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**Curst Shrews and Venomous Scolds:  
The Societal and Legal Reactive Processes to Dangerous and  
Unideal Female Speech in Early Modern England**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis argues that in seventeenth century England, the tongue, or more specifically the female tongue, was understood as a fleshy weapon wielded to inflict misery and chaos on men. In response, early modern society reacted strenuously when faced with this form of living danger. The two primary processes were containment and correction.

Female verbal expression was often framed or contained in artifices created through rhetorical texts, for example, satirical, judicial, or moralistic texts. These texts were made to disempower and dismiss female verbal expression categorised as dangerous, or abnormal. Two of the main constructs used in texts were the ‘cursed shrew’ and the ‘common scold’, both of which were created to vilify and dismiss verbal rebellion by presenting them in negative narratives. The shrew was defined through satire. The common scold was defined through a mixture of legal definitions, and community intervention. First, this dissertation investigates these two female constructs of Early Modern England, which emerged from verbal disorder observed by external parties. The second element of this dissertation explores the ‘correction’ of the female verbal rebel: the formal mechanisms that were employed for public justice, and also the informal rites or actions carried out in the neighbourhood or household.

Framed in chapters which resemble the sequence of a stage play, I begin my thesis with a comedic opening act about the cursed shrew and her illustrious satirical career. The arrival of the common scold heralds the dramatic second act. This act ends in a spectacle, as the shrew and scold are delivered their deserved punishment; the shrew ‘tamed’ and the scold ‘crowned’. The shrew was a warning, while the common scold was defined in relationship to the community, or through personal hardship. While taming narratives eked a good wife out of a shrew, the punishment of the common scold was a of combination communal rite and formalised legal legislation.

The study of past female crime and punishment is a crowded domain of history; the witch and the whore jostling for the ‘most historical research dedicated to her person’ award. This thesis contribution is centred on verbal female characters and punishment, a topic which has received far less attention. The shrew and the common scold are often mentioned as a means of comparison to other female criminals, to draw similarities and divergences in behaviour and punishment, but they have rarely achieved protagonist status. This is what my thesis accomplishes, through an assemblage of ideas about the binary of unwanted female speech and English society.

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In a Jacobean ballad, a husband found himself cursed not with a pox, failed harvest, or financial ruin, but rather with a wife that “would ner be contrould”.<sup>1</sup> Her unruliness originated from her slippery tongue, something he was unable to tame or master, allowing her speech to be thunder loud.<sup>2</sup> This account of spousal discord introduces one of the central themes of this thesis: characters defined from an untamed female tongue.

The unruly female was a popular image in Early Modern England.<sup>3</sup> A woman with an untamed tongue rejected her expected role as the silent shadow of her husband and rather embraced her ‘natural’ inclination for excessive speech. Women were stigmatised as the inferior sex in Early Modern England, a stance validated through scripture, for example Eve’s weakness to the lure of temptation, and Galenic-Aristotelian theories of female inferiority at the physiological level.<sup>4</sup> The general message of this being that women were inferior due to a cold and moist humour composition and a domineering womb. The former “left her brain too soft and cold for rigorous thought,” the latter caused ““lust, irrational behaviour, and mental instability.”<sup>5</sup> Women were the embodiment of disorder and unrestrained emotion; their tongue, limbs, mind, and appetites anarchic under their weak will.

But this unruliness could not go unchecked. By owning an untamed tongue and falling into excessive speech, society ensnared the offending woman in a deluge of negative signs, satirical tropes, and clichés, which when read together built a

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<sup>1</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds or, A True way of Taming a Shrew’, RB 2.51 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (n.p: n.pub, 1685-1688), British Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>> [accessed 20 January 2015]

<sup>2</sup> A Caution for Scolds.

<sup>3</sup> See Natalie Davis’s *women on top* for a study on the unruly female image in early modern England, primarily through the framework of the women on top trope. She explores the phenomena of sexual inversion in a number of expressions, including transvestism and dominating wives, in literature, popular festivities and ordinary sombre live.

<sup>4</sup> For contemporary treatises on woman physiology see, *Women's Secrets: A Translation of Pseudo-Albertus Magnus' De Secretis Mulierum with Commentaries* ed. by Helen Rodnite Lemay (SUNY Press, 1992), Ludovic Mercatus, *On the Common Conditions of Women* cited in Kate Aughterson, ed., *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook* Constructions of Femininity in England (New York: Routledge, 1996), 41-66, Nicholas Fontanus *The Woman's Doctor* (1652), Helkiah Crooke, *Microcosmographia* (1618), pp. 270-2, 276 cited in Kate Aughterson *Renaissance Woman: A Sourcebook : Constructions of Femininity in England*, pp. 54-56. Secondary commentary on woman physiology include, Merry E. Wiesner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 32-35, Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* ( Boydell & Brewer, 2007). p. 19- 21, G. K.Paster, ‘The Unbearable Coldness of Female Being: Women's Imperfection and the Humoral Economy’, *English Literary Renaissance*, 28 (1998), p. 416–440, Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies* (Yale University Press, 2003) and Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England* (Routledge, 2014), p. xviii-xxi.

<sup>5</sup> Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell & Brewer, 2007), p. 20.

new identifier. She became trapped underneath a stereotypical layer dismissing any female attempts to express power and authority through verbal rebellion. This thesis will focus on verbal rebellion distorted into figures of female wickedness; the shrew, and her more literal counterpart, the common scold.

### **The tongue: An organ of disorder**

The tongue was perceived differently from other anatomical features during the Middle Ages and through to the early modern period. It was not simply an organ that performed imperative bodily functions. Human organs were metaphorically acknowledged to be already tamed by man, as Thomas Adams wrote “the eye hath been tamed”, “the ear hath been tamed”, and so on until all mankind’s organs had been wrangled under human domain, apart from the tongue.<sup>6</sup> Though the tongue was unassuming in appearance, it was “*ad affectum*, to provoke great passion; *ad effectum*, to produce action.”<sup>7</sup> In other words, despite appearances, the tongue was an incredibly powerful tool from its ability to produce speech. It could sway men to follow a cause, spark bloody revolutions, destroy reputations with a single hissed “whore”, or dissolve spousal bonds through overuse.

Rationally, there would have been the awareness that the tongue was only an extension of human intention, but during the Early Modern period the organ was given almost autonomous status. If the tongue was used correctly, it brought forth excellence, “a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver”, yet as the tongue was perceived as ambivalent, this potential for goodness stood in duality with a capacity for great wickedness, “a good tongue, there is nothing better; an evil tongue nothing worse.”<sup>8</sup> An evil or untamed tongue had potential to be a bringer of chaos. It stood separate from human will and rather acted as an autonomous creature; masterless and untameable. This was a sentiment with roots in the scriptural passage, James 3:8, “every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by the human race. But

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<sup>6</sup> Thomas Adams, *The Taming of the Tongue* (London, 1616), p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Adams, p. 12.

<sup>8</sup> Adams, p.12.



noone can tame the tongue; it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.”<sup>9</sup> The association with evil and poison was something moralists presented as natural through their treatises and sermons. Through these ends, for many the tongue lost a mere anatomical role and became something capable of generating vivid emotional and antagonistic responses. It was potentially a conflict zone perceived with mistrust for its abilities to create disorder on a personal as well as social level, as understood by St. Paul who said “he that hath an evil tongue troubleth all the town where he dwelt and sometimes the whole country.”<sup>10</sup>

From the end of the sixteenth through to mid seventeenth century, men rushed to add their voices to the castigation of the tongue. These included George Webbe, *The Arraignment of an Unruly Tongue* (1619), Thomas Adams, *The Taming of the Tongue*, Edward Reuner, *Rules for the Government of the Tongue* (1656), and William Perkins, *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue* (1593). From the titles alone, the intention of these treatises is clear: to expose the untamed tongue and introduce means for its proper government. Each shared similar language and ideas which eventually created “an uniform discourse that permeated not only poetry and sermons but also the law courts”.<sup>11</sup> This discourse included superlative descriptions of the tongue’s potential for destruction as well as building the connection between the untamed tongue and abject wickedness. For example, Thomas Adams anchored an unruly tongue to the epitome of evil, the devil by writing that “an evil tongue is meat for the devil [and] the devil makes his christmas pie of lewd tongues”. Adams then presented a pageant of evil garrulity, “a prattling devil, the fawning sycophant, and a roaring devil”.<sup>12</sup> These associations with evil reinforced the notion that the unruly tongue was something translated as negative, wicked, and definitely not desirable in an ideal woman.

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<sup>9</sup> James 3:8, *New International Version Bible*, updated 2011 <[BibleGateway.com](http://BibleGateway.com)>, [accessed May 02 2015].

<sup>10</sup>Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 102.

<sup>11</sup>M.C Bodden, *Language as the Site of Revolt in Medieval and Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> Adams, p. 21.

Though these treatises were not specifically orientated towards a single sex, the image of the untamed tongue did become associated with the female sex. For example, the Latin word for tongue is the feminine *Lingua*. This connection was nourished by moralists and satirists and by the already entrenched acceptance of “women’s alleged mental, physical, and moral inferiority”, making women prone to faults and flaws.<sup>13</sup> These ideas were shared and disseminated, and eventually a woman’s loose tongue became perceived as a natural female failing.

In *The Taming of the Tongue*, Adams referenced the unruly tongue as female, writing that “women, for the most part, hath the glibbest tongue” and, “a foolish woman is ever clamorous.”<sup>14</sup> Adams also endeavoured to build woman’s speech as negative by citing Eve’s primordial actions. He wrote that “the first use Eve to have made of her language was to enter parry with tempter and that to become a tempter to her husband”, which presented one of the first uses of the female tongue as something destructive and tainted.<sup>15</sup> It did not bestow goodness onto mankind, rather pure misery with the fall of man. As Eve was representative of the female sex as a whole, for her first words to be perceived as such may have set a prejudice for female speech. Other means that the female sex became linked with an untamed tongue and speech were through associations with the crimes of witchcraft and whoredom, “an intensification of treatises, popular literature and court cases targeting women speech and tongues”, and lastly through the formation of female characters identifiable by untamed speech.<sup>16</sup>

The untamed female tongue was a menacing image. It could spill domestic secrets, make endless noise to the chagrin of the husband, it could destroy reputations, erode marriage bonds and bring discord to quiet neighbourhoods. But perhaps most disconcerting was its potential for eking out disorder from order and marring the patriarchal edifice. The shrew and the common scold were social and legal artifices made from a necessity to define this danger to patriarchal authority

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<sup>13</sup> Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580-1680*, 2nd ed. [Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2003], p. 99.

<sup>14</sup> Adams, p. 17.

<sup>15</sup> Richard Allestree, *The Government of the Tongue* (Oxford, 1674), p. 7.

<sup>16</sup> Bodden, p. 27.

and the social order, and stood as a reactive process of English society when faced with such a threat. The female with the untamed tongue became someone identifiable and consequently easier to subdue. Women were made into these female stereotypes, which stood as cultural, social, and legal means of effectively cloistering female verbal disorder. These stereotypes may have initially been borne from observation of verbal behaviour, but ended up being warped through hyperbolic literacy tropes, alarmist ideas, and supercilious language. The aligning of female speech with such stereotypes functioned as a means “to control every conceivable aspect of women’s speech by deconstructing and fantasising its powers, for [it]...endangered domestic and national order”.<sup>17</sup>

The role of shrew and the scold were not natural. They were artificial constructions built out of patriarchal anxiety and mistrust, and a desire to control and contain female danger.<sup>18</sup> The first part of this thesis will focus on verbal stereotypes, as understood by patriarchal society. These constructions had the very real ability to completely overcome women, to the extent that the stereotypical cage they found themselves trapped within became what they were known for. They created situations where Mrs. Walker from two doors down was not simply Mrs. Walker, but rather that distributive scold or shrewish wife. This thesis examines how specific uses of speech ended up becoming a woman’s defining feature for external parties.

Constructions of woman’s speech eventually were perceived as ‘natural’ female images and expressions of natural female traits. It was a natural occurrence for women to fall into chiding, railing, or scolding and in turn to become a shrew or scold. Moreover, this communal ideology meant that when women spoke it would more often than not be dismissed as inconsequential or vilified through containment in the aforementioned categories. By making these categories which ensnared female speech in a deluge of pejorative signs and prejudice, society

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<sup>17</sup> Walker, p. 29.

<sup>18</sup> Sara Heller Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998], p. 30.

effectively achieved its intention of controlling a part of the volatile female body. Female speech became distorted through patriarchal ideology.

Though the social constructions were different to an extent; the shrew much more benign than her less abstract counterpart of the common scold. Nonetheless, they shared a similar place in the communal patriarchal perception of separate from the ideal female, who was silent, obedient, chaste, and tamed. The former needed to be swiftly brought to heel.

There was a collective understanding that the untamed female, or more specifically their untamed tongue, needed to be tamed. For example, the husband cursed with a scolding wife only managed to find his happy ending when “he made a sweet wife of a shrow”.<sup>19</sup> A cry of victory that was joined by a comrade in domestic arms, who crowed, “and thus I must tell you I conquer'd a shrow, made her buckle and bend to my bow”.<sup>20</sup> The second half of this thesis focuses upon the question: How were women with unruly tongues tamed, conquered, or subdued? Or another way to look at this is the extraction from the stereotype. This will be achieved in two ways. First, the abstract taming of the shrew, and second examination of the formal and informal methods used by society to punish the garrulous woman.

Early Modern English crime and punishment has been extensively scrutinised and investigated through past historiography, so it is difficult to find ‘room’ in an already saturated niche. However, female verbal crime and the resulting punishment have been studied to a lesser degree. Also, this study will not restrict itself to legal frameworks for verbal transgressions, for example, the shrew was not a legal category. She was a female stereotype who remained primarily an abstract creature animated by ink and paper, but still with a real presence in society approached with satire and annoyance not hatred and iron bars.

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<sup>19</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds or, A True way of Taming a Shrew’, RB 2.51 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (n.p: n.pub, 1685-1688), British Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>> [accessed 20 January 2015].

<sup>20</sup> ‘Couragious Anthony: or A Relation of a Dreadful Combat between Bonny Anthony, and his Wife. Together with Anthony's Valliant Conquest’, Pepys 4.146 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London: n.pub, 1664-1703?), Magdalene College <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/21810/xml>> [accessed 20 January 2015].

The shrew is primarily studied through popular discourses, while the common scold is examined through legal discourse. Historians who have produced scholarship on the scold include David Underdown and Martin Ingram with *The Taming of the Scold* and *Scolding Women Cucked or Washed: A Crisis in Gender Relations in Early Modern England* respectively. Both works investigate the scold's presence within a legal framework as well as their place in the community. Underdown employed hyperbolic phrases and conclusions, for example introducing such things as the 'scolding epidemic' and 'gender relations crisis'. Through an examination of court records, Underdown devised the idea that Early Modern English society was preoccupied with women – predominantly scolds – believed to be a threat to the patriarchal system. Underdown also presents an explanation on why the scold manifested, arguing that she was a natural psychological outlet for the frustrations of the poor and alienated. Her existence was a symptom of the decline in good habits and local harmony. Ingram presents an evaluation with much less fanfare, working to subdue Underdown's theatric scolding presentation. He argued that scolding persecutions were relatively few in number with some areas passing decades without a single persecution. Lynda Boose also presents an interesting study on the scold and shrew, with a focus on the shrew's place in English literature. Her work has advanced my understanding of who the shrew was, while also offering some information on the common scold and her punishment in the community.

My own approach to these female social constructs will be achieved by means of four different perspectives. I study the observations and commentary of a husband on their wife's verbal behaviour situated in the most rudimental social and authoritative unit; the household. I look at the communities role in constructing these artifices. I investigate the male author and his use of ink and a wicked imagination to breathe life into satirical female outlines. And lastly, I explore the legal framework which transformed stereotypes into a legal category. Regarding punishment, I use four frameworks, domestic, the community, the courts, and literature.

## Defining Context and Terms

This thesis focuses on the period from 1590 through to the accession of Queen Anne in 1702 with sources used falling generally within these time parameters.

For this period, English society, both rural and urban, was hierarchal. People belonged to social classes based on wealth, authority, land, and blood. This social stratification can be neatly presented with the labels of gentry or elite, the middling class, and the rest, the common people with a woman's social standing being largely dependent on the social rank of her husband or family. The focussed upon section of society for this study are from the lower-middling classes. I have chosen not to focus on the higher classes from there being limited instances of high born shrews and scolds.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, society often kept reprimanding censure focussed on the lower classes as they properly felt that these 'rougher' woman were more prone to shortcomings. In satire, woman lampooned as shrews or scolds were not often of the elite class, rather they were the shrewish wives of the artisans or blacksmiths. Outside of satire the same exclusion is witnessed. Also, woman who scolded were noted to be of the middling class, or lower working classes.

This marginalisation may be partially put down to differences in education. Elite women would have had access to the writings of conduct manuals, as well as maturing in an environment that promoted the practice of idealistic female virtues, such as silence, obedience, chastity, and modesty. Even if a woman of a higher station was charged with scolding, it would have most likely been kept from public scrutiny. Something achievable through a monetary punishment, rather than a public ducking. Public scrutiny would have also been lessened by merit of these women being more securely anchored to their homes. This meant that woman of the higher social classes would have had fewer opportunities to be found scolding in their streets.

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<sup>21</sup> When I refer to class in this thesis, I am making reference to the social-economic classification or hierarchy of society.

The studied spaces are restricted to England, with England defined as a “thousand...relatively small rural communities, interspersed with a smaller number of towns and a handful of great cities,” which can be further divided into the social units of the village, parish, and town.<sup>22</sup> An emphasis is placed on urban over rural, with the shrew nearly wholly restricted to London though the scold will be studied in both settings. At the microcosm level, my thesis will include several spaces. This being the household based on the traditional nuclear family model; the most rudimental social and authoritative unit in society, public streets, as well as several sites that were on occasion occupied by women, such as taverns and alehouses, the market place, and areas of labour, such as the conduit.<sup>23</sup>

### **Terms**

Certain terms will be used with the assumption that their meanings are plainly understood. I use a number of terms to map out space or referring to units of social collectiveness, including the community, parish, neighbourhood, street, village, and city. A community and neighbourhood will be used in a synonymous manner; both understood as a social collective bound together by spatial proximity, kinship ties, shared values, ideas and norms, economic reciprocity. This concept of community will be applied to both rural villages and urban streets. A parish, street or village may be understood as a community, in the sense that each worked as an unit through the aforementioned factors. Though each varied in size, from a small street, large parish into the sprawling metropolis of London, the people within each were connected by these factors as well as being connected to other spatial units, for example a street connected to a parish which was connected to a city.

Though a parish had the potential to be substantial in size and contain a significant number of people, elements such as the Poor Law<sup>24</sup> created community sentiments

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<sup>22</sup> Wrightson, p. 48.

<sup>23</sup> Wrightson, p. 74.

<sup>24</sup> The Poor Law was an edict created in which saw the weekly collection of alms from the members of the parish which were to be distributed to the deserving poor.

or a 'local identity',<sup>25</sup> the same way that national issues or concerns connected the people of England to a national identity. My understanding of space is based on the idea that there were bonds created and these bonds made communities out of spatial parameters. I will read communities as a whole as well as in the sense of being singular households and individuals.

The thesis focuses on two social and legal artifices, the shrew and scold, which will be understood through the immovable cage of a stereotype or criminal, assigned and kept locked by a unwavering male hand. Both were fixed and static images ascribed to individuals on the basis of behaviour. These observed behavioural elements formed the bare bones, later warped and exaggerated by male anxiety, fear, and whimsy. These two artifices were ascribed labels used as a means to vilify certain types of behaviour viewed as undesirable or threatening. This label had defined borders, with edges widely known by society.

Another term often used throughout this thesis is patriarchy. Bernard Capp called it an edifice, Patricia Crawford understood it as a system or framework, and Eleonora Hubbard referred to it as an order, bedrock or a factor that created a social hierarchy in early modern England.<sup>26</sup> It had rigid, invisible bonds that influenced life on many different levels, from national to local and domestic.

The components that fashioned this imposing edifice were a series of beliefs, institutions, concepts, laws, and social and cultural ideas that interlocked for the purpose of promoting the idea of male dominance and female subjection or marginalisation in society. I use this word as something to describe a male dominated society that promoted male interests and kept the biblical adages of female submission to the husband or father firmly in place. I will also be using this term in the context of it being an analytical framework that described a society that looked out for the interests of men over women.

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<sup>25</sup> This idea of the parish becoming a local identity through the Poor law was explored by J. F. Merritt in his *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City*. Merritt states that the Poor Law made it so there was an "emphasis on the identity of the parishioner as a participant". He even went as far to refer to the parish as a mini commonwealth, each had their own poor, aged and sick that they were responsible for. It made it so there was a "very strong territorial aspect to all of this" [139].

<sup>26</sup>Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).



As this study does not have a focus on women raging against the patriarchal machine, I have opted not to frame this work as a ‘feminist study’, but rather as an exploration of gender studies, the studying of past male and female relationships for what they were. I will also be paying attention to shared behaviour, ideology, beliefs, and observing private and public ways of life and how each sector dealt with the issue of female garrulity. I will be studying the social, legal, and cultural structures imposed to understand female speech, as well as how they dealt with its presence. This is then a study of social and cultural history with an emphasis on the thoughts and ideas of the common person, rather than mental extracts from the elite. Popular opinion will be extracted through the reading of various kinds of popular literature and communal actions.

### **Sources**

This study draws upon a number of different sources, including archives, images, material objects, popular fiction, conduct literature, and diaries. Popular literature acts as a core component to the construction of the female stereotype as well as to her punishment. Broadside ballads, pamphlets, plays, and various forms of satire were all used to build an understanding of the shrew stereotypes, as well as helping with my attempts to analyse their place in Early Modern England. From an appraisal of the tone alone, a representation of their standing in the community and within relationship dynamics can be acquired. This presentation will be studied as representative of general societal opinion. Ballads and chapbooks functioning as representations of general society was decided upon due to their cheapness, meaning that ‘common people’ would have the means to acquire them. The fact that these sources would be heard by a great number of people across class lines meant that ideas would have needed to be easily identifiable as well as relatable. In other words, the content expressed within these lively tunes needed to be colloquially understood. The behaviour expressed would in essence be the stereotypical, the qualities that she had acquired over time through popular opinion and harsh prejudice that were now widely known.

Therefore, the shrew as a comedic stereotype would have been a widely known structure and consequently easily read and understood. The content and literary tropes remained static and largely unchanged over the many ballads that presented her. This suggests that the content showcased were common societal perceptions that were widely known. A relationship between the ballad and society was apparent; the more these ideas were showcased in ballads, the more they became entrenched as a cultural norm.

I have treated the ballads as a pivotal source. The ideas expressed were representative of the mentality surrounding the female stereotypes, as underneath the deluge of satirical tropes and cliché social situations meant to incite laughter were traces of social realism. I decided to not dismiss prejudice and bias as inconsequential, rather I have embraced the skew. It acts as a usable window into early modern mentality. For example, the shrew was often drowned in scornful distaste, which can be translated as evidence of her negative place in the home and society.

I have also used sources richer in social realism. These include diaries, legal records, images, material objects, and moralistic treatises. For example, alongside accounts of his many dalliances and concerns about deteriorating eyesight, Samuel Pepys's diary made mentions of his wife's shrewish behaviour. I have used this source as a means to view the shrew separate from satirical confines while legal records have functioned in the reconstruction of the common scold. The legal records, moreover, acted as means to witness the judicial punishment of the scold – the cucking stool and the scold's bridle. The punishment process has also been conceptualised through a series of eyewitness accounts. Most from the perspective of watching the punishment, a singular account being from Dorothy Waugh, who was imprisoned in the scold's bridle.

Images and material objects have also worked to build an understanding of early modern scold punishment procedures. Victorian antiquarians had a preoccupation with the fair scolding one. Many dedicated extensive research to her and her punishments, transversing the English county seeking the devices used, and

producing treatises on them with detailed descriptions on each individual device as well as rough sketches. T.W Brushfield was one such curious Antiquarian. In his treatise, which he published in the Chester archaeological journal, Brushfield documented the different instruments used in the correction of a scold. He described the cucking stool, ducking stool, and scold's bridle, offering accounts of their use and providing sketches of them.

Lastly, conduct books and tongue treatises were two forms of moral tracts that I have utilised, the former for the purpose of understanding female behaviour in the duality of ideal and unideal, and the latter for gaining an awareness of general opinion on speech as well as the tongue. Tongue treatises were penned by preachers and moralists who were concerned with the unruly tongue. The manner in which I have used this source has been achieved through two means. The writings have shed light on the unease that was directed towards the tongue and its behaviour in Early Modern England. The amount written and the extreme language used, that is, the associations with the devil, hell, and wickedness with the unruly tongue, was telling of the mentality surrounding the organ. A man's eyes, ears, or limbs didn't receive the same treatment exempt from passionate entreaties and lengthy treatises and viewed with apathy, while the tongue was treated with alarmist discourse.

The actual existence of these treatises was something that aided in my understanding of this organ. Men strove to meticulously detail its nature and dangers, because it was something that was viewed with a wary eye. So, tongue treatises were used to formulate an idea of the mentality directed towards an unruly tongue as well as speech. The other use of this source is on the details written on how to wrangle an unruly tongue into submission. This is apart from the physical methods employed in the legal sphere, rather it presents immaterial suggestions.

Chapter One examines the Early Modern English shrew. It begins by studying the impact certain speech had on a woman's place in society, demonstrating how silence was a valued ideal while garrulity acted as a catalyst for these harmful

builds. The remainder of this chapter works to present the stereotype of the shrew, primarily from the hands of male satire writers. The stereotype will be assembled mainly through the gathering of literacy tropes that were assigned to the shrew accompanied by the scattering of evidence more grounded in social reality.

Chapter Two works in contrast to the abstract nature of the shrew through the presentation of the common scold. This will look at her transition from stereotype to legal category, the change from shrew to common scold. I study both her place in the legal framework as well as the community's reaction and opinion on having a local scold.

Chapter Three studies the punishment, the taming of the shrew and legal correction of the scold. It examines the fictional husband's reaction to having a shrew as a wife, if he carried out any actions that were meant to erase the shrew stereotype replacing it with an idealistic image of a good wife. The other half studies formal legal punishments executed through various devices, such as the ducking stool and scold's bridle, as well as monetary punishments and informal community responses.

## ACT ONE:

### ENTERS THE SHREW: THE JEST OF EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

#### Silence, Speech, and Separation in Early Modern England

The female sex of Early Modern England was fractured. Women either could “be good, proceeding from virginity to marriage and maternity, and die after a virtuously spent widowhood”, or choose wickedness, being “scolds, whores, or witches.”<sup>27</sup> Or as one balladeer summarised, “good and bad amongst women there be”.<sup>28</sup> This schism was partially encouraged by communal ideology which identified and defined ideal female behaviour, namely silence, chastity, and obedience. Women who strove to this ideal became symbols of pride, especially for a husband. For example, William Gouge exalted his wife by praising her as “a pious and diligent housewife who carefully kept Saint Paul’s precept to keep at home, avoided idle company, and devoutly breastfed her brood of thirteen children.”<sup>29</sup> Another happy husband was Suffolk minister, Isaac Archer, who had a “wife perfectly devoted to pleasing him” and who was blessed with such “a meek and quiet spirit.”<sup>30</sup>

Female speech was one quality that divided the female sex, at least in regards to societal perception. She could be either a rigid despot ruling her tongue with unwavering fortitude, or she allowed it to rule her. The verbal category which a woman aligned with potentially could influence their standing in society. Those who demurely embraced the virtue of silence were the good, the desirable, the ideal, and the ordered, while women with tongues like slippery eels were the bad, the undesirable, the unideal, and the disordered. Though it is worth mentioning, this ideal was generally not part of social reality, rather it was more a conceptualised utopian female image based on patriarchal ideals, one not often, if

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<sup>27</sup> Mendelson and Crawford, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> ‘Advice to Batchelors Or A Caution to be careful in their Choice, As also, the deserved praise of a Careful Industrious Wife. If thou wilt change a single Life to live free from annoy. Chuse then a kind and careful Wife, she’ll Crown thy days with Joy’, RB 2.6 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (Printed for P. Brooksby at the Golden Ball in Pye Corner, 1685-1688) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30091/xml>> [Accessed 07 May 2015].

<sup>29</sup> Bernard Stuart Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], p. 15-16.

<sup>30</sup> Capp, p. 72.

ever, fully realised. For example, a completely silent woman remained a rarely realised idealistic archetype. It stood as an unrealistic ideal that husbands could measure their wives against and observe how far they fell short of their image of their 'perfect' woman. Though as long as a woman genuinely aspired to the virtue of silence then she could still be identified as a good wife. Anxiety and fear arose when women consciously rejected quietude, and rather decided to eagerly fall to prating and scolding. This was the point when society crafted them into comical or villainous characters, such as the shrew, as well as paving the way for the introduction of legal measures for reform.

Silence was an important virtue in Early Modern English society; its praise sang in various discourses from prescriptive to eulogy.<sup>31</sup> Female silence was frequently written upon in a prescriptive manner where it was encouraged that women should still their tongues and not wag them like a lamb's tail. Conduct manual writers spoke on silence in laudable terms, working to construct an exemplary image of the silent woman, meant to influence young female minds while they prepared for their future role of wife. The ode to silence in England most likely began with the English translation of Juan Luis Vives *Instruction of a Christian Woman* and continued until the English Civil War.<sup>32</sup> Following this, many English voices contributed to this homage, including Richard Brathwait, John Dod and Robert Clever, William Whately, William Gouge, and Thomas Becon.<sup>33</sup> Time after time, these men demanded feminine silence, and such uniformity on its praise meant that it became "institutionalised as a cultural idea"<sup>34</sup> or "absorbed into popular

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<sup>31</sup> See Christina Luckyj's, 'A Moving Rhetoric': Gender and Silence in Early Modern England' [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002], for a study on silence that attempts to elevate it above its rigid place in the trio of early modern female virtues, 'obedience, silence, and chastity, as Janette Dillon in her review of the book wrote that Luckyj built silence as "more paradoxical than that simple model of triadic virtue implies" (Janette Dillon, *Block Theatre Research International Close*, 28.1 (Mar 2003): 100-102.). For a general look at Early Modern female virtue see also, Jessica C. Murphy, *Virtuous Necessity: Conduct Literature and the Making of the Virtuous Woman in Early Modern England* [Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2015], Robert B. Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society 1650-1850: The Emergence of Separate Spheres* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 23-25, and Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England: Print, Gender, and Literacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 200-202.

<sup>32</sup> Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003], p. 104.

<sup>33</sup> Listed are the titles of conduct books written by the men listed above. These were: Richard Brathwait, *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), John Dod and Robert Clever, *A Godly Form of Householde Government* (1612), William Whatley, *A bride-bush, or A vvedding sermon compendiously describing the duties of married persons: by performing whereof, marriage shall be to them a great helpe, which now finde it a little hell* (1617), William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622) and Thomas Becon, *Catechism*.

<sup>34</sup> Heidi Brayman Hackel, 'Boasting of Silence: Women Readers in a Patriarchal State' in Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, eds., *Reading, Society and Politics in Early Modern England* [Cambridge University Press, 2003], p. 104. Hackel's study on silence was unique as her focus was not on the traditional form of female silence, rather she studied silence in a woman's reading of books.

attitudes”.<sup>35</sup> These polemics were also formulaic in content. For instance, many stressed an emphasis on a woman’s visibility coupled with quietude,<sup>36</sup> as conceptualised by Brathwaite in *The English Gentlewoman* where he wrote “all women should be seene and not heard.”<sup>37</sup> The tongue was central in these treatises, where it was translated as a potentially mutinous member. Brathwait’s conception of the female tongue was that it should be “tipped in silence,”<sup>38</sup> Becon’s maids must not to be “full of tongue”,<sup>39</sup> and Gouge prescribed that the tongue should always be restrained. Silence was also understood as a sign of respect. Female “silence testify a reverend respect”<sup>40</sup> particularly in the presence of their husbands, “verily this reuerence doth inioyne the woman silence, when her husband is present.”<sup>41</sup>

Despite conduct books generally being accessible only to the elite and middling classes, this knowledge would have been widely accessible through ballads and broadsides, theological teachings, and “social osmosis.”<sup>42</sup> Popular sayings hyperbolised silence, for example, “silence was the best ornament of a woman”, “silence was a fine jewel for a woman” and “nothing that doth so much adorn, deck, trim and garnish a maid as silence.”<sup>43</sup> This communicated its importance to a woman’s character. One Stuart ballad vilified feminine speech by framing it in the discourse of a scold while simultaneously idealising silence by associating it with honesty and virtue, as “honest wives and maides and widdowes of each sort,

<sup>35</sup> Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 303.

<sup>36</sup> Other expressions of this particular edict for female verbal behaviour include c. 1400 John Mirk’s *Festial: A Collection of Homilies* p. 230, “for hyt ys an old Englysch sawe: ‘A mayde schuld be seen, but not herd’”, c. 1560 Thomas Becon *The Catechism*, p. 369, where the proverbial wisdom of, “a maid should be seen and not heard” was included, and c. 1773, Richard Graves, *The Spiritual Quixote*, p. 111, ‘it is a vulgar maxim ‘that a pretty woman should rather be seen than heard’.

<sup>37</sup> Sharpe and Zwicker, p. 104.

<sup>38</sup> Sharpe and Zwicker, p. 104.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas Becon, *The Catechism of Thomas Becon: With Other Pieces Written by Him in the Reign of King Edward the Sixth*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1844), p. 369.

<sup>40</sup> Aughterson, p. 133.

<sup>41</sup> Whatley, *A Bride-bvsh. Or, A Direction for Married Persons: Plainely Describing the Duties Common to Both, and Peculiar to Each of Them. By Performing of Which, Marriage Shall Prooue a Great Helpe to Such, as Now for Want of Performing Them, Doe Finde it a Little Hell* (Banbury, Oxfordshire: William Whateley, 1623], p. 200 in *Google Books* <[https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=GshCAQAAMAAJ&dq=A+Bride-bvsh.+Or,+A+Direction+for+Married+Persons:+Plainely+Describing+the+Duties+Common+to+Both,+and+Peculiar+to+Each+of+Them&source=gbp\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=GshCAQAAMAAJ&dq=A+Bride-bvsh.+Or,+A+Direction+for+Married+Persons:+Plainely+Describing+the+Duties+Common+to+Both,+and+Peculiar+to+Each+of+Them&source=gbp_navlinks_s)> [accessed 20 May 2015].

<sup>42</sup> This is a term used by Bernard Capp in *When Gossips Meet* (p. 6) in description of the process of society absorbing social conventions through oral teachings or advice given by parents, preachers, and masters.

<sup>43</sup> Aughterson, p. 112.

might live in peace and rest, and silence keep her court.”<sup>44</sup> Another presented a suffering husband repeatedly uttering the oath, “a ny thing for a quiet life,” an impossibility because of his clamorous wife.<sup>45</sup> The image of a silent woman was far-reaching, and far-wanting. It became a “pressure of the patriarchal state.”<sup>46</sup> Many buckled under this pressure, as silence became “equated to modesty, piety,” honesty, and most importantly to acceptable “femininity.”<sup>47</sup>

Complete silence, however, was not a realistic or perhaps even an idealistic state, rather silence was contemporary defined as the absence of uncontrollable speech.<sup>48</sup> Complete silence was actually translated as obstinate, illustrated by William Gouge who wrote that “silence....is not opposed to speech as if she should not speak at all, but to loquacity.” and he later went on to write that complete “silence imply stoutness of stomach and stubbornness of heart.”<sup>49</sup> An opinion shared by William Whatley, who wrote, “I meane not an vtter abstinence from speech, but vsing fewer words (and those mild and low) not loud and eager.”<sup>50</sup> Women needed to learn that words “be few... [there was] a fit time and occasion of speech.”<sup>51</sup> Thomas Becon’s vision of a silent woman was one that was also scare of words, “honest maids provide that they not be full of tongue and of much babbling, not use many words, but as few as they may,”<sup>52</sup> concurred by William Gouge, when he wrote, “a wife to be sparing in speech, to expect a fit time and just occasion of speech.”<sup>53</sup> A woman’s voice should never fall into

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<sup>44</sup> ‘A Pleasant new Ballad you here may behold, How the Devill, though subde, was guld by a Scold’ in *University of Oxford Text Archive* (London, 1635) <[http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A03/A03200.html#index.xml-body.1\\_div.2](http://tei.it.ox.ac.uk/tcp/Texts-HTML/free/A03/A03200.html#index.xml-body.1_div.2)> [Accessed 13 Nov. 2015].

<sup>45</sup> ‘Any thing for a quiet life, or, The Married mans bondage to a curst wife’ in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London: Printed by G.P, 1620) <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A20572.0001.001/1-1?rgn=div1;view=toc>> [accessed 20 April 2015].

<sup>46</sup> Hackel, p. 101.

<sup>47</sup> Hackel, p. 106.

<sup>48</sup> Luckyj, p. 46.

<sup>49</sup> Aughterson, p. 135

<sup>50</sup> Whatley, p. 200.

<sup>51</sup> William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties, eight treatises, etc.* (London: John Haviland for William Bladen, 1622), p. 288.

<sup>52</sup> Becon, p. 369.

<sup>53</sup> Gouge, p.282.



prattle, tattle or scolding, rather she was to speak “wisely, discreetly, soberly, and modesty.”<sup>54</sup>

Silence was a gendered duty, similar to obedience and chastity. Compliance to these behavioural stipulations was compulsory, if a woman had designs of fashioning an appropriate public image, for example, the good wife or the chaste maid. When this duty was forsaken, silence dismissed and loquacity seized, a change of character was a potential consequence. Moralists, kin, judicial authority, and satirists built new identifier constructs for the noisy, unchaste, and disobedient, for instance, the shrew and the scold were made for the clamorous.

### **The Curse of Marriage: A Sharp Tongued Shrew**

Snips and snails and puppy dog tail; sugar and spice and all things nice made boys and girls, but what made a shrew?<sup>55</sup> Similar to a witch cackling over her bubbling cauldron, Dame Nature brewed a wicked shrew in *The Shrew's Looking Glass*,<sup>56</sup> concocted to punish men's stupidity when it came to a pretty face. The ingredients that made the proto-shrew were neither sugar or spice, rather they were venomous and odious. For instance, her artillery was added first, “the tongues and galls of bulls, bears, wolves, magpies, parrots” seasoned with venom, “tails of vipers, adders, snakes and lizards, seven apiece,” finalised with a balneum of quicksilver and choleric blood to cement her nature as one of ill-temper.<sup>57</sup> From the shimmery surface, a shrew arose ready to become tormentor of mankind. She was a curse that seeped into the “world, that scare an alley or village is free from some of her lineage.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Aughterson, p. 27.

<sup>55</sup> In this chapter I will be using the term shrew and scolding wife in a synonymous fashion. Shrew was seen to be a female who performed the same behaviour as a common scold, but kept this behaviour indoors. Thus she was not persecuted. She could also be known as a domestic scold.

<sup>56</sup> Despite being referred to as a scold in this satire, I have understood this as a representation of a shrew. The two were often synonymous in the context of literature.

<sup>57</sup> Anon, *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold or The Shrew's Looking Glass* (London: Printed by Charles Clark at his Press, 1848), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> *Poor Robin's True Character of a scold*, p.6.

Nature as alchemist and the shrew made from a noxious potion is obviously fantastical, but it reflects the general opinion about her. The ingredients listed in this recipe would have been accepted as synonymous for a shrew's temperament, as "women who talked back, or scolded their husbands were stock figures of ridicule."<sup>59</sup> They became familiar from the numerous "stylisations of negative femininity," framed in the discourse and visuality of a shrew.<sup>60</sup> It was envisioned, assembled, formalised, and shared as an uniform textual presentation, something that may be called the ideology of the shrew or scold. People anticipated the shrew to exhibit certain kinds of behaviour. The more people were exposed to things that aligned with their static ideas: the more the shrew image was cemented in the societal mentality. Analogous to how this recipe cooked the shrew using one component at a time, I intend to study the shrew by isolating her two primary qualities: her notorious speech and beasts and devil imagery. Moreover, I will briefly study how the shrew moniker largely became her identity to others. She was not Miss Katherina, or Robert Smith's wife, rather she was that cursed shrew. Her behaviour defined her.

The shrew's persona was built outwardly from the oral cavity, where shrill speech and a sharp tongue became internal to her image. Her voice was fundamentally a constructed edifice given volume and content through text. The wife played the puppet, while the husband or male author acted the puppet master, controlling or mutating female speech ensuring that it would always be presented as rabid, loud, destructive, and senseless. But what exactly did a shrew's speech sound like?

What did a woman need to say for it to be perceived as shrewish?

First, there was too much of it. There was a theme, nurtured by social and cultural conventions, that made the shrew synonymous with excess speech. Popular proverbs such as, "many women many words," and "where there are women and geese there wants no noise" reflected the entrenched mentality that women,

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<sup>59</sup> *Historians On Chaucer: The General Prologue To The Canterbury Tales* (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 328.

<sup>60</sup> Kirilka Stavreva, *Words Like Daggers: Violent Female Speech in Early Modern England* [Nebraska: U of Nebraska Press, 2015], p. 46.

particularly shrews, enjoyed speaking in surplus.<sup>61</sup> For example, Milton's characterisation of Dalila adhered to this, writing that she "blandished parleys, feminine assaults, tongue batteries, she surceased not day nor night."<sup>62</sup> It was also envisaged that the shrew's tongue was such an unstoppable force that not even the all-powerful devil could bring it to heel, "the devil cannot tye a woman's tongue."<sup>63</sup> Balladic tradition was another vector that promoted this feminine prejudice, for example, a typical plot presented a husband anchored to a scolding wife living in perpetual unquiet from the line "she began to brawl and scold."<sup>64</sup> In the Jacobean ballad, *Poor Anthony's Compliant*, the henpecked husband, Anthony, lamented on having "not one quiet hour,"<sup>65</sup> rather his days were misery now that "scolding was [his] dyet."<sup>66</sup> Perpetual lingual motion was also emphasised. In *Poor Robins Scold*, the shrew had a tongue that "runs like a wheel, one spoke after another and makes [much] noise and jangling."<sup>67</sup> Another dialogue saw a maid described as having a tongue that could not be held as it was always on the "run run run,"<sup>68</sup> while another fabricated husband bemoaned that his wife "bit her lippe, not her tongue, for that she kept still in motion."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> John Ray, *A Complete Collection Of English Proverbs ... To Which Is Added ... A Collection Of English Words, Not Generally Used ...* Reprinted Verbatim From The Edition Of 1768, 2nd edn (London: T. & J. Allman, 1817), p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> Constance Classen, *The Colour of Angels: Cosmology, Gender and the Aesthetic Imagination* [Routledge, 2002], p. 74.

<sup>63</sup> Classen, p. 75.

<sup>64</sup> 'The scolding wife', Crawford 1151 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London: Printed for P. Brooksby at the Golden Ball in Pye-corne, 1672-1696), National Library of Scotland <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/33867/citation>> [accessed 20th June 2015].

<sup>65</sup> 'Poor Anthony's Complaint and Lamentation against his Miseries of marriage, meeting with a scolding Wife', Euing 275 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London, 1685-1688), University of Glasgow Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31889/xml>> [accessed 6 October 2015].

<sup>66</sup> Poor Anthony's Complaint.

<sup>67</sup> Poor Robin's True Character, p. 2.

<sup>68</sup> 'The Dumb Maid', Roxburghe 4.44 in *English Broadside Ballad* (London: Printed for F. Coles, 1678-1680), British Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31276/citation>> [accessed 20th June 2015].

This plot of this ballad diverges from the typical shrew plot, in the sense that a shrew was made from a good wife rather than vice-versa.

It was as follows: A bachelor married a young maiden who was fair, modest, and hardworking, however she had one flaw, she was mute. The husband wished to cure this inflection, and sought a doctor to assist him. The doctor cut her chattering string and set her tongue a running. The husband ended up living in woe and misery as he was now married to a scold, much worse than his earlier predicament of being married to a mute.

<sup>69</sup> John Taylor, *Divers crabtree lectures Expressing the severall languages that shrews read to their husbands, either at morning, noone, or night. With a pleasant relation of a shrewes Munday, and shrewes Tuesday, and why they were so called. Also a lecture betweene a pedler and his wife in the canting language. With a new trick to tame a shrew.* [London: I. Okes, 1639], p. 93.

Husbands were not exclusively tormented in stanza, they also suffered in reality. For example, Adam Eyre of Yorkshire was troubled by his wife's scolding one June morning in 1647.<sup>70</sup> Eyre wrote that his "wife began, after her old manner to brawl and revile me",<sup>71</sup> over silly matters such as her clothing and whether or not Adams stepped on her foot,<sup>72</sup> and she kept on till noon.<sup>73</sup> This mention of the passing of time is reflective on the idea that the shrew's voice was an unrestrained thing. She did not speak in short interments, rather she was disposed to verbal gluttony. Moreover, the fact that he referred to this as her old manner is suggestive of habitual scolding. This was not a singular happenstance for the Eyres, rather Adam was anchored to a shrew. Another Englishman who had a scolding dyet was Samuel Pepys, who regularly endured high words from his wife. For instance on the 19th of November 1668, Pepys came under attack from his wife's sharp tongue. The catalyst for this being Samuels proclivity for buxom young maids. Pepys described how he was forced to "endure the sorrow of her threats and vows and curses all afternoon...fearing that it will never have an end,"<sup>74</sup> another reference to the perpetual state of a scold's speech.

A wife's speech did not tamper off come nightfall, rather her position of shrew was a 24-7 wifely obligation, "she scolded day and night."<sup>75</sup> In some depictions, her speech was not even actual words, rather it was expressed in terms of simple noise where even while unconscious, she kept the home in a constant flux of noise, from snoring or sleep talking. For example, *Poor Robin's Scold* demonstrated that a shrew was "never quiet, for either she talks in her dream, or

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<sup>70</sup> Adam Eyre was a Yorkshire farmer, and was married to one Jane Eyre. His life can be witnessed through the collection, *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Some memoirs concerning the family of the Priestleys...* by Jonathan Priestley. *Some brief memoirs of the family of the Priestleys..* by Nathaniel Priestley. For a brief secondary description of their marriage and activities in the 1640s see Rosemary O'day's *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain and the American Colonies*.

<sup>71</sup> Rosemary O'Day, *Women's Agency In Early Modern Britain And The American Colonies* (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 168.

<sup>72</sup> The full quote is as follows; This morn my wife began,after her old manner to brawl and revile me for wishing her only to wear such apparel as was decent and comely, and accused me of treading on her sore foot, with curses and oaths, which to my knowledge I touched not" (O'Day, p. 168).

<sup>73</sup> Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel: Woman's Lot in Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Phoenix Press, 2011) in Google Books < [https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=nfZVnNYgnCYC&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=nfZVnNYgnCYC&source=gbs_navlinks_s)> [accessed 27th June 2015].

<sup>74</sup> *Diary Of Samuel Pepys*, ed. by H. B.W, Brampton, 2nd edn. (North Carolina: Hayes Barton Press, 2007), p. 2189.

<sup>75</sup> 'The scolding wife', Crawford 1151 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London: Printed for P. Brooksby at the Golden Ball in Pye-corne, 1672-1696), National Library of Scotland < <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/33867/citation>> [accessed 20th June 2015].

awakes the whole house with a terrible fit of snoring.”<sup>76</sup> A device that framed this image of the nocturnal shew, or as Joseph Swetnam called them, night crows, was the curtain lecture.<sup>77</sup> The term curtain lecture first appeared in print in 1633 in Thomas Adams’s *A Commentary or Exposition Upon the Divine Second Epistle Generall*, where Adams introduced the scene of a wife reprimanding a husband while cloistered behind bed-curtains. After this premiere, “Early Modern english writers demonstrated an exceptionally lively interest in curtain lectures, devoutly rehashing popular merry tales of curtain lecture wives in ballads, collections of jests, conduct books, and pamphlets completely entirely to the theme.”<sup>78</sup> Text was not the only means that framed these night crows, images also encapsulated them, for example, the engraving frontispiece for Heywood’s treatise.<sup>79</sup>

Stepping out of fiction, Samuel Pepys’s bedchamber was a real-life venue for curtain lectures. After discovering Pepys infidelity with Deb Kneep, “Mrs. Pepys used the bed she shared with her husband as the site for airing her grievances.”<sup>80</sup> Pepys informed his diary that his wife “full of trouble in her looks” retired to bed, but “midnight she wakes me...affirming that she saw me hug and kiss the girle.”<sup>81</sup> Pepys’s denied the charge, but “upon her pressing me did offer to give her under my hand that I would never see....Kneep.”<sup>82</sup> Her nocturnal lecture was finished as “at last was quiet...so to sleep.”<sup>83</sup> This respite was only temporary, as an encore performance was held the next evening. Samuel related the matter once

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<sup>76</sup> *Poor Robin’s True Character of a schold*, p. 2.

<sup>77</sup> The term lecture was being used in a satirical manner for a wife during her lecture did not impart intellectual and stimulating dialogue or debate, rather she had a one-sided monologue listing her various complaints and grievances.

<sup>78</sup> For examples of literary constructions of curtain lectures see Thomas Heywood’s *Curtain Lectures* (1637), John Taylor’s *Divers Crabtree Lectures* (1639), and Richard Brathwait’s *Ar’t asleepe husband? A Boulster Lecture* (1640). For an interesting review of the curtain lecture also see, Kathleen Kalpin’s ‘Framing Wifely Advice In Thomas Heywood’s A Curtaine Lecture And Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale’.

<sup>79</sup> See Appendix 2 for this image. In this image, the audience is presented with a lavish bedchamber, where a husband is attempting to sleep and a shrew was preventing that from happening. An hourglass rests on the side table, perhaps a symbolic reference to the lengthy nature of the lecture. Next to the visual was a caption, which included lines such as “when wives preach, tis not in the husband’s power, to have their lectures end within an hower”. An apt summarisation; minutes and seconds her voice did not occupy, rather she could talk for hours upon hours.

<sup>80</sup> Kathleen Kalpin ‘Framing Wifely Advice In Thomas Heywood’s A Curtaine Lecture And Shakespeare’s The Winter’s Tale’, *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 48 (2007), 131-146 <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/sel.2008.0010>> [accessed 06 May 2015]

<sup>81</sup> Samuel Pepys, *The Diary Of Samuel Pepys* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2012), p. 284 <[https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=4HFGXSQ4pa0C&dq=inauthor:%22Samuel+Pepys%22&source=gbg\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=4HFGXSQ4pa0C&dq=inauthor:%22Samuel+Pepys%22&source=gbg_navlinks_s)> [accessed 5 June 2015].

<sup>82</sup> Pepys, p. 284.

<sup>83</sup> Pepys, p. 284.

again in his diary, writing that “my wife did towards bedtime begin to be in a mighty rage...and did most part of the night in bed rant at me in most high terms.”<sup>84</sup> Contemporary opinion on curtain lectures was overwhelming negative, evidenced in waspish satirical representations which constructed night crows as abusive and unreasonable; ranters and ravers who kept honest husbands from slumber. It was unideal and consequently women were advised against such behaviour. For instance, in *A Merry Dialogue Declaringe the Properties of Shrowde Shrews and Honest Wives* (1557),<sup>85</sup> it was written that a wife should “be wyse...never gyve hym foule wordes in the chambre”, the bed being for “pastyme and pleasure” not “scholde and chyde.”<sup>86</sup> A shrew was never tongue tyed or bereft of words; she was word mad.

A shrew’s words were also assembled from insults. *Taming of the Shrew’s* Katherina did not sanguinely address men, rather she knighted them “mad—cap ruffian and swearing Jack” and “rascal fiddler, and twangling Jack.”<sup>87</sup> John Taylor’s shrew scripts in *Divers Crabtree Lectures* were rife with insulting language.<sup>88</sup> For instance, an apothecary’s wife honoured her husband with the titles, “duke of the dung-cart and Vicount rubbish,” a sergeant’s wife called her libertine husband “thou pestilent pill-garlicke,” and a poet’s wife insulted her husband’s ‘talent’ with “thou an artist? Thou an asse.”<sup>89</sup> Actual wives also created cruel epithets for their husbands, for example Samuel Pepys was titled “the [most]

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<sup>84</sup> Pepys, p. 285, Samuel seemed to be a regular attendee to these curtain lectures, as there were subsequent entries on the dates of 19 May 1662 where he was “long in bed, sometimes scolding with my wife”, and Friday 6 January 1664 “lay long in bed, but most of it angry and scolding”.

<sup>85</sup> This medieval text was framed as a dialogue between two women, Eulalia and Xan. who cleaved the female sex using spousal treatment as the mark of difference. In the opinion of these two women, behaviour in the bedchamber was one quality that separated good and bad wives.

<sup>86</sup> Desiderius Erasmus, ‘A Merry Dialogue Declaringe the Properties of Shrowde Shrews and Honest Wives’ in *Gutenberg Books* <<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14282/14282-h/14282-h.htm>> [accessed 20 June 2015].

<sup>87</sup> William Shakespeare, *The Taming of the Shrew* (London: Printed for John Bell, 1785), pp.60, 55. For critical commentaries on *The Taming of the Shrew* see, Stevie Davies *William Shakespeare The Taming of the Shrew*, Philippa Kelly’s ‘What Women Want: The Shrew’s Story’ in *Storytelling: Critical and Creative Approaches*, George Hibbard’s ‘The Taming of the Shrew: A Social Comedy’ in *Shakespearean Essays*, ed. Alwin Thaler and Norman Sanders, *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays* ed. by Dana Aspinall, and Linda E. Boose’s ‘Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman’s Unruly Member’ in *Shakespeare Quarterly*.

<sup>88</sup> The full name of this text was *Divers Crabtree Lectures Expressing the severall languages that shrews read to their husbands, either at morning, noone, or night. With a pleasant relation of a shrewes Munday, and shrewes Tuesday, and why they were so called. Also a lecture betweene a pedler and his wife in the canting language. With a new tricke to tame a shrew* (1639) This satirical treatise presented husbands with various professional backgrounds being scolded by their wives using caustic language.

<sup>89</sup> John Taylor, *Divers crabtree lectures Expressing the severall languages that shrews read to their husbands* [London: I. Okes, 1639], pp. 15, 28, 59.

false, rotten-hearted rouge in the world,” William Cotes of Leicester was welcomed home from the alehouse with the greeting “drunken knave,” another Leicester husband ears were rattled from his wife calling him “dog-faced fool, scurvy knave and ass,” and a passionate oration of “thou art a rouge, go and be hanged to thy whore” was addressed to an adulterous husband in Leicestershire.<sup>90</sup>

This representation of a shrew’s speech as replete with cruel and rude insults diverged from the ideal wife-husband discourse. Prescriptive literature decreed that the proper manner a wife should address her husband, for example, William Gouge in *Of Domesticall Duties*, wrote that a wife should never show malice or disrespect towards her husband in speech or gesture, rather “by speech must a wife’s reverence be manifested...her words must be reverend and meek.”<sup>91</sup> Gouge went on to list names a wife may use alongside particular titles that a wife’s tongue should never articulate, writing that in naming her husband “must...signify superiority, and savour of reverence.”<sup>92</sup> Disrespectful epithets were “not fit to be given to the basest men... grub, rouge and the like, which I am even ashamed to name.”<sup>93</sup> The shrew’s insulting language functioned as another mark against her character, and a reflection of her separatism from the ideal wife image.

Third, a shrew’s voice was used to abuse foes. The female voice always had an octave of danger rippling through it, from beautiful sirens serenading sailors to their watery graves to mother Eve and her sweet apple tongue. Preachers, such as George Webbe, wrote that “it was the tongue [that] giveth shrewd wives sharpe weapons to fight against their husbands.”<sup>94</sup> Medical writing presented associations between the tongue and danger, for example, in William Bullein’s *The Government of Health* (1596) the reader was reminded that the tongue was perilous and “full of venim” for Bullein was, “oftentimes stinged with it.”<sup>95</sup> *An*

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<sup>90</sup> Capp, pp. 88, 95.

<sup>91</sup> Gouge, p. 435.

<sup>92</sup> Gouge, p. 200.

<sup>93</sup> Gouge, p. 200.

<sup>94</sup> Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, *The Unruly Tongue in Early Modern England: Three Treatises* [Maryland: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012], p. 91.

<sup>95</sup> Jonathan G. Harris, *Foreign Bodies and the Body Politic: Discourses of Social Pathology in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 108.

*Anatomy of a Woman's Tongue* (1638), had a dying man testifying that his encroaching demise was brought about by a feminine tongue, “tis true” he said “it was a woman’s tongue that hath, like poison, done me so much wrong.”<sup>96</sup> Other parallels were presented in this treatise, stressing a female tongue being synonymous with danger, such as it being likened to an inferno, with “such flames, such wonderous flames,”<sup>97</sup> and hissing serpents, with a husband proclaiming that “I have a serpent every night, that leith in my bosom and can bite,...I do know her tongue to be that sting that does me so wrong.”<sup>98</sup>

At the popular level, the shrew’s tongue was smithed a sharp edge through its representation in popular literature.<sup>99</sup> For example in the ballad *Keep a Good Tongue in your Head*, it was sang that “no venomous snake stings like a woman’s tongue”.<sup>100</sup> Swetnam in his attack against womankind wrote that “the serpent hath not so much venom in his taile as [a woman] hath in her tongue” and “some women are never well except they be casting out venom with their tongues to the hurt of their husbands.”<sup>101</sup> A Stuart ballad depicted a husband comparing his scolding wife’s tongue to “a two-edged sword,” while the “Princess of France and her ladies” in Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost* had tongues that were “as keen as is the razors edge.”<sup>102</sup> A casualty list of men, suffering from stings, burns or nicks, from a shrew’s tongue amassed in the literary world, as well as in reality. For example, in the anonymous Elizabethan ballad *A Merry Jest*, the shrew

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<sup>96</sup> ‘An anatomy of a woman’s tongue’ in *The Harleian Miscellany, Or, A Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts: As Well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the Late Earl of Oxford's Library. Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes ; with a Table of Contents, and an Alphabetical Index*, Vol. 2, ed. by William Oldys, Edward Harley Earl of Oxford [London: T. Osborne, 1744], p.170.

<sup>97</sup> Oldey & Harley, p. 172.

<sup>98</sup> Oldey & Harley, p. 170.

<sup>99</sup> Historian Olwen Hufton compiled a checklist of a disorderly female’s expected qualities, one being “a shrewish and uncontrollable tongue which is her main weapon in the defeat of her husband” cited from *Lewd and Notorious: Female Transgression in the Eighteenth Century* ed. by Katharine Kittredge, p. 3.

<sup>100</sup> Martin Parker, *Keep a Good Tongue in your Head: for Here's a Good Woman in Every Respect, But only her Tongue Breeds all the Defect*, Roxburghe 1.512-513 in *English Broadside Ballads* [London: for Thomas Lambert at the Horsshoo in Smithfield, 1633-1669 ?] <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30344/citation>> [accessed 4 April 2015].

<sup>101</sup> Joseph Swetnam, *The Arraignment Of Lewd, Idle, Froward, And Unconstant Women: Or, The Vanity Of Them; Chuse You Wheter. With A Commendation Of The Wise, Vertuous, And Honest Women. Pleasant For Married-Men, Profitable For Youngmen, And Hurtfull To None* in *Google Books* (London: B. Deacon, 1707), p. 89 <<https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=JvxeAAAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>> [accessed 6 June 2015].

<sup>102</sup> “The New German Doctor: or, An Infallible Cure for a Scolding Wife”, Crawford 1414 in *English Broadside Ballads* (London: J Deacon at the Angle in Giltspur Street, 1672-1702) National Library of Scotland <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/33940>> [accessed 6 June 2015].  
William Shakespeare and Alexander Dyce, *Love's Labour's Lost*, 2nd ed. (Leipzig, Germany: Bernhard Tauchnitz, 1868), p. 60.



“caused her fathers heart to bleede,” Samuel Pepys’s described his wife’s verbal barrages as “the greatest agony in the world,” and husbands from Stuart ballads called out various exclamations, normally within the lines of she “put me to great pain”, and “makes my heart full cold.”<sup>103</sup> The fabled story of St. Christina of Tyre presented the tongue as a weapon in the most literal sense of the word. The story went that Christina was tortured, first by her father and later by two judges because of her Christian beliefs. Her final tormentor cut her tongue out in order to establish her eternal silence, however, the legend went that she “spat this cut-off piece of her tongue into the tyrants face putting out one of his eyes.”<sup>104</sup> Though Christina is far from being translated as a shrew, it still acts as an instance, be it a legendary and hyperbolised instance, where a woman used her tongue as a weapon against patriarchal authority, which was the very essence of a shrew’s agenda.

Another shrew with a weapon for a tongue was Katherina Minola, who openly acknowledged this transmutation. After she was called out as a buzzing wasp by Petruchio, she counter-riposted with “if I be waspish, best beware my sting” and when Petruchio threatens to pluck this sting out, she directs him not to the tail, but rather the tongue.<sup>105</sup> This exchange is reflective on how Katherina understood her own tongue. Not as an appendage that solely facilitated speech, rather she made it her weapon to inflict pain and misery to the foolish men that surrounded her. There was also this association with venom and poison in her speech; her tongue was a stinger that released venomous words.

Another layer to dangerous feminine speech was the threat for future damage, that is blackmail. The scene often witnessed was a shrew vindictively informing her husband that she would release his shameful secrets if he did not comply to her

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<sup>103</sup> Anon, *A Merry Jest*, University of Oregon, updated 2015 <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html>> [accessed 28 June 2015]. Samuel Pepys, 'Thursday 19 November 1668', *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, 2011 <<http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1668/11/19/>> [accessed 25 June 2015]. Arthur Halliarg, *The Cruel Shrew*, Roxburghe 1.28-29 ( London: Printed by M.P. for Henry Gosson on London Bridge, 1601-1640 ) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30026/xml>> [accessed 20th March 2015].

<sup>104</sup> Margaret W Ferguson, *Dido's Daughters: Literacy, Gender, and Empire in Early Modern England and France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), p. 218.

<sup>105</sup> The full exchange from the play was:  
Katherina: ay, if the fool could find it where it lies.  
Petruchio: Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?  
In his tail.  
Katherina: In his tail. *Taming of the Shrew* (1785) (2.1.15-18).

will. In Taylor's *Crabtree Lectures*, an assemblage of wives who used their speech in this manipulative manner were presented. The tailors wife knew of her husband's dishonest practices, "you pay the rent of the house by this unlawful meanes," and thus armed with this knowledge she demanded a new gown or else she would "reveale it, and have it put in print to the view of all men."<sup>106</sup> Similar behaviour was exhibited by the wife of a village official, who used his position for treachery, he "live[d] by bribery and extortion."<sup>107</sup> In response to this information, the wife threatened that if she did not have her will she would "make you loose your Office of a Baily, and make you be whipped through the Towne at a horse Taile."<sup>108</sup> Samuel Pepys made reference to instances where his wife expressed herself in a manner that had the potential to cause him harm. Mrs. Pepys's sharpened her tongue for combat upon the discovery of one of his many dalliances with the fairer sex. Her speech was one of jumbled threats, with Samuel writing that "she swore by all that was good that she would slit the nose of this girle, be gone herself this very night, did demand 3 or 400l of me to buy my peace, or else protested that she would make all the world know of it."<sup>109</sup> Another attack followed, this time brought about by his affair with Deb, where Mrs. Pepys once again threatened to publicly publish his shame, unless he dismissed Deb and promised to never see her again. In this instance, it was not immediate damage rather the tongue was used in a manner that promised future harm if there authority was not heeded. Something that once again painted the shrew as the villain of marriage. These different verbal facets communicated that the shrew's aural nature was mutated into a dangerous and malignant force from controlled representation in fiction, which in turn reflected how a woman's speech was perceived in reality, for example, the shrew's dangerous speech was something that most definitely bleed through to the label of common scold.

Finally, the shrew's voice was frequently invented as raw noise. Framed in onomatopoeia terms, her voice was marginalised as nonsensical noise through use

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<sup>106</sup> Taylor, p. 53.

<sup>107</sup> Taylor, p. 172.

<sup>108</sup> Taylor, p. 170.

<sup>109</sup> Samuel Pepys 'Tuesday 19 November 1668', updated 2011, <<http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1668/11/19/>> [accessed 20 May 2015].

of particular language and imagery. In *Anthony's Complaint*, Anthony complained that his wife's voice "roars as loud as thunder," the husband from another ballad found his wife to be quite the musician, as she "fills his house with cries, and she rattled his ears like a drum drum drum," in *Caution for a Scold*, the scold railed with a voice "like thunder loud," and a final thundering could be heard from *New German Doctor* when the scold "rings him a thundering peal in his ears, the wife who does thunder, nay, her tongue louder than thunder."<sup>110</sup> In *Taming of the Shrew*, Hortensio after witnessing Katherina speaking perceived it as "her loud alarums," while Petruchio heard "thunder when the clouds in autumn crack."<sup>111</sup> Moreover, when questioned on why he did not fear this cursed shrew, he made an explanation that compared the scold's roar with other noises of the world. He said, "have I not in my time heard lions roar? Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds" or "have I not heard great ordnance in the field, and heaven's artillery thunder in the skies?"<sup>112</sup>

A common strategy when presenting the shrew's voice was to frame it as meaningless and nonsensical. The shrew's vocal cords vibrated with sounds that equated to alarms ringing, thunder cracking, and basins clanging. It was uncontrollable and autonomous. As it was conceptualised that the shrew was a creature ruled by her emotions, it is not a farfetched conclusion that the words spoken would have been marginalised as ones of passion and emotion, not reason. It was irrational noises released without any complex cognition behind them, hence the husband may ignore this clamour and clapper, which effectively dismissed and disempowered the shrew and her voice.

The voice of a shrew was something constructed outside of herself. It was fabricated octaves which worked to vilify and dismiss the shrew's voice. Outside of fiction, patriarchal authority used these normative ideas presented in satire. A

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<sup>110</sup> *Anthony's Complaint, The Dumb Maid, A Caution for a Scold, and The New German Doctor*.

<sup>111</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), pp. 46, 42.

<sup>112</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 46.

The full quote from the taming of the shrew is as follows: "Have I not in my time heard lions roar? Have I not heard the sea, puff'd up with winds? Rage like an angry boar chafed with sweat? Have I not heard great ordnance in the field, And heaven's artillery thunder in the skies? Have I not in a pitched battle heard. Loud 'larums, neighing steeds, and trumpets' clang? (i. ii. 199-209).

husband using assimilated ideas on wifely speech could end up translating any unpleasant or argumentative speech as scolding, railing, and chiding. Wifely advice could be interpreted as chiding, innocent complaints could be heard as scolding, a raised voice may be translated as railing, or a wife could be seen as a shrew. The cacophony of shouts heard from fiction trickled down into reality. The same manner in which ideals from conduct manuals, which called for silence, demureness, or meek words, played a part in building an ideal in the minds of men, which in turn became symbolic of a good wife, so to did the manifold negative representations of a woman's voice become a marker for what a bad wife or a shrew sounded like. The fictional shrew acted as a phantom that haunted women in Early Modern England, where it played a role in how her voice was interpreted by her husband, and society in general. Literary imagery was used by shrew creators as another tool to stigmatise her character as negative or wicked, alongside disempowering and mutating her voice into an undesirable thing. This imagery was the use of beast language and devil references.

A shrew was more inclined to bark, roar, or hiss than verbalise using human attributes in satire and other types of Early Modern fiction. This grafting of animalistic qualities onto the female sex was not unusual for the period, as it was common to witness “sermons, poetry, and many other texts [have] women [being] compared to animals.”<sup>113</sup> A close relationship between animal and women was formed which denoted a negative, disparaging, and misogynic tone, as Holly Nelson explained, “women and beast intersect as negative terms in the dominant patriarchal discourse.”<sup>114</sup> Traditionally the boundary between animal and human was fortified and kept erect, through archaic and modern philosophical discourse, theological discussions, biblical passages, and the law, for example beastlity was made a capital offence in 1534.<sup>115</sup> These discourses stressed separatism between beast and man, which most assimilated as natural, as “humans in seventeenth

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<sup>113</sup> *Challenging Orthodoxies: The Social and Cultural Worlds of Early Modern Women: Essays Presented to Hilda L. Smith*, ed. by Dr Melinda S. Zook and Dr Sigrun Haude (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, 2014), p. 23.

<sup>114</sup> Lisa Walters, *Margaret Cavendish* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 80.

<sup>115</sup> James Serpell, *In The Company Of Animals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 34.

century England were greatly invested in guarding human-animal boundaries.”<sup>116</sup> These tracts made the distinction clear; that animals lacked a soul, reason, free will and restraint, mental capacities and were irrational and destined to be ruled. Whereas humans were rational, had reason, free will and control over their impulses, were intellectual beings, able to rule, and express authority.<sup>117</sup>

Acting collectively, society consciously framed humans in animal rhetoric in order to stress difference. It was used as a powerful prop that cleaved society into the desired, and the undesirable; revealing who or what was valued in society and what was looked upon as undesirable or alien. In Early Modern society, subsections of humanity were branded as beasts through direct comparisons or through satire. These included the non-English, for example, a Jacobean clergymen called the “Hottentots beasts in the skin of man and their speech noise rather than language-like the clucking of hens,” infants and children were also given beast status as one Jacobean writer articulated “what is an infant but a brute beast in the shape of a man.”<sup>118</sup> The poor toiled like horses, vagrants lived the life of a beast, and the mad were also beheld as bestial.<sup>119</sup>

Women, both good and bad, were often paralleled to animals, for example a good wife was said to carry her home on her back like a snail. But it was the use of negative beast rhetoric that was most common, being used to frame quarrelsome women and their speech. Proverbs were one way which “matched women with animals [to] exemplify their negative traits.”<sup>120</sup> For example, quarrelsome and garrulous females were likened to dogs, “women and dogs set men together by the

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<sup>116</sup> Shefali Rajamannar, *Reading The Animal In The Literature Of The British Raj* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 22 <<https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=xdHIAAAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>> [accessed 9 June 2015].

<sup>117</sup> For an examination on this application of bestial to humanity in order to infer inferiority see chapter one of Erica Fudge, *Perceiving Animals: Humans and Beasts in Early Modern English Culture* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002). Fudge also has another study on early modern english human-animal dynamic, titled *Brutal Reasoning: Animals, Rationality, and Humanity in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2006).

<sup>118</sup> Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: Changing Attitudes in England 1500-1800* (London: Penguin UK, 1991), pp. 43, 42.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, p. 43.

<sup>120</sup> Crawford, p. 61.

ears” or “many women and dogs cause contention.”<sup>121</sup> Women's voices were the chattering of monkeys, barking of dogs, buzzing of bees; their tongues were lambs tails, slippery eels, and stingers.<sup>122</sup> Levinus Lemius explained in *The Secret Miracles of Nature* that women who “casts off the bridle of reason” were “like a mad dog” who attacked all without reason or choice; they “bark and bawl like mad dogs.”<sup>123</sup> Katherina in *Taming of the Shrew* was likewise described through the use of beast rhetoric. Gremio enquired whether or not Petruchio would “woo this wild-cat,” while Petruchio labelled Katherina a wasp and a haggard.<sup>124</sup> Further, Petruchio’s wedding toast described Katherina in terms of property by calling her “my horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing”.<sup>125</sup> This transfiguration dehumanised Katherina into something that Petruchio owned and had complete authority over, which to a degree ended up justifying his later cruel treatment of her.

By giving women claws, talons, or fangs, a specific message was transmitted; that women were without restraint with unbridled instincts and passions. Men grafted animal qualities onto their enemies, for example, John Milton compared his adversaries to owls, cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs,<sup>126</sup> and Thomas Moore called William Tyndale a bold beast and his writings the tales of a stinking serpent.<sup>127</sup>

Shrews, or quarrelsome women in general, were defined as enemies of an ordered society alongside patriarchal authority. Therefore, this can be understood as a tactic to discredit and degrade them. It built an external layer that paralleled the perceived inner nature of the shrew; that their inner beastly nature became

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<sup>121</sup> Morris Palmer Tilley, *A Dictionary Of The Proverbs In England In The Sixteenth And Seventeenth Centuries : A Collection Of The Proverbs Found In English Literature And The Dictionaries Of The Period* (Michigan, USA: University of Michigan Press, 1950), p. 746 <<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?q1=many%20women%20and%20dogs%20cause%20contention;id=mdp.39015016495585;view=1up;seq=766;start=1;sz=10;page=search;num=746>> [accessed 14 June 2015].

<sup>122</sup> Tilney, pp. 742, 745, 748.

<sup>123</sup> Levinus Lemnius, *The Secret Miracles Of Nature* (London: Printed by Jo Streater, 1658), p. 274 <<https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=gxQDAAAQAAJ&q=dogs#v=snippet&q=%20bridle%20of%20reason&f=false>> [accessed 23 July 2015].

<sup>124</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 45, 57, 86.

<sup>125</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 77.

<sup>126</sup> Joseph Ivimey, *John Milton, His Life And Times, Religious And Political Opinions: With An Appendix, Containing Animadversions Upon Dr. Johnson's Life Of Milton* (New York: D. Appleton & Co, 1833), p. 74.

<sup>127</sup> Thomas, p. 47.

reflected in aesthetics. This in turn worked to justify society's actions towards them as "once perceived as beasts, people were liable to be treated accordingly."<sup>128</sup>

English society worked to dehumanise the shrew, as well as the common scold, so their ridicule, cruelty, and dismissive attitudes were acceptable. The dehumanisation of women functioned as a prerequisite for future severe actions, for example punishment. Furthermore, this tactic used against this stereotype worked to discredit her verbal expressions as beastly and something not worth consideration, as a woman's voice was leached of humanity from being paralleled to a beast. The proverb that aptly exemplified the futility of engaging with a female's speech using beast rhetoric was found in Tilley's *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England*, in which it was quipped that "he is mad that quarrels with women or beasts."<sup>129</sup> In other words, it was silly to engage in argumentative speech with women, men would sooner argue with his dog, horse or pig. Beast rhetoric was dynamic, acting as a tactic, or means to control this unpredictable entity by identifying them as animals. A form that already had established negative and derogative normative prejudice.

Beast rhetoric was one manner in which the domestic scold was imagined, fantasied and presented; another was "a variety of Early Modern English sources from treatises and legal documents, to cheap print and the representational arts [which] drew affinities between the domestic scold, the devil and witchcraft."<sup>130</sup>

A shrew was on occasion described as a devilish creature or as the devil dam, the devil's female consort. For example, the shrew from *A Merry Jest* was frequently described as a devil.<sup>131</sup> Her husband called her "devil/she fende of hell" as well declaring her "our dame is the devil."<sup>132</sup> In Brathwait's collection of tales, *Ar't*

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<sup>128</sup> Thomas, p. 44.

<sup>129</sup> Tilley, p. 746.

<sup>130</sup> Sarah F. Williams, *Damnable Practises: Witches, Dangerous Women, and Music in Seventeenth-Century English Broadside Ballads* [Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2015], p. 27.

<sup>131</sup> *A Merry Jest of a Shrewd and Curst Wife Lapped in Morel's Skin* (1550) is often cited as a core source for *The Taming of the Shrew*.

<sup>132</sup> *A Merry Jest*, University of Oregon, updated 2015 <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html>> [accessed 28 June 2015].

*Asleepe Husband*, a shrew was described as “an arrant devil of her tongue,” while in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Katherina was often labelled as a devil by her male critics.<sup>133</sup> Lucentio’s faithful servant, Tranio exclaimed that “she’s a devil, a devil, the devil’s dam,” Gremio beheld her as a “fiend of hell,” and Baptista and Hortensio recognised her inner devilish nature: “thou hilding a devilish spirit” and “a most impatient devilish spirit.”<sup>134</sup> Lastly, when Hortensio shared the news that he had found a husband for Katherina, Gremio responded “a husband? A devil. Think’st thou, any man is so very a fool to be married to hell?”<sup>135</sup> The only conceivable mate for a shrew was one of the most villainous, wicked, and hated forms in Early Modern England, the devil.

Another popular literacy trope was to juxtaposition the devil next to the shrew. These stories normally involved recycled scripts presenting a meeting between the devil and the shrew. In the Jacobean engraving *A New Years Gift for Shrews*,<sup>136</sup> a shrewish wife was pictured being chased from her vexed husband by the devil, alongside the inscription “and she mend not, the Devil take her a Saturday.”<sup>137</sup> Because the husband could not tame his unruly wife, the devil chased her off to hell. Another trope was to introduce occasions where a shrew ended up besting the devil. In the ballad *The Politic Wife*, a scolding wife outwitted the devil by masquerading as a beast, a deception only made necessary from her husband making a deal with the devil. This deal had the devil bestowing food and propensity to the family for seven years, but upon the conclusion of this period the husband needed to present the devil an unidentifiable beast. The years ticked over to seven, and the husband despaired as he was without inspiration on his self-created dilemma, but his wife decided to “save [him] from the devil” by

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<sup>133</sup> Richard Brathwaite, *Ar't Asleepe husband? A Boulster Lecture* (London: Printed by R. Bishop, for Richard Best or his assignes, 1640), p. 92 in Early English Books Online <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A16650.0001.001/1:8..7?rgn=div3;view=toe>> [accessed 30 June 2015].

<sup>134</sup> Richard Brathwaite, *Ar't Asleepe husband? A Boulster Lecture* (London: Printed by R. Bishop, for Richard Best or his assignes, 1640), p. 92 in Early English Books Online <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A16650.0001.001/1:8..7?rgn=div3;view=toe>> [accessed 30 June 2015]. Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), pp. 32, 50, 55, 74.

<sup>135</sup> Shakespeare, p. 33.

<sup>136</sup> For this image, see appendix 2.

<sup>137</sup> Thomas, C., (original), Edward Lee (Reprint, *A New Year's Gift for Shrews*, pub. by Edward Lee, c.1620, engraving, Private Collection <<http://www.bridgemanimages.com/de/asset/103760/terill-c-17th-century/a-new-year-s-gift-for-shrews-pub-by-edward-lee-c-1620-engraving-b-w-photo>>.



disguising herself as a beast.<sup>138</sup> The devil was duly tricked, and “declared a health to such wives who can cheat the devil.”<sup>139</sup>

Another popular scenario presented the devil being unable to tame a shrew or showed her out cursing the devil, or “render the devil mute with her excessive chiding and brawling.”<sup>140</sup> In one Jacobean ballad, a “woman curst” had a tongue so “truly evil” that she may “tire the very devil,” while another broadside ballad had the devil rejecting a scold for passage to hell as “hell will not be troubled with such an earthly scold.”<sup>141</sup> This connection to the devil and hell had various consequences on how the shrew’s character was perceived by outside observers; that she was so wicked and cursed that not even the devil could abide her company. It reiterated her already fixed negative nature and tainted her oral features to be commonly referred to as wicked or curst.

It had much more dangerous ramifications for her legal form of the common scold when she was associated with the witch. For example, Reginald Scot in his image of the witch wrote that witches were “doting scolds, mad, devilish and not much differing from them that are thought to be possessed with spirits,” and “witches [being] often accused of scolding as well as the more serious capital offense of witchcraft.”<sup>142</sup> The shrew, the common scold, and, to a degree, the witch had a chain of connection, whereas each chainlink was a “terrifying symbol of female power” partially connected from use of devil and hell rhetoric.<sup>143</sup> Woman who diverged from the male ideal, those seen as threats to patriarchal authority and society and were viewed in some manner monstrous, were often aligned with the devil through popular discourses. It was a clear marker of what her presence in Early Modern society meant—something negative, wicked, and evil. The devil,

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<sup>138</sup> ‘The Politic Wife: or The Devil outwitted by a Woman’, RB 3.867 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (London: n.pub, 1790-1800), British Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31370/xml>> [accessed 2nd July 2015].

<sup>139</sup> ‘The Politic Wife: or The Devil outwitted by a Woman’.

<sup>140</sup> Sarah F. Williams, *Damnable Practises* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2015), p. 28.

<sup>141</sup> Williams, p. 28.

<sup>142</sup> Reginald Scot, *The discoverie of witchcraft* [London: A. Clark, 1665], p. 5. Williams, p. 27.

<sup>143</sup> Williams, p. 28.

like the beast, was used as a prop to effectively communicate this through the vector of contemporary ballads, plays, images, and sermons.

Women in Early Modern England developed identity through a number of different means, be it class, appearance, marital status, her husband, occupation, friends, and kin. But regarding this discourse, a woman gained external character from behaviour. For example, Katherina in *The Taming of the Shrew* was known throughout Padua for her status of shrew and scold. People when discussing her rarely would use her name without an additional moniker attached to it. For example, Grumio called her “Katherina the curst” and asked Petruchio will you “undertake to woo curst Katherina.”<sup>144</sup> Petruchio mentions that the residence of the Minolas was locally known as Kate’s Hall, named from her infamous personality. Everyone knew Kate from her lingual behaviour and shrewish nature and everything else faded into obscurity, or unimportance; deemed secondary when compared to her more notorious qualities.

Each of these men defined her behaviour rather than the individual. Rather than discuss her beauty, smarts, family or carriage, they boiled down her entire person to her reputation for being a scold. Petruchio before meeting Katherina was only able to define her as “an irksome brawling scold,” Tranio simply described her as “so curst and shrewd” and “one famous for a scolding tongue,” and Curtis, Petruchios servant, enquired whether or not his new mistress will be “so hot a shrew as shes reported.”<sup>145</sup> Her reputation both preceded her as well as defined her. Broadside ballads also followed this tradition. Ballad titles headlined cruel scolds, scolding wives or cross wives, while in stanza her identity was similarly restricted to the same few monikers as well as such things like “this vile shrew”, a “brawling bawling woman,” and the visually appealing line of “she is such a troubled wonderous sore.”<sup>146</sup> Her behaviour was a sore that festered until her character or identity was infected with its canker. Male writers pinned a descriptive label or adjective phrase to her form, something that the audience

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<sup>144</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), pp. 43, 45.

<sup>145</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), pp. 35, 42, 45, 48, 79.

<sup>146</sup> *A Caution for Scolds, Poor Anthony’s Compliant and The Scolding Wife*.

would most likely identify her with. It was her outside layer that most were content to use in their understanding of that individual. Her tongue and her speech essentially defined who she was to external parties, nothing else was discernible when such notable qualities loomed.

This will be also apparent when it comes to her legal counterpart, the common scold, where after she was prosecuted and publicly entrapped in a brank or a ducking stool her reputation in the community as that notorious scold or quarrelsome disturber of peace was very hard to evade. I have briefly studied the shrew, one whose existence was primarily abstract with a prominent presence in Early Modern England through her fabricated existence in print. Now I will shift to the common scold, the quarrelsome female whose behaviour was translated as criminal.

**ACT 2:**  
**AND NOW HERE COMES THE SCOLD: THE VILLAIN OF THE  
COMMUNITY**

The word scold should not be unfamiliar to the modern reader. Images of a stern teacher reprimanding a naughty schoolboy, or a child being told off by a parent would likely come to mind. But for the Early Modern man or woman, its functionality as a noun more than a verb held greater relevance and familiarity. That is, an impudent woman mid-rant would besiege the mind on reading or hearing the term scold.<sup>147</sup> The act of calling a woman scold for this period introduced the potential risk that they would be reconstructed with legal jargon, and presented as a common scold. Martin Ingram perceived the term to have a “destructive impact second only to whore.”<sup>148</sup>

The scolds presence in history was first regarded as mere curiosity, for example, the antiquarians fascination with the fair and sharp-tongued one was largely based around the strange and cruel nature of her punishment. Things such as circumstances which surrounded the instigation of her scolding were absent. It was not until around thirty years ago that the common scold moved into a protagonist role in historical research, rather than simply being mentioned alongside other well-known genderised criminals or being a piece of trivia. David Underdown could be described as the pioneer of common scold-centric research. In his 1985 essay *The Taming of the Scold*, he introduced an extreme theory of there being an epidemic of scolding in Early Modern England, a symptom of a larger gender crisis for the period. He also introduced a geographical binary to explain the emergence of the common scold, where areas that were of wood-pasture witnessed a greater number of scold persecutions when compared to

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<sup>147</sup> For examinations on the term scold as a noun see, Sandy Bardsley's *Venomous Tongues* 109, Rhonda Knight's 'Shakespeare, Scolds, and Self-fashioning: The Making of Mathilda Gillespie in *The Scold's Bridle*' in *Minette Walters and the Meaning of Justice : Essays on the Crime Novels* 71-73, Margie Burns's, 'The Ending of the Shrew' in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays*, 136-137 and Etymonline.com, 'Online Etymology Dictionary', 2015 <<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=scold>> [accessed 9 July 2015].

<sup>148</sup> Martin Ingram, 'Scolding Women Cucked And Washed: A Crisis In Gender Relations In Early Modern England', in Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker eds., *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, (London: UCL Press, 1994), p. 48.

arable regions. A difference brought about by particular societal and community conditions. Lynda Boose introduced her scolding scholarship in 1992 and my own study parallels this closely in the sense that Boose spent a considerable amount of time studying the scold's literacy counterpart of the shrew. The final part of the scolds scholarly trifecta was Martin Ingram's *Cucked and Washed*, which presented an inversive argument to Underdowns. Rather than an epidemic of scolding, Ingram witnessed only sporadic scold persecutions within court records with some English towns and villages going years without a single presentment of a scold. His ideas focussed less on widespread geographical paradigms where spatial conditions were used to explain a scold's existence. Ingram, rather, wanted to explain the scold using a personalised and individualistic approach. These three essentially led the charge in common scold scholarship, though obscurity still very much exist even after these efforts.

In this chapter, I will decipher what the common scold was through legal jargon, and then synthesis who the scold was from studying specific cases that dealt with the common scold. After the who and what, I will examine general trends and theories on the scold, for example societal and individualistic phenomena which underlines her existence as well as geographical distribution of scold persecutions in England between 1590-1680.

### **What was the Common Scold?**

The common scold was a legal term or category in English common law, though the precise date when it became solidified as an uniform and exact legal form is ambiguous and contradictory. The general consensus among historians has put the first mention of a common scold in the court rolls to be in the early fourteenth century. Sandy Bardsley accumulated earlier records of scold cases, including one from 1311 Colchester, and three Bradford women who were charged in 1359 for being *communeset notorii obiurgatrices* (common and notorious scolds).<sup>149</sup> However, Bardsley acknowledged that cases presented in the fourteenth century

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<sup>149</sup> Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), pp. 82, 84.

were anomalous.<sup>150</sup> However, Geoffrey Hughes thought this too early and cited the first recorded case to be in 1476, where the court rolls included the ‘*Eadem Katherina est communis scolde* (the aforementioned Katherine is a common scold).<sup>151</sup>

But even when scold became a prosecutable offence, there remained a lack of uniformity in the latin transcription. For example, “the court rolls of Bradford [Yorkshire] between 1355 and 1361 contained three different latin words for the term scold plus several different constructions of the offence.”<sup>152</sup> Terms such as, *garulatrix*, *maledictrix*, *obiurgator*, *litigatrix*, and *rixatrix*, were used interchangeably in description of this offense.<sup>153</sup> Taking this into account, a tentative date for the first common scold persecutions and it becoming a static definition in common law can be made to be around the late fourteenth century.

It is however important to remember that the behaviour which ended up defining the common scold was expressed prior to the formation of the legal category, and also, these women who acted like scolds were often persecuted under similar but different terminology. These women would have likely been defined as scolds if the definition was available, but without such a label, English law was compelled to employ different means. Women who behaved like scolds sans the label were labeled protoscolds by Sandy Bardsley. An example of one of these protoscolds was Agnes de Bakshot, who in the year 1355 troubled a male neighbour and was consequently charged as a *communis maledictrix* (common speaker of evil about people).<sup>154</sup> These women who publicly acted in a quarrelsome and troublesome manner would have likely been persecuted as common scolds had the “legal mentality and vocabulary existed” amongst society for that time.<sup>155</sup> The behaviour

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<sup>150</sup> Bardsley, p. 83.

<sup>151</sup> Geoffrey Hughes, *An Encyclopaedia Of Swearing: The Social History Of Oaths, Profanity, Foul Language, And Ethnic Slurs In The English-Speaking World* (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2006), p. 411.

<sup>152</sup> Bardsley, p. 83.

<sup>153</sup> Bardsley, p. 88.

<sup>154</sup> Bardsley, p. 83.

<sup>155</sup> Bardsley, p. 83.

essentially preceded the legal terminology, not a rarity when all criminal behaviour preceded the legal jargon.

Deciphering what the common scold was should begin at the barebones, from examining the legal term. Common has been a phrase used since the early fourteenth century functioning as a disparaging prefix for criminal categories, such as common drunkard. It acted as an indicator that the persecuted person was a public and shared by all or many concern. That their behaviour had a negative impact on the community more so than a separate individual. This is key to the common scold, where their offense was a concern or threat shared by many.

The second half of the construct involves the behavioural qualities that embodied this criminal. Scold developed from the old Norse word Skald, meaning bard or a poet, who sang praises about heroes. Scold was first introduced to the English language around the mid twelve century, under the meaning “person of ribald speech”, which later developed into “person fond of abusive language, especially a shrewish woman.”<sup>156</sup> The link between skald and scold may be placed in the fact that “Germanic poets were famously feared for their ability to lampoon and mock”.<sup>157</sup> This had the association of both verbal expression alongside a negative implication. Further understanding of the common scold can be found in the various legal constructions and terminology created to define the criminal, both contemporary and modern attempts. Though each varied in presentation, all shared common language. To be labelled a common scold, an individual needed to exhibit particular qualities. First, they were overwhelming women, second, they publicly spoke disruptive and quarrelsome speech. This speech needed to break the public peace. Third, her behaviour was troublesome, a common nuisance, and performed to purposefully increase public discord. And finally, their behaviour was habitual rather than singular. These four points acted as prerequisites for being defined as a common scold.

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<sup>156</sup> n. a, *Scold Etymology*, updated 2015 <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=scold&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=scold&allowed_in_frame=0)> [accessed 20 July 2015]. Other examples of scold etymology can be found in, Hensleigh Wedgwood, *A Dictionary of English Etymology*, 2nd edn. (London: Trübner and Co., 1872), p. 560, Walter W. Skeat, *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 1993), p. 416.

<sup>157</sup> n. a, *Scold Etymology*, updated 2015 <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=scold&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=scold&allowed_in_frame=0)> [accessed 20 July 2015].

Her behaviour needed to be public. I have already discussed that a chief difference between a common scold and shrew was that the shrew kept her behaviour within domestic walls, whereas the scold made hers public. The very label of common scold is revealing of this. By including common, it was broadcasting to society that this individual was a threat to many or all, not one. The language used in presentments of the scold was also reflective of her public presence. First, the well used epithet of notorious frequently popped up in presentments. Conveying that her behaviour was typically witnessed by many in an exposed space for her to become ‘generally known’ by the community. Sandy Bardsley noted that scolds typically scolded in “a space accessible to all,” evidenced in Leet descriptions where scold entries typically were written in such formulaic texts as disturber of her neighbours.<sup>158</sup> Her spatial realm where her voice echoed needed to be public for her to inherit the moniker of common scold.

Next, the common scold was traditionally female. Femininity was built into this legal category through several means, including latin use and cultural association. When authoring the scold in latin, the feminine suffix -ix or -a was used, for instance, *communis rixatrix*. William Blackstone perceived the latin form as something that “confined scolding to the female gender.”<sup>159</sup> Outside of lexical construction, men and women would have come to associate scolding with the female sex through witnessing women as the commonly persecuted party when it came to scolding. Satire, plays, and sermons also popularised the close connection between verbal assertiveness and the female sex. Additionally, when a scold was referred to in the abstract or en mass, “the generic masculine form of the noun was seldom used,” rather the female version was.<sup>160</sup> For example in the *Promptorium Parvulorum*, the first English-Latin dictionary, only the feminine latin nouns, *contentrix* and *litigatrix*, were located under the header of scold. It seemed that English society had a ‘knee-jerk reaction’ to describe the scold in feminine terms rather than masculine. Verbal crimes involved largely genderised labels, and verbally disorderly men were more likely to be assigned the criminal description

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<sup>158</sup> Bardsley, p. 110 .

<sup>159</sup> William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Vol. 4 (London: John Murray, 1862), p. 181.

<sup>160</sup> Bardsley, p. 88



of barrator rather than scold. Bleed over between labels did occur, but the more traditional situation was to have women penalised as scolds and men as barrators when it came to verbal disorder.<sup>161</sup> Third, the presentable behaviour was verbal expression. Women were using their tongues and speech as acts of violence against neighbours or figures of authority and power. This speech could be indiscriminate, attacking any, or specific speech spoken to damage someone else's fama or reputation. For example, one description of a scold had the verbal transgressions listed, which included "tale bearing, indiscriminate slander, the stirring up of strife, and the deliberate sowing of discord."<sup>162</sup> Her voice was a weapon used to disrupt social harmony, and cause deliberate misery to others. When imagined, a scold was someone who made a scene or broke the peace with her voice. This gives the impression that the common scold's verbal state was loud and bold, not whispered or hissed insults. On occasion, her whole body was viewed as quarrelsome or troublesome when she was described as being a brawling scold. Physical movement could be synchronised with her verbal attacks, however her tongue acted as the scold's most favoured weapon. The finishing normative feature for the common scold was that her behaviour was not a singular curiosity, rather habitual. A single outburst of disruptive speech did not make a common scold. But if she followed it with sundry encores, then the ensign of scold became a possible outcome. As exemplified in the scold case of Regina vs. Foxby in 1704, where it was written that "scolding once or twice is no great matter; but it is that frequent repetition of it to the disturbance of the neighbourhood."<sup>163</sup>

This has been a brief, and static definition of the scold, limited to flat text, formative language, and legal jargon, but to identify the scold solely through the legal prism would be like drawing a picture only in black ink and then deciding

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<sup>161</sup> For information on barrators see, Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.105-108 for a brief but compressive study of the crime of barrator alongside a discussion of the scold, for a general definition of the crime see, Humphry William Woolrych, *The Criminal Law, as Amended by the Statutes of 1861, with Pleading, Evidence, Forms of Indictment, Cases, and Index* (London: Shaw and Sons, 1862), p. 924.

<sup>162</sup> Ingram, p. 68.

<sup>163</sup> Mark S. O'Shaughnessy, 'On Certain Obsolete Modes of Inflicting Punishment, with Some Account of the Ancient Court to Which They Belonge' in *Transactions of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Volume 2* (Ireland:1853), p. 263 <<https://archive.org/details/jstor-25489836>> [access 20th July 2016].

not to add colour or intricate detail.<sup>164</sup> In other words, it would leave this Early Modern character flat and listless. There would only be a generalised umbrella term of ‘scold’, which stigmatised her into a limited scope, including things like being female, wicked, verbal, and disruptive. This tells us what the scold was in general terms, but it does not take into account individuality. Was she a wife, or a widow? A common disturbance of the neighbourhood or sporadic offender? Was the scolding part of a personal quarrel, or was it an attack on a parish notary? These are the questions that I will endeavour to answer in this section, all working to answer the foundation question: who was the local common scold?

The common scold during the Early Modern period was presented primarily in the local courts, namely the Quarter Sessions or Leet Court, as well as through the Ecclesiastical Courts, though the latter dealt with scolds less frequently. This was primarily because of verbal transgressions in the church courts being concerned with defamation suits relating to sexual honesty rather than scolding. Scolding cases that did end up being presented in the church courts were normally of an auxiliary nature, meaning that it was a secondary offence adjacent to a woman’s primary offence. Scold cases presented in the courts were few in number, despite Underdown’s claim of an epidemic of scolding, and the presentments that have survived contain little information on specifics; for example the catalyst behind the scold’s behaviour was often absent, as well as the subject matter of her quarrelsome speech. It normally was described as simply scolding, railing, or chiding.

A typical session entry was consequently quite minimalistic, containing only the austere bedrocks. These included names, dates, locations, marital status, and legal jargon taken directly from the legal definition. That being said there were a few instances in which a more comprehensive presentation was recorded. Below I will present four women who were presented as common scolds, all four were found in either Quarter Session books, Leet records, or from the research of other

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<sup>164</sup> For complete definitions of the common scold see, Niles National Register: Concerning Political, Historical vol 36, p. 391, Ivo Kamps’s Materialist Shakespeare: A History, pp. 248-9, William Blackstone’s Commentaries on the Laws of England vol 4, p. 169, J. Bouvier’s A Law Dictionary, p. 252, Antonia Fraser’s The Weaker Vessel, pp. 103-104, and R. H. Helmholz, *John Hamilton Baker’s The Oxford History of the Laws of England: The Canon law and Ecclesiastical jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s*, pp. 632-3.

historians. From these examples of more fleshed out scold presentments coupled with the minimalistic records, a synthesis of the scold character can be produced through the observance of common language and behaviour. However as was the case with legal definition, the scold seen through the means of depositions is a method with limitation. A few lines of text written as a means of keeping proper documentation by a male official is not exactly reflective on the true and accurate nature of the common scold. It may again fall into what the common scold was, rather than my true focus for this second half of this chapter-who was the scold. The obtainable who for the scold has ended up primarily being an artifice constructed by male neighbours and local authority figures, whose thoughts have ultimately been shaped by prejudice and bias that have converged around the scold for hundreds of years. Inferences can be made and broad conclusions can be drawn, but the true nature of the common scold, the emotions and thoughts that instigated her behaviour, the exact thoughts of the neighbours on this behaviour, and the impact on the community and familial unit, are presently beyond this.

This examination will not be studying all of England, nor the entire Early Modern period. The court records that I have ended up studying appear at first glance arbitrary regarding region and date and to an degree they are guilty of this. The reason for this rests in the fact that the court records were chosen from necessity rather than desire, as there was a limited number of digitised court Leet records or Quarter Sessions available. However, this limitation has not been too much of a handicap, as I have been able to find full records for a number of English towns and counties, including Manchester, Middlesex, Preston, Southampton, Somerset, and Preston. Moreover, I will keep within a hundred year period from 1590 to 1690.

First lets introduce Catherine Barnaby of Wood Street, London, who in the year 1637 was presented as a common scold. The charges were introduced by John Dickinson, a churchwarden of St Alban, who claimed that Catherine for seven years had “been and still is a very troublesome and disquiet woman amongst her niegahbours by calling them out of their names.”<sup>165</sup> Her behaviour was not

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<sup>165</sup> n.a., *British Social And Political History*, updated 2015 <<https://www.staff.ncl.ac.uk/j.p.boulton/xread/his211womenlecture.htm>> [accessed 17 July 2015].

singular, rather Mr. Dickinson and his fellow neighbours had to deal with this unquiet for nearly a decade. However, this is not to say that her behaviour remained unchecked for that amount of time, in fact find that to be highly improbable. Informal means may have been applied, such as unofficial reprimands, neighbourly intervention in an attempt to fix the situation, or Catherine may have been presented in court prior to Mr. Dickinson intervention. It is unlikely that her behaviour remained unchecked for such a lengthy period of time. Nonetheless the explicit mentioning of Catherine's behaviour being a long-term phenomenon is reflective of the scold's legal definition. Returning to the case, Mr. Dickinson was incited to bring Catherine to court, as he and his wife were specifically targeted by her viperous tongue. She allegedly jeered that Mr. Dickinson's wife was "a drunken quean and a copper noised quean" and that she went "a drinking from house to house every day."<sup>166</sup> This assortment of cliché insults spoken to damage Mrs. Dickinson's reputation were later followed by another public altercation where Catherine singled out Mrs. Dickinson in a bustling area with an accusatory pointed finger and a raised voice, accusing her of murdering her child, "that drunken quean hath murdered my child and smothered it in a rug."<sup>167</sup> Rhetoric certainly unusual for a scolding case as the words were either absent from the textual records, or if present remained as cliché insults, such as whore, queen, or jade. Mr. Dickinson was not left unscathed, as she "reporteth upon and down that he keepeth pretty wrenches in his home" and declared that "he is a cheating knave, and a cozening knave and that he getteth his living by cheating, bribing, and buying stolen goods."<sup>168</sup> These personal attacks could have easily been shaped into a defamation suit by the Dickinsons,<sup>169</sup> as all the components were present for such legal action. However rather than be sued for defamation, Catherine found herself presented as a common scold. The reason for this could have been that the Dickinsons were not the only victims of Catherine, rather also ended up targeting the entire neighbourhood with her verbal

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<sup>166</sup> Staff.ncl.ac.uk, "British Social And Political History".

<sup>167</sup> Staff.ncl.ac.uk, "British Social And Political History".

<sup>168</sup> Staff.ncl.ac.uk, "British Social And Political History".

<sup>169</sup> For scholarship on defamation, see Laura Gowling's *Domestic Dangers*, J. A. Sharpe's *Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts of York*, and Sreeramesh Kalluri's *Words Like Daggers: Violent Female Speech in Early Modern England*.

mischief. For instance, mentioned in her deposition was that she would “fall to scolding with her nieghabours daily,”<sup>170</sup> and she would respond to verbal retaliation by mockingly setting up a wisp of hay, the scold’s symbol, for the irate neighbours to argue with.

Leaving Catherine behind we now enter the town of Manchester, Lancashire. The Leet had convened for their Easter session on an April morning in 1638. After an array of other local concerns had been presented, Isabell the wife of Franncis Rydings was brought forth. Isabell at some point before April 10th was witnessed to “scolding upon an officer [while] in the execucon of his office.”<sup>171</sup> An interesting quality about this case was that the scold was not the sole party to be persecuted, rather the husband, Franncis Rydings, was likewise punished for the said offence of scolding. Legally, a husband in Stuart England was not liable for criminal offences committed by his wife with some exceptions.<sup>172</sup> This introduces the idea that the husband, Franncis Rydings, may have scolded the town official alongside his wife, or he may have simply remained passive allowing his wife to verbally assault the authority figure. Hierarchy and order were important in all interactions for this period, from husband to wife, master to servant, and king to subject. Within these binaries, one was meant to rule, maintain order and authority, the other was fit to be ruled. For his inaction and failure to exert patriarchal authority, Franncis was deemed equally culpable.

For the next scold presentment, we will remain within the walls of Manchester but jump backwards eighteen years to the 5th of October, 1620. Before the Michaelmas session of the local Leet, two women were presented as common scolds. Isabell Rychardson and Alice Worthington alias Greenehalghe were labelled as common scolds from “the testimonye of manye of their sufficient and

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<sup>170</sup> Staff.ncl.ac.uk, "British Social And Political History".

<sup>171</sup> *The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846. Printed under the superintendence of a committee appointed by the Municipal Council of the City of Manchester, from the original minute books in their possession* vol 3 (England: Manchester H. Blacklock, 1884), p. 268.

<sup>172</sup> Capp, p. 30. Though other historians have contradicted this by introducing a more ambivalent legal situation when it came to husband-wife legal responsibility. For example, Helen Berry, and Elizabeth Foyster’s *The Family in Early Modern England*, the following was written that: He may have been a victim of the ambivalent position of women in manorial courts where fathers and husbands were legally responsible for offences committed by wives and daughters [p.113]. Roger Thompson’s *Women in Stuart England and America: A Comparative Study* p. 163, also shared this argument.

well reputed nieghboures.”<sup>173</sup> This resulted in estrangement from their well-reputed neighbours by being denounced as “comon scoulds and disturbers of theire nieghboures.”<sup>174</sup> A personal plea from the neighbours followed this presentment, where they “earnestly intreate the steward of the court to see them punished accordinge to the lawe” so that “theire nieghboures might lyue in peace and quiet they being so notorious.”<sup>175</sup> It continued with a complaint that these two women had verbally besieged them for long enough, while also establishing themselves as the ‘good guys’: “all godlye and well disposed people doe wonder that they have beene so longe spared lyvinge in a town where theire ought to be better carriage and government.”<sup>176</sup> It concluded with a plea that “the great steward of heaven and earth will revenge theise and other the like synnes which raigne amongst us which god in his mercye remove farr from us.”<sup>177</sup>

Concluding where we began in London specifically in the parish of St. Michael, where Alice, wife of Robert Godrich, was presented as a common scold. Alice was accused of having spoken malicious and scandalous speech towards William Waleworthe. The words spoken by Alice during this verbal tangle were accusatory in nature, as she charged William of being a false man, a thief, and that he had “unjustly disinherited her of twenty pounds value of land yearly, and that he, by his mastery unjustly detained the aforesaid Robert, her husband, in prison, for that reason.”<sup>178</sup> William responded to these allegations by petitioning that “Alice, for the cause before alleged, might be chastised, that so, such scolds and sheliars might dread in future to slander reputable men, without a cause.”<sup>179</sup> Similar to Katherine’s case, we have particular language being used that was relevant to the particular individual, rather than generic insults. And like the Dickinsons, William Waleworthe could have made a defamation suit, but rather he wished that she

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<sup>173</sup> The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, p. 31.

<sup>174</sup> The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, p. 31.

<sup>175</sup> The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, p. 31.

<sup>176</sup> The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, p. 31.

<sup>177</sup> The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, p. 31.

<sup>178</sup> ‘Memorials: 1379.’ *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries* Ed. H T Riley (London: Longmans, Green, 1868), pp. 428-438 British History Online <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/memorials-london-life/pp428-438>> [accessed 20th July 2015].

<sup>179</sup> ‘Memorials: 1379.’ *Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries*.

might be chastised as a scold. The appeal behind this course of action laid in the promise of a more humiliating punishment, the cucking stool or bridle, rather than a simple fine. William may have wished to have a visual representation of justice. Also, his desire that ‘scolds might dread in future to slander’ suggests that he wished for Alice to be made an example of. By being punished as a scold, which was traditionally public and heavy on the shame element, William was granted his wish. So to a certain degree, personal vindictiveness was present in the making of the common scold, where men and women could use the legal system to force women that they disliked or found disagreeable into a situation where they would face humiliating punishments, and the harmful designation of common scold.

By using these brief descriptions of individual scolds, tentative brush strokes can be made in order to form a complete portrait of her. First and foremost the scold was a creature of speech, so it is only logical to begin this portraiture by dabbing into her most definable hue. It can be said with a considerable degree of confidence that a woman would not have been identified as a scold if they lacked abusive speech and an unrestrained tongue. These were the two aspects that were perhaps the most integral to the making of a scold, going by the emphasis placed on them in legal discourse.

Strangely, unlike shrew dialogues, the tongue did not occupy a central place in common scold presentments. Rather greater emphasis was placed on speech. That being said the instances where the tongue was mentioned, it was always negative. As witnessed with Alice Harper, who was charged as a common scold in the town of Steple Ashton. In the presentment discourse, the tongue was negatively constructed as something that inflicted harm and misery. The tongue was the way a scold abused or expressed violence, similar to how emphasis was placed on a dagger or fists for instances of physical assault, so was the tongue. It was her weapon. Harper was witnessed to have “time to time abused with her tongue the best men and women in the towne.”<sup>180</sup> Her tongue was also described as “viperous manner,”<sup>181</sup> bringing forth connotations of her tongue being venomous and

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<sup>180</sup> Betty Travitsky *Attending to Women in Early Modern England* (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1994), p. 133.

<sup>181</sup> Travitsky, p. 133.

beastly, similar to the shrew. Overall, what is gathered from this case is that the tongue's nature in the scold's legal identity parallel the satirical prelude as something negative, wicked, and destructive. Though compared to the proliferation of literacy constructs on this anatomical feature the legal presence was minimalistic.

When it came to the common scold's voice, volume was not the decisive quality, rather she needed to create certain types of speech. The common scold's speech was destructive, consciously malicious, and abusive in a manner that often made it common, rather than individualistic tailored. A woman who was loud, imprudent, and bold in verbal expression did not necessarily mean that the common scold emblem would be sewn on her bodice. However, if her speech ended up being described with one of the aforementioned qualities, a common scold label would have been a real danger. In legal discourse, precision when describing a scold's speech was largely forgone and replaced with formative and cliché language. Phrases used included lascivious talker, ignominious speeches, malicious speeches and words, uncivil language, sower of discord, and common defamer and slander. The language used in individual common scold cases closely paralleled the language used in the static definitions, where anonymity and nonidentity was made through both. But what was gained through both was a sense of negatively and wickedness regarding her behaviour. Moreover these manners of speech were seen to achieve the state as prescribed in legal definition, "break public peace and beget and public cherish discord."<sup>182</sup> That is not to say that all scold persecutions followed this formula, as for some cases words and insults were noted as witnessed in Catherine Barnaby's personalised insults.

However when talking in generalities, the scold's speech was narrated using a very small pool of descriptive phrases. The fact that her character had become known for indiscriminate, angry, and senseless speech holds implications that the actual words spoken held little to no importance. This was not a defamation or slander case where the individual words were key to persecution, rather for a common scold to be deemed a scold she only needed her verbal expressions to fit

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<sup>182</sup> Kamps, p. 248.



the requisites previously mentioned. Perhaps authorities and neighbours did not even listen to words spoken by the scold but rather perceived her behaviour as compatible to their image of the common scold, in turn perceiving her speech as scolding and railing.

Essentially the common scold's speech became a very normative thing where only a handful of terms and phrases were used in description. Her language was formulated and became a prescriptive part of the common scold's persona. Exactness of verbal expression become boiled down to such phrases of railing and scolding, much the same as a shrew. But where the shrew's voice was an artifice made from similes and imagery, the scolds was constructed from prejudiced and biased neighbours, who had minds enriched by various discourse with prejudice on what the scold was supposed to look and sound liked. The scold railed, chided, scolded—but what was she actually saying. This remained mostly shadowed for the Early Modern scold.

Another identifying feature of the scold was martial status. In regards to the five cases above, only two of the five were specifically identified as wives with the rest being left unidentified. From this, it would suggest that the status of wife was the minority, but when a larger pool of scold cases are taken into account, a different trend is witnessed. Examining thirty scolding persecutions between the years of 1613-1670, seventeen women were identified as married, three were widows, three were spinsters, and the rest were unidentified.<sup>183</sup>

Moreover, using Martin Ingram's research on common scolds for the borough of Nottingham for the years 1632-6, he found that thirty-two scolds were married while one was identified as a widow and again for the small town of Henley-in-Arden, Warwickshire in the years of 1616-47, nineteen scolds were married.<sup>184</sup> Ingram put forth one explanation for this, proposing that as scolding was an

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<sup>183</sup> This data was taken from the following: *The Court leet records of the manor of Machester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846*, vol III, vol IV, vol V (Manchester: Manchester H. Blacklock, 1884), *Preston Court Leet records* (Preston: Preston, G. Toulmin Guardian Print, 1905), *Sessions, 1614: 28 and 30 March.' County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Vol. 1, 1612-14*. Ed., William Le Hardy (London: Clerk of the Peace, 1935), pp. 370-400 <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol1/pp370-400>>, A. P. Baggs, Diane K Bolton, M A Hicks and R B Pugh 'A History of the County of Middlesex: Volume 6, Ed., T F T Baker and C R Elrington (London: Victoria County History, 1980) 38-55.

<sup>184</sup> Ingram, p. 65.

energetic activity it was logical to suppose that women who partook in such behaviour would need to be in their prime.<sup>185</sup> Marriage also gave women newfound confidence from being identified as fully mature with all the auxiliary benefits that came with transition from maiden to wife. In this period, women who were within the middling-lower classes normally married in their mid to late twenties, an age where frailty, weakness and, impotency were mostly absent. However, to designate scolds as only wives would be an oversimplification. The only thing being proposed is the majority of scolds were married. This status of wife was not the scold's most defining feature in the sense that a scold and a wife were equatable, and it likely had no major implications upon her behaviour. It simply acts as another means of identifying her.

The social backgrounds of common scolds tended to lean towards the lower social-economic strata of society.<sup>186</sup> For example, from five scold cases in the Middlesex, the following occupations were listed as their husband's professions; baker, yeoman, alehouse owner, blacksmith, and cutler.<sup>187</sup> From such limited data, no norm can be established, however it is reflective of a general trend. This being that women who scolded were more often from poorer backgrounds. Crippling hunger pangs, poor living conditions, and everything else that accompanied an impoverished existence would have acted as contributing factors for the development of a quarrelsome mien. In turn being verbally expressed and translated as scolding. For example in the parish of Hempnall in Elizabethan Norfolk, Mary Stracke was charged as a common scold, as she was "a sower of discord and breaker of christian charity."<sup>188</sup> In her defence, she revealed that she "had three children and is very poor and when spoke of relief they said she

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<sup>185</sup> Ingram, p. 65.

<sup>186</sup> For discussions on the scold's social-economic backgrounds, see Karen Jones, *Gender and Petty Crime in Late Medieval England: The Local Courts in Kent, 1460-1560* pp. 119-122, David Underdown, 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of the Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', p. 120, and Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, p. 134.

<sup>187</sup> *County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 1, 1612-14, County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 2, 1614-15, County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 3, 1615-16, and County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 4, 1616-18* ed. by, William Le Hardy (London: Clerk of the Peace, 1935) in *British History Online* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/search/series/middx-sessions>> [accessed 30 June 2015]

<sup>188</sup> Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Making of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 120.

scoldeth.”<sup>189</sup> There were cases where women of the higher classes fell to scolding, for example, Judith Grosvenor, who was the wife of an esquire and the daughter of a knight, was charged as a common scold.<sup>190</sup> Cases of this nature were not an impossibility, they were just less common.

The testimony of Mary Stracke presented implications that fell outside of social-economic matters. By definition, a scold was senseless who railed and chided without real cause. This bias was shared by William Waleworthe of London who when discussing his scold’s impending punishment said that “so such scolds and sheliars might dread in future to slander reputable men, without a cause.”<sup>191</sup> The rite of gifting a wisp of hay for a scold to rail at was also revealing of this mentality. It painted an image of an individual who would enthusiastically rail at an inanimate object so long as she had a working tongue and a cache of insults at her disposal. Mary’s words, however, introduces the circumstance of a common scold’s speech not being senseless, but rather there were practical reasons behind its instigation. Mary scolded out of impoverished desperation, others may have scolded out of unhappiness, discontent, or outrage. Mary Hooper of Dorchester was another such scold who scolded out of personal problems. Mary lived in conditions that were tumultuous and unhappy from being shackled with a violent husband and a perpetually drunk father-in-law. Pushed to her limits, Mary verbally attacked one of her daily tormentors which gained her the label of scold.<sup>192</sup> Underdown defined the scold from this quality to a certain degree, imagining that the scold was not a natural expression of female disorder or passion, rather she was born from circumstance and misery.

Both of these Marys decided to voice their unhappiness at specific individuals, Stracke against an official and Hooper against her father-in-law. Both authoritative figures and symbols of power; the former a more general form of

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<sup>189</sup> Wood, p. 120.

<sup>190</sup> David Underdown 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of the Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 120.

<sup>191</sup> Memorials: 1379.' Memorials of London and London Life in the 13th, 14th and 15th Centuries.

<sup>192</sup> Martin Ingram, 'Scolding Women Cucked Or Washed': A Crisis In Gender Relations In Early Modern England?', in *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England*, ed. by ed. by Jennifer Kermode & Garthine Walker (London: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 70.

local power, the latter representing patriarchal and domestic power. The impoverished mother viewed this parish notable as a justifiable outlet for her unhappiness and turmoil, as perhaps in her mind he represented a cog in the machine which had contributed to her poverty, hunger, and unemployment. While the wife saw her father-in-law as the direct causation of her problems and acted accordingly. Even if there was real motivation behind scolding, there was little possibility for a scold's words to be regarded and her problems heard, as "there was a tendency among men to belittle even ridicule the significance of woman's disputes."<sup>193</sup> Misogyny and age-worn ideas about the female sex made words and speeches, specially if spoken in a loud and brash manner, easily dismissed as female hysterics or scolding.

Underdown thought that scolds were individuals who vented "their frustrations against the nearest symbol of authority, in most cases being the village notables."<sup>194</sup> He went on to present a case where a woman was accused of being a scold in the town of Steeple Ashton, Wiltshire, her targets were "the tithingman and his wife, people of good repute and estate."<sup>195</sup> Another dichotomy of scold and authoritative figure was witnessed with Francis of Rydings of Manchester who in 1638 was charged with being a common scold, "scolding upon an officer in the execution of his office," and again with Margaret Herrings of St. Michael Wood street who was said to be "a very unquiet and troublesome woman who spoke against some elevated figures," including the esteemed merchant and politician Baptist Hicks, the alderman and clothworker Sir William Stone, and Hugh Blackhurst.<sup>196</sup> A scold who discriminated in her attacks and challenged authority was to Lynda Boose pivotal. She speculated that "a scold was in essence any woman who verbally resisted or flouted authority publicly and stubbornly enough to challenge the underlying dictum of male rule."<sup>197</sup> This made scolding

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<sup>193</sup> Capp, p. 208.

<sup>194</sup> Underdown, p. 120.

<sup>195</sup> Underdown, p. 120.

<sup>196</sup> *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester*; vol. 4, p. 268. Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 186.

<sup>197</sup> Lynda Boose 'Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Woman's Unruly Member' in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays* ed. by Dana Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 137.

an act of rebellion. The cucking stool and bridle were tools employed to stomp out said rebellion while warning others from joining the rallying call for female disorder.

Both of these features worked in divergence to legal prescription from being discriminate, rather than senseless random speech. This functions as a reminder that the common scold was not a static legal definition, rather she was a dynamic and changeable presence. Her visage could be youthful or line creased. She could have strutted down streets attacking all she saw with her sharp tongue, or she could have specifically targeted the local constable.

By simply looking at the scold as an isolated entity, I can summarise that she was female, often married, and frequently lived an impoverished life rife with difficulties. She was also someone who ended up venting her personal grief towards symbols of authority, be it a husband, parish notable, or nearest male victim, such as her neighbour. Thus far the scold has been studied as an isolated construct removed from the rest of society, however something that frequently arose when examining her through the legal prism was the use of collective language when it came to victim-ship. There were occasions where a scold targeted only one individual, a circumstance witnessed with the aforementioned presentments of Catherine and Anne with their personally tailored attacks, but more commonly the legal terminology in presentments was collective. The community or neighbours were described as the other side of this conflict. There is logic in this when the scolds traditional behaviour is taken into account. By this I mean, that the scold's criminal activities were not exactly clandestine, rather she practiced an outward expression of verbal bedlam. She was loud, rough, and disruptive to many if not all in the immediate vicinity. In lieu of the her behavioural qualities, legal and parish officials as well as the general locality translated her as a common concern and threat.

The ability of a disorderly tongue to impact the many has been discussed priorly, but is worth briefly reiterating here. Sermons alongside popular literature spread awareness of the tongue's potential for destruction and chaos. For example, in the

homily against contention and brawling, St. Paul declared that “he that hath an evil tongue troubleth all the town where he dwelleth and sometimes the whole country.”<sup>198</sup> Skin torn knuckles, cold daggers, and blunt clubs acted in the capacity for direct impact and consequence, but the tongue and in turn speech had a greater destruction radius. St. Paul’s warning words are applicable to the scold as she was identified with an evil tongue that she used to trouble her street, village, or town. Her behaviour was not simply one man’s misery, but rather it was many, discernible from her designation of common scold. This offers a foundation to the scold’s community presence, one originating from an anatomical feature.

Before a survey of the community-scold relationship can be undertaken, a question needs to be answered. What was the community? Historians have found themselves wary of the term, especially when discussing rural England.<sup>199</sup> In early scholarship, the rural community was often imagined as some form of idealised locality of yesteryear. Where men harmoniously worked together until the sun faded into the horizon, and as sweat cooled from their brows they walked shoulder to shoulder to the local alehouse to share a drink. This picture of camaraderie was also often superimposed on a picturesque backdrop of tumbling hills, green meadows, and fertile fields. This romantic image was simply a constructed artifice made after the fact to idealise past humanity and draw attention to present day’s waning humanity. It was a mirage born from nostalgia that looked appealing and attractive, but ultimately was a pretty illusion. So miasmatic idealism was one manner the community was understood, another was more severe and austere. Laurence Stone in *The Family, Sex and Marriage* rebelled from quaint nostalgia to an extreme degree. Stone’s concept of rural life was bereft of all warmth and tolerance, rather it was awash with malice and hatred.<sup>200</sup> The only time that this hostility was replaced with fragile cooperation

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<sup>198</sup> *Certain Sermons Or Homilies Appointed to be Read in Churches in the Time of Queen Elisabeth* (London: 1843), p. 145.

<sup>199</sup> For some interesting studies on the rural English village see, the collection of essays in *The English Rural Community Image and Analysis* ed. by Brian Short, Cambridge CUP, 1992, especially the introduction by Short, Joan Thirsk *English Rural Communities: Structures, Regularities, and Change in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, Keith Wrightson, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700* Oxford UP, 1995, David Hey, *An English Rural Community: Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts*, Leicester UP, 1974, and M. T. Wild *Village England: A Social History of the Countryside* New York I.B. Tauris, 2004.

<sup>200</sup> Laurence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1977), p. 98.

was the happenstance of “mass hysteria,”<sup>201</sup> such as a witch hunt, a jovial skimmington, or a ducking of a scold. Using this community ideology, the scold would have only become a common concern from her functionality as a lynch pin that united the community through mutual fear and hatred. From these two answers, two very antithetical understandings of the community arose; idyllic imagery worthy of a John Clare poem or a grim and unforgiving dystopia. It has already been mentioned that historians have mostly dismissed the nostalgic village image, while Stone’s community build has largely been labelled as a pessimistic dream; a middle ground is therefore needed. Keith Wrightson’s definition of community has greatly impacted this middle ground. Wrightson thought that a “community isn’t a thing or a place. It [was a] quality of living.”<sup>202</sup> A quality of living formed from local custom and institutions, as well as face-to-face interactions between community members. Moreover, Wrightson’s micro-communities were not isolated English realms, rather “the myriad of tiny local communities in this period...were distinctive entities in their own right” while also being “integral parts socially and politically of larger spaces.”<sup>203</sup>

So in the context of this thesis, the community will be understood as a social collective united by spatial closeness, law and traditional social customs and rites, kinship bonds, face-to-face interactions, and shared ideas and beliefs. All of which forged some form of collective identity and sentiments of community. To witness this collectiveness in action, one simply needed to turn to the local leet records, which contained items that could be read as expressions of community sentiments. For example, expressions of pseudo-xenophobia were present where community notables patrolled local borders in await for exoduses of foreigners and strangers, which produced strict edicts that prevented the housing of such people without sureties of good character.<sup>204</sup> The records also presented instances of monetary unity being exercised when communal fixtures, such as the conduit, were in need

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<sup>201</sup> Stone, p. 98.

<sup>202</sup> Keith Wrightson, ‘Lecture 4 - Communities: Key Institutions And Relationships’ part of the lecture series: *Hist-251: Early Modern England: Politics, Religion, and Society Under the Tudors and Stuarts* [Open Yale Courses: September 15, 2009] <<http://oyc.yale.edu/transcript/332/hist-251>> [accessed 24th August 2015].

<sup>203</sup> Wrightson, ‘Lecture 4 - Communities: Key Institutions And Relationships.’

<sup>204</sup> Examples of this type of discourse in the Leets can be seen in, *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846* vol. 1 (Manchester Manchester H. Blackpool, 1884), pp. 122, 154, 165, 191.

of repair.<sup>205</sup> Lastly, there were swift action from the godly, honest, and orderly community members against any symbols of disorder.

Disorder manifested in man, with common drunkards and scolds, beast with unmuzzled dogs and loose sows, or the inanimate, for example the many orders against noisome ditches and broken pillories.<sup>206</sup> Community members not only shared space, but also a conception on the ideal community. Actions were executed in order to achieve as close as possible to this ideal. This cooperation for mutual benefit and the conscious shaping of the populace composition were expressions of community ethos. Urban centres also functioned as communities, as noted by Wrightson who suggested that “most towns had a very strong sense of identity as autonomous, self-governing communities, especially those of them which actually had a charter from the king which laid down their rights of self-government.”<sup>207</sup>

Unity between communities when it came to a shared understanding on the scold were built through legal discourse and popular culture as, “the law was subject not to the whims of a capricious individual, but a set of prescriptions that bound all members of polity.”<sup>208</sup> The common scold triggered uniform reactive responses which transcended geographical boundaries by consequence of common societal values pertaining to appropriate female behaviour. She was anchored down with a deluge of legal, cultural, and ideological baggage rigidly welded onto her carriage, which made her easily identifiable by local society. The scold was juxtaposed against the ideal meant that she was primarily understood as something negative. Her many appearances in popular print also played a major part in solidifying her as a negative and unideal form of the female sex. The scold was a chink in the ideal societal armour, thus she was easily translated as a threat. The existence of a

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<sup>205</sup> Examples of this form of discourse in the Leets can be seen in *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester, from the Year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the Year 1731 to the year 1846* vol. 1 (Manchester Manchester H. Blackpool, 1884), pp. 121, 229.

<sup>206</sup> Examples of this type of discourse include, *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the Year 1731 to the year 1846*, vol. iv (Manchester Manchester H. Blackpool, 1884), pp. 63, 114, 182, 317, vol. 5, pp. 61, 81.

<sup>207</sup> Wrightson, ‘Lecture 4 - Communities: Key Institutions And Relationships.’

<sup>208</sup> Anthony Fletcher & John Stevenson, *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 15.



national scold identity was integral to her being translated as a community category.

This familiarity with the scold's behaviour and punishment was witnessed in court records. For example in the small northern village of Slaughtwaite of West Riding, Anne Walker was to be punished for her bold and impudent behaviour. Included in the description of her punishment, was the phrase "as is *accustomed* for common scowldes."<sup>209</sup> This term accustomed is revealing of the scold and her punishment being a familiar one for the community of Slaughtwaite. This was also witnessed in Finchley, where Agnes Miller was ordered to be ducked "in such sorte as common scoulds are won't be."<sup>210</sup> Each time the community witnessed a scold being persecuted at the local court and when they acted as spectators to their punishment, the conception of the scold solidified. Alongside textual representation and common ideas on proper social conduct which all worked synchronously to make the scold known by all.

Collective language in legal terminology was one window into scold-community relationship. Typical phrases included 'breeder of discord *between her neighbours*,' 'to the nuisance *of her neighbours*,' 'disturber of *the neighbours* and source of strife *among her neighbours*.'<sup>211</sup> She was pitted against the community. Petition signatures given in evidence of a scolds behaviour also demonstrated community concern. For example, Alice Harper from the small parish of St. Ashton in Wiltshire was presented as a common scold in 1649, with a petition signed by ten aggravated neighbours, and again witnessed with Edith Willis, who was presented as a scold in 1648, and her vexed neighbours presented a petition signed by four others. A binary between two societal groups arose. There were those against the scold, who were primarily described in terms such as honest, godly, and civil, while on the other side was the scold, who was evil, disorderly, and lewd. Women were especially eager to cleave the scold from the rest of their

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<sup>209</sup> John Lister, *West Riding Sessions Records: Orders, 1611-1642; Indictments, 1637-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 18.

<sup>210</sup> 'Preface.' *County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series*, Volume 3, 1615-16. Ed. William Le Hardy. London: Clerk of the Peace, 1937 pp. vii-xxvi <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol3/vii-xxvi>> [accessed 20th July 2015].

<sup>211</sup> Underdown, p. 119.

sex, as she was seen as a besmirch on their sex. Women protected themselves through social exclusion, as well as reporting them to local officials, as “non-conformity threatened the security of the conformist woman.”<sup>212</sup> The scold was a division of the female sex that preachers and satirists used to prove female disorder, frailty, and wickedness. This separatism was often expressed with phrases like she was “not fit to dwell amongst any well disposed people.”<sup>213</sup> The community of Sheriff’s Lench, Worcester, in 1619 opposed such an unfit scold, and presented as evidence that “she had been driven out of three villages where she had formally lived through her wicked behaviour.”<sup>214</sup> Social exclusion was sometimes deficient with permanent erasure being sought through exile.

Though the potential for banishment or even punishment was partially dependent on what type of resident the scold was. There stood a greater possibility for the community to be willing to deal with the matter outside of court if the scold was familiar or a type of resident which Wrightson termed ‘stayers’. Stayers were persons who had lived in the area for a considerable period, owned property or had a husband who owned or rented property, and had a community beneficial trade or profession. These community members were ideal from their positive contributions to the community. These stayers contrast with ‘transient neighbours’, who were normally labouring families, subtenants, masterless women, and the wandering poor. Individuals who belonged to this category were at a greater risk of being persecuted as scolds.

First it was easier to punish strangers. Things capable of generating sympathy or understanding such as personal histories and individual qualities were unknown. Strangers were less likely to be objects of sympathy. Second, neighbours would have been more willing to deal with scolds outside of court, if they were a long-term resident to avoid resentment forming between the scold, her kin and friends, and the persecuting parties. This was the outcome witnessed in the small village of Nettleton, Wiltshire in 1614. Agnes Davis and Margaret Davis, of no relation,

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<sup>212</sup> Deborah Willis, *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England* (London: Cornell University Press, 1995 ), p. 12.

<sup>213</sup> Capp, p. 280.

<sup>214</sup> Capp, pp. 280-1.

were longterm residents of Nettleton. They were both presented as common scolds after repeatedly and publicly quarrelling with each other to the common annoyance. But from the two, only Margaret was ducked as a scold, which led to anger and resentment, and eventually vengeance from Margaret's friends and kin. This vengeance was a two part affair, beginning with an invasion of Agnes home where the mob "found two minced pies [and] devoured them" and left but not before urinating in a pottage pot.<sup>215</sup> The second act saw the mob dragging Agnes from her home and plunging her "in the river seven several times."<sup>216</sup> This outcome eventuated only from Margaret having lived in Nettleton long enough that she had acquired supporters eager to rise to her defence.

Martin Ingram suggested that neighbours regularly tried to keep scolds from the court "for neighbourhood sake" with tolerance being encouraged for the sake of communal harmony.<sup>217</sup> Underdown was one historian who to a degree stigmatised the scold as the alienated and friendless,<sup>218</sup> though Sandy Bardsley later proposed that the majority of scolds were "fairly respectable or otherwise ordinary villagers and townspeople".<sup>219</sup> Scolds were not always outsiders and locals were persecuted, especially when they were repeat offenders who eroded community tolerance. However it stood to reason that it would have been easier to stigmatise the already marginalised and those without a support system, compared to those with deep roots in the community and everything that came with that.

From this exploration of the community-scold relationship, I have endeavoured to present the scold as something that reflected community ethos. Ingram aptly described this quality, when he suggested that the scold was the essence of the community.<sup>220</sup> She was a community quality and a community concern, but why? One way to answer this question is to study a wider framework of the order and

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<sup>215</sup> Ingram, p. 61.

<sup>216</sup> Ingram, p. 62.

<sup>217</sup> Ingram argued for leniency given to locals through a study of larceny at Wiltshire quarter sessions in 1616,19, & 23 focussing on three spirit groups, local, outsiders, and servants. From this, Ingram discovered that local residents had a much lower percussio rate compared to the other two groups.

<sup>218</sup> Underdown, p. 129.

<sup>219</sup> Bardsley, p. 107.

<sup>220</sup> Ingram, p. 66.

disorder binary of Early Modern England. When discussing this, it is easy to slip into the hyperbolic, with discussions of a crisis, breakdowns of order, and a realm rife with disorder and chaos. All of which have come from both contemporaries who lived in these times as well as historians partial to the use of theatric labels to classify the age.<sup>221</sup> That is not to say there was no disorder in Stuart England, as to deny such a thing would be omitting a chief cog in the machinations of the time. But there were no tsunamis of disorder crumbling the bulwark of order, rather a better description would be to an ebb and flow of disorder that periodically battered the institutions of order but never destroyed it. J. S Morrell when describing the consequences of Charles I's execution, nicely summarised this when he wrote that it caused "social hierarchies to tremble" but not to crumble.<sup>222</sup>

The English people were concerned with order. This order was maintained through various institutions. Social order could be witnessed at the familial level, something Underdown termed the lynch pin of order.<sup>223</sup> For many social and political theorists in late Elizabethan and Early Stuart England, the household mirrored society or functioned as "the cornerstone of social order."<sup>224</sup> Order was achieved in these micro-commonwealths through the authority of the master or husband. He was responsible for his servants, children, and to a certain degree, his wife. He was "expected to maintain order in his household to contribute to the order of the community."<sup>225</sup> This made the order of a community rather piecemeal. By this I mean, order for a town or village could be understood as the amalgamation of orderly well governed households. Order was likewise witnessed in the proper execution of the law and a general respect for it, respect for and fealty to authority, attendance of church services, and general orderly behaviour in daily life. Order was the acknowledgement of established regulatory intuitions, as well as custom and ideology. In opposition to this was disorder. Disorder can be

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<sup>221</sup> See Underdown for his hyperbolised descriptions of the age, for one example of this literature convention, in his 'The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of the Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson, Cambridge (1985).

<sup>222</sup> J. S. Morrill and J. D. Walter 'Order and Disorder in the English Revolution' in *Order and Disorder in England* eds. by Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 145.

<sup>223</sup> Underdown, p. 116.

<sup>224</sup> Amussen, p. 197.

<sup>225</sup> Amussen, p. 199.

defined as sporadic intervals of disruptive events, ideologies, and processes or people who embodied inverted ideals.

For the Early Modern period, disorder was witnessed in the impoverished masses, population movements which saw inter-county exoduses from the poor north and west highland regions to the more prosperous south and east,<sup>226</sup> outbreaks of bubonic plague, various religious separatist movements, changes in the longstanding ruling system of the monarchy, and of course the Civil War.<sup>227</sup>

Disorder at the popular level also contributed to the general English condition, for example disorder was expressed in the grain riots and other agrarian issues, enclosure and disorderly local people. During the period between 1560-1640, Susan Amussen recorded an “increased frequency of prosecutions in the courts.”<sup>228</sup> These prosecutions related to persons who opposed the social order including vagrants, beggars, labourers who played cards with calloused hands, men and women who kept unlicensed alehouses, those who bore or sired bastards, committed adultery, and imprudent men and women who sat in the improper church seat as decreed by status.<sup>229</sup>

The scold can be understood in this framework; she was another assaulter against order, especially by being contrary to the edicts of patriarchal authority fundamental to correct gender relations. Female disorder was a preoccupation for this period. Evident in such things as the imagined dystopian community in *Lancashire Witches* where wife ruled husband.<sup>230</sup> This unusual image was accompanied by a “flood of antifeminist literature and the concurrent public obsession with scolding women, domineering, and unfaithful wives.”<sup>231</sup> The common scold was a walking and more importantly talking manifestation of disorder. Underdown placed the scold within a ‘crisis of order’, declaring that an

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<sup>226</sup> Barry Coward, *Social Change and Continuity: England 1550-1750* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 8.

<sup>227</sup> For a general study of disorder for the Early Modern England see the collection of essays in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* eds. by Anthony Fletcher, and Andy Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England*.

<sup>228</sup> Amussen, p. 206.

<sup>229</sup> Amussen, p. 206.

<sup>230</sup> Thomas Heywood and Richard Brome, *The Late Lancashire Witches* (1637).

<sup>231</sup> Underdown, p. 116.

epidemic of scolding contributed to this crisis. To validate this connection between general disorder and scolding, he turned to the court records.<sup>232</sup> Studying the years between 1560-1640, Underdown perceived “an intense preoccupation with women who were visible threats to the patriarchal system,” such as scolds and whores.<sup>233</sup> Underdown chalked up this obsession to be “a by-product of social and economic transformation that was occurring during this period, decline of social harmony, and the spread of capitalism.”<sup>234</sup> Scolding alone was a symbol of disorder, and was also understood by Underdown to be part of a wider context of disorder sweeping through England at this time.

In consequence of the great upheavals of the time, expressions of micro-disorder were targeted and demolished. Men and women were in desperate need of stability. They could not realistically gain order from tacking the great causes of disorder, such as the war or plague, but the common scold was an appropriate target to direct their bright anger, distress, and anxiety at. A single scold may not have had the power to change the entire fabric of the community, but they were living evidence of disorder. Scolds also reflected poorly on the husband’s domestic authority, while also being poor examples for other women who may decide to mirror this undesirable behaviour. For Susan Amussen, the prosecution of common scolds “reflected the anxiety of those in authority about the potential for disorder” and that scolding would only cease to be a concern when “disorder ceased to be obsession.”<sup>235</sup> An idea shared by Lynda Boose who wrote that the preoccupation with the scold and other forms of disorder was simply a reflection of the “increased concern on social order” as well as the “social anxiety that came to identify the source of all disorder in society in its marginal and subordinate groups.”<sup>236</sup> Amussen perceived that this obsession faded around 1640 when “the

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<sup>232</sup> Underdown, pp. 116, 120.

<sup>233</sup> Underdown also made reference to the fact that this was also the time in which witchcraft trials peaked, “the chronology of public anxiety about scolds and witches was roughly similar and paralleled by a third category of rebellions women, the domineering wife” (The Taming of the scold, p. 121). Underdown understood the scold as a symbol of disorder alongside the witch, she “cursed her more fortune neighbours as the witch cast a spell on him”, and both females were in rebellion “against their place assigned to them in social and gender hierarchies”. (p. 120).

<sup>234</sup> Underdown, p. 126.

<sup>235</sup> Amussen, p. 123.

<sup>236</sup> Boose, p. 195.

proverbial scold virtually disappeared from court documents.”<sup>237</sup> She explained that “the formal mechanisms of control were rarely used after the restoration as order had effectively been restored.”<sup>238</sup>

The same was witnessed in fiction. The shrew may have enjoyed her time outside the restrictive confines of patriarchal authority, but this was only a temporary freedom. She needed to come back under the yoke of patriarchal authority by the time the curtains fell. For example, in *The Lancashire Witches*, the witches who had cursed the community were brought to justice and “the natural lines of martial and social obedience restored and the world turned right side up again,”<sup>239</sup> Katherina, that infamous shrew, was tamed when she swore fealty to the proper order of “thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,” the cursed shrew from the mid sixteenth ballad *A Merry Jest* was turned into a good wife by her husband encasing her in Morel's Skin, and finally in the *True Way of Taming a Shrew* the wife was cured of her inflection by bloodletting with order being restored when the wife “beggd pardon for all that was past.”<sup>240</sup> This literature restoration of order by the time the last word had been uttered was likewise seen with the community's bottom line.

Order in a general sense was obviously imposed on communities for reasons outside of punishing common scolds and disorderly women. These included the crusade against profane behaviour led by Puritan magistrates incited by the desire for the people to adhere to “a strict 'godly conversation': that is, strict personal behaviour, strict moral behaviour.”<sup>241</sup> This crusade attacked various symbols of unruliness and disorder including gambling, alehouses, games, and feasts and festivities on Sunday. This imposition of austere order was not welcome by all as evident by *Letter of Sports* issued by King James in 1617 and later reissued by his

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<sup>237</sup> Amussen, p. 130.

<sup>238</sup> Amussen, p. 130.

<sup>239</sup> Underdown, p. 118.

<sup>240</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds or, A True way of Taming a Shrew’, RB 2.51 in *English Broadside Ballad Archive* (n.p: n.pub, 1685-1688), British Library <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>> [accessed 20 January 2015].

<sup>241</sup> Keith Wrightson, ‘Street Wars Of Religion: Puritans And Arminians’ part of HIST 251: Early Modern England: Politics, Religion, And Society Under The Tudors And Stuarts from Open Yale Courses <<http://oyc.yale.edu/history/hist-251/lecture-18>> [accessed 20th July 2015].

son Charles. Its contents were initially restricted to the county of Lancashire, but later was “read from pulpits throughout the land.”<sup>242</sup> This act was made by James I after he had directly come into contact with the results of the zealous crackdown on merriment and leisure being undertaken by the puritans in Lancashire. James observed at the local level that there was much dissatisfaction with these actions, as the “meaner sort” who toiled hard all week were deprived from recreations “to refresh their spirits.”<sup>243</sup> Within this public document, James presented a list of acceptable festivities including erecting maypoles, dancing, Whitsun-ales and Morris dances, which was put alongside the much shorter list of the unacceptable, which included bull and bear baiting and bowling. This letter was explained to have no grander function of defining “the boundaries of what might be one side unbridled license on the other pharisaical austerity,” while offering ease and comfort to “our well deserving people.”<sup>244</sup> Presented we have two very different definitions of order; Puritan crackdown and James’s letter, which introduced the idea that order was to a degree slightly ambivalent. By this I mean that the nature of order and disorder varied in accordance to who ended up perceiving it. For the most devout Puritans, it was a lack of festivities and maypoles, for the commonalty it was the holding on to such cultural symbols. The common scold though lacked this ambivalence. To the communality, she was disorder and needed to be contained through legal terminology and public shaming.

Other instances the community experienced external order imposed upon them were in such things as the reformation of manners in the late seventeenth century, the various royal acts and proclamations,<sup>245</sup> and garrison troops used by national authorities to stifle agrarian rioters to “deal with expressions of dissent by brute

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<sup>242</sup> *Religion And Society In Early Modern England: A Sourcebook*, eds. by David Cressy & Lori A. Ferrell (New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 169.

<sup>243</sup> Cressy, p. 170.

<sup>244</sup> ‘Introduction’ in *The King’s Maiesties Declaration to His Subjects, Concerning Lawful Sports to be Used* (Philadelphia: Benj. Ashworth, 1866), p. 3 <<https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=m78yQERuvroC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>> [accessed 29th July 2015].

<sup>245</sup> A good example being the various legislation made in an effort to regulate alehouses and excessive drinking as “there was a growing concern with a perceived link between alehouses and disorder and in particular criminal activity” (Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England By Mark Hailwood, p. 26). Various acts were made in sixteenth and seventeenth century to stifle this expression of disorder including a fine of five shillings to punish the “loathsome and odious sin of drunkenness” and various legislation made to regulate alehouses including mandatory licensing and the proclamation of 1619 which issued “prohibitions of operating during divine service, buying or pawning stolen goods and harbouring rouges, vagabonds, and masterless men”. (Hailwood, p. 26).



force.”<sup>246</sup> This was order externally imposed to correct internal disorder, something that was also executed with the common scold through standardised legal definitions and punishment regulations. However, the scold was a form of disorder that was more frequently dealt with at the local level, where it was the community’s responsibility to utilise the supplied mechanisms to impose order. Including containing her disorder in legal terminology and having her swiftly fined, ducked, or bridled. Working in tandem with formal imposition of order were also informal methods of reprimanding those who threatened social order while also publicly broadcasting zero tolerance of such behaviour, deeds, and people. For example, cuckolded husbands, an inversion of sexual norms and gender dynamics, would often find themselves presented with horns, the shaming symbol of the cuckold, “confronted by the ritual repetition of the words thou art a cuckold”, written libels circulated in taverns or attached to church doors. Disorder and order are important themes for Early Modern England. The scold was an expression of disorder while the identifying and punishing of her was an expression of maintaining the local order. Early Modern society already had various barrages of disorder assailing them, which they had largely no control over. The punishing of the common scold, as well as other disorderly persons, can be interpreted as a means of gaining some form of control over their lives and communities.

This discussion on the community has primarily been of an abstract variety, but it will now become direct and specific. From a quick cursory look of the chart supplied in appendix 1,<sup>247</sup> a few preliminaries can be put forth on the distribution of scold persecutions. First, that coastal regions appear to have had a greater number of common scold persecutions in the early modern period and second, that the northern and eastern areas of England were troubled with scolds to a greater degree when compared to the western and southern regions.

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<sup>246</sup> Underdown, p. 146.

<sup>247</sup> For the most part, the chart is a copy of Martin Ingram’s data presented in his essay ‘Scolding Women Cucked or Washed: A Crisis in Gender Relations in Early Modern England’. A few auxiliary sets of persecutions have also been included, sourced from local court records that Ingram passed over.

To study English scold distribution, I have used two tools: an urban/rural binary and a rural topographical method of separatism of pasture-woodland vs. arable filter, beginning with the former.

Beginning with the former, the persecutions presented appear more of an urban problem than a rural one, a conclusion reached by most. David Underdown supposed that “scolds were primarily an urban problem” for the Medieval era and into the Early Modern period.<sup>248</sup> Martin Ingram almost a decade later was of the same mind when he suggested that “it would seem that urban areas were in general more fertile grounds for scolds compared to country districts.”<sup>249</sup> For example, Nottingham experienced a significant number of persecutions, second only to London, with a total of ninety-seven scold cases in a nine year time period. London, though, was the area with the greatest number of scold persecutions for the period studied, with fifty-two persecution in just six years. Comparisons between urban scold persecutions with rural presents substantial differences. For example, the small village of Acomb in York officially experienced only thirty-three scold persecutions in a half a century period. Likewise with the small village of Earls Colne in Essex, which had even less of a scolding problem with only one official common scold persecution for a thirty-six year time period. Ingram when discussing rural scold persecutions, commented that “numerous villages and even some towns must’ve gone years, if not decades, without witnessing the prosecution of a single scold.”<sup>250</sup> For example, the Preston Leets records, which represented nearly two centuries of community regulation, was bereft of a single common scold persecution.<sup>251</sup> This is not to say that scolds were complexly absent in Preston, as scolds may have been persecuted through the quarter sessions rather than manorial, they may have been acquitted, or informally dealt with by the community. That being said the absence of any kind of mention on the cucking or ducking stool in the Preston Leets, the devices

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<sup>248</sup> David Underdown, *Revel, Riot And Rebellion: Popular Politics And Culture in England 1603-1660* (England: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 100.

<sup>249</sup> Ingram, p. 56.

<sup>250</sup> Ingram, p. 56.

<sup>251</sup> *Preston Court Leet records* eds. by Anthony Hewitson (Preston: George Toulmin and Sons, 1905) <<https://archive.org/stream/prestoncourtleet00hewigoog#page/n30/mode/2up>> [accessed 2 August 2015].

traditionally used for punishing scolds, is strange. Orders for installing or repairing of cucking stools were matters for the local courts, so for both to be completely absent in the leets is curious. It communicates the impression that the community of Preston held no urgent desire to establish the device for scold punishment, or were even overly concerned with scolding.

So in regards to generalities and trends from the available data, it appears that the common scold was less a rural anxiety and more of an urban one. Marjorie McIntosh supported this statement when she wrote that “jurisdictions presenting scolding were more likely to be market centres than small villages.”<sup>252</sup> McIntosh further limited this geographical space by suggesting that scolds “were slightly more common in the north and northwest than in the midlands and east central region,” and were more numerous along either coastlines, rivers, or major roads.<sup>253</sup> Ingram’s data collaborates with this argument of urban commonality, with Nottingham, London, Dorchester, Devizes, and Norwich being the areas which experienced the most scold persecutions. Dorchester, Devizes, and Norwich experienced less overall scold persecutions than the two urban juggernauts of London and Nottingham. Dorchester had on average only a single persecution every 1.01 years, and Devizes experienced an average of one scold presentment every five years. Urban areas that were not hubs of common scolds persecutions may have come about for a number of reasons. The most likely one being that those towns had stronger local governing institutions, a greater emphasis on order and control of disorder, and a smaller population, especially when compared to London’s hundreds of thousands.

But why was scolding more prevalent in urban centres? Beginning with Occam Razor, scold persecution were more numerous in urban centres because there were larger populations meaning more women present who could turn to scolding. There was also intense social regulations achieved through powerful and stable local governing institutions, meaning less possibility of scolding going unpunished. Underdown suggested that the pivotal factors of towns were “more

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<sup>252</sup> Bardsley, p. 114.

<sup>253</sup> Bardsley, p. 114.

poor people, less social cohesion, as well as more individualistic attitudes on the part of governing elite.”<sup>254</sup> Greater numbers of the impoverished could result in greater concern on the maintenance of order from the governing body leading to a greater preoccupation for maintaining order which in turn could be expressed in higher numbers of persecutions of disorderly folk, like the scold. Another causation link between poor and scolds, may be seen with the idea that scolds arose from the common rabble, as Underdown argued “scolding was a natural psychological outlet for the frustrations of the poor and the alienated.”<sup>255</sup> Scolding may have been more prevalent in urban centres, but they were not restricted by these borders as they were also a rural problem, just to a lesser degree.

Underdown, when discussing the distribution of scolds in rural communities, employed Thirsk’s criteria for cleaving English communities, presented in her agrarian history of England and Wales.<sup>256</sup> Thirsk and later Underdown, split the English rural landscape into arable and woodland-pasture counties. Arable areas tended to be smaller, have compact nucleated village centres, stronger manorial institutions which acted as effective mechanisms for social control, and also firmer adherence to the concept of neighbourliness and community cooperation. This contrasted with woodland-pasture regions, which tended to be larger and have scattered settlement patterns which had weaker or non-existent manorial institutions. Pasture areas were commonly cloth manufacturing centres, which attracted in-migration during periods of population expansion. Lastly, they were prone to serious poverty problems during depressed times. Using this pasture-arable binary, Underdown offered a tentative conclusion on the nature of the scold-rural distribution. He suggested that there were “more scolds in the pasturelands compared to arable regions.”<sup>257</sup>

However, imposing this methodology on a data set like Ingram’s offers little coinciding conclusions. Wiltshire was a cloth manufacturing county, but also an arable region with nucleated villages. This county had seven official scolding

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<sup>254</sup> Underdown, p. 126.

<sup>255</sup> Underdown, p. 126.

<sup>256</sup> Joan Thirsk, *The Agrarian History of England and Wales* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985).

<sup>257</sup> Underdown, p. 126.

persecutions over a fourteen year period. The village of Gillingham was seen to be part of a scattered settlement pattern of Kent had six scolding persecutions in a twenty year period. From this contrast of Gillingham with scattered villages and Wiltshire a nucleated county, the former had the greater amount, coinciding with Underdowns thesis. Other patterns of rural scolding persecutions were not so loyal to this model. For example, the village of Henley-in-Arden, situated in the pasture-woodlands of Warwickshire, had very few scolding persecutions, only one official persecution every nine years on average. This was less than the arable Wiltshire, though it should be the inverse if adhering to Underdowns theorem.

The problem with using Thrisk's model is that its simplistic. English counties were not often one topography type, they were more likely to be a combination of woodland, pasture, and arable. This means that cleaving England apart using this tool does not work really well. But the state of land is not the focal point, rather it was the accompanying features of each landscape type. That pasture-woodland regions contained weaker mechanisms of formal social control, were destabilised from various external threats such as the poor and economic change, and featured a fading ethos of neighbourliness. For example, a lack of neighbourly fealty equated to lesser possibility for scolds being dealt with outside the courts through informal community intervention. In turn, leading to greater numbers of official scold persecutions. An absence in camaraderie between neighbours also had the potential to create a situation where reporting scolds to the authorities was easier. Weaker mechanisms of social control may have also resulted in greater numbers of scolding persecutions. Fear is an excellent motivator for the avoidance of certain types of behaviour. Strong manorial systems had the means to enforce justice effectively alongside reliably obtaining the means for punishment, such as the gaining and maintenance of a cucking or ducking stool. Women may not have felt the same motivation to conform to a more agreeable behavioural type with poor fumbling local governing bodies. They may have felt that they could abscond with this type of behaviour free of consequence. Finally, the community may have been facing external pressures, such as the influx of poor or undertenants, internal economic issues, and poor living conditions. This could have resulted in dissatisfaction and unhappiness in community members which in turn could be

expressed through scolding for some women. To conclude I can reiterate with what I proposed in the beginning of this section: scolds were both a rural and urban problem, but were more prevalent in the latter. This was namely because of larger populations and extreme external pressures.

But scolds were not eventualities solely or perhaps even primarily dictated from the external. Certain environments, such as urban areas, may have offered a more ideal environment for them to flourish. Regions with weaker manorial institutions, larger numbers of poor, and generally larger populations acted as obvious external stimuli that made disorderly females a greater concern for the local governing body, and created a context more encouraging for scolds. Likewise there were also areas that practised greater concern on order alongside the stamping out of disorder. This in turn could lead to greater number of persecutions of living disorder, such as scolds, whores, or witches. Overall scolding was individualistic and personal, born from their misery and unhappiness, or from the personalities of bold, confident, and impudent women. These frameworks that have been applied have focussed on generalities, patterns, and general themes, but the scold will always be the individual woman who went and publicly voiced her dissent, anger, or misery. A scold can exist anywhere, be it a small village filled with weavers, a metropolitan labyrinth built on waste splattered cobblestones and cries of the hungry, or a small town with a coastal view. Scolds were a problem for Englishmen and women, not simply Londoners or only those from Southampton or Preston. They were an English phenomenon, or rather an European one. In other words, scolds were not restricted to a single space. Wherever there was a woman with a sharp tongue, bold voice, and a mind filled with complaint and rich insults, an emergence of a scold was feasible. Even if they were not officially encumbered in legal terminology of the common scold.

This section only intended to offer some insight on the scold's presence in England from studying generalities and specifics in the scold-geography correlation. They areas they were most prevalent and also where they were largely missing, as well as tentative factors that may have played a part in creating such a trend. But a scold was an individual born from personal experience and specific

innate qualities, not from the state of the topography. It may have been contributing external factor but not a defining one.

### **The Stereotype Preluded the Criminal**

Lynda Boose put forth an interesting question in her study of the scold. When a juror, constable, mayor, JP, or neighbour understood a common scold—what knowledge or basis were they using? How did they know how a scold behaved, looked, or sounded like? Thinking about this question, a few mental frameworks can be introduced that men and women may have used when they compartmentalised the scold. One process which may have equipped the Early Modern person with the awareness or understanding of the scold persona was face-to-face interactions with local scolds. Every instance in which a man or woman witnessed a scold being presented at the local courts, scolding in the market or streets, strapped into the imposing ducking stool or had their tongue imprisoned in the cold embrace of the scold's bridle, an image was slowly but steadily formed. Of what a scold looked and sounded like, which was reiterated and solidified with each repeat performance in the local context. That she was female, disorderly, verbally impudent, bold, and insulting. This was one means how rigid prejudices and conceptions about the scold were formulated.

The other framework that aided in the general understanding and in turn bias on the scold was her abstract literacy counterpart, the shrew. Her presence in ballad, plays, and other satirised mediums, made it so that people of Early Modern England were exposed to her nature and form either by directly consumption or the indirect exposure through oral tradition. This frequently witnessed and easily assessable literacy shrew did effect her legal mirror image to a degree, as “literacy and artistic constructions of troublesome female speech reinforced prosecutions of scolds.”<sup>258</sup> By the term reinforced, I mean that the abstract offered a visual reference or key to what a scold looked like, behaved like and also how they were situated or perceived in human interrelations. The shrew and scold image was to some degree two sides of the same coin, one face was simply much more

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<sup>258</sup> Bardsley, p. 6.

embellished or ornate than the other. The shrew had the core or raw components that defined the scold, including her parts of the female sex, garrulous speech, sharp tongue, and a bold or impudent nature. However, the shrew within her literacy confines was normally witnessed through a hyperbolised and often fantastical prism. She was born from ink, paper, and an imagination aiming to vilify, or besmirch the female sex, which in turn influenced her legal counterpart to be understood as negative and wicked. As they shared similar attributes, be it at a different degree or extent, they would have been compartmentalised as similar and understood as same. Prejudices formed from reading the shrew were superposed onto the legal counterpart, so that she was understood as overwhelming negative. The literacy form acted as a reference which could be turned to as a means to shape perceptions of and understand this local disorderly female presence. A way to understand both, is that the scold was as tailored out of the shrew. The extreme nature that the shrew was authored to be in possession of, to a degree intensified the fear and anxiety on female disorder and garrulity in reality. This created a context where women who paralleled this behaviour were treated with hostility and fear, and were also understood as something that needed to be corrected.

I have framed the shrew-scold connection by using a coin analogy, another way to imagine it is as a feedback loop, where each strand, the scold and the shrew being the strands, reflected and helped to build and reinforce the other. The shrew acted as a mental tool used when deciphering the behaviour expressed at the local and real level. An image of reference. While the scold, acted as a means for justifying the vilifying of the female voice, and also as a real representation of the shrew sans literacy exaggeration. Both were artifices, where one was created from a writer's ink kissed fingers, the other from an amalgamation of legal jargon used to encapsulate the behaviour. Each had words stuffed in their mouths; voices constructed outside of herself. Their verbal expressions were taken and mutated into something that would undeniably be translated as wicked and negative by the audience. The shrew's voice was constructed by the author and it was heard as hissing, spitting, chiding, while the scold's voice was written down in legal presentments as railing or scolding. Elizabeth Foyster actually considered the



entire nature of scolding to be nothing more than “a construct designed by men for the control of women.”<sup>259</sup> And there is something to that idea. The deluge of literature that criminalised the female voice made an environment where the female voice was not welcome. It was more likely to be stereotyped as scold’s venom, harmful scolding, or perhaps simply dismissed and ignored. The shrew could have simply been a wife who was bold and impudent, but she was corrupted to such an extent that she was the villainous and wicked shrew. The scold was real but she was altered after the fact through legal discourse and popular opinion into an wicked criminal outlined only in brief legal discourse and biased description from disgruntled neighbours.

These constructions were made with an intent behind them. They acted as a means to construct the female voice as something wicked, negative, and villainous. The shrew was achieved in the abstract, the scold in reality. However, both acted in conjecture for men and women during this time to gain an understanding of them and build appropriate emotive response towards both. “Scolding was typically constructed less as a behaviour than as an identity: a person was a scold, rather than behaving like a scold.”<sup>260</sup> She was a complete image, where she looked a certain manner, sounded a certain way or even walked a certain strut. Be it over the embellished lines of a play or through the muddy lanes of a small village. Her image was universal and it was all a construct made to empower one while disempowering another. The scold and the shrew were essentially Early Modern puppets given dialogue, costume and action through agenda driven puppet masters. As Sandy Bardsley wrote: “the scold served as an archetype and a focus for the more generalised cultural concern about illicit and dangerous speech.”<sup>261</sup> Persecutions and popular literature worked together to relay the important message that the female voice was potentially problematic and deserving of punishment.<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Karen Jones, *Gender and Petty Crime in Late Medieval England: The Local Courts in Kent, 1460-1560* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), p. 96.

<sup>260</sup> Bardsley, p. 108.

<sup>261</sup> Bardsley, p. 6.

<sup>262</sup> Bardsley, p. 7.

**ACT 3:**  
**THE CURTAIN FALLS WITH A CONQUERING OF A SHREW AND A  
SHACKLING OF A SCOLD.**

In the engraving *The Merry Dutch Miller*, a miller warmly invited any husband cursed with a shrew for a wife to gather around. Come all, come all, he cried, and stand in awe at my new invention; a mill capable of curing a shrewish disposition. The miller promised that no wife was too wicked for his wonderous mill. It cured the “old, decreped, wrinkled, blear-ey'd, long-nosed, blind, lame, scolds, jealous, angry, poor, drunkerds and whores.”<sup>263</sup> So, the husbands hurled their flawed wives into the old miller’s mill, which changed them into wives who were “young, active, pleasant, handsome, wise, loving.”<sup>264</sup> The wife in this image was externally transformed, cured, or fixed from an undesired past form into something better suited to a husband’s wants. This is what this closing act is about, the forceful punishment of the verbal rebel, implemented with the intention of curing, or correcting her behaviour. I examined here both the curtain call of the shrew, and the judicial punishments of the common scold.

**The Grand Opening of Petruchio’s Taming School**

In Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew*, Tranio gleefully informs Bianca about a novel new institution, that went by the name, *The Taming School*. The founder of this institution was Petruchio, a skilled breaker of wives, who “teacheth tricks eleven and twenty long—to tame a shrew, and charm her chattering tongue.”<sup>265</sup> This promotional honeypot: To tame a shrew, would have undoubtedly attracted droves of cursed husbands to learn the tricks and tools of the trade, so they too could become tamers of shrews. For the purpose of exploring the taming motif, I

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<sup>263</sup> Emily Cockayne, *Hubbub: Filth, Noise & Stench in England 1600-1770* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 51.

<sup>264</sup> Cockayne, p. 51.

<sup>265</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 89.

will be using the taming school as a framing device to explore the traditional taming narratives. Petruchio's Taming School offered three creeds, Petruchio's own tried and tested soft torture extravaganza, the brutish and forceful 'break the shrew' method, and lastly a medically sanctioned cure for a cursed tongue.

Petruchio conquering his shrew was, at least in his mind, a foregone conclusion; there was no alternative finale for his story. As he candidly informed Katherina, "I am he born to tame you Kate, and bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate."<sup>266</sup> His role was written in the stars, he was destined to curb her wildness, leaving only the idyllic remnants behind. In regards to the actual taming, a theatrical performance would be the best way to describe it. He did not beat the shrewish qualities from Katherina, rather he designed a convoluted sequential strategy. Beginning with what he termed taming through benevolence, Petruchio disarmed using sanguine ripostes: "say that she rail, why then i'll tell her plain; she sings as sweetly as a nightingale."<sup>267</sup> Rather than fight fire with fire, which would only worsen things, Petruchio decided that his discourse would be made to subdue her fiery temper, not exacerbate it.<sup>268</sup> Once the wedding came to a close, Petruchio left kindness at the threshold and set in motion stage two: psychological warfare. He starved Katherina, precluded her from sleep, and displayed aggressive brutish behaviour by abusing staff in her presence.<sup>269</sup> Following implementation of this severe stratagem, Petruchio soliloquies that he had politically begun his reign and hopes that it will end successfully. That presently Katherina was his sharp and hungry falcon; his haggard, but soon would stoop and "come and know her keeper's call."<sup>270</sup> Petruchio knew no better way to tame a shrew, and tame her he did, with the culmination of his work being showcased to his peers in the closing act. To test who had the tamest wife, Petruchio made a little wager; whosoever wife obeyed a direct summons would be crowned the winner. Each man made

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<sup>266</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 60.

<sup>267</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 56.

<sup>268</sup> William Gouge, *Domestical Duties*, p. 230: "if both be incensed together, the fire is like to be the greater, with the greater speed there must they both labour to put it out".

<sup>269</sup> "She eats no meat to day, nor none shall eat, last night she slept not, nor to night she shall not" *Taming of the Shrew* (1785) (IV.I.166-174).

<sup>270</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 86.

their beckoning, but to no avail; their wives played truant. But when it came to Petruchio's harkening, Katherina was quick to obey. Petruchio's previous promise had reached fruition: the falcon knew her keeper's call.

Even though Petruchio was mercilessly autocratic in dialogue, often dehumanising Katherina, for example his line that she was “my goods, my chattels, my house, my horse, my ox, my ass,” he never did become a violent dictator.<sup>271</sup> There was a noticeable absence of non-consensual physical interaction between Kate and Petruchio, rather “a series of humane but effective methods for behavioural modification” were executed.<sup>272</sup> Shakespeare, according to Lynda Boose, “effectively pushes brutal patriarchal practices off his stage.”<sup>273</sup> Direct manipulation of Katherina's body were not presented, rather a layer of separatism between victim and perpetrator was consciously established. This decision to present a soft-edged taming discourse may have related to the shifting opinions on wife beating; it was being translated as brutish and unbecoming to a gentleman or civilised human being.<sup>274</sup> As Capp noted, “educated opinion was moving firmly against the right of husbands to administer physical correction and most conduct books condemned it outright.”<sup>275</sup> William Gouge put forth the question: may not an husband beat his wife? Gouge answered this with “with submission to better judgements, I think he may not.”<sup>276</sup> He supported his position using scripture,<sup>277</sup> the “small disparity betwixt man and wife,” and St. Peter's adage that men were to love their wives as they would their own bodies—the two are one flesh, and only a madman would beat himself.<sup>278</sup> Gouge even accounted for the circumstance of a

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<sup>271</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p.77.

<sup>272</sup> Lynda Boose, ‘Scolding Brides and Bridling Scolds: Taming the Women's Unruly Member,’ in *Materialist Shakespeare: A History* ed. by Ivo Kamps ((London and New York: Verso, 1995), p. 257.

<sup>273</sup> Boose, *Materialist Shakespeare: A History*, p. 257.

<sup>274</sup> For discussions on domestic abuse or wife-beating in Early Modern England see, ‘That it is not lawful for a husband to beat his wife: William Heale's pamphlet against Wife Beating’ in *Custom is an Idiot: Jacobean Pamphlet Literature on Women* ed. by Susan Gushee O'Malley pp. 167-180, Susan Dwyer Amussen, ‘Being Stirred to Much Unquietness: Violence and Domestic Violence in Early Modern England’, *Journal of Women's History* 6 (1994), 70-89, and Laura Gowling, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London*.

<sup>275</sup> Capp, p. 103.

<sup>276</sup> Gouge, p. 278.

<sup>277</sup> “The scripture bend so silent in this point, we may well infer that God hath not ranked wives among those in the family who are to be corrected”. p. 280 William Gouge, *Domesticall Duties*.

<sup>278</sup> Gouge, p. 280.

headstrong bride, affirming that “no fault should be so great, as to compel an husband to beat his wife.”<sup>279</sup> Thomas Becon was of the same mind, writing in the *Catechism* that “husbands are not rulers of women unto this end; that they should reign over their wives like lords, or bridle them like horses or make them couch down like dogs.”<sup>280</sup> Shame appeared to have pervaded this martial practice, at least within the higher social circles. For example, when Pepys bruised his wife’s cheek with a vicious blow, he promptly made an excuse for their nonattendance at a Christmas party later that week.<sup>281</sup> A husband viciously beating a wife became associated with the lower classes, consequently making it a stigma of the poor and brutish, and a weakness in character.

Yet, Boose perceived some kind of invisible violent phantom haunting the edges of *The Taming of the Shrew*. Despite explicitly bypassing use of martial violence as a plot device, Boose witnessed its “suppression in the margins of the play.”<sup>282</sup> When Petruchio beat his servants bloody in the presence of Katherina, or when he apathetically whips his horse on the way to the wedding feast, violence and cruelty were closely juxtaposition to Petruchio’s taming narrative. And though Petruchio adheres to what he calls ‘killing with kindness’, the looming threat of violence is never far from the readers awareness, nor from the play’s plot. It was established that Petruchio was a man capable of breaking his wife from her shrew mould through means of violent interplay. This allows for Petruchio to be excluded from the traditional villain mould. If he was to appear as a raging, red-faced drunkard who beat his wife with a fire poker, the audience perhaps would have understood this play as the unjust treatment of a woman by a villainous husband. In actual fact, Katherina is shown as more violent than the ‘wife breaker’, beating her sweet-tempered sister and crashing a lute over the head of Hortensio. Petruchio is portrayed as intelligent, resourceful, and persistent in his actions, while Katherina is translated as wild and violent. As one scholar

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<sup>279</sup> Gouge, p. 280.

<sup>280</sup> Becon, p. 338-9.

<sup>281</sup> The Diary of Samuel Pepys, “Monday 19 December 1664” and “Sunday 25 December 1664”, 2007 <http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1664/12/19/> <<http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1664/12/25/>> [accessed 20 December 2015].

<sup>282</sup> Boose, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, p. 198.

summarised, “Petruccio – although no Romeo – is almost a model of intelligence and humanity.”<sup>283</sup>

A source alluded as the harsher prelude to the taming of the shrew was *A Merry Jest*, where the starring husband lacked the same finesse and restraint as Petruchio. The story told in this ballad was not an unfamiliar one. A young and naive husband marries a shrewish wife, enters domestic hell, and strives to find a means out of this self-made situation, though he is warned by his new father-in-law that for such a curse “no remedy there is.”<sup>284</sup> Despite the pessimistic climate, he did create his own unique remedy that would “mend all things that are amiss”.<sup>285</sup> However unlike Petruchio who tamed with kindness, this husband warned that “shall fynde me to her so unkind.”<sup>286</sup> His remedy would “make her blew and also blacke—make her bones all to crackle”, her shrewish qualities torn asunder.<sup>287</sup> Taming in *The Merry Jest* was bloody and savage. The husband ripped her smock from her back and threw her to the ground, beat her bloody with rods in each hand and then as his Pièce De Résistance wrapped her in the salted skin of his old loyal horse, Morel, and left her bound until she capitulated to his mastership. The ballad ended with a resolution: “this endeth the jest of morel skin where the curst wife was lapped in, because she was of shrewd [and] thus she was served in this manner.”<sup>288</sup>

*The Scolding Wife* presented a similar solution to a scolding problem, in which the husband to the titular scolding wife decided to “brake her of her scolding guise.”<sup>289</sup> He gathered a mob of misogynic comrades and fell upon his shrew with a merciless intensity. There treatment of her was physical and intensive meant to

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<sup>283</sup> William Shakespeare *The Taming of the Shrew*, ed. Linzy Brady, Richard Andrews, Rex Gibson, Vicki Wienand (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 180.

<sup>284</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest", 2015 <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html>> [accessed 20 December 2015].

<sup>285</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest".

<sup>286</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest".

<sup>287</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest".

<sup>288</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest".

<sup>289</sup> ‘The Scolding Wife’ Crawford 1151 (Printed for P. Brooksby at the Golden Ball in Pye-corner, 1672-1696?) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/33867/citation>> [accessed 4th October 2015].

tear away autonomy and perceived power. Her petticoat was ripped from her body, her hair pulled and tugged, arms wrenched until “blood did gush”, and once she had been mutilated and bedraggled by this outside power, they chained her like an animal with an “iron chain fast by the leg.”<sup>290</sup> This balladic husband transformed his wife through brute strength, however the end product differed from the traditional. Rather than be transformed from shrew to repentant begging-for-forgiveness wife, other more nefarious plans were hatched. He smeared his wife with mud and blood sketching her into a madwomen, he harkened to the gathering crowd—“my wife is mad, she doth so rave and brawl”.<sup>291</sup> He tore away one stereotype to make another “a witless mad woman.”<sup>292</sup> Though this ballad did not follow the traditional rote of producing a good wife by the last line, it still presented “enforced metamorphosis”,<sup>293</sup> which was the core component to any taming plot. Moreover, the husband post-ballad was free from his shrew wife—the big picture for all tamers.

Husbands who were not interested in attending the mental manipulation and forceful physical intervention seminars to learn the art of shrew taming, could turn to a medical remedy. This sub-genre contained the same elements of a taming plot, for example a forced transformation, but it diverged by being framed in medical discourse and hosting an intermediary between shrew and husband, the local doctor. *A Caution for Scolds: or, a True Way of Taming a Shrew* is a good example of the scolding cure mythos, where a husband “had the fortune to conquer the shrew” by calling for the doctor.<sup>294</sup>

The stricken husband used medical terminology to frame his predicament, introducing himself as a poor mortal plagued with a shrew, her behaviour described as cross humours and a turbulent mind; her voice were mad ravings. The skillful doctor was sent for, the patient was swiftly diagnosed with lunacy of

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<sup>290</sup> ‘The Scolding Wife’.

<sup>291</sup> ‘The Scolding Wife’.

<sup>292</sup> ‘The Scolding Wife’.

<sup>293</sup> Lena Cowen Orlin, ‘The Performance of Things in The Taming of the Shrew’, in *The Taming of the Shrew: Critical Essays*, ed. by Dana Aspinall (New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 199.

<sup>294</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds: Or A True way of Taming a Shrew’ <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>>.

the brain and the just resolution then began, a promise that “twill cure that violent noise in your head.”<sup>295</sup> Similar to most narratives, the doctor entered the fray by restraining the shrew, binding her to the bed and consequently stripping her autonomy. Her body was then attacked, marred and changed from her blood being drained and her head shorn. The good doctor went on to threaten to cut out her fleshy weapon and watch her bleed a gallon or more, but the transformation was already complete without the need for permanent mutilation as “he made a sweet wife of a shrew.”<sup>296</sup>

On occasion, the expected resolution was not presented in the ballad as some husbands were not cut out for the herculean endeavour of wrangling a wild shrew. These stories were normally written as a warning to bachelors and other free men, a be careful who you marry message. For example, one writer warned that “he that with a scolding wife eternally is vexed,” and in Heywood's curtain lectures, a farrier suffered for seven years with his shrewish wife.<sup>297</sup> His misery was dulled through the contents of an ale cup, and he only found his remedy with death: “so a patient man is remedied of his tormentor in time by death of his wife.”<sup>298</sup> Dark and depressing were the narratives where the scold won or was crowned the tamer.<sup>299</sup> This unhappy conclusion aligns with the idea that the scold was an incurable and untameable thing, as proclaimed in *Poor Robin* that “laurel, hawthorn and seal skin are held preservatives against thunder, magic has not yet been able to find any amulet so sovereign as still her ravings.”<sup>300</sup> Cruelty was no anecdote as it would only be like pouring oil onto an already raging fire, once her “flag of defiance” had been unfurled “she cares not a straw for constable, cucking

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<sup>295</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds: Or A True way of Taming a Shrew’ <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>>.

<sup>296</sup> ‘A Caution for Scolds: Or A True way of Taming a Shrew’ <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30449/citation>>.

<sup>297</sup> ‘The praise of Nothing: Though some doe wonder why I write in praise’ Roxburghe 1.328-329 in *English Broadside Ballads* (Printed at London for H. Gosson, dwelling upon London-Bridge nere the Gate, 1601-1640?) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30224/xml>> [accessed 20 July 2015].

<sup>298</sup> Taylor, *Divers crabtree lectures Expressing the severall languages that shrews read to their husbands*, p. 89.

<sup>299</sup> Women tamers, or husband breakers were another domestic structural narrative. See John Fletcher's *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed*, a jacobean comedy written in response or as an apology for the women hostile Shakespeare's Taming of the Shrew. Fletcher presents an opportunity for woman to become the tamers, the listed character being tamed was none other than Petruchio.

<sup>300</sup> *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold*,<sup>1</sup> p. 1.



stool”, and certainly not her husband’s rulings.<sup>301</sup> That being said, Robin did put forth one true way to cure a scold: to cut out her tongue with a sharp razor.<sup>302</sup>

Curing, hewing, and Petruchio’s patented technique made up the majority of the taming literary mythos. All of which involved reconstruction from unideal to ideal female forms executed by exterior masculine intervention. All used transformative terminology, cures, remedies, taming, and curbing. All vilified pre-taming behaviour and idealised post.

Taming narratives have been adequately explained, the question that now needs to be proposed is why did the introduction of a shrew require the follow up of a taming narrative? A good place to start would be at the most logical, the beginning. The state of things pre-taming had wives befitted in breaches, upholding a motto of “must rule and over rule all” while husbands tied apron strings or as one satirist snidely put it, “methinks I see the creeping snail shivering in an ague-fit when he comes in her presence.”<sup>303</sup> When the reader first entered a taming narrative, they were plunged into a strange new world where gender roles and power dynamics were topsy turvy. Such a strange universe was witnessed in the ballad, *Anthony’s Compliant*. Anthony danced to his wife’s tune, one that made him scour pots, clean the shitten clouts and flagons, and play the mother to their bairn. If he missed a beat, his wife would lug him by the ears and kick him up and down the house.<sup>304</sup> *Henpecked husband* witnessed another husband dancing to a similar tune, in which he swept and washed, and rocked the cradle as his wife went a-gadding. And every time her absolute authority was questioned she unleashed a flurry of violence, scratching and biting, slapping and knocking him flat with a iron cast frying pan.<sup>305</sup> It was an upside down world where normative

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<sup>301</sup> *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold*, p. 2.

<sup>302</sup> *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold*, p. 3.

<sup>303</sup> Gouge, p. 202, *Poor Robin's True Character of a Scold*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>304</sup> *Poor Anthony's Complaint: And Lamentation against his Miseries of Marriage meeting with a scolding Wife* Euing 275 (Printed for J. Conyers at the Black Raven on Holborn Hill, 1685-1688) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/31889/xml>> [accessed 06 October 2015].

<sup>305</sup> *The Hen-peckt Cuckold: Or, The Cross grain'd Wife*, Pepys 4.129 (Printed and Sold by J. Millet, next door to the Flower-de-Luce, in Little Brittain, 1685?) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/21793/xml>> [accessed 20th October 2015].

roles were turned on their heads. The opening of a taming narrative was a woman's utopia but a man's nightmare.

After the taming, things were remedied, righted, and resolved. The usurper had been overthrown and the husband sat on his rightful throne as domestic ruler. The wife was now a reflection of patriarchal ideals and normative gender constructs, following a code of obedience and submission. This cycle back to proper household and societal dynamics needed to be, furthermore, expressed in a pseudo-voluntary capitulation from the wife with a complete rejection of her past persona of the shrew. Katherina's closing speech, if read plainly, presents this literacy necessity, which began with Petruchio presenting his new built wife like some sort of prized cow and parading her in front to his captivated audience. Katherina then proceeded to orate perhaps the definition of the tamed shrew. Katherina who once slapped men and spat emasculating jeers, was remade into a patriarchal ideal; crafted into a beacon of obedience and submission. She outwardly rejected her old identity, calling all women who were "forward, peevish, sullen and sour" "foul contending rebels", and "graceless traitors."<sup>306</sup> Katherina identified a wife as a form built for serving, loving and obeying, and followed this definition by bending her knee and placing her lily pale hand beneath her husband's heavy boot.<sup>307</sup> Something that stood as a poignant symbol of Katherina's new found [read:coerced] fealty to her husband's rule. Katherina's actions were in the next frame translated as "thou hast tamed a curst shrew."<sup>308</sup> This turn of events was again written into *A Merry Jest*, where after the wife was released from her salty equine skin prison. She promised to never anger or offend her mate again, and would from this point on "will your commandments obey."<sup>309</sup> There could be no resolution or happy ending until visual female submission of

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<sup>306</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1758), p. 119.

<sup>307</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 119.

<sup>308</sup> Shakespeare, *Taming of the Shrew* (1785), p. 120.

<sup>309</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest", 2015 <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html>> [accessed 20 December 2015].

the shrew, “she submitted herself and hee accepted—they lived in great unity and love all the rest of their lives.”<sup>310</sup>

Taming acted as visual and heckled for justice for the chosen upon villain, something which will bleed through with the common scold and her public punishment, but perhaps more importantly it was the reverting back to a state which was understood as more natural and comfortable to the reader.<sup>311</sup> Lynda Boose presented the traditional Early Modern marriage as a binary system. There were two available spots, ruler and subject, dominant and submissive. When a wife took the ruler space in the binary the husband by consequence was pushed into the vacated spot. Boose explained this binary as an extremely tense and precarious situation, where “if the wife refused her natural role, the husband lost his manhood.”<sup>312</sup> Since someone was needed to occupy the submissive role in the marriage, it was in the better interests of guarding patriarchal ideals and social normative ideas that “women accept their inferiorization”.<sup>313</sup> A literacy shrew was written with the intentions that the “women had interpreted gender in ways that differed from the prescriptions of social theory.”<sup>314</sup> She was a threat, one that could not only throw traditional marriage dynamics on its head but also cause greater disarray at the home and societal level. A wife who made head against the husband is nothing but doing and undoing and so all things go backward and the whole house runs to ruin.<sup>315</sup> By merit of this, shrew literature felt incomplete without taming add-on, satisfying “society with formalised ideas about the relative rights, dignities and duties pertaining to the roles of husband and wife.”<sup>316</sup>

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<sup>310</sup> Luminarium.org, "A Merry Jest", 2015 <<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/jest.html>> [accessed 20 December 2015].

<sup>311</sup> See the following quartet from John Taylor’s *Divers Crabtree Lectures*, p. 74: Ill fares the hapless family that shows  
A cock thats silent and a hen that crows  
I know not which live more natural  
lives  
Obedient husbands or commanding  
wives.

<sup>312</sup> Boose, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, p. 194.

<sup>313</sup> Boose, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, p. 194.

<sup>314</sup> Underdown, *Taming of the Scold*, p. 117.

<sup>315</sup> Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Duties Briefely Couched Together out of Colossians, 3. 18, 19*. (London: Printed by William Iones, for William Bladen, and are be sold at his shop at the signe of the Bible in Pauls Church-yard, 1620), p. 10 <<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/ebo/A01541.0001.001?view=toc>> [accessed 21 October 2015].

<sup>316</sup> Underdown, *Taming of the Scold*, p. 117.

The shrew being justly tamed was a tool to reflect at the popular level the naturalness of male supremacy and female inferiority or weakness: monstrous shrews were destroyed, while heroic husbands triumphed.

### **The Common Scold's Communal Rite of Shame**

Over a murky pond, a woman sat slumped on her mildewy wooden throne, condemned by her peers for being armed with a sharp tongue. As this farce of a coronation was taking place, another virago was being cruelly dragged through the market place, which was all astir. A mockery of a crown muzzled her, crafted from cold iron and all sharp edged. The throne and crown plainly translated were the cucking or ducking stool and scold's bridle, the physical devices used for the correction of the common scold.

The cucking stool can be seen as the genesis for the formal punishment of scolds, first entering the English justice lexicon in the early thirteenth century. Though, its physical form and general function had roots in the Scandinavian tradition of the scealding [scolding] stool, where disorderly women condemned to a public punishment ended up being placed upon the chair.<sup>317</sup> The Doomsday Book likely was the first source to directly mention the cucking stool, where it refers to its use in Chester under the latin 'Cathedra Sterocris', which translated means a chair or seat of dung.<sup>318</sup> Mistranslation has plagued the device mainly from the idea that it was associated with coqueens or cuckolds from the similarities in spelling, and also from disorderly women being associated with both items. Its origins were more likely rooted in the middle english 'cuck' or 'cukken', meaning to defecate.<sup>319</sup> By using this name, it enthused a certain degree of derogatory

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<sup>317</sup> Ernest W. Pettifer, *Punishments of Former Days* (Winchester: Waterside Press, 1992), p. 104.

<sup>318</sup> *Encyclopaedia Americana: A Popular Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, Literature, History, Politics and Biography, Brought Down to the Present Time; Including a Copious Collection of Original Articles in American Biography; on the Bases of the 7th Ed. of the German Conversations-lexicon, Volume 4*, ed. by Francis Lieber, Edward Wigglesworth, & Thomas Gamaliel Bradford (Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Carey, 1830), p. 69  
<[https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=ZypUAAAAYAAJ&dq=Encyclopaedia+Americana:+A+Popular+Dictionary+of+Arts,+Sciences,+Literature,+History,+Politics+and+Biography,+Brought+Down+to+the+Present+Time%3B+Including+a+Copious+Collection+of+Original+Articles+in+American+Biography%3B+on+the+Bases+of+the+7th+Ed.+of+the+German+Conversations-lexicon,+Volume+4,&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=ZypUAAAAYAAJ&dq=Encyclopaedia+Americana:+A+Popular+Dictionary+of+Arts,+Sciences,+Literature,+History,+Politics+and+Biography,+Brought+Down+to+the+Present+Time%3B+Including+a+Copious+Collection+of+Original+Articles+in+American+Biography%3B+on+the+Bases+of+the+7th+Ed.+of+the+German+Conversations-lexicon,+Volume+4,&source=gbs_navlinks_s)> [accessed 02 October 2015], Arthur English, *A Dictionary of Words and Phrases Used in Ancient and Modern Law, Volume I* (Washington: Beard Books, 2000), p. 146.

<sup>319</sup> "Cucking Stool Etymology", 2015 <[http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=cucking+stool&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=cucking+stool&allowed_in_frame=0)> [accessed 20 October 2015].

sentiment on this device—where it could be snidely viewed that the scold was sitting on no throne but a shit stool. It was bereft of sombre dignity, shame was quite literally carved into its very form. Going back to the cucking stool’s origins, one of the earliest references in English and referencing its use in the capacity for punishment was in the 1308 anonymous collection of poems known as the *The Kildare Poems*, where it was written that “beth iwar of the coking stole, the lak is dep and hori.”<sup>320 321</sup>

The ducking stool was absent from the English justice codex until about three centuries later in 1597.<sup>322</sup> Despite having slight differences in appearance and use, the two over time became synonymous. Meaning that when a woman was described to have been cuckold or ducked it normally held implications that she had been ducked in the local pond or river. As just mentioned, these two wooden devices shared similarities in appearance and usage while also diverging in some aspects. The cucking stool resembled an armchair in form and was made from wood. They varied in size with some being compact and squat, while others were tall and narrow, and a metal bar was sometimes outfitted to the stool, which restrained the scold. The ducking stool differed slightly from this form mainly from a functionality necessity of it needing to be mobile and ducked in water. It still resembled an armchair, but this wooden chair, normally made from oak, was fastened to a narrow wooden beam approximately twelve or fifteen feet long,<sup>323</sup> which at the opposite end was attached to an axis. This permitted for the see-saw movement needed for ducking. The mechanism in its entirety was often affixed to a wheeled platform, permitting mobility. This allowed for it to be wheeled out when needed, and stored when not, lessening the effects of weather damage and the wear-and-tear of time. Otherwise, it was built into the local topography as

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<sup>320</sup> *Anglo-Irish poems of the Middle Ages: The Kildare Poems* ‘Poem 3’ (ll. 99-100) based on the edition of Lucas (1995). Cork: University College < <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/E300000-001/text003.html> > [accessed 24 October 2015].

<sup>321</sup> Other early mentions of the cucking stool include, *Political Poems* (1325), “The pillory and the cucking stool beth i-made for noht”, Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII* Act 3 (1511-12), “To be sett upon the pillorie or the cuckying stole man or woman as the case shall requyre”, *Mr. Rushworth’s Historical Collections: Abridg’d and Improv’d. From The Year 1628 to the Year 1638*, Volume 2 (1633), “She was committed to be duck’d in a cucking stool at Holborn Dike”, p. 194, and Samuel Butler, *The Genuine Poetical Remains Mr. Samuel Butler* (1680), p. 210.

<sup>322</sup> Samuel Covington, *The Esoteric Codex: Witch Hunting* (Lulu.com, 2015), p. 79 <[https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=R2LxCQAAQBAJ&source=gbs\\_navlinks\\_s](https://books.google.co.nz/books?id=R2LxCQAAQBAJ&source=gbs_navlinks_s)> [accessed 20 October 2015].

<sup>323</sup> This length is only an approximate. It was presented by a first hand observer to the device, a Frenchman who visited England in 1700 and wrote of English curiosities, such as the stool. The account can be found in Alice Morse Earle’s *Curious Punishments of Bygone Days*, pp. 12-3.

some sort of immovable waterside feature. Some cucking and ducking stools were also adorned with inscriptions or pictorial images. For example, the Cambridge stool was carved with devils abducting scolds, while the Sandwich cucking stool was embellished with images of men and women scolding, alongside the following inscription, ‘of members ye tonge is worst or best. An ill tonge often doeth breed unreste’, making allusions to what it was made to prevent/correct.<sup>324</sup>

Many towns and villages owned a cucking or ducking stool. Evidence for this, may be sourced from local records, which either called for the repair of a device or orders for a completely new one to be built in bereft areas. That being said, Underdown warned that this methodology was not without its shortcomings, explaining that just because a town ordered a stool did not signify that the area ever had a fully functional cucking or ducking stool. Rather, there may have been the desire for a stool or the various mentions may have been incited by standardisation movements that called for pillories and ducking stools to be installed in most English towns. That being said, court records alongside the aforementioned records as well as first hand accounts have given insight on what English provinces may have contained a working cucking or ducking stool.

Marlborough was in possession of a ducking stool during the Elizabethan period, with records presenting an order for it to be repaired in 1580, and again in 1582. The town ended up acquiring a completely new device in 1584, while in the town of Nottingham a cuckstool was in working order until the year 1731, when it was officially taken down.<sup>325</sup> In Manchester, the local cuckstool was mentioned for the first time in 1586 recorded as “ye Cuckingstoole poole”, referring to a pond near the residence of a local, Mr. William Radcliffe where duckings occurred.<sup>326</sup> It appears that locales modified the landscape not only in the physical with the erection of a stationary device, but also mental associations were built between

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<sup>324</sup> Andrew Williams, *Old-Time Punishments* (London: Hull: William Andrews & Co., 1890), p. 10.

<sup>325</sup> The story of why it was taken down is an interesting one. It is as follows, in 1731 a woman was to be placed on the stool for the crime of prostitution. The officials left her at the mercy of the gathering mob, and she was so beaten and ducked so many times that she perished. The mayor was persecuted for this turn of events, and the cuckstool was consequently taken down.

<sup>326</sup> *The Court leet records of the manor of Manchester; from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846.* vol 3 [Manchester: Henry Blacklock and co Printers, 1886], p. 12.

certain areas of the town. A visitor could point to a lane or pond, and a local would theoretically have responded that this was where their scolds were punished. Also, this inclusion into the local layout may have functioned as a physical reminder of the town's promise to quell any disorderly women. The devices themselves could have functioned in the same way, a line of thought that will be explored further later.

Manchester made several references to the device, always under the moniker cucking stool despite its description being more aligned with the ducking variant. On 1st April, 1619 the old stool was in such a state of decay that a new one was procured, which was “in some convenient place neare to the Horsepoole in Marketstidlane.”<sup>327</sup> This device appeared to be in working order until the 25th of April 1648, at what date an order was placed for the erecting of a new stool in the usual place of the horse poole.<sup>328</sup> Manchester appeared to be bereft for the next three years, where procurement orders were placed at each biannual Leets session. The town appeared to have obtained a new stool by the 22nd of April 1658,<sup>329</sup> where a repair order was recorded. The last record of the Manchester stool was 27th April 1738, in which it was ordered that “the present constables of this town do erect a ducking chair in the usual place”.<sup>330</sup> <sup>331</sup> Manchester seemed to be an English town that consistently either owned, or was in an anticipatory state of wanting a cucking stool. Other English towns that owned a ducking or cucking stool, included Plymouth, where a ducking stool was used at Barbican until 1808, the Leeds ducking-stool was at Quarry Hill, the parish books of Southam, Warwickshire, contained detailed accounts of both the process and expenses undertaken to acquire a ducking stool, while in Coventry there were traces of two ducking-stools and an order in the Leet Book for 1597, which called for any

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<sup>327</sup> Manchester vol iii, p. 12.

<sup>328</sup> *The Court Leet Records of the Manor of Manchester; from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846 vol iv*, [Manchester: Henry Blacklock and co Printers, 1886], p. 19.

<sup>329</sup> Manchester, vol iv, p. 230.

<sup>330</sup> *The Court Leet records of the Manor of Manchester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846, vol vii* [Manchester: Henry Blacklock and co Printers, 1886], p. 70.

<sup>331</sup> Prior to this final mention in the Manchester Leets, there were ten other orders for the repair. These being in 7 October 1662, 28 April and 6 October 1663, 4 October 1664, 4 April 1665, 30 October 1665, 11 October 1670, 12 October 1675, 29 April 1679, and 12 April 1681. It would seem that their ducking stool needed repairing every few years, with periods of non-repair that ranged from two to five years. This may be indicative of the average amount of time an outside stationary stool could withstand before repairs or complete replacements were required.

disordered and disquiet persons of that citie to be committed to the cooke stoole.<sup>332</sup> In the market town of Rugby, Warwickshire, a ducking stool was “on the west side of the horse pool, near the footpath leading from the Clifton Road towards the churchyard.”<sup>333</sup> Various orders were also made for the maintenance of this stool, for example, in 1721, 1s. 2d. was paid for a lock for ‘ye ducking stoole’, a repair record in 1739 and a new chain for pulling of the stool in 1741.<sup>334</sup> Worsborough had two ducking ponds, “one in the village of Worsborough another near to the Birdwell toll-bar” noted for frequent repairs between the years of 1703 and 1737, the market town of Skipton, Yorkshire paid 8s. 6d. for a wooden ducking stool on October 2nd 1734.<sup>335</sup> A price according to W. H. Dawson, a Victorian historian, “too small for the entire apparatus” meaning it would have properly been a repair or an order for a new part.<sup>336</sup> This implies that Skipton most likely was in ownership of a stool prior to the year 1734. The stool ended up being a fixture in Skipton for at least sixty more years, with the last record being in 1768, where a new stool was ordered for £1 11d.<sup>337</sup> Dawson was not able to “discover the exact date when the ducking-stool fell into disuse, but has good reason for believing that it was about 1770.”<sup>338</sup> In Scarborough, a ducking stool was in use until about 1795, its appearance has been preserved by the antiquarian Dr. T.N. Brushfield in his collection of sketches of English cucking and ducking stools.

The stool was a means to conduct a procession of formal punishment, similar to the pillory, and stocks. It was a centrepiece that focussed the public gaze, but was also something that acted as a translator of intent and mood, a symbol which the crowd could use to swiftly understand the following events as something of

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<sup>332</sup> William Andrews, *Old-time Punishments* (London: Hull William Andrews & Co, 1890) p. 12. The last use of this ducking stool was interesting in the sense that it was not a female nor a scolding case which resulted in its use, rather a husband who had beaten his wife was ducked in around 1840.

<sup>333</sup> Andrews, p. 15.

<sup>334</sup> Andrews, p. 14.

<sup>335</sup> Andrews, pp. 21, 22.

<sup>336</sup> Andrews, p. 22.

<sup>337</sup> Andrews, p. 22.

<sup>338</sup> Andrews, p. 22.



punishment and justice. The cucking and ducking stool were two material items attached or affixed to an uniform sequential procession, one that was public, made the female body into a centre of shame, and often invited crowd participation. Beginning with the cucking stool, the condemned scold would be placed on the stool, which was normally in a public place, but more frequently before her very own door. She was sentenced to sit in the contraption for a set period of time, which could range from an hour to a couple depending on the severity of her offence. For example, the town of Neath in Wales proclaimed the following order in 1542 “shee to be brought at the first defaults to the cooking-stoole and there to sit one houre, at the second defaulte, two houres.”<sup>339</sup> Other towns required the cucked scold to be hoisted around town, which normally involved being carried to the town gates. This made her punishment as visible as possible to her community, heightening her humiliation.

The ducking was often constructed as theatre; a punishment spectacle. A scene painted by Robert Chambers in 1879 adhered to this idea, where he imagined the lead up to a ducking as a very livery and tense affair. Chambers wrote that “when the hour of retribution arrived” the people were in a flurry of anticipatory excitement, and “all the world be out of doors, men would shout, women would look mildly from doorways, and the local dogs would madly yelp.”<sup>340</sup> The stage was set, the audience in attendance, it was now time for the curtain to be lifted and a scold to be ducked. For pre-ducking procession, the scolds march to the local pond, was an important part. It acted to attract onlookers, make her shame a spectacle and share this shame with as many locals as possible. An intent behind the pre-ducking procession was to attract spectators to witness a scold’s humiliation—to make it as public as possible. Parallels to this form of pre-justice ceremony can be made with prisoners being pulled behind the cart destined for the gallows, and Skimmington, where a procession was not only the processor to the punishment it was the main showpiece. This local spectacle used used

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<sup>339</sup> *Archaeologia Cambrensis: the journal of the Cambrian Archaeological Association* [London: Assoc., 1847], p. 470.

<sup>340</sup> *The Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities in Connection with the Calendar, Including Anecdote, Biography, & History, Curiosities of Literature and Oddities of Human Life and Character, Volume 1* ed. by Robert Chambers (Edinburgh W. & R. Chambers, 1863 ), p. 210.

carnavalesque elements, banging of basins, costumes, to ensure that their targets were shamed, visible; punishments crowd interactive, and almost jovial.

The ballad *The Cucking of a Scold* (1615), narrated a ducking procession. The fictional scold was sentenced to be ducked for scolding a constable and calling him a “beastly knave and filthy Jacke.”<sup>341</sup> When the day of her punishment arrived, the small village was all outdoors to stand witness. But a grand spectacle was to precede her meeting with the local pond. Beginning with an hundred good archers and an hundred armed men, with bows, pikes and spears were all charged with guarding the gallant scold. The sounds of trumpets and drums accompanied the thumping of two hundred men’s boots, forty chatty parrots were next carried out, “most fine and orderly.”<sup>342</sup> The scolds presence was nigh, one last custom needed to be performed, the wisp of hay “the perfect token of a scold, well known in every place” was presented to her.<sup>343</sup> After the parrots and armed barricade, the scold finally made her debut, naked but for her smalls, seated in a wheel-barrow, and wearing a strange necklace of tongues about her neck, “and thus unto the cucking stool this famous scold did go.”<sup>344</sup> Though reality had less birds and tongue jewellery, it was still orchestrated to make a scene. The condemned scold when lead or wheeled through her town was often accompanied by the banging of basins or ringing of bells. Moreover, a ducking could often become interactive with the gathering crowds throwing filth and food at the seated scold. In the town of Wakefield, Yorkshire, Ann Walker, daughter of John Waker, was “runge through the town with basins before her by the constables, as is accustomed for the common scowldes.”<sup>345</sup> Ultimately, the loud procession escorted the scold to the pond or river, where the awaited ducking was to occur. Once the scold was secured on the stool, elevated above the water, and an audience was in attendance,

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<sup>341</sup> *The Cucking of a Scould* Pepys 1.454 (Printed at London by G.P., 1630?) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/20029/xml>> [accessed 20 October 2015].

<sup>342</sup> *The Cucking of a Scould* Pepys 1.454.

<sup>343</sup> *The Cucking of a Scould* Pepys 1.454.

<sup>344</sup> *The Cucking of a Scould* Pepys 1.454.

<sup>345</sup> Ernest W. Pettifer, *Punishments of Former Days* (Winchester: Waterside Press, 1992), p. 132.

the ducking commenced and “she was plunged into the water as often as the sentence directs, in order to cool her immoderate heat.”<sup>346</sup>

Women condemned to the local ducking or cucking stool were not overly numerous, most scolds were either fined, exiled, or may have been corrected with another type of mechanical punishment, this being the bridle, which will be discussed fully shortly.<sup>347</sup> A fixed statistic for the total number of ducked or cucked scolds has not yet been quantified, and coupled with the fact that this thesis is a cultural survey and does not stress the quantitative, means that these devices will only be examined through a handful of recorded cases.

In 1612 two women from Nettleton were ducked, Anne Sweetinge of Midleton was ducked on 12 January 1610 by the local constable, Margery Watson of Whitby was given the following ultimatum, that if she did not within the next month beg the forgiveness of Jasmine Wilkinson and his wife at the cross in the market, then she would be ducked by the constable.<sup>348</sup> Other cases include Lucretia Gunter of St. Sepulchre who was sentenced to be cucked but managed to evade the local attempts for this, Dorothy Marwood stood in cucking stool at Wentworth on 9th October 1639 and Priscilla, wife of one Thomas Cerciller, of Ely Rents in Hobson was “ordered to be kuckt” at the Old Fleet River so to “soften the tongue.”<sup>349</sup> In Selby, Wakefield, three instances of duckings are recorded. First in 1602, Katherine Hall and Margaret Robinson, “great disturbers and disquieter's of their neighbours” were warned that if they did not cease their scolding and chyderyng they would be ducked or cucked on the cuckstool by John Mawde, the high constable.<sup>350</sup> The other occurrence was on October 6th, 1671,

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<sup>346</sup> Alice Morse Earle, *Curious Punishments of Bygone Days* [Bedford, Massachusetts: Applewood Books, 1995], pp.12-3 This was part of a written description made by a Frenchman who visited England in the year 1700 and ended up observing this strange custom for punishing scolding women, something he termed pleasant enough. It can be found in Alice Morse Earle's 'Curious Punishments of Bygone Days.'

<sup>347</sup> The amount that a scold was fined varied depending on jurisdiction, and economic means. In 1652, a batch of four scolds in Manchester was fined vs a piece, in 1667, Elizabeth Woodhouse was amerced to pay vis viiid.

<sup>348</sup> Underdown, p. 125, *Quarter Sessions Records, Volume 1* ed. by Great Britain. Court of Quarter Sessions of the Peace, Yorkshire, North Riding (London: Society, 1884), p. 180, and Pettifer, p. 106.

<sup>349</sup> Hubbard, p. 185, Pettifer, p. 105, and 'Preface.' in *County of Middlesex. Calendar To the Sessions Records: New Series, Volume 2, 1614-15*. Ed. William Le Hardy (London: Clerk of the Peace, 1936), pp. vii-xxii <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/middx-sessions/vol2/vii-xxii>> [ 19 October 2015.]

<sup>350</sup> Andrews, p. 19.

Jane Farret was indicated for being a common scold and “openly ducked three times over head and ears by the local constables.”<sup>351</sup>

Bridewell prison towards the closing of the eighteenth century used a ducking stool, witnessed by one John Howard and reported in *The State of Prisons in England and Wales*. He wrote that the prison’s courtyard contained a pump and bath. The bath had attached a new and singular contrivance, described as being a long pole with a chair fastened to one end. This was where “women prisoners were tied each week and received discipline.”<sup>352</sup> They were questioned, stripped down to a flannel shift, and “underwent a through ducking, thrice repeated.”<sup>353</sup> The last official use of the ducking stool was in 1809, where a Jenny Pipes was ducked in Leominster, Herefordshire.<sup>354</sup> Jenny alias Jane Corran was paraded through the streets while strapped down to the local ducking stool, which was elevated around three metres allowing all to see her public shame. Though a near-ducking did occur in the same town in 1817 when Sarah Leeke was condemned to a ducking, but the locals were ultimately thwarted due to low water levels.<sup>355</sup>

Cooling a scold’s immoderate heat in the local pond was not the only mechanism used to correct or reform a scold’s wicked ways, another was to lock her in a scold’s bridle.

Dr. Plot in his travels through Newcastle came across a very peculiar artefact forged with the intention of correcting local scolds. He wrote in his history of Staffordshire that this was a device preferable to the cucking stool, as the latter “not only endangers the health of the party but also gives her tongue liberty b’twixt every dip.”<sup>356</sup> The peculiar artefact that Mr. Plot had come across was the

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<sup>351</sup> Andrews, p. 19.

<sup>352</sup> John Howard, *The State Of The Prisons In England And Wales: With Preliminary Observations, And An Account Of Some Foreign Prisons And Hospitals*, Volume 1 (Oxford: Cadell, 1784), p. 437.

<sup>353</sup> Howard, p. 437. The nature of the questions were left out of Mr. Howard's account. Though suggestions may be made. They may have been related to their crime, whether they were repented, or may have been enquiring whether or not they had a health condition, which may have prevented them from being ducked.

<sup>354</sup> Andrews, p. 35.

<sup>355</sup> Andrews, p. 36.

<sup>356</sup> Robert Plot, *The Natural History of Staffordshire* (Oxford: Printed at the Theater, 1686), p. 389.

scold's bridle or brank. Despite being seen as a superior means for correcting scolds, the bridle was not often used, as described in Mr. Plot closing line that it was "an instrument scarce heard of, much less seen."<sup>357</sup> The silence in the records around this device, compared to the proud way the stool was used and displayed, can be partially explained by the illegality of the scold's bridle. T. S. Brushfield, an antiquarian who was interested in old time scold punishments, cited this in explanation for an uneven disparity between the number of bridles and the lack of records on its use for his county of Chester. Brushfield wrote that "the punishment was illegal, and hence preferred no record should remain of [local authorities] having themselves transgressed the law."<sup>358</sup> The use of the branks in Newcastle was also criticised as it was "not granted by their charter law and is repugnant to the known laws of England."<sup>359</sup> But despite this legal dubiety, the scold's bridle was used in a local setting for the "purpose of punishing female lingual delinquents",<sup>360</sup> just with a fainter historical echo than the stool or pillory. The earliest mention of this device on English soil was in the Corporation records of Macclesfield in 1623,<sup>361</sup> though "branks were in active use in Scotland many years before this introduction into England."<sup>362</sup>

In the Glasgow Burgh records, it was recorded that two female scolds were condemned to the branks on April, 1574,<sup>363</sup> and in the church Sessions records of

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<sup>357</sup> Plot, p. 389.

<sup>358</sup> Brushfield, T. N, 'On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1 in *The Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. ii, ed. by Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society (Chester: Courant Office, 1864), p. 46.

<sup>359</sup> Ralph Gardiner, *Englands Grievance Discovered, in Relation to the Coal Trade* (London: R. Ibbitson, and P. Stent, 1796), p. 117.

<sup>360</sup> Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments' part 1, p. 46.

<sup>361</sup> This date was put forth by Brushfield, 'The earliest authenticated mention of its existence and use in England that has yet occurred to me, appears in the records of Macclesfield, in this county, under date 1623.', p. x1 *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester and North Wales* volume 2.

<sup>362</sup> Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments' part 1, p. 35.

<sup>363</sup> The full record is as follows: Marione Smyt and Margaret Huntare, having quarrelled, they appear, and produce two cautioners or sureties, 'that thai sal abstene fra stryking of utheris in tyme cuming, under the pane of x lib., and gif thai flyte to be brankit, \* i.e. to undergo the punishment of the brank', p. 35, *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester and North Wales*, Volume 2.

Stirling, the brank was mentioned as a punishment for the shrew for 1600.<sup>364</sup> The last recorded public use of the branks was 1824.<sup>365</sup>

Despite having a belated entrance into England, certain associative factors existed which functioned as a very real prelude to this device, found in anatomical allusions and bridling discourses. The first part of this prelude was the idea that for many, “nature had already encoded mechanisms for censorship into the anatomical structure of man.”<sup>366</sup> This was seen in the “double barrier of the teeth and the lips”, which enclosed the tongue.<sup>367</sup> As William Perkins wrote: the tongue was located in the middle of the mouth locked in with lips and teeth as a double trench to “shewe us, howe we are to use heede and preconsideration before we speake: and therefore it is good advise to keepe the key of the mouth not in the mouth, but in the cupbourd of the heart.”<sup>368</sup> Thomas Adams followed this idea of natural restraint being encoded at an anatomical level, writing that “a double fence hath the creator given to confine it, the lips and the teeth: that through these moulds it might not break.”<sup>369</sup> The anatomical bridle made from enamel, skin and muscle encouraged “moderation and containment.”<sup>370</sup> Another idea was that God had an omnipresent domain over the mouth, controlling whether it was open or closed. “Man hath no bridle, no cage of brass, nor bars of iron,” rather speech was policed by god with his Golden Key of Grace.<sup>371</sup> This key opened the mouth when it should not be shut and shut it when it should not be open. Adams also wrote on this theme citing that the Lord had hung a lock on the mouth, but a man should not try to pry it open with his false key. Prayer is the way forward, “pray with David: O’Lord, open though my lips and my mouth.”<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments’ part 1, p. 35.

<sup>365</sup> Andrew Williams, p. 42.

<sup>366</sup> Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin, *The Unruly Tongue in Early Modern England: Three Treatises* [Maryland: Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2012], p. 34.

<sup>367</sup> Vienne-Guerrin, p. 34.

<sup>368</sup> William Perkins, *A Direction for the Government of the Tongue According to Gods Word* [Cambridge: Printed by John Legate printer to the University of Cambridge, 1593], p. 11.

<sup>369</sup> Adams, p. 14.

<sup>370</sup> Vienne-Guerrin, p. 34.

<sup>371</sup> Adams, p. 18.

<sup>372</sup> Adams, p. 14.

However, scolding women were not stopped by this organic bridle. Most men were in possession of a natural bridle, women needed one to be made with metal and pins to staunch speech. An idea that began as conceptional, with associations between women and equine imagery endorsed through earlier English discourse. William Baldwin's collection of philosophical aphorisms, *A Treatise of Moral Phylosophie* (1547) included "as to a shrewd horse belongeth a sharp bridle, sought a shrewd wife to be sharply handled", in *The Mothers Counsel* (1603) "a mad woman is like a rough stirring horse and as he must have a sharp bit, so must she have a sharp restraint," *Anatomy of the tongue* (1603), "God hath tied it [tongue] with many threades and strings to restrain it," and William Gouge wrote that wives first needed to "moderate their passion, and then to keep in their tongues with bit and bridle."<sup>373</sup> As Ethan H. Shagan put it, reality followed the rhetoric.<sup>374</sup> Before the scold bridle, 'the bridle' was a concept or figure of speech imagined. It was made up of horse bridles, locks and keys, and teeth and lips, and fantasised to powerfully restrain speech or subdue unruly women.

These talks of bridles and bridling came to fruition when the scold's bridle became a punishment. It was a physical object that permitted for the physical restraining of a tongue to become a real eventuality. Society could finally humiliate or shame a brazen woman by locking them inside the bridle and dragging them around the streets like a misbehaving horse.

The scold's bridle in appearance was an iron skeletal framework made to imprison the head when worn in 'a kind of cage.'<sup>375</sup> Many models were built with staples, allowing for it to be adjusted for different head sizes. The back of the cage was often a hinged door locked with a padlock, allowing for easy access. A gag was also built into this cage, which was forced into the scold's mouth. This gag was

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<sup>373</sup> William Baldwin, *The Sayings of the Wise, or, Food for thought. A Book of Moral Wisdom, Gathered from the ancient Philosophers* (London: Elliot Stock, 1908), p. 180, Ethan H. Shagan, *The Rule of Moderation: Violence, Religion and the Politics of Restraint in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 65, *The Unruly Tongue in Early Modern England: Three Treatises* ed. by Nathalie Vienne-Guerrin ( New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson, 2012), p. xxxiv and Walker, p. 109.

<sup>374</sup> Shagan, p. 65.

<sup>375</sup> Andrews, p. 39.

made of iron, and typically ranged from 1½ to 3 inches in length and width. Brushfield noted that models with gags that exceeded 2½ inches would have triggered symptoms of sickness by putting pressure on the back of her throat. The gag also ranged in style but was most often a plain flat iron that either turned upward or downwards, and covered in rasp-like elevations. Though on crueller models, spikes protruded from the gag so that “if she attempted to move her tongue, it was certain to be shockingly injured.”<sup>376</sup> A chain was normally attached to the brank, allowing for them to be lead around town by the magistrate or constable. If additional length was needed, a rope would be used. Decorative elements were sometimes added, including paint, where the gag was often painted red, coloured stripes adorned the top band, or a bell may be fixed on top of the brank. This artistic modification would work to attract the crowds attention, and introduce a carnivalesque mood to the judicial procedure.

Brushfield worked to categorise many of England’s scold’s bridles or as he liked to imagine, all of England’s bridles. He provided textual descriptions for each brank, some were accompanied by rough sketches, and for a device that was said to be a rarity, Brushfield’s efforts have grouped many of them in a single accessible source.

Some of his findings included, a ‘singular’ specimen was and still is to this present day preserved in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, singular from its attached chain in front, Newcastle-under-lyme formally was in possession of one, but Brushfield noted that it was recently stolen, but believed that it was the specimen described in Mr. Plot’s Natural History of Staffordshire.<sup>377</sup> At the manor house in the village, Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire, Brushfield documented a “preserved brank of very remarkable form and construction”, being smithed to have skeleton cage for the head with a door at the back for access and an interesting frontispiece, a grotesque mask that the scold was forced to masquerade

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<sup>376</sup> Andrews, p. 39.

<sup>377</sup> Brushfield, ‘on obsolete punishments’ part 1, p. 38. Brushfield included an textual account of the brank for Newcastle-under-lyne. A notice was found by Brushfield in Joseph Mayer, Ancient Custom of Erecting a Mock Mayor in Newcastle-under-lyme. He went as follows: “our worthy mayor giveth notice, and commandeth that all canting, backbiting, gin drinking, women be brought before him, that they may punish them with the bridle, kept by him for that purpose”. Brushfield, ‘on obsolete punishments’ part 1, p. 39.



in.<sup>378</sup> Another very respectable looking brank was found by Brushfield in the Town Hall of Macclesfield. It possessed a plain gag, one band that passed over the head, a hinged joint that allowed it to be adjusted to fit “any description of head,” and an attached chain.<sup>379</sup> Brushfield notes that this brank was never recorded to have been used, but was “often produced in terrorem, to stay the volubility of a woman’s tongue,” as the threat was enough to strike terror into even the most determined of scolds.<sup>380</sup> One of the more crueler specimens of branks and what Brushfield described as “most remarkable in this county” was found in Stockport.<sup>381</sup> The gag of the Stockport brank was as unique as it was savage. It was flat at the hoop, terminated in a bulbous extremity, and was covered with iron pins. Nine in total, three on the upper surface, three on the lower and three pointing backwards. This made it so that the scold could not move her tongue without slicing it.

Amongst all these singular and respectable branks, were also uninspiring dull ones, with one such specimen belonging to the Corporation of Altrincham. This was what Brushfield snidely described as “the most rudely constructed primitive looking scolds bridle I have yet seen” with workmanship that was so rough leading one to believe that “it must have been made by some very ordinary blacksmith.”<sup>382</sup> An ordinary blacksmith who smithed a plain flat gag, and a plain hoop that was fastened at the back by a plain hook. It also had no feature that allowed for its size to be adjusted, which lead Brushfield to imagine that “a great deal of additional scolding must have been caused during the endeavour to affix any large head.”<sup>383</sup>

Cheshire had seven models either originating from the county or being in, these being at Congleton kept in town hall, a specimen previously held at the same

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<sup>378</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments’ part 1’, p. 40.

<sup>379</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments’ part 1’, p. 23.

<sup>380</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 24.

<sup>381</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 31.

<sup>382</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 23.

<sup>383</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 23.

location but moved to Warrington museum, one from Chester which had a cross on top, four chester bridles that Brushfield described as plain and present nothing of particular interest, and one that came from Chester but presented to the town of Walton-on-Thames.<sup>384</sup> This last model was rather unique. It was presented to the town by someone of consequence in the sixteenth century. The date 1633 was inscribed into the metal, alongside an explanatory inscription for such as strange inter-town gift. The barely eligible inscription read:<sup>385</sup> “Chester presents Walton with a bridle—To curb women’s tongues that talk too idle.”<sup>386</sup> Despite there being a strange cache of bridles in the county, no notice of their use is to be found in the corporation books. Shrewsbury, Lichfield, St. Mary Church of St. Andrews, and Leicester were also areas that either owned a bridle or had evidence for its former use.<sup>387</sup>

As Brushfield discovered, records that presented the use of the scold’s bridle were rather minimal when compared to the number of devices. Two separate English accounts, though, present a picture of what transpired when the bridle was used. One being an outside observation, the other being a first hand account from inside the confines of the iron prison. Presented in Brushfield’s treatise of old time punishments, the first account relays an experience with the brank from a distance. In 1653, John Willis of Ipswich visited Newcastle six months previous to his account, and during this was treated to the sheer spectacle that involves a scold being bridled. The scold in question was Ann Bidlestone, who was paraded through the streets by an officer from being pulled along with a rope. Willis described the device, to be “like a crown, being of iron and musled the head and face.”<sup>388</sup> A gap was in the mask permitting for the release of blood, creating a macabre picture. An air of separatism pervades this account. He looks on apathetically as the scold was pulled around town with her crown of iron. With a detached interest, he commented on blood dribbling down the iron and her chin.

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<sup>384</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, pp. 24, 43, 28, 31.

<sup>385</sup> Brushfield noted that the bridle was very badly corroded so much so that the inscription was barely readable, with only some letters remaining, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 28.

<sup>386</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. 28.

<sup>387</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, pp. i, ii.

<sup>388</sup> Brushfield, ‘On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1’, p. xiii.

His account was more focussed on the engine of punishment than the woman trapped within it.

Dorothy Waugh was not persecuted as a common scold, but for speaking publicly on her religion of Quakerism, or as she described “I was moved of the Lord o go into the market of Carlisle to speak against all deceit and ungodly practices.”<sup>389</sup> Despite not being a scold, I have used this account, from the raw portrayal of the time spent in the unforgiving embrace of a brank. Her account was published anonymously in *The Lambs Defence against Lye* in 1656.

Waugh wrote that after being hauled off by the mayor’s officer, she was later thrown into jail and the mayor called someone to bring the bridle, which Dorothy was a stranger to noting with a puzzled tone, “bring the bridle, as he called it.”<sup>390</sup> It was decided that the brank was to be put on for three hours, and then they fell upon her violently plucking off her hat and tearing at her clothes. The brank was then placed on Dorothy. She made note of the uncomfortableness of it being a “stone weight of iron, three bars of iron over my face, and a piece of it was put in my mouth,” which was “so unreasonable big a thing for that place, as cannot be well related.”<sup>391</sup> Once everything had been secured, it was locked in place by the padlock at the back. So crowned with the stone weight of iron, Dorothy stood for a time with her hands bound behind her back. The man who kept the prison door made this into an economic venture, and charged two-pence a head to all who wished to marvel at the bridled scold. After three hours, the brank was taken off and she was left in prison “for a little season.”<sup>392</sup> Her imprisonment ended when the mayor again visited, put the brank back on, led her into the city so that her shame was public, muttered harsh and vile insults into her ear, and concluded this procession by having Dorothy whipped out of the town by a local authority.

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<sup>389</sup> Boose, *Materialist History*, p. 265.

<sup>390</sup> Boose, *Materialist History*, p. 265.

<sup>391</sup> Boose, *Materialist History*, p. 265.

<sup>392</sup> Boose, *Materialist History*, p. 265.

Throughout this account, Dorothy expressed a sense of bewilderment on the device. To her, it was strange and alien. A loss of autonomy was also apparent. An authority figure snatched her from the market and imprisoned her in the town's jail. They removed her hat and clothes. They forced her stand while men and women gawked at her with her iron crown, even paying for this privilege. Her body was made into a spectacle, and a nucleus of shame and humiliation. Her body was also made into a living warning to other women.

Her town would now most properly associate her with this event. Her bare head, her clothes ripped, and the brank muzzling her face. In the same way a woman was still a whore even after she had taken off the white sheet of penance, or a man was still a cuckold even once he had take down the horns from his door. Likewise, Dorothy now lived in a community that had witnessed her criminal role and consequential public punishment. Dorothy's community may have often associated her with the crime and the humiliating punishment, as it was difficult to escape a collective local memory. Brushfield summarised this rather aptly when discussing the brank. He wrote that "the object of this public punishment was not only to restrain the use of the tongue but also to cause a feeling of shame in the individual, as well as to act as a warning to others."<sup>393</sup>

The scold's punishment presented an interaction between communal ritual and formal judicial action, from the mixing of popular and formal qualities. Laura Gowing when discussing the carting or whipping of a persecuted whore, described this in terms of "rituals of community censure."<sup>394</sup> Something also pertinent to the scolds from both being instances where the community used legal procedures as a framework which they minutely personalised through the inclusion of qualities exhibited in their own informal communal rites. Local communities had means to police their space through popular shaming rituals, such as Charivari and Skimmington. These were processions formed around an individual who had behaved outside of community values and norms, such as marriage conventions or

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<sup>393</sup> 'On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1 in *the Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. ii, pp. 47.

<sup>394</sup> Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London', *History Workshop*, 35, (Spring, 1993), pp. 1-21, <<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.waikato.ac.nz/stable/4289204>> [accessed 24 October 2015].

gender dynamics. Cuckolded husbands, domineering wives, or old men married to younger women were common victims to ridicule staged in a public procession. For example, a henpecked husband would be placed on an ass backwards and led around town. A neighbour dressed as a woman would follow this parade, and a harsh cacophony of basins and bells would cut through the settled silence.

A scold was punishable under the English judicial system. But as they were a community problem, it stood to reason that the community desired involvement in their punishment. Though locals did not hold the chain of a bridled scold, there was little separatism between the community and persecuted. They could jeer and heckle the scold, and were also encouraged to throw scraps and mud at her. Though they were not in control of justice as with a skimmington, they were nevertheless involved. A scold's punishment was also made so that it stood reminiscent of these communal rites through the inclusion of certain carnivalesque qualities. Rough music formed the score of the procession, where the banging of basins and ringing of bells accompanied the scold's walk through the streets. A scold riding a cucking stool or being bridled was also comparative to the riding of an ass, like in a skimmington, from equine parallels and elevation of the persecuted.

Peter Burke defined a ritual as the "use of action to express meaning" a definition applicable to the scold's punishment, where certain aspects potentially may have alternative meaning.<sup>395</sup> For example, a bridling of the scold would have brought upon ideas of a bridling of a horse or wild beast, the restraining of wildness. Ducking presented the idea of purification or rebirth from being immersed in water, sharing a likeness with baptism. She entered the pond a scold, but arose a new, silent woman. The inclusion of water was also understood as a means to cool a scold's intemperate heat, as observed by the Frenchman who documented the English Ducking stool, he wrote that water was used "in order to cool her immoderate heat."<sup>396</sup> Parallels could also have been made between the scold's ducking and the witches water immersion in order to discover their guilt or

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<sup>395</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe* (Temple Smith, 1978 ), p. 180.

<sup>396</sup> Andrews, p. 247.

innocence, which may have created a mood of severity and feminine condemnation. Lastly, Gowing understood the legal punishment of disorderly women as an invoking of verbal and physical symbols. For a scold, these symbols included a wisp of hay being presented to the scold, and a bridle, which arose allusions of bridling wild horses or other types of beast to the forefront.<sup>397</sup>

A scold's punishment was framed in local rite dialogue through community participation, and also through the use of carnivalesque props to embellish its procession. The ends to both processes were also similar, being that they were both "a means to express its hostility to individuals who stepped out of line and so to discourage other breaches of custom."<sup>398</sup> However, where charivari was a time of orchestrated disorder, of reversal, madness sovereign, the scold's punishment stood in opposition. It was about the turning of the world the right way up through the implementation of order achieved through the correcting of a creator of local disorder, the scold. A time where the representation of female disorder was toppled, reverting back to communal from a time of disorder. The scold's punishment through its absorption of local custom qualities became more than a formal execution of justice. It became multivalent through the weaving of formal English justice and local, it was a formalised national decree but also a community's interpretation of the decree, where it was made into a spectacle, and encouraged the community's role in the execution of justice by including familiar items and zero barriers between them and the persecuted.

It was a dramatic expression of justice; a staged spectacle of punishment. The streets, market square, and village green were made into the stages where the punishment would play out, as Burke put it "the city became a theatre without walls and the inhabitants the actors."<sup>399</sup> This dramatic performance staged outside was "carefully managed by the authorities to show the people that crime did not pay."<sup>400</sup> This was accomplished through the decision to make the punishment

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<sup>397</sup> Gowing, *Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London*, p. 17.

<sup>398</sup> Burke, p. 200.

<sup>399</sup> Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, 3rd ed. (England: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2009), p. 261.

<sup>400</sup> Burke (2009), p. 278.

public in nature, attract crowds, and consequently outfitting the female body into something of concerted shame and humiliation. Dr. Johnson on the English execution wrote, “executions are intended to draw spectators, if they do not draw spectators the don’t answer their purpose.”<sup>401</sup> It was believed that public displays of justice, the pomp and overstatement which characterised them, were able to “create a shock and awe that helped deal with criminal activity” from those who witnessed not wishing to be made the next protagonists to such a display.<sup>402</sup> Public punishment had the ends of generating shame for the persecuted party, or as Gowing put it, the scold’s punishment was a “legal punishment that satisfied with its element of ritual humiliation.”<sup>403</sup> By putting an emphasis on exposure and shame for this gloomy festival of punishment, it would hopefully act as a symbol of deterrence. Social control maintained through generating fear in the masses. Though these processions did not always function in a deterring fashion. On the thief’s punishment, Henry Fielding wrote “the thief’s shame is the day of glory in his opinion. His procession to Tyburn, all triumphant.. attended by applause, admiration and envy of all bold and hardened.”<sup>404</sup> And after the thief’s life had been extinguished, many of the crowd would later talk about his death “with honour, by most with pity, and by all with approbation.”<sup>405</sup> Observations by Bernard de Mandeville in 1725 on the mood for an execution portrayed something of levity where the condemned men drunk madly and swore riotously. Mandeville concluded from this display that the spectators, would have “came to believe that there is nothing in being hang’d, but a wry neck and a wet pair of breaches.”<sup>406</sup>

Though there are no accounts such as the ones above on the scolding procession, it could be tentatively suggested that some women were not deterred after watching a ducking or bridling. They may have thought that there was nothing to being ducked than a wet petticoat. Their lives were not in danger, and if they were

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<sup>401</sup> Burke (2009), p. 278.

<sup>402</sup> John Hostettler, *A History of Criminal Justice in England and Wales* [Hampshire: Waterside Press, 2009], p. 184.

<sup>403</sup> Gowing, *Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London*, p. 17.

<sup>404</sup> Henry Fielding and Arthur Murphy, *The Works Of Henry Fielding, Esq: With An Essay On His Life And Genius, Volume 12* (New York: W. Durell, 1816), p. 332.

<sup>405</sup> Hostettler, p. 183.

<sup>406</sup> Hostettler, p. 183.

as brazen as many people described them, future shame and humiliation may not have been a strong enough deterrent. And as Fielding's supposed about the nature of post-punishment discussions, the men and women of the community may have ended up discussing the ducking or bridling in terms of pity or respect, rather than scorn, fear, and just conclusions. Though, the evidence is unresponsive of those communal sentiments, as most accounts presented mutual satisfaction and rightness about the scold's public justice. Many also incessantly brayed for a scolds ducking when they were besieged by one, for example, Isabell Rychardson and Alice Worthington, both from Walworke, Manchester, were persecuted as scolds in 1620, and in the petition the neighbours wrote that they, "doe earnestly intreate the steward of the court to see them punished accordinge to the lawe to the end that their neigbhoures might lyue in peace."<sup>407</sup> Scolding was also an expression of anger or passion. It was a crime ruled by emotion rather than planned logic. So the image of a scold immersed in a river, may not have entered the mind of a woman while her blood was up.

Deterrence was not restricted to the witnessing of the actual punishment, the devices also functioned as powerful symbols of deterrence. Though, Martin Ingram claimed that most manors or boroughs rarely used the cucking stool leaving them to rot and fall into disrepair, he understood the device as something beyond its functionality, rather its form acted as a powerful symbol of public intolerance to female assertiveness, "its very presence must have acted as a powerful deterrent to women."<sup>408</sup> Many communities invested in first building this local symbol, then maintaining it. In the parish books of Southam, Warwickshire, the costs for the erection of a stool was recorded at £2 11s. 4d.<sup>409</sup> The parish accounts of East Ardsley in 1683-4 recorded a payment for the repairing of the stool for 1s. 8d. and two stools in Worsborough, underwent a total of £1 10s. for the years between 1703-1737.<sup>410</sup> Skipton also committed to the

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<sup>407</sup> *The Court leet records of the manor of Manchester, from the year 1552 to the year 1686, and from the year 1731 to the year 1846* vol 3, p. 31.

<sup>408</sup> Sara Butler, *The Language of Abuse: Marital Violence in Later Medieval England* (Leiden: BRILL, 2007), p. 237.

<sup>409</sup> William Andrews, *Old-Time Punishments* (London: William Andrews & Co., 1890), p. 11-12. See this for a full account of the costs, on what each step on the building and erecting of the stool cost <<https://archive.org/details/oldtimepunishmen00andruoft>> [accessed 21st November 2015].

<sup>410</sup> Andrews, p. 20-21.



maintaining of this device, spending 8s. 6d. in 1734, a further 4s. 6d a decade later, and twenty five years after that payment an entry for £1 11.5d. was put forth for the building of a completely new ducking stool.<sup>411</sup>

Brushfield presented the bridle as a symbol of terror. A bookseller at Macclesfield communicated to Brushfield that the bridle was often produced in petty sessions “in terrorem,” which heeded “the volubility of a woman’s tongue.”<sup>412</sup> Presenting the iron crown “proved sufficient to abate the garrulity of the most determined scold.”<sup>413</sup>

The associative attachment between a common scold and her punishment also extended to dialogue, again acting as a deterrent. The cucked scold or bridled scold became a fixed pairing. An account presented by Brushfield shows that this association remained even in nineteenth century in England. The former mayor of Congleton recounted a narrative relating to a set of hooks which were present in some home’s decor, next to their fireplaces. Using these hooks as a threatening prop, husbands of Congleton could control their wife’s behaviour with lines, such as “if you don’t rest with your tongue, i’ll send for the bridle, and hook you up.”<sup>414</sup> The form and use of the bridle could still be used in threatening narrative to control women’s behaviour, even after it had stopped being implemented as a local punishment. Literacy tradition also encouraged the connection between scold and public shame, examples being *The Cucking of a Scold*, lines in Samuel Butler’s *Hudibras* which presented “a chair-curule, which moderns call a cucking-stool” and those who shared “sharp hard words” marched “proudly to the river’s side, like dukes of Venice”, and in John Fletcher’s, *The Tamer Tamed*, the men wished to punish their disobedient women by showing them out “in cuck-stools; they they’ll sail, as brave Columbus did, till they discover the happy islands of obedience.”<sup>415</sup> It became a normative caustic relationship, this being that scolding

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<sup>411</sup> Andrews, p. 23.

<sup>412</sup> Ivo Kamps, *Materialist Shakespeare* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 271.

<sup>413</sup> Kamps, p. 271.

<sup>414</sup> Pettifer, p. 133.

<sup>415</sup> Samuel Butler, *Hudibras* (Edinburgh: Printed for John Fairbairn, Hunter's-Square, and Archibald Constable at the Cross, 1799), p. 149. John Fletcher, *The Tamer Tamed* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 169.

would inevitably lead to the stool or bridle. Women would have been continually exposed to this association, both from the abstract and reality, forming an institutionalised shared understanding of the fate of a scold. In a conversation between Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Knowles, Johnson said that “madam, we have different modes of restraining evil—stocks for the men, a ducking stool for women and a pound for beasts.”<sup>416</sup>

This knowledge for Englishmen and women stood in warning that any female verbal rebellion would be promptly and rigidly stamped out by a legal shaming ritual. This alongside the punishment being framed as public and a shameful thing functioned as a means of social control used by a community. It policed female behaviour, as one scholar wrote Elizabethan and Stuart Englishwomen “learned to keep her peace in the community through fear rather than respect or civility.”<sup>417</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Earle, p. 12.

<sup>417</sup> Sara Butler, p. 238.

## Conclusion

This study has presented the responses of early modern society to the perceived dangers of female speech, when female speech was categorised as dangerous, unwanted, and divergent from the ideas of acceptable feminine speech behaviour. I have argued that this response was a two-part strategical operation on the part of contemporaries. The first was in the form of external constructions made on the basis of observed speech, and later warped through personal prejudice and ideology. The second response was active intervention in the form of correction of their behaviour through non-consensual means.

Female speech was scripted as unacceptable; especially speech that was not meek, chaste and respectful. This type of verbal expression was changed or altered by external influences, such as legal theorists, writers, and the average man.

The process of marginalising women's speech primarily involved the disarming, disempowering, and dismissing of rebellious and bold female speech by framing it in popular and legal discourses and constructing new identifier artifices through imagery, language, and custom. Stereotypes and criminal categories were made to contain this form of female volatile threat; it made them easier to identify and in turn thwart.

These artifices superposed upon a woman's natural identity changed how a woman's speech was perceived. It mutated and changed the nature of her speech so that it would be understood in particular way, primarily negative, wicked, or irrelevant. It did this from the creation of a new external identifier layer that was sketched and created from society's anxiety, fear, and hostility society on the female voice.

My thesis has structured the arguments in two major sections. The first half focussed on the artifices, the second the forceful, often non-consensual extraction

from this. Both were means to control the female body, and reaffirm patriarchal control and authority, making the male voice supreme.

The first was about shame and a period of containment. The speech on being observed by anxious and fearful people was next framed in one of two discourses, the shrew or scold, depending on the context. The second half involved a resolution. Authority needed to be maintained, gender dynamics needed to be reaffirmed and the audience or crowd brayed for a just end to a wicked or evil character

Containment and elimination were two tools methodology employed by early modern society to shame, vilify, and draw attention to the negative nature of the speech. They were also a means of separatism, forming and shaping what a negative speech looked like. A way to present them as the 'wrong', and the way it was framed was simply herding society to understand it in a very specific way.

They were also both ways to control the female voice. This being a looming threat of being marginalised as a scold or a shrew as well as the belated punishment that awaited such a label.

The affixed punishment or taming process to these, presented the idea that these were negative so a process of change or transformation process was imperative to revert or bring back these women back to a more ideal state. A shrew's reign was only one part of a plot, the taming nearly always followed. Same with the scold, the punishment was a necessity for community resolution.

The opening act examined the framing of this threat at a popular level with the early modern shrew. I explored her place in literature, the tropes and imagery that became associated with her and in turn defined in to society. The prejudice and cliché language, the shrew as a cursed wife and a wildcat, became almost universally accepted as associative connections in early modern society. The shrew was more of a comedic plot device, or something to generate sympathy for

a husband or thirst for a wife's downfall. She was an plot device, but one that generated fear and spite towards the image of a garrulous female.

The second chapter moved from abstract and examined the legal construct of the common scold. This showcased the female verbal rebel framed in legal discourse and community prejudice and bias. I studied the scold as a part of a space, a community. That she was defined from community bias and intervention from observations of outward behaviour, nourished by ideas gained from past cases and shrew discourses. She was also studied on the personal and individual level, that the scold arose from emotive experiences.

The shrew and scold were presented as two separate constructs, made from different ideology, rhetoric, imagery, and they each had different conclusions. However, to a degree they both influenced each other, or feed of each other to build an ideology of the rebellious female voice.

The closing act studied the curtain call for these verbal villains. The shrew was tamed. The scold was punished. Each of these verbal characters needed to be reverted back to an ideal idea through the implementation of punishment. The shrew was bleed, shaved, beaten and starved, by the husband in order for authority to be demonstrated, dynamics to be righted and for the early modern reader to gain the resolution that they anticipated. The scold was made the protagonist in a public expression of justice. This resolution was the tail end of the introduction of the verbal character.

Future research projects worth pursuing are found with additional verbal stereotypes, and a different perspective.

The gossip was another construct which was formed on the basis of imperfect verbal behaviour, used to corrupt and mutate bold female speech. She was another framing device, through more illustrious with the shrew than the scold from her illustrious literary career.

This study has mostly remained within the confines of stereotypes and criminals, static definitions created out of external patriarchal influences and intervention in order to leach power from verbal rebels. A multifarious study could be presented through taking of male spectacles, and rather going and studying the stereotypes from the perspective of the ones who found themselves locked within these static definitions of shrew and scold. The female conception of such an image. Their navigation, acceptance and resistance to these externally imposed new personas.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>418</sup> Some early modern literature that presents this dynamic includes John Fletcher, *The Woman's Prize, or the Tamer Tamed* (London and NY: Bloomsbury, 2010). This is an unofficial sequel to William Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*. It details the story of Petruchio, now a famed breaker of wives, being tamed by his new wife, Marie, presenting an interesting reverse of roles where Petruchio becomes the tamed. Balladic tradition also wrote on this theme, one being Martin Parker, *Robin and Kate: or, A bad husband converted by a good wife, in a dialogue between Robin and Kate*, RB 1.354-355 in *English Broadside Ballad* (London: n.pub, 1633-1669) <<http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu/ballad/30241/xml>> [accessed 20 September 2015].

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### Lectures

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## Appendix 1

Scolding persecutions covering twenty-seven regions throughout England between the years of 1550-1830.

Location		Year	Number of Persecutions
Lancashire.		1590-1592	0
		1601-1602	2
Yorkshire	North riding	1605-12	6
	West Riding	1598-1602	1
		1637-42	4
Wiltshire		1615-29	7
Devizes Borough court		1580-1600	4
Dorchester borough		1631-5	30
Norwich court of mayoralty		1630-35	14
Nottingham Borough Sessions		1601-3: 1612-16-14 1623-25	15 39 43
Acomb, Yorks		1550-1600	33
Gillingham, Dorset		1620-1640	6
Manchester, Lancs,		1552-1618 1618-41	0 18
Earls Colne, Essex		1560-99 1604-40	4 1
Henley in Arden, Warks		1592-1647	19
Archdeaconry of Wilshire		1586-99	37
Dicose of York,		1577	33
Middlesex Sessions		1613-17	15
Westminster court of Burgesses		1610-16	52
Cornhill Wardmote inquest		1571-1651	12

St Katherines Precient		1589-1625	6
Bremhill, Brohmham, Rowden and Stanley		1565-1606 1612-88	8 2
Castle Combe		1569-96 1602-39	0 2
Nettleton		1561-94 1611-39	0 4
Stockton		1612-26	0
Somerset quarter sessions*		1625-1639	0
Preston Leet Records*		1653-1813	0
North Riding*		1612-1620 1647-1657 1658-1677	2 1 0
Southampton*		1550-1557 1578-1602 1603-1624	0 0 0

*The majority of this chart has been sourced from \_\_\_\_\_, Martin, 'Scolding Women Cucked And Washed: A Crisis In Gender Relations In Early Modern England', in Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker eds., Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England (London: UCL Press, 1994)*

\*The marked data are not part of Martin Ingram's table cited from 'scolding women cucked and washed', rather they were sourced from individual research using local leet and quarter session records.

## Appendix 2

Images of common scold punishment devices: The cucking stool, the ducking stool, and the scold's bridle.



Fig. 1. T. Brushfield, *Ducking Stool at the Museum of Scarborough*, Sketch, cited from T.N Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 2, in the *Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. ii ed. by Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society (Chester: Courant Office, 1864), p. 207.

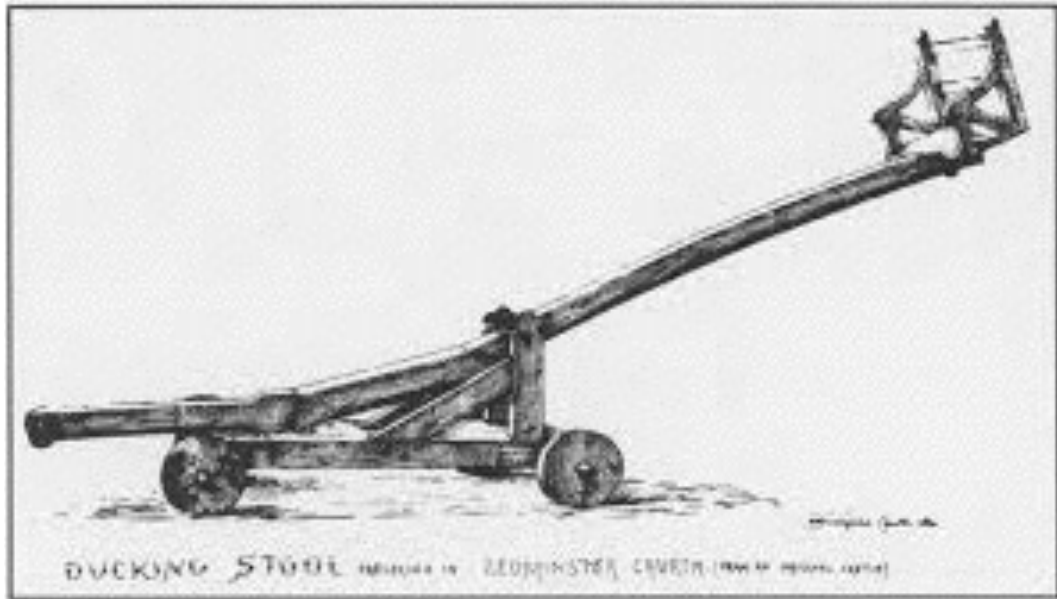


Fig. 2. T. N. Brushfield, *Ducking Stool Preserved in Leominster Church*, Sketch cited from T. N. Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 2, in *the Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. ii ed. by Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society (Chester: Courant Office, 1864), p. 215.

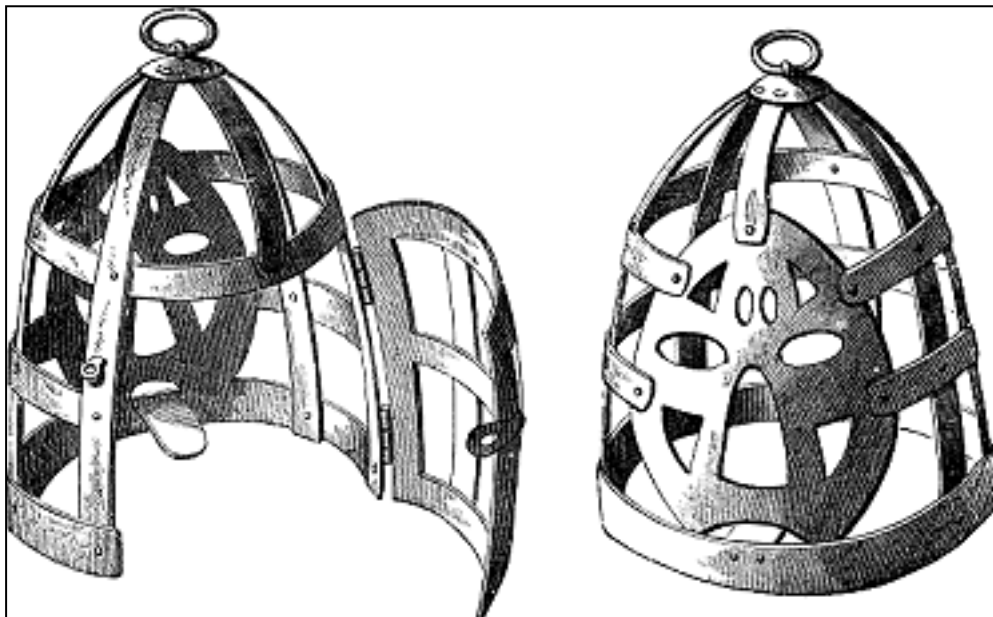


Fig. 3. T. N. Brushfield, *Brank At Hamstall Ridware, Staffordshire*, Sketch, cited from T. N. Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments, with particular reference to those of Cheshire, part 1, in *the Journal of the Chester Archaeological Society*, vol. ii ed. by Chester and North Wales Architectural, Archaeological and Historic Society (Chester: Courant Office, 1864), p. 40.

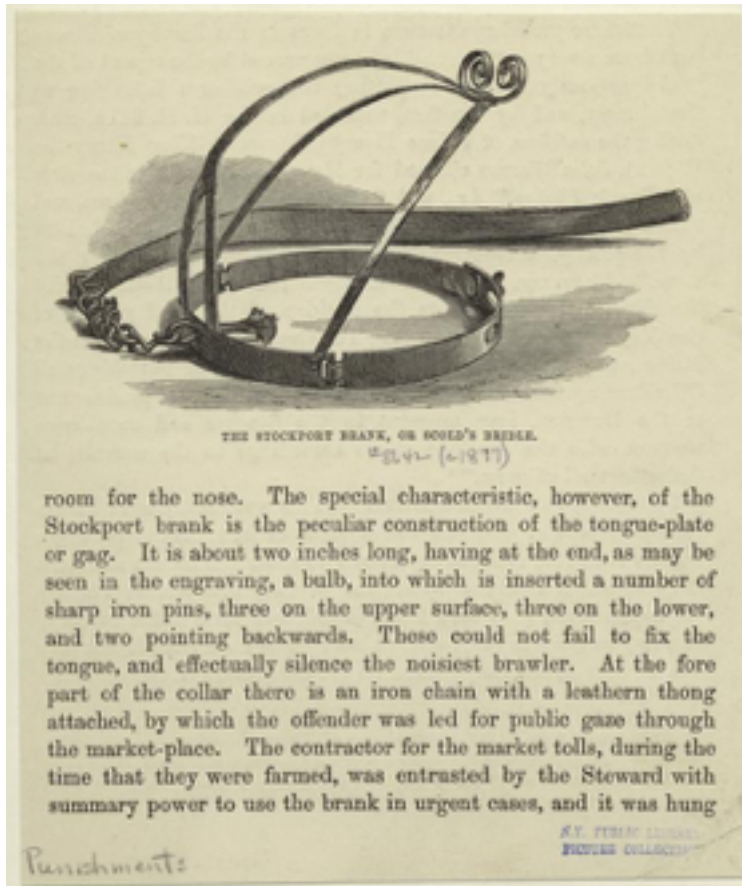


Fig. 4. *The Stockport Brank, Or Scold's Bridle*, c. 1817, Sketch, Mid-Manhattan Picture Collection: Art and Picture Collection, The New York Public Library, retrieved from <<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-1ca6-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>> [accessed 20



Fig. 5. Image from chapbook titled, *Strange and Wonderful Relations of the Old Woman who was Drowned at Ratcliff Highway a fortnight ago*.



Fig. 6. *Scolds' Bridle*, c. 1649, Engraving, Private Collection, retrieved from <http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/resource/xjf352332eng/scolds-bridle-c1649-xjf352332-eng/> [accessed 20 June 2015]. Image shows Robert Sharp, an officer of the corporation of Newcastle, leading Ann Bidlestone, though the streets in a scolds' bridle.



SCOLDS.—THE DUCKING-STOOL, & PUNISHMENT FOR SCOLDS.—SEE PAGE 21.

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Fig. 7. Scolds -- The Ducking-Stool, A  
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 Scolds ; The Klapperstein, c. 1876, Print,  
 The New York Public Library Digital  
 Collections retrieved from <<http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e1-1cdc-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>> [accessed 20 September 2015].





Fig. 8. E. Crouch, *The Merry Dutch Miller, and New Invented Windmill*, c. 1672, woodcut, London, retrieved from Emily Cockayne, Hubbard: Filth, Noise & Stench in England 1600-1770, p. 51.



Fig. 9. Engraving from the front piece of Thomas Heywood, *A Curtain Lecture* (London: Printed by Robert Young for John Aston, 1637).



