Chatham Theatre, New York City (Odell; Ludlow)

**1829**
July 7. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. 8. Haymarket (*Theatrical Observer*)
Sept. 26. Haymarket (*Theatrical Observer*)

**1830**
Feb. 15. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)
Mar. 1. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
June 3. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
July 10. St. Louis, Missouri (Carson)
July 28. Haymarket (*Theatrical Observer*)
Sept. New Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)

1831
Apr. 27. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, *Old Drury*)
June 3. Chatham Theatre, New York City (Odell)

1832
Mar. 29. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
June 19. Haymarket (*Theatrical Observer*)

1833
Jan. 16. New Orleans, Louisiana (Smither)
June 10. Drury Lane (*The Age*)

1834
Mar. 11. Chestnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, *Old Drury*)
May 9. Park Theatre, New York City (Ireland; Odell)
June 3. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (James, *Old Drury*)

1835
Mar. 28. Charleston, South Carolina (Hoole)

1836
Mar. 7. New Orleans, Louisiana (Kendall; Smither)
Sept. 26. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (Wilson)
Nov. 26. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)

1838
Apr. 20. National Theatre, New York City (Ireland; Odell)
June 20. National Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. 17. Boston, Mass. (Clapp)

1839
June 19. Haymarket (*Theatrical Observer*)
Mar. 21. Edinburgh (*Caledonian Mercury*)
Oct. 15. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Oct. 22. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Oct. 29. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Nov. 1. Covent Garden (*Theatrical Observer*)
Nov. 7-14?. Liverpool (*Liverpool Mercury*)

1840
Apr. 13. Bowery Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Aug. 10. Edinburgh (*Theatrical Observer*)

1841
May 19. Park Theatre, New York City (Ireland; Odell)

1842
Sept. 14. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. 24. Park Theatre, New York City (Odell)

1843

May 1. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (Wilson)
May 4. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (Wilson)
Aug. 19. Chatham Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Sept. 29. Hull (Era)

1844

Feb. Lyceum (Age and Argus)
Aug. 20. Walnut St., Philadelphia, Penn. (Wilson)
June. Liverpool (Era)
Sept. 20. Worthing, England (Age and Argus)
Nov. 5. Dublin (Freeman’s Journal)

1848

Jan. 25. Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn. (Wilson)
Sept.-Oct. Bowery Theatre, New York City (Odell)
Oct. 11. Sadler’s Wells (Phelps and Forbes-Robertson)
Oct. 18. Sadler’s Wells (Satirist)
Oct. 19. Sadler’s Wells (Era)
Oct. 25. Sadler’s Wells (Era)
Oct. 26. Sadler’s Wells (Era)
Nov. 17. Hull (Hull Packet)
Dec. 18. New Orleans, Louisiana (Ludlow)
Dec. 28. Sadler’s Wells (Era)
Dec. 29. Sadler’s Wells (Era)

1848-49

Sept.-May. Sadler’s Wells, thirteen performances (Allen)

1849

Apr. 12. Edinburgh (Caledonian Mercury)
Oct. 13. Sadler’s Wells (Phelps and Forbes-Robertson)

1850


1850-51

Sept.-May. Sadler’s Wells, three performances (Allen)

1851

Feb. 26 Sadler’s Wells (Era)
Feb. 28. Sadler’s Wells (Daily News)
Oct. 3. Sadler’s Wells (Daily News)
Oct. 3. Liverpool (Era)
Oct. 4. Sadler’s Wells (Daily News)

1851-1852

Sept.-May. Sadler’s Wells, four performances (Allen)

1852

June. Bowery Theatre, New York City (Odell)
June 18. Marylebone Theatre (Era)

1852-53

Sept. 23. Dublin (Freeman’s Journal)

1852-53

Sept.-May. Sadler’s Wells, four performances (Allen)
1853
Mar. 28.  Sadler’s Wells (*Era*)
Mar. 29.  Sadler’s Wells (*Era*)
May 4.  Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn.  (Wilson)
May 5.  Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn.  (Wilson)

1854
April.  Sadler’s Wells, one performance (Allen; Phelps and Forbes-Robertson)
May 24.  City of London Theatre (*Era*)
May 27.  City of London Theatre (*Era*)
June 7.  Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn.  (Wilson)
June 10.  Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn.  (Wilson)
June 19.  Arch St., Philadelphia, Penn.  (Wilson)

1855
May 7.  Boston, Mass.  (Tompkins)
Nov. 24.  Wallack’s Theatre, New York City  (Odell)

1859
25 April.  Edinburgh (*Caledonian Mercury*)
28 April.  Edinburgh (*Caledonian Mercury*)

1860
Mar. 12.  Sadler’s Wells (*Era*)

1864
Mar. 11.  Bristol (*Bristol Mercury*)
May 2.  Bristol (*Bristol Mercury*)

1865
Dec. 2.  Belfast (*Belfast News-Letter*)

1925
28 June.  Scala Theatre, London (Summers; Wearing)
29 June.  Scala Theatre, London (Summers; Wearing)

1971-1972
Dickinson College.  Carlisle, Penn.

2003
May 20-31.  Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah
Appendix D – Revisions in Major Acting Editions
of Rule a Wife and Have a Wife

This record of the changes made to Rule a Wife for performance supplements the discussion of these alterations in “A Stage History.” The following collations record substantive changes made to Rule a Wife in the editions of 1763, 1776, Butters, and 1811. A “+” following the siglum indicates that the subsequent printed editions collated here adopted that change. Changes made in John Philip Kemble’s personal copy of the prompt-book (1811MS) are selectively collated, as are the changes to Act 5 recorded in Folger Library manuscript W.b. 466, which is an intermediate stage of Garrick’s revision between 1763 and 1776. The editions recorded here printed the play “as performed,” and so are the most detailed account to survive of the probable content of many performances. Most of the numerous post-1776 editions of Rule a Wife outside of collections of Beaumont and Fletcher’s Works followed one of these texts. The play was printed often in anthologies and alone. Therefore, the following is a record of not only the forms in which the play was most often seen, but also in which it was most widely read.

It was a convention of acting editions (as early as the 1676 quarto of Hamlet) to print a play in full and to mark lines intended for omission with a double apostrophe. In the following collations no distinction is made between lines so marked and lines not printed. Additions were often, but not consistently, italicized; such typographical

165 Pedicord and Bergmann edited 1776a in The Plays of David Garrick Vol. 6, and collated the eighteenth-century acting editions, but did not note the variants of 1811 (for obvious reasons). They collated 1776a against Saintsbury’s 1914 edition Rule a Wife, which is the least reliable modern edition, rather than Q1, which undermines some of their apparatus.
distinctions are ignored. The typography, spelling, and punctuation of revisions and additions are modernized in accordance with the editorial principles of this edition. The same is true of the additional passages quoted from the manuscript W.b. 466. The objective here is to present a record of changes made for performance (or planned performance), not a diplomatic transcript. Therefore its text is presented using the same conventions as the other texts. Some cancellations and interlineations are represented (by strike-through for cancellations and carets surrounding interlineations) because these changes record an intermediate stage of revision (see 5.3.93-103, for example). While it is not certain that any of the versions of Act 5 recorded in MS W.b. 466 were ever performed, a few pencilled notes by a prompter indicate that it at least reached the rehearsal stage. The manuscript contains Act 5 of the play in a form very close to what would become 1776 (5.1 is cut, 5.4 follows 5.2, and 5.5 follows 5.3), and the following selective collations include additions to the play that were later cut. These additions give a partial record of Garrick’s continuing process of revising the play. Most significantly, the manuscript contains two additional scenes featuring Margarita and Cacafogo, and an addition to Perez’s final speech.

The revised and reordered scenes of Act 5 first printed in 1776 continued to be tinkered with, and there are also variants between 1776a and 177b. This fact creates the need of collations within collations. In order to present an immediately visible sense of these changes, the additional passages are based on 1776a (unless otherwise noted) and substantive variants from that text are given in angled brackets justified to the right-hand

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166 Many of the changes in the MS are recorded on pasted-in slips of paper which unfortunately obscure the text under them. Other rejected additions are partially visible under the paste-ins, but are not recorded here.
margin. Hopefully, this presents an easily navigated synoptic text. The changes made to speech headings necessitated by Kemble’s assignment of personal names to minor characters are ignored. Stage directions adopted in the main text are not noted here.

**Prologue**

1-25] _om. Butters 1811_

1.1

0.1] SCENE, _a chamber._ 1776 _Butters_; SCENE I. / Don Juan’s Lodgings. 1811

7-9 The . . . numbers] _om. 1763+

12 For my _alférez_] _om. Butters_

12-13 had . . . protesteth] _om. 1763+

18-20 he . . . hopes] _om. 1776+

47 Don Juan—] Don Juan,—hem! hem!— 1811

47 How you itch] _om. 1763 1776a 1811_

49 Do your eyes glow now?] _om. 1763 1776a 1811_

56-57 Maybe . . . ’em.] _om. 1776+

60 SD] “Perez x behind to Estifania, who stands a little retired –L. and tries to persuade her to unveil.” _1811MS_

71 SD] “Perez signs to Vasco to follow Juan & Clara, and get out of the way.” _1811MS_

89-90 I . . . open?] _om. 1763 1811; will . . . open? om. 1776 Butters_

92 She will draw sure] _om. 1763+

98 And . . . me] _om. 1763_

117-19] _marked as an aside 1811_
I fear a fly. *om. 1763+

**1.2**

Scene 1.2 *om. 1776+

26-27 She . . . on’t. *om. 1763

**1.3**

0.1 SD ] SCENE, a street, Estifania crosses the stage. Enter a servant of Michael Perez, after her. 1776+ (subst.)

3 SD ] Enter Estifania, curtsies, and exit. 1776 Butters (subst.)

4 curtsy ] courtesy.— / Madam, I am your most obedient servant. 1811

6-11 She . . . tidings. *om. 1763+

**1.4**

0.1 ] SCENE, a chamber in Margarita’s house. 1776 Butters; SCENE III. /

Margarita’s Country-House. 1811

0.1 three Old Ladies. ] Victoria and Isabel. 1811

8 ’Tis . . . with. *om. 1811

16-17 To . . . not. *om. 1763+

**1.5**

0.1 ] SCENE, a street. 1776+

17-19 Canst . . . me. *om. 1811

24-25 How . . . sir. *om. 1811
29.1 SD ] Enter Cacafogo, with a Bag of Money. 1811 (after l. 32)

30 Oh ] (Cacafogo without.) / Cacafogo. Ay, ay,—enough, enough. / Alonzo. O 1811

30 another . . . sake ] om. 1763; let . . . sake om. 1776+

38 SD ] Puts up his Money. 1811

40 SD ] Draws his Sword. 1811

46 SD ] He attempts to kick Leon. 1811

46-47 You . . . fellow. ] om. 1763+

1.6

0.1 SCENE, a chamber in Margarita’s house. 1776 Butters; SCENE V. / Margarita’s Town-House. 1811

5 SD ] Kisses her. 1811

18-21 The suits . . . parallel. ] om. 1811

31-32 day-beds, and such ] om. 1811

45-46 My rial . . . direction, ] om. 1763

57-58 I am . . . me, ] om. 1811

61-63 a thousand . . . too ] A thousand ducats too in ready gold, / As rich clothes too

1763+

72 I’ll stir it better ere you sleep ] Ah, 1811

2.1

0.1 SCENE, an apartment in Margarita’s house. 1776 Butters

4-5 Yet . . . question ] om. 1776+

6-11 Credit . . . fed ] om. 1763+
11-12 I desire . . . must have. ] And such a husband would I find, as I / Can govern at my will, and still remain / The mistress of my fortune and myself— / One that will never pry into my pleasures: For pleasure I must have. 1811

14-15 As . . . more. ] om. 1811

25 And clears all passages. ] om. 1811

28-29 One . . . maker. ] om. 1811MS

34 lusty ] yours 1763; comely 1776a 1811

35-44 Methinks . . . lady ] om. 1763

37 But . . . business. ] om. 1776+

43-45 I’ll . . . end, ] om. 1776+

47-48 He . . . complexion. ] om. 1763+

50-51 A good fellow . . . credit ] om. 1811MS

50 wears good clothes ] but wants good Clothes. 1763; and has good clothes, if he knew how to wear ’em. 1776+

56-59 Has no . . . honourable. ] om. 1811

62 I shall add branches to adorn him ] om. 1776+

2.2

0.1 ] SCENE, a street. 1776+

0.1 Alonzo ] Alonzo and Sanchio 1811

21-23 and I . . . still ] om. 1763+

29 Alonzo. You need none but her tabor. ] om. 1763+

30-37 Maybe . . . contentedly. ] om. 1776 Butters

38 My mistress ] Sir, sir,— / Perez. Well, sir? / Vasco. My mistress 1811
44 Alonzo ] my friends 1811
46-47 Tell . . . him, ] om. 1776 Butters

2.3

0.1 ] SCENE, a chamber. 1776 Butters; Margarita’s Country-House. 1811
0.1 the [Old] Ladies ] Victoria, Isabel 1811
4-6 He . . . likely man. ] om. 1763+

7 good presence ] comely countenance 1776+

7 pray ye come this way ] after l. 10 1811
8 Of a lusty body ] om. 1763+
25 busied ] abused Butters
26 or heare of? ] here? Butters
27-32 Margarita. Let . . . learn. ] 1776+ revise:

Margarita. Come, salute me.

Leon. Ma’am!

Margarita. How the fool shakes! I will not eat you, sir.

Can’t you salute me?

Leon. Indeed I know not, but if your ladyship will please to instruct me,

sure I shall learn.

Margarita. Come on, then.

Leon. Come on, then. [He kisses her.

29-32 Beshrew . . . instructed ] om. 1763

44-45 As I . . . with ye ] om. 1776+; And . . . ye om. 1763
54-55 a strong . . . lips ] om. 1763+
72 wench. ] wench. / Margarita. (Without.) Come, sir, come. 1811 (which specifies staggered exits: Isabel and Victoria, then Margarita, then Leon and Altea.)

2.4

0.1 ] SCENE, a grand Salon. 1776 Butters; Margarita’s Town-House. 1811
3-6 and the ablest . . . man ] om. 1763+
17 For . . . bold ] om. 1763 1811
24-29 How . . . pay him. ] om. 1763+
48 cuckold ye ] wrong ye, sir 1811MS
60 taught tricks. ] caught by tricks. 1776a
66 Maid. My . . . come ] Clara. Your mistress, as I live,—your mistress come! 1811
86-88 Nor . . . she has. ] om. 1763
88 what ] I hate such 1763+
90-91 this is too big / For a bordello ] This house is, sure, too big for a bordello 1811
93 lady. ] lady.— / You’ve gained a proper man too. 1811 (subst.)
102-3 Or . . . gone. ] om. 1776+
103 SD ] Exeunt Leon, Margarita, and her Attendants. 1811
107 To milk the lover on ] om. 1763+
113 After . . . him ] om. 1776a 1811MS
419

121-22 is’t not . . . help ] om. 1763+


Perez. No? / Estifania. No. / Per. Oh,— 1811

126 Would . . . too. ] om. 1763 1811

129 the goods ] my trunks 1763+

131 be. / Perez. ’Tis well then. ] lodge. / Perez. (Returns.) But, Estifania,— 1811

132 Well. ] But for four days? / Estifania. Four days.—Begone, begone.— 1811


139 ladyship. ] ladyship. / Margarita. Come, lead me. 1776 Butters

3.1

0.1 ] SCENE, a chamber. 1776 Butters; Margarita’s Town-House. 1811

0.1 and Boy ] om. 1776a 1811

2-4 Now . . . credit? ] om. 1763+

8-10 The pleasure . . . envy ] om. 1763+

18-22 For . . . too ] om. 1763+

24 SD ] No song is given here in any editions, but it is the most likely position for

“There’s not a Swain on the plain.”

There’s not a swain on the plain,

Would be blessed like me, Oh!

Could you but, could you but,

Could you but on me smile.

But you appear so severe,

That trembling with fear,
My heart goes pit a pat, pit a pat,

Pit a pat all the while.

If you cry, must I die,

You make no reply, but look shy,

And with a scornful eye

Kill me by your cruelty.

Oh! can you be, can you be, can you be,

Can you be, can you be, can you be,

Can you, can you, can you be too hard to me. (Purcell, et al. 26)

24-28 And to . . . Lady, ] om. 1763+

28 In all ] They are 1811

40 bonnet ] hat 1776b Butters

54-55 And . . . service. ] I thank you, sir— 1776 1811 (subst.)

59 The house perfumed ] om. 1776+

59-60 Now . . . me ] om. 1763+

61 Go, get your best clothes on, but ] What do you here?—Go in; and, 1811

63 cleanly ] handsomely 1776a; handsome 1776b 1811

64-65 Leon. That’s . . . army. ] om. 1811MS

70 to prepare yourself ] sir, as I bade you? 1811

70-71 Why . . . course ] om. 1776a; May . . . course, om. 1811

72-74 A portly . . . spurring. ] om. 1763+

97 Such . . . produces ] om. 1763 1811MS

101-2 And . . . lust. ] om. 1763

101 stories ] wantonness 1811
101 lust ] wantonness  1776 Butters  1811 (Q1 reads “last”)

108-10 And how . . . commands ] om. 1763; The piece . . . commands om. 1776+

131 Altea. ] Leon. 1763+

131 You ] Altea. You 1763+

3.2

0.1 ] SCENE, an ordinary apartment. 1776a; SCENE a Chamber. 1776b Butters; A very mean Lodging-House. 1811

0.1 SD ] “Deal Table. / Three-legged Stool. / Lighted Candle. / in a broken / bottle.”

1811MS

0.1 Perez ] Perez discovered, seated. 1811; & smoking 1811MS

8-10 The fumes . . . gold-finder ] om. 1763

9 And . . . marmalade ] om. 1776+

13 going ] coming 1811

16-17 My lungs . . . sorts ] om. 1763+

36-37 The . . . forever ] om. 1763

41 Break my neck rather ] Break my fast? Break my neck rather 1763+

48 There’s . . . both ] om. 1763; they must both, om. 1776+

60 And for the stuff. ] om. 1776+

3.3

0.1 ] SCENE, a street. 1776+

11-16 Juan. Are . . . charity. ] om. 1811

45-46 To . . . scrivener. ] om. 1811
3.4

0.1] SCENE, an ordinary apartment. 1776a; SCENE, a Chamber. 1776b Butters; A very mean Lodging-House. 1811

0.1 an old Woman, and Maid. ] dragging in an Old Woman and her Daughter, crying clamorously. 1811

4 what picklock spirit ] om. 1776b+

9 The palsy and pick locks ] om. 1776b+

14-15 truly, / Truly ] duly and truly 1763+

15 I think so ] Duly and truly my wife, I think so 1763+

19 husbands. ] husbands. / Perez. The devil she has! 1811

24 what’s the lady’s name, wench ] om. 1763 1776 Butters

26-27 but . . . played ] om. 1811

28-32 Am I . . . fair. ] om. 1811

33 Now . . . undone ] om. 1811

34-36 This . . . sweetly. ] om. 1763 1776b Butters; This . . . cousin om. 1776a

50 civil ] single 1763+

53 civil ] single 1763+

54 flay ] slay Butters 1811 (Q1 reads “flea”)

59 whore ] wanton 1811

60-61 yours, sir, / But these ] yours.—(Aside.) Oh, mercy o’ me! This trick, I fear, / Will cost me dear.—These 1811

61 firked a pretty living ] lived / Upon picking up 1776b Butters

63 She has served me faithfully ] She has firked me finely 1763 1776a 1811; She has picked me finely 1776b; She has picked me up finely Butters

64 whore ] jilt 1811

65-67 I hope . . . ’em ] om. 1763

69-71 And read . . . tests ] om. 1763

71 And make . . . tests ] om. 1776b+

73 meat for this week ] meat, old hag 1811

74-75 A . . . box ] om. 1763

75 SD ] Seizes her. 1811

78-79 hang ye presently. ] 1811 revises:

be the death of you. (Perez flings the Old Woman against her

Daughter, throws them both down, and exits.)

Old Woman. O villain!—Murder! Murder!—Villain, Rogue!—

Anna-Maria, child, where are you? Help me.

Daughter. (Gets up, and raises her Mother.) So—Are you hurt, mama?

Old Woman. I’m killed!—My hip!

My shoulder!—Is this usage for the fair sex!

78-79 Old Woman. And . . . mother. ] om. 1763 1776b Butters 1811

79 mother. ] mother. / (Pushes her down and Exit.) / Old Woman. Oh the rogue! the villain! Is this usage for the fair sex! 1776 Butters (SD not in 1776a)
0.1 ] SCENE, a grand apartment. 1776a; SCENE, A Grand Saloon. 1776b Butters;
Margarita’s Town-House. /[Musick.] 1811

2 Hung wantonly ] om. 1811

3 It . . . banquet ] om. 1811

22 Bring in the Dukes meat ] Serve in the dinner. 1811; ~ (The Duke & Margarita
confer) 1811.

23 Juan. ] Alonzo. 1811

24 I had ] Juan. I had 1811

25-36 Cacafogo. I’ll . . . away too. ] om. 1763

27-36 And some . . . away too. ] om. 1776 Butters

27-34 And some . . . taught us. ] om. 1811

36.1 SD ] richly dressed. 1811

50 rascal ] rascal. / Cacafogo. I’ll talk with you another time. (Exit.) 1763; after l. 52

1776+

51-52 Provoke . . . ball. ] om. 1763

55-58 A flirted . . . man ] om. 1763+

58 I am astonished ] om. Butters

62 And of your age ] om. 1763 1776a

64 you had thought . . . coxcomb ] om. 1763

65 foul . . . ye] rudeness meant ye 1811

69 ’tis not so ] om. 1776 Butters

75 ’Tis mine ] ’Tis my house 1811MS

76 I am ] This house is mine: I’m 1811MS
77 you have nothing ] Your house? Why, you’ve nothing 1811; You? Why you’ve nothing 1811MS

80-81 Margarita. As . . . madam, ] 1763+ revise:

Margarita. ’Tis well.

Leon. It shall be better.

Margarita. As you love me, give way.

Leon. I will give none, Madam,

86-87 A young . . . too ] om. 1763

87 An itching ] A wanton 1776 Butters

99-100 Juan. Brave . . . now. ] om. 1776+

104 Get ] I will abroad, and hear no more of this— / Get 1811

115 weep. ] weep—Draw, Sir. 1776+

115-117 They are . . . not. ] om. 1811

116 I . . . pity ] om. 1763+

118-20 She . . . orient, ] om. 1763

119-20 Else . . . orient. ] om. 1776+

125 SD ] The Duke advances on him. 1811

129 I . . . ye ] after l. 124 1763

129-30 I . . . me.] Mercy forsake me. I have a cause will kill / A thousand of ye.

Seward 1776+

134-38 His . . . honour ] om. 1811

136 No . . . monster ] om. 1763 1776 Butters

139-40 Let . . . bury him ] om. 1776 Butters

141 ready ] ready enough 1811; enough crossed out 1811MS
145  Duke.  I’ll cross your joy yet. ] after l. 197 1763

148-49  Sancho.  Has . . . husk. ] om. 1763+

151  pretty ] good-natured pretty 1776 1811

152  Leon, another darer come? ] om. 1763+

155  It is ] Yes, that’s she borrowed by house for the four days, / It is 1811

161  You . . . girl ] after “halter” l. 162 1763+

162  SD ] Juan, Alonso, and Sancho, observe Perez, and enjoy his perplexity. 1811

163  Pray, speak truly. ] om. 1776+

170  Sanchio. What . . . you. ] om. 1763+

175-78, 182, 190, 191  SD ] 1811 adds copious laughter for Alonzo and Sanchio:
repeating “Ha! ha! ha!” after and during these lines.

176-77  Juan. Is . . . yet? ] om. 1811MS

191  SD ] Alonso and Sancho laugh at him, and strive to hold him. 1811

193  wife. ] wife. / Leon. What then, sir? / Perez. Why then I’d give the devil one to fetch
the other. 1763;  wife. / Leon. What then, sir? / Perez. No matter if the devil had one to
fetch the other. 1776+

194  Come near ] walk in 1776+

197  Juan. Thou . . . thee. ] om. 1763+

4.1

0.1  ] SCENE, a street. 1776+

1  go ] om. 1776 1811

2  This pilf’ring whore ] om. 1811
13-14 Perez. I . . . too. ] Perez. I’ve been—/ Estifania. Where you should not, I’ve very little doubt. 1811

16-22 In . . . Babel. ] om. 1763;
16-17 In . . . confessions. ] om. 1811

20-24 At gossipings . . . for ye, ] om. 1776a
20-22 At gossipings . . . Babel] om. 1776b+

37-39 tipped . . . comes too ] drunk, he quarrels, then I hear of him 1763
38 whores ] wenches 1811; quarrels 1811MS
39 If . . . too ] om. 1811MS
41 Amongst . . . women ] om. 1811

52 stinking overstewed, poor, pocky ] stinking, nasty, incorrigible 1763; stinking overstewed incorrigible 1776 Butters; subtle, cheating, incorrigible, 1811

65 It . . . sir ] om. 1811

74 A . . . matters ] om. 1763
76 Worse . . . for ] om. 1763

78 dog ] monkey 1763+ (except 1776a)

85-87 And . . . pilgrims ] om. 1763+

93-94 A . . . you. ] om. 1763
93 A kind of candlestick, ] A copper, a copper captain 1776+

93 my husband ] om. 1811

95-96 Perez. Is there . . . hangings? ] 1811 revises:

   Perez. Is there no house then?

   Estifania. No.

   Perez. Nor no grounds about it?
Estifania. No.

Perez. No hangings?

Estifania. No.

Perez. Nor plate?

Estifania. No, no, no, no—

97 justice. ] justice. / (Perez sings.—Estif. sings.) 1763 1776 Butters; justice. / Perez. (sings) Tee ty tum ty, &c. / Estifania. (sings.) Tee ty tum ty, &c. 1811

104-5 you . . . after ] om. 1763

105 shirts ] linen 1776a; things 1811

109 However I forgive thee ] om. 1811

116 straight ] virtuous 1811

121 ass ] ass. / Cacafogo. (Without.) Scoundrel! rascal! 1811MS

121 I’ll . . . else. ] om. 1763+

128-32 it looked . . . him ] om. 1763+

133 cuckold ] monster 1811

139 “Love . . . together,” ] om. 1763+

150 Do not forget thyself ] om. 1811

170 dukes ] dukes.—Come, come. 1811

170 Estifania. Green . . . sippets. ] om. 1763 1776 Butters

4.2

0.1 ] SCENE, a Chamber. 1776 Butters; A Room in the Duke’s Palace. 1811

0.1 ] Duke ] Duke, with a paper in his hand 1811

6-7 And . . . him? ] om. 1763 1776 Butters; And . . . height om. 1811
8  Sanchio. ] Alonzo. 1811

9-18  was she . . . thus. ] om. 1763 1776 Butters

9-16  was she . . . friends. ] om. 1811

24-25  And . . . little. ] om. 1776 Butters; And . . . too, om. 1811

25  let’s attend a little. ] do but wait a little. / Come, let’s go see how my plot takes with him. 1811

4.3

0.1  ] SCENE, another Chamber. 1776 Butters (subst.); Margarita’s Town-House.

1811

13-17  ] 1811 simplifies the staging by directing Lorenzo and the Servant to enter
together and exit in turn. 1763 and 1776a eliminate Lorenzo’s entrance altogether and
the Servant’s exit, so that the Servant apparently takes Lorenzo’s following lines, though
the speech headings are not changed.

17  Go take ] Go you, Lorenzo, take 1811

23  hear ] hear, Lorenzo 1776b

25-32  And you . . . quickly. ] And you and all; all, must go. / Lorenzo. Why Pedro,

Vasco, Diego. 1763; 1776+ revise:

Servant. Must my mistress, go, sir?

Leon. Ay, your mistress, and you, and all must go.

I will not leave a turnspit behind me,

All must go. <All must go. ] om. 1811>

Servant. Why Pedro, Vasco, Diego, come, help me, boys.

<come . . . boys. ] help boys, help! 1811>
34 And . . . dearly ] *om.* 1776 Butters

35 SD ] *Exit Juan.* 1811

35.1 Margarita, led ] Margarita, *with the commission in her hand, attended* 1811

56 Be in peace you shall not. *Knocking within.* ] I don’t intend you shall. / *(Hammering without.)* 1811

62.1 Coachman. ] Lorenzo. 1763 1776 Butters; Lorenzo, *in a great hurry.* 1811

64 it. ] it. / Lorenzo. Here—quick, boys, quick—the coach. 1811

75-87 Margarita. I am . . . lullaby. ] *om.* 1811

79-84 I’ll . . . now. ] *om.* 1763 1776 Butters

92.1 SD ] *and Juan.* 1811

117-18 Which . . . unnnoble ] *om.* 1763; And I . . . unnnoble *om.* 1776+

123 her to. ] her to, / Fie, fie, for shame! 1776+; 1811*MS adds* “The Duke retires angrily.”

123.1 *Enter Perez* ] *(Hammering without.)* / Perez. *(without.)* Holla! Holla! What are you all about? 1811

125 SD ] *Enter Perez.* 1811

125 What cousin’s this? ] *om.* 1811

147 SD ] *A knock within.* 1776b Butters; *Hammering without.* 1811

152 place, you are ] place. / Leon. Ha, ha, ha! / Perez. Ha, ha, ha!—You’re 1811

164 SD ] Towards *Left drawing his Sword.* 1811*MS

164 Leon. For . . . it. ] *om.* 1811

172 yield ] yield—Do but look at him. 1776+

174-76 I have . . . we do ] *om.* 1763

182 SD ] *The Duke advances at Leon’s left.* 1811*MS
another. } another— / You’re welcome, gentlemen—you’re very welcome. 1811
’twas . . . wife. } om. 1763 1776 Butters; upon . . . wife. om. 1811
dearly } dearly. Hark ye, sir, 1776 Butters; dearly—(To Perez.) Hark ye, sir—
/ Perez. Yes, ma’am— 1811
I . . . thing } om. 1763+
your . . . consider } om. 1776 1811; Go . . . consider. om. Butters
sweet } sweet Mahound 1763+
cousin, / I should be glad, sir } cousin. / You are welcome—welcome all—my
cousin too— / We are soldiers, and should naturally do for one another. 1776+
Juan. These are fine toys. } om. 1763 1776 Butters; Juan, Alonzo, Sanchio. Ha, ha, ha! 1811
try ye } do’t.— / Come, and give orders for your easy voyage. (Going with
Margarita.) 1811
grace, } grace— / (To the Duke who, with his friends, is following.) 1811
Duke. If . . . visions. } om. 1763+; Leon. There liest your way—there. 1776b+

5.1
Scene 5.1 om. 1763+

5.2
SCENE, a street. 1776+; One that has not been used in the Play. 1811MS
Phalaris’s . . . for’t } om. 1763+
To burn . . . salamanders; } om. 1811
Tell . . . with me } om. 1763+
Enter Margarita, Cacafogo following her.

Margarita. Who taught you this impertinence? Be mute, sir.

When was it, frightful thing, you dreamed to love me?

Dare you affront me with your hideous passion,

Who gave you this authority? Declare, sir.

Cacafogo. That which gives all authority—my money.
I have the means to make myself well looked on;
Money’s the sovereign ruler of the senses,
And he who bears it, bears them in command.

*Margarita.* Where are my servants?

*Cacafogo.* They are mine now, lady,

I’ve paid them for their absence. Where’s the mind
Money can’t market with? Come then, madam,
I have no phrases blown with sighs and zephyrs,
Nor shall I speak of fevers or of agues,
Nor will I promise to commit self-murder,
Though you should scorn me—no, let poor rogues perish.
We that have means can make life worth our while.
Behold, fair mistress, I would woo thee nobly.
Here, here’s a casket worth a monarch’s ransom.
Within it jewels which all gems outshine,
Save those your eyelids shelter. Here are rubies,
Red as the roses in your glowing cheeks,
Bright as vermilion of your velvet lip.
Nay, lady Margarita, do not leave me.

*Lay the casket upon the table.*

*Margarita.* Assuredly I shall, sir. What, Not leave thee?
Go talk your mind to fish-drabs, or to ale-wives,
But woo not ladies. Thou, thee a lover?
What mad conceit could make thee think so proudly?
Cacafogo. My money, that’s my prompter. ’Tis my compass; I sail by it. It brings me into harbour.

Why, lady Margarita, I have found thee.

Hast thou not entertained voluptuousness? Why, so have I. Thou art pursuing pleasures —

Why, so am I. Hast thou not chose a husband?

Margarita. Be dumb this moment.

Cacafogo. Nay, now, angry lady—

Margarita. If thou should dare t’advance but one foot farther, Or, bear-like, load me with thy cumbrous courtship—

Presumes thou on thy wealth?

Cacafogo. Yea, truly, lady.

It is the Ladder for unconquered boldness—

We’re now alone, no Eye nor Ear can reach us,

I’ve sealed them up.

Margarita. Thou insolent—Alone!

Wretch thou shalt find my husband’s within— (Call)

Don Leon— (Go to the side to call)

Cacafogo. Lady, hold—(aside) that name’s a scarecrow.

Margarita. Yet you must see him, sir, he’ll teach you distance.

Cacafogo. Nay, madam.

Margarita. Husband!

Cacafogo. Hold, dear lady!

Margarita. Leon!
Cacafogo. I did but—

Margarita. What thou shalt now—

Cacafogo. Beseech thee, lady, I’ll begone.

Margarita. This moment vanish or—

Cacafogo. I’m going, madam—

Margarita. Away at once.—Leon!

Cacafogo. Nay, good Margarita—

When next I come wife wooing they shall flay me. Exit.

Margarita. Fear be his punishment. Why should such men

^Let thy fear bear thee hence^

Such worthless beings, bold in base conceit

^Hence with thy F^

Dare to presume ladies will make them welcome.

Meet it is that our sex such courtship scorn,

By merit only women should be worn—Exit

Then hence thou abject thing. Be taught thy distance,

or thy base fears shall come in real terrors.

Hence with thy fear, or punishment shall reach thee. Exit.

Scene: Street.

Enter Cacafogo, returning from Don Leon’s house.

Cacafogo. Beshrew me, but I’ve ’scaped a threatened tempest.

A pestilence on jilts, when next I court them,

Or trust one foot on t’other side yon threshold—
No sweetheartsing for me among fine ladies,
Such very dainty damsels. Headaches hurt them!
Henceforth I’ll make my markets where my wealth
Shall cater for me, and command a kindness,
And not be gulled again, or made an ass of. Exit.

0.1 ] SCENE, a chamber. 1776 Butters; Margarita’s Town-House. 1811
9-18 And your . . . shadows ] om. 1763
9 And . . . honour ] om. 1776+
10-12 Why . . . embraces ] om. 1811MS
13-18 Oh . . . shadows ] om. 1811
15-18 ] om. 1776 Butters
22-24 visit . . . goodness ] om. 1763; visit . . . pleasure om. 1776+
24 linked ] bound 1776a
27.1 Servant ] Lorenzo 1776+
36.1 SD ] Sancho and Alonso, with their swords drawn, support the Duke, who has a
handkerchief stained with blood wrapped round his right arm. 1811MS
41 And . . . thus ] om. 1776 1811
41 And . . . charity ] om. Butters
44 gentlemen ] om. 1776b Butters
44 carry him ] bear him in 1776b+
47.1 Enter Juan. ] Enter Juan, with his sword drawn. after l. 49SD 1811
48-49 Juan. Doctors . . . peace. ] om. 1763+
51 And . . . ye ] om. 1776+
66-71 Have . . . widow. ] om. 1763 1776a Butters 1811

66-67 Have . . . for? ] om. 1776b

69-71 Have . . . widow. ] om. 1776b

72-72 Thou wilt . . . Thou ] You’ll . . . You 1811 (throughout scene)

75 If . . . mad ] om. 1763

75 run stark mad ] shall be desperate 1811MS

77 shall be desperate ] run stark mad 1811MS

81 I’ll . . . opened ] om. 1763

81-82 I’ll . . . ye ] om. 1811MS

84 that she ] you shall 1811

89 lose. ] lose. Thou foolish, wicked woman. 1776+

91 My wantonness ] om. 1763

93 nobleness— ] 1776+ add (not in W.b. 466):

Leon. Beware, beware—have you no fetch now!

Margarita. No, by my repentance, no.

Leon. And art thou truly, truly honest? <And ] But 1776b Butters>

Margarita. These tears will shew it.

<These ] My 1776b+; tease will ] life shall 1811>

93 SD ] after l. 94 1776+

94-103 ] W.b. 466 revises:

I take you up, and wear ye next my heart,

See you be worth it, now play your prize.

You say you dare be honest, I’ll put you to your test.

Enter Altea.
Margarita. Rest yourself secure, sir.

Give me a candle. Pass away in Silence.

Exeunt.

95 Now ] Altea. Madam—/ Leon. Now 1811MS

96 fellow ] fat fellow 1776b; fat fellow below 1811

97-103 ] 1776+ revise:

Leon. ’Tis Cacafogo; keep him from the duke,

The duke from him; anon he’ll yield us laughter.

Altea. Where is it, please you, that we shall detain him?

He seems at war with reason, full of wine.

Leon. To the cellar with him; ’tis the drunkard’s den,

Fit cover for such beasts. Should he be resty,

Say I’m at home; unwieldy as he is,

He’ll creep into an auger-hole to shun me.

Altea. I’ll dispose him there. Exit.

Leon. Now, Margarita, comes your trial on:

The duke expects you, acquit yourself to him.

I put you to the test; you have my trust,

My confidence, my love.

Margarita. I will deserve ’em. Exit.

Leon. My work is done, and now my heart’s at ease.

I read in every look she means me fairly;

And nobly shall my love reward her for’t.

He who betrays his rights, the husband’s rights,
To pride and wantonness, or who denies
   Affection to the heart he has subdued,
   Forfeits his claim to manhood and humanity.  Exit.

99-100 ] Leon. I . . . willingly ] om. 1763

Scene 5.5 follows Scene 5.3  W.b. 466  1776+

5.4

Scene 5.4 follows Scene 5.2  W.b. 466  1776+

0.1 ] SCENE, a street. 1776a; SCENE, another street. 1776b+
4-5 No . . . thee? ] om. 1763
7 And comest upon me,] om. 1763
14 That . . . women ] om. 1763
16 But . . . me? ] om. 1811
33 Hold ] Hold, hold 1763+
34 What, thine own ] what, would you / Kill your 1763 1776b Butters 1811; what, would you / Kill your own 1776a
34 husband? . . . husband ] dear husband?—Ah!— / Estifania. Ah!—. . . dear husband 1811
43 me. ] me. / Estifania. Did you never know that before? 1811

5.5

Scene 5.5 follows Scene 5.3  W.b. 466  1776+
1-10 Enter . . . Altea. ] om. 1776+
SCENE, a chamber. <A Chamber in Margarita’s Town-House. 1811>

Duke discovered in a night-gown.

<in . . . gown ] upon a couch 1811>

Duke. Why, now this is most excellent invention.

I shall succeed, spite of this huffing husband.

I can but smile to think most wary spouses

The soonest are deceived. <I can . . . deceived om. 1776b Butters>

Enter Margarita.

Who’s there? My love? <My love? om. 1811>

Margarita. ’Tis I, my lord.

Duke. Are you alone, sweet friend?

Margarita. Alone, and come to enquire how your wounds are.

Duke. I have none, lady; not a hurt about me;

<SD ] Taking the handkerchief off his arm. 1811MS>

My damages I did but counterfeit,

And feigned the quarrel, to enjoy you, lady.

<to . . . lady ] only for your sake 1811>

I am as lusty, and as full of health,

As high in blood—

Margarita. As low in blood, you mean.

Dishonest thoughts debase the greatest birth;

The man that acts unworthily, though ennobled,
Sullies his honour.

Duke. Nay, nay, my Margarita;

<Margarita. As low . . . Nay, nay, ] om. 1811>

Come to my couch, and there let’s lisp love’s language.

Margarita. Would you take that which I’ve no right to give?

<Would ] Hold, hold, my lord:— / Would 1811>

<give ] steal Butters>

Steal wedlock’s property; and in his house,

Beneath the roof of him that entertains you, <line om. 1776b Butters>

Would you his wife betray?—Will you become

Th’ungrateful viper, who, restored to life,

Venomed the breast which saved him?

<breast . . . which ] unsuspecting breast . . . that 1811>

Duke. Leave these dull thoughts to mortifying penance;

Let us, while love is lusty, prove its power.

Margarita. Ill wishes, once, my lord, my mind debased;

<Ill . . . debased ] Forbear, my lord:—

Proud follies once, I own, debased my mind 1811>

You found my weakness, wanted to ensnare it.

Shameful, I own my fault, but ’tis repented.

<Shameful, I own ] Great, I allow 1811>

No more the wanton Margarita now, <wanton ] giddy 1811>

But the chaste wife of Leon. His great merit,

His manly tenderness, his noble nature,
Commands from me affection in return,

Pure as esteem can offer. He has won me,

I owe him all my heart.

And all my mended heart’s devoted to him

Duke. Indeed, fair lady, Indeed, fair lady, om. 1811

This jesting well becomes a sprightly beauty.

But sure time is too precious at this instant

In wordy ceremonies to employ it.

Love prompts to celebrate sublimer rights.

I know thy mind, I read thy inclinations,

Thoughts free as air, and wishes warm and wanton.

Let us embrace, voluptuously embrace,

And pant ’midst amorous raptures.

Margarita. They who have happily escaped a snare,

Joyful look backwards on the dangers past.

A love-breathed speech may lure th’incautious jar,

But I’m not to be caught with courtship’s phrase.

My duty’s pleasure now.

No more mementos; let me press you to me,

And stifle with my kisses—

Margarita. Nay, then, within, there!
Enter Leon, Juan, Alonzo, and Sanchio.

Juan. Did you call, my wife, or you, my lord?

Duke. More hurt than ever. Spare your reproach,

I feel too much already.

Leon. I see it, sir—And now your grace shall know

I can as readily pardon as revenge:

Be comforted, all is forgotten.

Duke. I thank you, sir.

Leon. Wife, you are a right one,

And now with unknown nations I dare trust ye.

Juan. No more feigned fights, my lord, they never prosper.

Enter Lorenzo.

Lorenzo. Please you, sir,

We cannot keep this gross fat man in order.

He swears he'll have admittance to my lady,

And reels about, and clamours outrageously.

Juan. No more feigned fights, my lord, they never prosper.
Leon. Let him come up.—Wife, here’s another suitor

We forgot; he’s been sighing in the cellar,
Making my casks his mistresses.

Will your grace permit us to produce a rival?

Duke. No more on that theme, I request, Don Leon.

<Cacafogo. (without.) Where is she? where is she?— 1811>

Leon. Here comes the porpoise; he’s devilish drunk.

<he’s devilish drunk. om. 1811>

Let me stand by. <by ] by awhile 1811>

Enter Cacafogo drunk.

<drunk ] drunk, led by Lorenzo and Diego 1811>

Cacafogo. Where is my bona roba? Oh, you’re all here. Why, I don’t fear snap-dragons—impotential, powerfully potioned—I can drink with Hector, and beat him too. Then what care I for captains; I’m full of Greek wine, the true, ancient courage.—Sweet Mrs. Margarita, let me kiss thee, your kisses shall pay me for his kicking.

<as verse 1776b Butters>

<impotential . . . captains om. 1811; Your . . . kicking om. 1811>

Leon. What would you?

Cacafogo. Sir!

Leon. Lead off the wretch.

Duke. Most filthy figure, truly.

Cacafogo. Filth! Oh, you’re a prince, yet I can buy all of you, your wives and all. <all of you ] thy dukedom, I can buy all of you 1776b+>
Juan. Sleep, and be silent.

Cacafogo. Speak you to your creditors, good captain half-pay; I’ll not take thy pawn in.

Leon. Which of the butts is thy mistress?

17-23 Duke. What’s... safe. [om. 1763
26-37 hark... think? [om. 1763
40-45 I heard... I come, I come. [om. 1763
47-49 I plainly... me. [om. 1763
53-71 Margarita. And... more. [om. 1763
74-78 Despise... daylight. [om. 1763
80-85 And like... body. [om. 1763
90-107 Duke. Let... too. [om. 1763
114-15 And... so. [om. 1763
115 Sanchio. ] Sanchio, Cacafogo, and Altea. 1763
120.1-35.1 Enter... Servant ] om. W.b. 466
132 sleep. ] sleep. / Cacafogo. I can buy you all—all—(Exeunt. Cacafogo, Lorenzo, and Diego.) 1811
133 A... too. [om. 1763+
134 sober ] cooled, we’ll 1811
139-40 My... plainly ] om. 1763+
147 whipcord— ] whipcord. / Leon. Ha! ha! ha!— 1811
147 ] W.b. 466 adds:

  Retail stale groceries, half pounds of candles,
  Worsted and inkle, ferreting and bobbing,
And make my shop the gossiping assembly
Where servants may betray their master’s secrets.
And I will gossip with them, rail at great ones,
Pointing out faults in every sovereign’s rule,
And take upon me to direct the whole,
As if, like Atlas, I had power to poise
The world within my arms.

148-55 ] W.b. 466 revises:

Nay you must laugh,
And if you do not laugh now, and laugh heartily,
You are a fool, coz, I’ll be bold to tell you.—

159 Margarita. ] Leon. 1763 (following Seward) W.b. 466; Margarita. 1776 Butters;
Margarita. Sir, let me imitate your nobleness.—Here (Gives Estifania a Purse.) 1811

160 Use . . . gave it. ] om. 1811
163 a soldier. ] my gallant comrades, for the field!— 1811
163 Gentlemen. We all rejoice in’t. ] om. 1763+
164 fortunes. ] fortunes. / Sanchio. Noble Don Leon, so shall I. 1811
165 I ] I too 1811
175 I’ll bring ] Duke. I’ll bring 1776b+
176 And . . . Neptune. ] om. 1763 1776 Butters
181 blind. ] blind. / Leon. You who would lead a happy married life, / Learn first to rule
and then to have a wife. 1763 1811; blind. / Leon. All you who mean to lead a happy
life, / First learn to rule, and then to have a wife. 1776 Butters
Epilogue

1-8 ] om. Butters 1811
Abbreviations


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