Urban Sociability in Ben Jonson's *Epicene*

Hui-chuan Wang
Assistant Professor
Department of English
Tamkang University

ABSTRACT

Ben Jonson's *Epicene, or the Silent Woman*, first performed in 1609/10 by the Children of the Queen's Revels at the Whitefriars theatre is regarded as a precursor to Restoration comedy, devoted to the portrayal of the manners and mores of the "Town," i.e. the fashionable society of London. Unlike most other city comedies of its period, Epicene focuses exclusively on a very narrow social group, the upper classes of Jacobean England. These are people with sufficient wealth and leisure to pursue sociable activities more for the sake of conviviality than for any commercial purpose. Instead of fraudsters, gentlemen with cash flow problems, and dupes ripe for fleecing that city comedies are usually peopled with, *Epicene* features wits, fops, and talkative women. When *Epicene* was written, the fashionable society was in the making around the Strand and its neighbouring streets: Jonson saw the people and their lifestyle, and he did not like what he saw. The playwright assessed their social life by humanist notions of civility and found much to criticize and satirize.

The development of London as the political and social centre of the nation in Tudor and Stuart England drew the landed classes to the capital to settle around the royal court. The notion of civility as politeness and agreeable manners was important in this urban context where one sought to be pleasant and accommodating in company and to avoid offending others. Urbanity gave the urban gentry an identity, but this identity was fragile. A man is known by the company

he keeps; therefore, if he is not careful who he socializes with, his status could be misunderstood.

The narrow social group in Epicene identifies with the culture of the Strand neighbourhood, subscribing to the lifestyles and social rituals of the community. On the other hand, the playwright also highlights the different categories within this group through their practices of sociability. The odd man out in this group is a social recluse who tries to avoid all human contact. The sociable kind is dominated by a trio of witty, suave young men about town who, while offering friendship to fellow gentlemen and gallantry to ladies, actually speak of those people with contempt. The trio constitutes an in-group of elites who judge the taste, manners, and intelligence of others. In the interactions throughout the play we can see that sociability is employed for both social inclusion and exclusion.

姜生《寡言女》中的都市社交

摘要

　　姜生的《寡言女》咸被認為是復辟時期喜劇的前身。本劇描繪十七世紀初期在倫敦逐漸形成的上流社會的社交風貌。十七世紀初期由於幾項因素結合，導致世居英格蘭鄉間的仕紳與貴族階級紛紛聚往倫敦，停留時間日漸增長。連接古老的倫敦城與王宮所在的西敏城之間的大馬路，the Strand，及其周邊街道遂成為上流人士置產賃屋之處。仕紳貴族匯聚一處，彼此往來頻繁，社交禮儀遂日形重要。蓋同儕相處須注意禮貌，配合他人的性情與好惡，避免得罪別人。更由於物以類聚的原則，故擇友須謹慎，以免與不適當之人為伍，而遭旁人看輕。

　　姜生以人文主義對文明禮儀的概念為準，觀察這成形中的上流社會，發現許多值得批判之處，因此在《寡言女》中以嘲諷筆法呈現一群滿口客套裝模作樣的可笑人物。此劇主人翁雖身居都會，卻拒絕與人往來，完全無視上流社會對社交的重視。有三位聰明的年輕人自成一菁英小團體，儼然是社交圈的品味裁判，對不夠聰明的人表面禮尚往來，背後則極盡嘲笑之能事。由此可見，社交亦是區分人己親疏關係的手段。

關鍵詞：社交、禮節、城市喜劇、前現代時期倫敦

Urban Sociability in Ben Jonson's *Epicene*

In studies of early modern English drama the city of London is often characterized as a theatre writ large. Not only was the English capital the centre of commercial theatre, but it was also a space for performances of many kinds, from the display of luxury goods in the shops to the civic pageants and royal progresses through the streets. The city showcased its own economic and political power to impress a viewing public, citizens as well as outsiders. Both theatre and city have been, in turn, likened to the market, where values are compared and negotiated, and commodities bought and sold. The language of the business world -- buying, selling, credit, debt, venture, project, etc. -- found its way into the theatrical world. And the market, no longer bound to the physical limitations of the marketplace but referring to any place of business transactions, encompassed the city.[1] Early modern England was discovering that money makes the world go around.

Jacobean city comedy is a genre that takes a satirical look at the energy, folly, greed, and vanity of the city as a market. The genre articulates many of the social, economical, and cultural shifts of the early seventeenth century: not only was the notion of the market more fluid, but the conceptions of social relations were also changing. Since influential studies of city comedy often point to "greed" as a key feature in the plots of the genre,[2] the social relations in the plays are usually characterized as competitive or confrontational. However, there is no reason to think that, compared with today, early modern society was more driven by greed, self-interest, and individualism. What is often neglected in studies of city comedy is the sociable side of human relations: apart from the pursuit of profit and position,

---

[1] For discussion of the relation of early modern drama to various London locations, see Janette Dillon and Jean E. Howard. For discussion of the similarities between the market and the commercial theatre, see Jean-Christophe Agnew.

[2] L. C. Knights has noticed in Jonson's comedies an "anti-acquisitive attitude" toward the ills of a nascent capitalist system (200). Brian Gibbons describes the plots of money-lending as a "modern manifestation of the sin of avarice" (16). Gail Kern Paster, comparing Jacobean London in city comedy to a predator, identifies the power of the city as "a product of the greediness of the city's embrace, because the city is a version of the Renaissance overreacher, unwilling to let anyone or anything go" (177).

people were also trying to build affable relations with others. Friendship and sociability were "roads to fulfilment" in the early modern period, along with other objectives such as honour and reputation.[3]

City comedy may demonstrate the difficulty of balancing friendship with profitability or, more cynically, present sociability as a front for dishonest dealings. Nevertheless, the dramatis personae do have social lives. If city comedy is, crudely speaking, all about greed for money and/or sex, the plays show how the desirable objects are obtained or lost through sociable activities among friends, neighbours, or business partners. The plots do not revolve so much around actual transactions of valuables or sexual favour as around the creating and maintaining of relations. We have a glimpse of Volpone's enormous wealth when Mosca reads out the inventory of his master's possessions, but the play's main action consists in Volpone receiving visits from his hopeful "heirs." The plate, coins, and jewellery they bring him are "gifts" rather than payments. In short, the pressures and tensions in the world of city comedy can be better understood when we take into account the demands of sociability.

Sociability, "the capacity of human beings to live peacefully without the continuous intervention of a coercive power," is deemed "one of the most enduring ideas of the Enlightenment" (Gordon 96). Indeed, the word Enlightenment evokes images of men enjoying lively conversations or reading the latest newspapers in that iconic space -- the coffee house. And there were plenty of other spaces where one could find good company: taverns, theatres, assembly rooms, salons, clubs, etc. The enlightened self -- polite, accommodating, and good-humoured -- was fashioned by committed socializing. The absence of sociability, or solitude, was described by Samuel Johnson as "one of the greatest obstacles to pleasure and improvement" (qtd. in Porter 22). In the influential journal *Spectator* written by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, Mr. Spectator says he is a regular visitor to several coffee houses and describes how he passes "the evening at Will's in attending the Discourses of several Sets of People, who relieved each other within

---

3 See Keith Thomas.

my Hearing on the Subjects of Cards, Dice, Love, Learning and Politicks" (qtd. in Miller 89). Coffee house sociability led to the formation of clubs, as people in the same trade or with a common interest tended to frequent the same establishment. In the early eighteenth century, 2,000 clubs and societies were said to exist in London: these associations, together with a flourishing print business, spread modern knowledge and up-to-date information to a wide public (Porter 37).

The first coffee house in London was opened in the 1650s. However, this should not be taken to suggest that English people only started to take their social life seriously after the Restoration. Social historians of the earlier period have reminded us that townspeople in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries already participated in a variety of associational life. Phil Withington considers "society," together with the related term "company," two of the key words in the social history of early modern England. Both words, in the sense of companionship or fellowship, were often used interchangeably; they also appeared on the title page of an increasing number of texts printed between 1500 and 1700, with the percentage of appearances first peaking by the 1610s (107-10). The currency of such words indicates "a burgeoning recognition of the power of deliberate and purposeful association" (172). Jonathan Barry argues that diversity of associational life marked the distinctiveness of early modern urban experience as opposed to country life. Moreover, the urban middling sort -- from merchants, professionals, to artisans -- found involvement in associations necessary and beneficial to their interest. The rituals of sociability gave them an identity, while collective action taken by a group could bring in more business for members (95).

With the increasing importance of associational life came concerns about "manners" -- the behavioural habits appropriate for the maintenance of social relations. In *From Courtesy to Civility* Anna Bryson notes that books offering advice on good manners formed a substantial part of the texts printed in England during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Influential works by Continental writers such as Erasmus's *De Civilitate* (1526), Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano* (1528), Della Casa's *Il Galateo* (1558), and Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* (1574), to name

but a few, were translated into English and reissued several times. English writers then followed the Continental lead in describing or theorizing codes of conduct proper to the social elites and those who aspired to that status (29-38).

Bryson observes that the styles and rules of social behaviour of the past, often neglected by historians, have been captured in literary works: "Perhaps it is strange how far social theorists and historians have lagged behind novelists and dramatists in recognizing the active, strategic, highly practical considerations involved in the operation of social codes" (18). She points to the comedy of Ben Jonson as well as Restoration comedy as examples of playwrights dissecting the behavioural conventions of particular social groups and offering satirical commentary on society. Bryson is right in her choice of examples. Of all the literary genres, drama is the most social in nature, in terms of both production and reception. It is commonly written in dialogue, whereby the characters display and negotiate their relations through the ways they talk, gesture, and move. Even in the earliest Greek tragedy, when there was only one actor, the action was between actor and chorus, between individual and community.

To read a city comedy in the context of early modern sociability, I choose Ben Jonson's *Epicene, or the Silent Woman*, first performed in 1609/10 by the Children of the Queen's Revels at the Whitefriars theatre. The play is regarded as a precursor to Restoration comedy, devoted to the portrayal of the manners and mores of the "Town," i.e. the fashionable society of London. Unlike most other city comedies of its period, *Epicene* focuses exclusively on a very narrow social group: the upper classes of Jacobean England. These are people with sufficient wealth and leisure to pursue sociable activities more for the sake of conviviality than for any commercial purpose. Instead of fraudsters, gentlemen with cash flow problems, and dupes ripe for fleecing that city comedies are usually peopled with, *Epicene* features wits, fops, and talkative women. The setting is the Strand and its neighbouring streets, a district in London which in the early seventeenth century was emerging as the centre of a lifestyle marked by leisure and consumption. The Strand, connecting Westminster with the walled city of London, "was neither the court nor exactly

the city, but a fashionable demi-monde between" (Dutton 12). When *Epicene* was written, the fashionable society was still in the making: Jonson saw the people there and their lifestyle, and he did not like what he saw. The playwright assessed their social life by humanist notions of civility and found much to criticize and satirize.

Early seventeenth-century London witnessed the development of the West End, beginning with the building and refurbishing of the nobility's houses along the Strand. The north side of this thoroughfare became a residential area where the aristocracy, the gentry and professional men either built or rented accommodations. The notion of the "Town" was well established in the Caroline period. It was not just a locality covering the Strand and surrounding streets but also a neighbourhood, a community. The development of this community of aristocracy and gentry at this particular time was the result of several factors. The royal Court became more settled in Westminster after Henry VIII took Whitehall Palace as his chief London residence, and the Court drew to the area people seeking royal patronage. In the Jacobean period, parliament met more frequently, thus requiring lords and MPs to stay longer in the capital. The rise in litigation also brought people frequently to the Westminster law courts. Finally, the availability of coaches enabled an entire family to travel together from their country residence to London (Merritt 141).

The concentration of the upper classes in this area had an impact on the economy. In 1609 the New Exchange, Sir Robert Cecil's project, was opened in the Strand. This building, modelled on Sir Thomas Gresham's Royal Exchange, was a meeting place for businessmen as well as an upmarket shopping mall. Cecil commissioned Jonson and Inigo Jones to produce a masque, *Britain's Burse*, to entertain King James on his visit in April 1609 to name the building. Although business in the New Exchange initially fluctuated, slumping in the early 1620s and recovering during the 1630s (Merritt 157), its status as the symbol of conspicuous consumption was recognized from the start. A few months after writing *The Entertainment at Britain's Burse*, Jonson created *Epicene*, in which a visit to the New Exchange is portrayed as a must for the rich. The purchasing power of the aristocracy and gentry came from their land in the country. They collected rents

and the proceeds from farming and then spent the money in London shops and theatres. The trend of the landed classes taking up residence in London was noticed and criticized by many, including the King himself. James I was so concerned as to make a speech to the Star Chamber, urging the nobility and gentry to stay in the country and fulfil their duty of hospitality to their tenants rather than flock to the capital in imitation of foreign habits (Dillon 20). James also blamed the heads of landed families for bowing to pressure from their wives and daughters to bring them to London in pursuit of fashion (Newman 188). But royal proclamations could not stem the tide. Wealth was diverted from the country to the capital as the aristocracy and gentry led their life of conspicuous consumption in London.

The development of London as the political and social centre of the nation in Tudor and Stuart England drew the landed classes to the capital to settle around the royal court. In addition to effects on the economy, this migration led to the development of a "shared, self-contained and exclusive culture of gentry sociability" (Merritt 142). In the countryside a vertical master-servant relationship predominated, with the landowner at the top giving hospitality to his social inferiors. In the city, however, the elites had more chance to socialize with their peers. The notion of civility as politeness and agreeable manners was important in this urban context where one sought to be pleasant and accommodating in company and to avoid offending others. Over time this attention to civility, to the proper conduct of interpersonal relations, came to be a major element in the social identity of the urban elites (Bryson 111-14). Urbanity gave the urban gentry an identity, but this identity was fragile. A man is known by the company he keeps; therefore, if he is not careful who he socializes with, his status could be misunderstood. Conduct literature warns against keeping company with inferiors. On the other hand, in the crowded city one met many strangers whose rank was difficult to ascertain, so it was often decided that one had better defer to them just to be on the safe side (Bryson 136-37).

The narrow social group in *Epicene* identifies with the culture of the Strand neighbourhood, subscribing to the lifestyles and social rituals of the community.

On the other hand, the playwright also highlights the different categories within this group as revealed through their practices of sociability. The odd man out in this group is a social recluse, Morose, who tries to avoid all human contact. The sociable kind is dominated by a trio of witty, suave young men about town who, while offering friendship to fellow gentlemen and gallantry to ladies, actually speak of those people with contempt when they are not around. The trio -- Truewit, Clerimont, and Dauphine -- constitute an in-group of elites who judge the tastes, manners, and intelligence of others. In the interactions throughout the play we can see that sociability is employed for both social inclusion and exclusion.

One of the social norms in this community is to be in company. The characters spend their time visiting each other, inviting people to dinner, or promenading the city together. As Truewit points out, fashionable men "hearken after the next horse race, or hunting match," lay wagers on horses, spend money conspicuously to be noticed by aristocrats, and visit ladies at night to "give 'em the character of every bowler or bettor o' the green" (1.1.33-38).[4] These are the idle pursuits of fashionable men, and Truewit joins them "for company." To while away the hours in the company of one's peers seems the proper lifestyle, and Truewit even criticizes his friend Clerimont for being contented with a very limited range of interests: "his mistress abroad, and his ingle at home, high fare, soft lodging, fine clothes, and his fiddle" (1.1.23-25). Not only are his interests small in number, but they also hardly require Clerimont to go out and socialize much. If the variety of sociable activities defines a fashionable man, not to socialize much is to jeopardize one's reputation in the eyes of one's peers. However, Clerimont's social life is actually not so dull. He has, in fact, just come back from court, the ultimate source of power, fortune, and fashion.

Dinner stands out among the many sociable activities mentioned in *Epicene*. The aptly named Sir Amorous La Foole does not miss an opportunity to invite acquaintances to dine. He believes in hospitality and knows how to entertain guests. As he explains to Clerimont and Dauphine, he has been sent a brace of fat does,

---

4 References to the play are from Richard Dutton's edition.

half a dozen of pheasants, a dozen or two of godwits, and some other fowl, "which I would have eaten while they are good, and in good company" (1.4.46-49). He has invited several ladies and gentlemen: "we'll be very merry, and have fiddlers and dance" (1.4.56-57). This envisaged dinner is later moved, foods and guests, to Morose's house to furnish a wedding feast, which turns out to be just as merry as La Foole could have hoped: the guests enjoy the meal with such abandon that the room is filled with sounds of "the spitting, the coughing, the laughter, the neezing, the farting, dancing, noise of music" (4.1.8-9). This kind of uninhibited behaviour seems the norm of a social dinner. Dauphine was at a dinner which he describes as "such a *Decameron* of sport fallen out! Boccace never thought of the like" (1.3.14-15).

A busy social life is not exclusive to fashionable men. Fashionable women, too, spurn domesticity. The Ladies Collegiates, led by Lady Haughty, live away from their husbands and socialize with gallants, poets, artists, and rich citizens. When they are not entertaining guests at home or paying visits to friends, they are visiting china shops and the New Exchange. Moreover, as Truewit remarks in his warning to Morose against marriage, it is impossible to keep a woman at home since London offers so many attractions: "masques, plays, puritan preachings, mad folks, and other strange sights to be seen daily, private and public" (2.2.34-36). One thing greatly enhances women's mobility and facilitates an active social life: the coach. The Collegiates' advice to Morose's bride is to have her own coach and four horses, so she can go with them to sample the sights of the metropolis.

Why do people insist on passing time together? Perhaps the feeling of living in isolation is too oppressive. Lady Anne Clifford, Countess of Dorset, wrote in her diary in May 1616:

> All this time my lord was in London, where he had all and infinite great resort coming to him. He went much abroad to cocking, to bowling alleys, to plays and horse races, and commended by all the world. I stayed in the country, having many times a sorrowful and heavy heart…. So as I may truly say, I am like an owl in the desert. (Graham et al. 42)

This diary entry reveals the contrast between the scarcity of sociable activities in the country and the busy social life in the metropolis. The attraction of gaming and playgoing apart, it was perhaps being in company and "commended by all" that added to the count's enjoyment of his leisure activities. Had the countess been allowed to live in London to socialize with other women of her rank, she would probably not have experienced so much misery or felt so neglected.

The value of an active social life does not lie only in the pleasure of being in company but, more importantly, in the fun of swapping news. News is eagerly listened to, and the person who imparts the information can feel a sense of superiority. Women are supposed to be obsessively curious: they want to know all the news about fashionable places, "what was done at Salisbury, what at the Bath, what at court, what in progress" (2.2.114-15). Young gallants pride themselves on being *au courant*, and there is an undercurrent of competition in this respect. Truewit, for instance, cannot believe that Clerimont, who has just come away from court, has not heard of the Collegiates: "Why, is it not arrived there yet, the news?" (1.1.72). But when Truewit shows ignorance about Morose's intention to marry, it is Clerimont's turn to tease his friend: "Why, thou art a stranger, it seems, to his best trick yet" (1.2.22-23). Knowledge of news makes the gallants very welcome to the ladies. Thus, it would be wise for women to cultivate lovers while still young; otherwise, when old, as one Collegiate says in 4.3, who will write or tell them the news then? News also prompts the curiosity to see the thing for oneself. The arrival of a mysterious young woman, Epicene, in town generates a lot of interest. The Collegiates, for instance, look forward to La Foole's dinner party because the silent woman will be among the guests. They cannot hide their surprise and disappointment when they hear Epicene speak. These urban elites love to hear about newcomers, strange sights, and new fashions so they can then "cry down or up what they like or dislike in a brain or a fashion" (1.1.77-78).

Amid all the to-ing and fro-ing of social calls, dinners, outings, Morose stands out as a singularly unsociable man. His greatest fear is noise: not only the environmental noises from coaches, church bells, and artisans' workshops,

but more importantly the noises of human interactions -- street vendors selling their wares, lawyers arguing their cases at courts, and even simple face-to-face conversation. He chooses to live in a street so narrow that coaches cannot enter, thus sparing himself their clatter. Since he cannot stop church bells ringing, he has his house soundproofed. At home, his servants are not allowed to speak and must answer with gestures. His eccentricity borders on narcissism when he says: "All discourses but mine own afflict me; they seem harsh, impertinent and irksome" (2.1.4-5). Perversely he chooses to live in the metropolis, where noise must be expected. His paradoxical choice must be explained by his strong self-love that "insists on being at the heart of the social world" even though he has no wish to participate in that world (Dutton 12).

This unsociable man then decides to get married, not out of any wish for a proper family life but simply in order to disinherit his nephew. In retaliation, Dauphine and his friends engineer to provide Morose with what he fears most: a talkative bride and a boisterous wedding reception. Though self-centred, Morose is not vicious, greedy, or deceitful. He harms no one, nor does he bore anyone with boasts. Nevertheless, he is made a target of endless practical jokes. His nephew may have some genuine causes for complaint against him, so Dauphine's elaborate plan to trick his uncle should come as no surprise. The other characters, however, gleefully join the game of tormenting Morose for fun. He is considered fair game because he does not observe the codes of urban sociability.

Morose has what was called a clandestine marriage: the ceremony takes place in his own home, officiated by a parson and with just one witness. Clandestine marriage in the seventeenth century was frowned upon by the authorities but legally binding. In early modern England the ideal process for the propertied classes began with parents selecting the potential spouse and settling financial arrangements between the two families. Then the banns announcing the impending marriage were proclaimed in the local church, or a marriage licence was bought. Afterwards, the couple was married by a priest in a public ceremony held in the church or at its door. The ceremony was followed by the wedding feast and the public bedding of

the couple (Stone 57). In 1753 the English Parliament passed a Marriage Act that banned clandestine marriages and gave parents the power to stop their underage children marrying without parental approval.

The concerns of the state and the church with the legality and morality of marriage were expressed in the rules set down to regulate the ceremony. The festivity surrounding the ceremony, however, including the processions to and from the church and the wedding feast, was governed by social customs. Though not legally required, the customary celebrations were no less important than the ceremony itself. The religious solemnization could be over in minutes, but wedding festivity could last for hours or days (Cressy 350). It was not only the middling sorts and those lower on the social ladder that looked forward to a wedding as an excellent opportunity for making merry and getting drunk. The upper classes were no less excited by the prospect of an invitation to a splendid wedding. In the court of James I weddings were spectacular events, enthusiastically anticipated by the court circle. The Jacobean letter writer John Chamberlain reported an instance of excitement, writing to his friend in November 1613, "all the talke now is of masking and feasting at these towardly marriages" (qtd. in Curran 1). Naturally, the wedding guests are essential to the festivity. Their participation underlines the social nature of marriage: they need to "be persuaded to accept the couple into their midst as a morally bonded domestic unit" (Stone 51). However, not everyone cared to seek social acceptance. People of all social positions chose clandestine marriage for various reasons, such as secrecy, modesty, speed, or economy. In this way, one could also bypass the rituals of wedding festivities: "treating, feasting, practical jokes, and ribald songs culminating in public bedding and the throwing of the bride's stocking across the bed." It is hardly surprising that some couples wished to avoid such embarrassing and expensive rituals (Stone 101). In other words, Morose's low-keyed wedding ceremony is not unusual by seventeenth-century standards.

Nevertheless, his fashionable guests demand a proper celebration, and, unfortunately for Morose, there are several rituals that he fails to prepare for. The

hapless groom is cornered by Lady Haughty, who asks: "We see no ensigns of a wedding here, no character of a bridal: where be our scarves and our gloves? I pray you give 'em us. Let's know your bride's colours and yours at least" (3.6.70-73). There should be food, music, and dance as well. However, undeterred by the groom's lack of preparation, the guests proceed to enjoy an impromptu wedding feast. The groom loses all control of his house when the bride takes command of the celebration and bids everyone to the feast.

It is Morose's loss to neglect the wedding customs. Lady Haughty points out to him: "How much plate have you lost today -- if you had but regarded your profit -- what gifts, what friends, through your mere rusticity?" (3.6.83-85). The guests would have brought him valuable wedding gifts. More importantly, the hospitality offered and the gifts exchanged would have strengthened the friendship between the newlyweds and the guests. Since one's well-connectedness may facilitate social advancement, it is foolish not to use the wedding as a convenient networking opportunity. Yet, perhaps Morose no longer feels any need to cultivate further his circle of acquaintances. He is obviously well off, with a sufficiently secure social position. He seems content with what he possesses and does not have to strive for more wealth or greater prestige. In other words, he hardly needs to please others by observing social rituals. So why can't people leave him alone if he does not want attention? Why do people insist that he be sociable like others?

Morose's neglect of all wedding customs is branded by Lady Haughty an instance of his "rusticity." But he is not an unsophisticated country bumpkin; on the contrary, he has "sucked the milk of the court," "been a courtier from the biggin to the night-cap" (3.6.78, 80-81). For others acquainted with society, it is unforgivable that such a thorough courtier should fail to follow the proper procedure to solemnize holy matrimony. The word rusticity, used by a fashionable lady in town, means the opposite of civility. The lady associates knowledge and observance of courtly codes of conduct with urban experience and neglect of such codes with rural life. Like Haughty, early modern English upper classes thought of courtly manners and polite behaviour as rooted in an urban environment despite the fact

that the English aristocracy and gentry were based in the country. Morose's failure to invite guests to his wedding offends Haughty's sense of civility, and she takes it upon herself to remind him that he risks losing his membership in the urban clique and being classified as a rustic.

Morose's avoidance of society seems rather extreme but is not entirely unreasonable. Not everyone enjoys constant socializing; feasts and dances may not be to everyone's taste. Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, writes in her autobiography *A True Relation of My Birth, Breeding and Life* (1656) that fashionable pastimes, such as playing cards, dancing, revelling, and feasting, disagree with either her temperament or her health: "For I being of a lazy nature, and not of an active disposition as some are that love to journey from town to town, from place to place, from house to house, delighting in variety of company, making still one where the greatest number is" (Graham et al. 94). Rather than paying and receiving visits, she preferred to pass her time with writing, jotting down as fast as possible the thoughts that flashed through her mind. Since childhood she had been more inclined towards contemplation than conversation, towards solitariness than society, towards melancholy than mirth. In adulthood she knew, because of her status, she had to present her best to the world; "yet I could most willingly exclude myself, so as never to see the face of any creature but my lord, as long as I live" (Graham et al. 98). Here was an aristocratic woman who rather wished to be excused from the glamour and fun of high society. However, in analyzing her own personality and describing her inclination toward solitary pursuits, she indirectly acknowledged her singularity, suggesting that to prefer writing to socializing needed some justification. Indeed, in Restoration London Cavendish was thought an eccentric, from dress to behaviour; and writing was the oddest habit of all for a lady.

As Cavendish remarked on her own character, the love for solitariness was linked to a melancholic temperament. Seen as a disease of both body and soul, melancholy weighed heavily on the early modern European mind. Solitariness, being a cause or symptom of melancholy, was taken very seriously. The desire

to stay away from society was not regarded as simply a personal affair but rather as an attitude dangerous to both the individual and society. In Stefano Guazzo's influential conduct treatise *The Civile Conversation*, translated into English in 1586, two Italian gentlemen have an extended dialogue on the subject of civility that begins with one gentleman's advice to the other to cure melancholy. The man who is suffering from the disease wishes to escape "the contagion of vices, which began to growe hot in the Cities and assemblies of men" (25). However, his friend argues that "who so leaveth the civile society to place himselfe in some solitarie desert, taketh as it were the forme of a beast, and in a certaine manner putteth upon him selfe a brutish nature" (30). In other words, a solitary man denies his own humanity. The melancholy man, like Cavendish, believes that solitariness is conducive to contemplation: monks leave their families and friends to live and pray in monasteries. But the friend points out the social nature of religious life: "God hath appointed the Church for Christians to assemble in" (28). And Christ himself was a model of sociability: "for that disputing, preaching, healing the sicke, making the blinde to see, raysing the dead to life, hee was conversant amongst us" (30). If people all chose to live separate lives, minding their own business, communicating with no one, the civil society would collapse.

Solitariness brings on melancholy, which has observable symptoms. After the noisy wedding feast, Morose controls his impatience and desperation with increasing difficulty and speaks to Epicene with ever greater sarcasm. But his anger is deliberately interpreted as an illness:

> EPICENE. Lord, how idly he talks, and how his eyes sparkle! He looks
> green about the temples! Do you see what blue spots he has?
> CLERIMONT. Ay, it's melancholy. (4.4.53-56)

Melancholy, in the popular imagination, is just a small step from madness. Epicene calls Morose a "distracted man" and starts to consult the guests about possible cures, which leads to more nonsensical chatter that aggravates Morose's suffering. Once pronounced sick and mad, Morose is treated as an object for observation and discussion, like a helpless patient who can do nothing but listen to doctors' opinions about his illness and treatment.

Morose's anger is seen as madness rather than outrage over the disturbances in his own house. The offenders, instead of apologizing, say that the angry man is not normal. Significantly, no one thinks of Morose as violent or murderous, just as Epicene ignores the hatred and disgust in Morose's words to her. In the opening scene Morose's skirmishes with a bearward and a fencer are equally spoken of with derision even though he wounded one on the head and pierced the drum of the other. His violent behaviour is consistently denied by the people around him and interpreted as evidence of his madness. Studies of madness in the early modern period have argued that the labelling of certain behaviours as signs of madness is an expression of power: naming certain people as mad is "a way of silencing their complaints, invalidating whatever grievances they happen to hold" (Kitzes 8). By withholding acknowledgement of Morose's violence as such and attributing it to madness, the wedding guests deny that he has the right to insist on a quiet living environment and to feel anger when his peace is disturbed.

Toward the end of the play the playwright gives Morose a lucid speech that somewhat mitigates the character's self-centred behaviour. The problem lies in Morose's upbringing. His father instilled in him a very narrow view of human affairs: "I should look to what things were necessary to the carriage of my life, and what not, embracing the one and eschewing the other" (5.3.50-52). He came to see most interpersonal relationships as "turmoil" and has avoided social involvement until this habit becomes second nature to him. His sincere pleading for silence and tranquillity, compared with the nonsense of the fake canon lawyer and parson that follows his plea, should win our sympathy. However, does the playwright sympathize with Morose? Given Jonson's humanist training, Morose's strategy of avoiding human society is probably not endorsed by the playwright.

Even Morose is prepared to say that he does not neglect "those things that make for the dignity of the commonwealth" (5.3.56-57). "Those things" refer to the law courts and, by extension, to the legal profession. The space where notions of justice, urbanity, and civic virtues coalesced was the Inns of Court. Though starting as a voluntary association responsible for the direction of legal education,

the Inns did not insist on the study of law: "the Students in them, did there, not only study the Laws, but use such other exercises as might make them the more serviceable to the King's Court." The students came from the noble and gentry classes; they received a liberal education and learned music, dancing, and other accomplishments. Another description of the Inns says: "So that knights, barons, and the greatest nobility of the kingdom, often place their children in those Inns of Court; not so much to make the laws their study, much less to live by the profession (having large patrimonies of their own) but to form their manners and to preserve them from the contagion of vice" (qtd. in Green 30, 33-34). It is clear from these descriptions that contemporaries thought of the Inns as training ground for courtiers and civic administrators. This function was similar to that of the two universities; in fact, many students entered the Inns after graduating from Cambridge and Oxford. Together these institutions taught students the skills necessary for a career serving the monarch: rhetoric for oration, debate, and writing; courteous manners for dealing with superiors and peers.

In her book *The English Wits* Michelle O'Callaghan argues for the centrality of the Inns in the associational culture of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The corporate identity of the Inns "resided in acts of living and working together as a professional fraternity, and relied on rituals and cultural fictions to bind individuals in a voluntary contract." The most distinctive cultural fictions were the entertainments called revels. The format of entertainment included singing, dancing, parade, and a play. In the performance the Inns were imagined as "the ideal commonwealth." The social type of this ideal polis was "the gentleman lawyer who combines civic office with the exercise of civility." Jonson was friends with many Inns of Court men, including the poet John Donne, who was at Lincoln's Inn together with his lawyer friend Christopher Brooke, and their friends John Hoskyns and Richard Martin, members of the Middle Temple (10-12). Jonson's early plays *Every Man Out of His Humour* (1599) and *Poestaster* (1601) were indebted to the culture of civility and the revels tradition at the Inns of Court (36).

The bonding formed at the Inns continued in the tavern societies. Many

members of convivial societies that met at the Mitre and Mermaid taverns were Inns of Court men. Following the classical tradition of *convivium*, sociability at the Inns and taverns involved eating, drinking, and talking. Food nourished the body and talk stimulated the mind: sharing a dinner table "had a civilising effect, integrating the individual into the humanist community" (O'Callaghan 60). The tavern society provided a relatively private space where men could relax, joke, and speak their mind in the company of friends; even excessive drunken behaviour was allowed. Jonson himself was active in several convivial societies, writing and receiving poems that commemorated the occasions of drinking and feasting together.

If sociability at the Inns of Court and tavern societies is, for Jonson, the ideal of a commonwealth of learned men, then Morose is wrong in distancing himself from such associational life. Without the company of other men of quality, Morose becomes undernourished intellectually and morally. His communication skills suffer for lack of dialogue. Such a person, despite his advantageous birth and court connections, will not be a competent courtier: he cannot provide his monarch with wise counsel. In Morose we see a person who wastes his social capital and makes no contribution to the civil society.

Though Morose's avoidance of social encounters is a serious flaw, the other characters who embrace sociability are hardly role models. The most gregarious is La Foole. He chooses to live in the Strand not only because this is the most prestigious address in London but also because this is where the fashionable people converge; he can invite guests to his entertainment by calling aloud "out of his window as they ride by in coaches" (1.3.35-36). From his window he can also watch ladies go into china shops or the New Exchange, so he may meet them "by chance." At his first appearance on stage, he is going from house to house, inviting people to dinner. La Foole is a new arrival in town, having inherited a knighthood after the death of his elder brother. Anxious to have his status widely recognized, he assiduously cultivates a sociable image, playing the generous host and everyone's friend. However, his surname accurately labels him a fool. His doubtful urbanity

leads to many social faux pas: "He will salute a judge upon the bench and a bishop on the pulpit, a lawyer when he is pleading at the bar, and a lady when she is dancing in a masque, and put her out" (1.3.31-34). Despite his bows and polite phrases, he cannot help advertising his lineage "of the French La Fooles" (1.4.40-41) or pitying anyone who does not have a lodging in the Strand. His vanity is easily seen through: he only needs to be told that his guests have been diverted to someone else's banquet to feel insulted, but an equally simple face-saving device immediately restores his self-satisfaction. This shallow, ludicrous character has many descendants in the fops of Restoration comedy.

Another laughing stock similar to La Foole is Jack Daw, a knight with literary pretension but no talent. Like La Foole, Daw works hard at his sociability, hoping to impress society with his poetry and literary criticism even though he cannot tell book titles from the names of authors. Both fools wish to be accepted into the charmed circle of Dauphine, Truewit, and Clerimont. The three young gentlemen are what the contemporaries described as "wits" -- "witty, single (or living single), sexually and socially gregarious, awaiting inheritance, a felicitous marriage or (if both of these fail) patronage to maintain their status in life" (Dutton 12). In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the wits "were part of a complex habitus made up of shared linguistic codes, rules for behaviour and social communication, leisure pursuits, taste in objects, songs, and ways of dressing" (O'Callaghan 45). Without actually forming a club, the wits nevertheless excluded from their circle those who did not share the same outlook on life.

The early modern period saw the "valorization of 'wit' as a quality of the self." The witty self was resourceful and inventive; in company the witty self was able to be "entertaining in general and humorous in particular." For laughter was regarded by humanists as an essential skill of the teacher, rhetorician, and companion. However, the natural intelligence of "wit" came to be more and more associated with book learning until "wit" became "a source of cultural distinction -- a faculty that only the educated or (at the very least) the literate could access directly" (Withington 189-92). The three witty young men in Epicene brim with clever

schemes: from Dauphine's elaborate plan to extract five hundred pounds annually from his uncle, to Truewit's more impromptu staging of "a tragicomedy between the Guelphs and the Ghibellines, Daw and La Foole" (4.5.30-31). Their plots of practical jokes are highly entertaining to themselves as well as bystanders. The theatre audience, too, can enjoy the ways these wits expose the stupidity, crassness, lies, and self-importance of their neighbours. The wits know just what dosage of encouragement is required to induce the fools to expose their weaknesses. Daw and La Foole cannot expect to join the circle of wits, no matter how frequently they dine together. The wits may profess friendship but do not mean it. Clerimont says he thought Truewit and Daw "had been upon very good terms," to which Truewit replies, "Yes, of keeping distance" (1.2.71-73). Fools and wits move in the same fashionable society, but the wits band together in an exclusive circle that does not admit people of inferior intelligence or taste.

Through his acquaintances in tavern societies, Jonson probably knew several aristocrats on whom the wits in *Epicene* might have been based (Dutton 14-16). He certainly shares the wits' contempt for status-conscious La Foole, boastful Daw, social climbing Mistress Otter and her hen-pecked husband, as well as the arrogant Collegiates. But does Jonson identify with the wits? In other city comedies, tricksters end up being tricked or defeated by their own success; in *Epicene*, by contrast, the wits are not subject to any comeuppance. However, the playwright does portray these young men as fundamentally idle and frivolous. Their sociability, instead of promoting intellectual conversation as the Inns of Court and tavern societies did, is devoted to triviality. Clerimont brushes aside Truewit's half-serious criticism about his leisurely lifestyle, saying: "Talk me of pins, and feathers, and ladies, and rushes, and such things, and leave this stoicity alone till thou mak'st sermons" (1.1.63-65). Truewit is aware of their self-indulgence: the activities he mentions as gentlemanly pursuits are "nothing, or that which, when 'tis done, is as idle" (1.1.32-33). The wits laugh at Jack Daw's inept verses and smattering of classical knowledge, but they do not seem interested in good poetry or genuine scholarship, either. If they use their time, connections, and influence wisely, they might act as supporters

of true poets, just as Sir Francis Stuart did, to whom *Epicene* was dedicated in 1616 (Dutton 15). But Dauphine, Truewit, and Clerimont are too pleased with themselves to notice the merits of others. They congratulate each other on the success of their manoeuvres and demand praise and admiration as well. At the same time, there is a competitive edge to their friendship: each one wants to pull off a more astonishing feat. The ultimate winner is Dauphine, who withholds the secret of the silent woman not only from his friends but also from the audience. Dauphine is intelligent; he is also callous, finally saying to his defeated uncle: "I'll not trouble you till you trouble me with your funeral, which I care not how soon it come" (5.4.211-13). It seems as if Jonson is saying that, if all the advantages of birth, wealth, education, intelligence, and association together produce only frivolous and self-satisfied young men, the society cannot be very healthy.

Despite the implied criticism of frivolous young men about town, Jonson lets the wits off the hook and reserves the full force of his sarcasm for the women. The misogyny in *Epicene* has been described as extreme. The set pieces about the awfulness of women, with which Truewit tries to dissuade Morose from marrying, are derived from Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* and Juvenal's *Satires*, but the presentation of the Collegiates is Jonson's creation. Truewit's description of these women in 1.1 is cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as the source of the first appearance of "collegiate" as a noun. These women "every day gain to their college some new probationer" (1.1.79-80). Their president is Lady Haughty. But Truewit's wording is ironic. The *Oxford English Dictionary* quotes a passage of the 1590s that uses "college" to mean company, society, fraternity, and assembly. But early modern women normally had no place in organized associations;[5] they could not be admitted as probationers, let alone appointed presidents. The Collegiates in *Epicene* are mocked for daring to ape men's associational behaviour. The women's association is a joke, an impossibility. Living away from their husbands and hence away from men's supervision, these women behave in a way that scandalizes all

---

5 Withington writes: "It is no coincidence that the two most economically and politically vulnerable social groups in early modern England -- the labouring poor and most classes of women -- were for the most part deprived the means of the capacity for purposeful organization" (179).

right-thinking men. The Collegiates could be accused of promiscuity, for they openly entertain all the "Wits and Braveries" in town, the most fashionable gallants in talk and in dress. Moreover, these women have the audacity to play the critics of fashion and learning, usurping the male prerogative. In an age of unrestrained male chauvinism when this play was composed, such women can only be monsters since they are "hermaphroditical," going against the natural, patriarchal order. This college, instead of promoting civic virtues, learning, and friendship, teaches vices. Soon after being introduced to Morose's bride, the Collegiates begin to instruct her in the methods of enjoying the fun of the capital and cheating on the husband. Although opinionated, they cannot exercise independent thinking. As Truewit tells Dauphine: "Why, all their actions are governed by crude opinion, without reason or cause; they know not why they do anything; but as they are informed, believe, judge, praise, condemn, love, hate, and in emulation one of another, do all these things alike" (4.6.61-65). In other words, this college may have the associational form of tavern societies or the Inns of Court, but it is devoid of the spirit and culture of male associations. What is more, the Collegiates do not even really cherish friendship. They are prepared to betray each other to win the exclusive attention of a desirable gallant. There simply is no redeeming feature in them.

Female associational life is not taken seriously by the men in *Epicene*. Upon learning that the president of the Collegiates is Lady Haughty, Clerimont launches into an attack on her appearance, for he has been courting her without much success. Truewit then follows this attack with a lengthy commentary on women's cosmetic efforts in general. So the topic of this new female society is abandoned and forgotten. For the wits, the women's association is of little consequence, as they know that forming a college gives the women some notoriety but hardly any collective power worth noticing. The women's transgressive behaviour may be unpleasant to men but does not really threaten the elevated position of the wits. Mary Beth Rose argues that Jonson was aware of women's struggle for more independence in the early seventeenth century, and, judging from his representation of women's efforts at independence, it can be seen that he "regarded any such

female challenge to traditional social and sexual order as offensively ludicrous"
(56). The most ludicrous female in the play is the would-be Collegiate, Mistress
Otter, who rules her husband with a rod of iron but fawns on the ladies and wits.
Her efforts to adopt courtly manners and fashionable expressions surpass in
absurdity the male fools' swagger.

However, as Rose also comments, *Epicene* focuses on a very narrow range of
early seventeenth-century London society, making no attempt to represent a wider
variety of attitudes toward social and sexual mobility (64). Neither does the play
recognize the diversity of women's networking in early modern England. The
casual gathering of gossiping women "on the door step or at the washing place,
spinning and knitting together, or working in the fields" (Thomas 220) normally
went unrecorded. In women's writings of this period, however, a fair amount is
revealed about women's efforts in social networking. Educated women, although
less likely than men to take part in convivial events held in taverns and inns,
could maintain relationships with a circle of friends through letter writing.[6] For
example, "letter writing was as pivotal a feature of the interactive nature of puritan
cultural style as gatherings for lectures, conferences and conventicles, fasting and
prayer." Lady Brilliana Harley, a puritan aristocrat, wrote nearly four hundred
letters in the two decades before the Civil War, conversing in writing with her
husband, her son, tutors and ministers on the political, theological, and cultural
issues of the day (Harris 109). Her social network thus extended far beyond the
household circle. Some aristocratic women acted as patrons of art and literature.
Queen Anne commissioned several masques, including *The Masque of Blackness*
(1605), *of Beauty* (1608), and *of Queens* (1609). The Queen and her ladies-in-
waiting worked like a theatre company, commissioning and performing in the
masques. The Collegiates in *Epicene* could remind the audiences, especially its
Jacobean audiences, of Jonson's noble patronesses, who were independent of their
husbands and exercised considerable authority. Was Jonson venting his annoyance

---

6   The essays edited by James Daybell in *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700*
(Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) reveal the extent to which women of different
ranks used letter writing to exert influence within the family, the community, or beyond.

with his female patrons? Would the Queen and her ladies feel offended by such an unflattering portrayal of female networking? We do not know. Nevertheless, whatever the intention of the playwright or the response of the first audience, it cannot be denied that the Collegiates are dramatically interesting characters: their strident voices command attention.

Epicene dramatizes the ironic discrepancy between the people who pride themselves on being civil and sociable and the reality of how they actually treat each other. The action consists of social calls and a wedding feast, all conducted in the spirit of fellowship, neighbourliness, and celebration. Yet, there is a feeling that beneath the jovial manners, the characters could not care less about each other. They are self-appointed arbiters of etiquette and lifestyle, quick to impose their notions of standards on others, and even quicker to criticize in acid terms those who fail to meet their personal criteria. In Jonson's view, fools and women, ignorant of humanist thoughts on civility, are only capable of idle chatter and conformist behaviour; they cannot form meaningful societies. An intelligent man, therefore, should keep fools and women at arm's length, socializing with them but not admitting them to his circle of friends. At the same time, solitude is the wrong response to the world of fools: one needs to stay in company, maintaining a dialogue with others, in order to remain civilized and human. Jonson's social conservatism did not prevent him from foreseeing the trend of genteel sociability: Restoration comedy, for which Epicene set a precedent, would give centre stage to foppish men and wayward women.

Works Cited

Agnew, Jean-Christophe. *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986. Print.

Barry, Jonathan. "Bourgeois Collectivism?: Urban Association and the Middling Sort." *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*. Eds. Jonathan Barry and Christopher Brooks. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. 84-112. Print.

Bryson, Anna. *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1998. Print.

Cressy, David. *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1997. Print.

Curran, Kevin. *Marriage, Performance, and Politics at the Jacobean Court*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009. Print.

Dillon, Janette. *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. Print.

Dutton, Richard. Introduction. *Epicene, or The Silent Woman*. By Ben Jonson. Ed. Richard Dutton. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003. 1-108. Print.

Gibbons, Brian. *Jacobean City Comedy*. 2nd ed. London: Methuen, 1980. Print.

Gordon, Daniel. "Sociability." *Encyclopedia of the Enlightenment*. Vol. 4. Ed. Alan Charles Kors. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003. 96-104. Print.

Graham, Elspeth, et al, eds. *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-Century Englishwomen*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print.

Green, A. Wigfall. *The Inns of Court and Early English Drama*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1931. Print.

Guazzo, Stefano. *The Civil Conversation*. Trans. George Pettie (1581) and Barth Young (1586). Pettie's Guazzo. Vol. 1. New York: AMS, 1967. Print.

Harris, Johanna. "'But I thinke and beleeve': Lady Brilliana Harley's Puritanism in Epistolary Community." *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558-1680*. Eds. Johanna Harris and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. 108-21. Print.

Howard, Jean E. *Theater of a City*. Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007. Print.

Jonson, Ben. *Epicene, or the Silent Woman*. Ed. Richard Dutton. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2003. Print.

Kitzes, Adam H. *The Politics of Melancholy from Spenser to Milton*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Knights, L. C. *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*. 1937. London: Methuen, 1977. Print.

Merritt, J. F. *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster: Abbey, Court and Community, 1525-1640*. Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005. Print.

Miller, Stephen. *Conversation: A History of a Declining Art*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006. Print.

Newman, Karen. "City Talk: Women and Commodification -- *Epicene* (1609)." *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*. Eds. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass. New York: Routledge, 1991. 181-95. Print.

O'Callaghan, Michelle. *The English Wits: Literature and Sociability in Early Modern England*. Leiden: Cambridge UP, 2007. *Cambridge Books Online*. n.d. Web. 1 Aug. 2012.

Paster, Gail Kern. *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare*. Athens: The U of Georgia P, 1985. Print.

Porter, Roy. *Enlightenment: Britain and the Creation of the Modern World*. London: Penguin, 2000. Print.

Rose, Mary Beth. *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988. Print.

Stone, Lawrence. *Road to Divorce: A History of the Making and Breaking of Marriage in England 1530-1987*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

Thomas, Keith. *The Ends of Life: Roads to Fulfilment in Early Modern England*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2009. Print.

Withington, Phil. *Society in Early Modern England: The Vernacular Origins of Some Powerful Ideas*. Cambridge: Polity, 2010. Print.