Gendered Circulation and the Marital Ship of State in Jonson's *The Staple of News*

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She is like the shippes of marchants: she bringeth her fode from a farre.
—Proverbs 31:14, Geneva Bible[1]

In his sermon "The Merchant Royall," preached in 1607 on the occasion of Lord Hay's marriage to Honoria Denny and framed as advice for how the couple can achieve a happy marriage, Robert Wilkinson explicates Proverbs 31:14 at length. He asserts that the biblical verse can teach his audience "all the dignity, beauty, duetie of the virtuous wife and holy woman."[2] This "virtuous" wife, according to Wilkinson, ought to obey her husband as a ship obeys the pilot. Yet he almost immediately confuses the wife's passive role: he writes that the good wife "is like a shipp indeed, and to nothing so like as to a ship; for shee sits at the sterne, and by discretion as by Carde and Compasse, shapes her course" (7). Wilkinson creates a contradiction, explaining that the wife is like a ship precisely

I would like to thank Margaret Ferguson, Frances Dolan, Gina Bloom, Catherine Chin, Pearl Chaozon-Bauer, and the members of the early modern working groups at University of California Davis, as well as Jennifer Spitzer, Dan Breen, Chris Holmes, Chris Matusiak, Derek Adams, and the members of the Ithaca College Medieval and Renaissance Colloquium for their generous and insightful comments on early and late drafts. I am also grateful to the *Renaissance Drama* editors and anonymous readers for their help in improving the article. Remaining shortcomings are entirely my own.

1. All biblical quotations are from the Geneva translation of the Bible: *The Bible and Holy Scriptvres Conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament. Translated According to the Ebrue and Greke, and conferred with the best translations in diuers langages. With Moste Profitable Annotations vpon all the hard places, and other things of great importance as may appeare in the Epistle to the Reader* (Geneva: Rovland Mall and William Whittingham, 1560).

2. Robert Wilkinson, *The Merchant Royall. A Sermon Preached At White-Hall before the Kings Maiestie, at the Nuptials of the Right Honourable the Lord Hay and his Lady, upon the Twelfe day last being Ianuar. 6* (London: Felix Kyngston for John Flasket, 1607), 2. Further references are cited in the text.

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0486-3739/2018/4602-0003$15.00

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because she is also like a pilot; she is the vessel, but she is also the guide who "sits at the sterne" steering the ship. Wilkinson seems intent on describing the wife's power to "command" (8) men and to run the ship "as if . . . she were captaine" (8), but he is also anxious to curb the power he has ascribed to the wife. He appears uncomfortable with his own assertions that the good wife is powerful, independent, and perhaps even "captaine" (8) of the ship, so he qualifies his description of her power by rejecting her participation in the active roles of the metaphor—pilot, captain, "Maister"—and by finally reiterating that she is only the "master's mate" (8) and that "shee is like a ship" (8). Although the good wife appears to have independent power, Wilkinson attempts to contain that power by asserting the husband's ultimate mastery over the good wife. The ambiguity of his metaphor, and the instability of his terms in his lengthy discussion of it, mirror the unstable power structure on board an actual ship: the master—a pilot or navigator—shares command with the captain, and both are, in various situations, beholden to the (likely land-bound) owner of the vessel and to storms, mutinies, and other contingencies.[3] Despite Wilkinson's efforts to assert the good wife's passivity, his metaphor makes clear that mastery in a marriage, just as aboard a ship, is a fantasy. Marital and mercantile profits often depend on risky, collaborative power structures in which humans, vessels, and even nonhuman agents influence each other.

The writers of "An homely of the State of Matrimonie"—a homily often read in marriage services from 1563 through the early seventeenth century—make a similar comparison of the husband and wife pair to a merchant and his ship:

> For the marchaunte man, excepte he firste be at composition with his factor, to use his interaffares quietlye, he wyll neyther stirre his shyppe to sayle, nor yet wyll lay handes vpon his marchandyse: Even so, let vs do all thynges, that we may haue the felowship of our wyfes, which is the factor of all our doynges at home, in great quiet and rest. And by these meanes, all thynges shall prosper quietly, and so shal we passe through the daungers of the troublous sea of this worlde.[4]

Is the wife in this comparison a vessel for her husband's "interaffares"—is she, in Wilkinson's language, "like a shipp indeed"—or is she the "factor" who conducts "all our doynges at home"? Are those doings of the wife definitively and only com-

3. *OED Online*, s.v. "master," noun, def. 1, and adjective, def. 7.

4. "An homely of the State of Matrimonie," in *The seconde tome of homelyes of such matters as were promysed and intituled in the former part of homelyes, set out by the aucthoritie of the Quenes Maiestie: and to be read in euery paryshe churche agreablye* (London: Richard Iugge and John Cawood, 1563), Tttt1v–Xxxx4r, at Xxxx3r.

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pleted "in great quiet and rest," within her house, or does she "passe through the daungers" of active economic initiatives beyond her home as well? Although they do not explicitly reference Proverbs 31:14, the writers of the homily, like Wilkinson, give wives both active and passive roles, fleshy and wooden, in the marital voyage through life's "troublous sea[s]." Moreover, their metaphors imply an analogous relationship between the governance of the English state and the governance of a marriage: Wilkinson titles one section of his sermon "Application to the King" (33), comparing a monarch to a merchant. The homily's husband is like a "kyng" or "ruler"—in addition to a pilot or merchant—who governs the "State of Matrimonie."[5] Wilkinson and the writers of the homily join a long tradition of deploying gendered ship of state metaphors in arguments about wifely circulation. Horace's *Odes* 1.14—sometimes referred to as the "ship of state" ode—relies on a comparison between the state and a female ship with a "painted stern" that "terrifie[s]" both the sailor and the speaker of the ode, who watches her venture in stormy waters.[6] Shakespeare's Petruchio jokes about how he will "board" Katherina no matter how much she rages.[7] Heywood's Bess Bridges—partially a representation of Elizabeth I—is figured as a ship both by her violent suitor Roughman and by the King of Fez.[8] Milton's *Samson Agonistes* meditates at length on Samson and Dalila's failures as "steers-mate[s]" in a marital ship.[9] These texts and others like them invoke the ship of the matrimonial state as a microcosm of the political ship of state and align the power structures required for successful economic, marital, and political ventures. Yet as my brief discussion of Wilkinson's and the homily's comparisons illustrates, elaborations of the ship of (marital) state metaphor are ambiguous in their assignations of power and agency. Instead of allaying the anxieties that male writers often display about powerful, economically savvy, circulating women, these metaphors emphasize the parallels between necessary risks of maritime ventures and those of marital ventures, which include ceding power to one's wife or enabling her to be an economic agent in markets "a farre" (Prov. 31:14)—that is, outside of the domestic sphere.[10]

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5. "An homely," Xxxxiv.

6. Horace, *Odes and Epodes*, ed. and trans. Niall Rudd (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004), 29–31. For a discussion of the stable ship of state as always under threat from shipwreck, see Steve Mentz, *Shipwreck Modernity: Ecologies of Globalization, 1550–1719* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), esp. 7–11.

7. *The Taming of the Shrew*, in *The Norton Shakespeare: Comedies*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard, and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York: Norton, 2008), 175–244, 1.2.91.

8. Thomas Heywood, *The Fair Maid of the West, Parts I and II*, ed. Robert K. Turner (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1967), pt. 1, 2.1.18–21, and pt. II, 3.3.177–85.

9. John Milton, "Samson Agonistes," in *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (New York: Longman, 1997), 349–413, at line 1045.

10. Relevant critical work on the uses of the concept "anxiety" for studying early modern texts includes Valerie Traub, *Desire and Anxiety: Circulations of Sexuality in Shakespearean Drama* (New

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Taking Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* (1640–41) as a particularly instructive example within the tradition of the ship of the matrimonial state, this article provides a sustained reading of the play's often-neglected maritime metaphors, aiming to advance the critical discussion of the play and to demonstrate a method for reading maritime metaphors in other early modern texts.[11] In what follows, I examine biblical commentaries and marriage advice tracts that interpret the words "a farre" from Proverbs 31:14 as confirmation not of the proverbial wife's endeavors in distant marketplaces but of the writers' arguments that all women's work ought to take place inside—not outside—the home. "A farre" to these writers means "within the home" or very close to it, not out in the world. Then, turning to Jonson's play, I show that his characters employ maritime metaphors in debates about the proper or improper circulation of Lady Pecunia—a personification of money and the fiancée of the play's central character, Pennyboy Junior (P. Junior), an heir and prodigal son. Some of these characters, echoing biblical commentators and writers of marital advice, propose that the marital and monarchical state should be governed like a ship, wherein the masculine pilot controls the feminized—passive, inert, nonhuman—ship to reap the profits of the political or marital venture. But many metaphors in the play also suggest that such a strict, stable hierarchy is illusory: the vision of the pilot who singly and entirely controls the ship is in tension with Jonson's portraits of rough winds, seas, tides, and sea monsters, not to mention merchants, factors, mates, and sailors who share the control of the ship and mutineers or pirates who threaten the ship as much as or more than hostile seas. Jonson's maritime metaphors make it clear that hierarchies such as husband over wife, monarch over subjects, and humans over the environment are fundamentally unstable.

The critical discussion of Pecunia's circulation, as both woman and money, has been robust. According to Don E. Wayne, "Jonson's . . . play emphasizes the proper circulation and reproduction of money regulated by contract. A central

York: Routledge, 1992), and Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996). I follow Traub's and Breitenberg's definitions of anxiety, taking as particularly illuminating Breitenberg's argument that "masculine anxiety is a necessary and inevitable condition that operates on at least two significant levels: it reveals the fissures and contradictions of patriarchal systems and, at the same time, it paradoxically enables and drives patriarchy's reproduction and continuation of itself" (2). See Traub, *Desire and Anxiety*, 8–9, for a discussion and critique of Freud's definition of "anxiety." See also Traub's most recent book, *Thinking Sex with the Early Moderns* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), in which she articulates desire not as "endlessly fluid" but rather as "mobile across and through specific sites of embodiment and enunciation" (24).

11. Here and throughout, I give the date of first printing after the title for the texts that I discuss. In his introduction to his edition of *The Staple of News*, Anthony Parr notes that the play was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1626 and was likely composed sometime within 6 years before that date; Ben Jonson, *The Staple of News*, ed. Anthony Parr (New York: Manchester University Press,

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metaphor for such reproduction under lawful regulation is marriage."[12] Stephen Deng has linked the play's concern with the "lawful regulation" of money to English worries about the loss of specie during the economic depression of the 1620s, arguing that "Pecunia's proper circulation is the moral of the play, and *The Staple of News*, in essence . . . teaches English households how to be virtuous in order for the English commonwealth to succeed within a world economy."[13] The marriage relationship and the social, economic, or moral profits that come from the correct management of the marriage are purportedly responsible for England's global economic success. England's economic management in the early seventeenth century relied on emerging ideas about financial investment; as Valerie Forman argues in her analysis of tragicomedy and emergent capitalism, early modern writers of both drama and economic treatises reimagine the "losses" incurred by "long-distance overseas trade as . . . necessary expenditures" or "as a transformable source of legitimate, future profit."[14] The maritime metaphors in *The Staple of News* suggest that just as economic profit required risk in commercial, maritime ventures in the seventeenth century, marital "profit," such as spousal cooperation, marital bliss, and procreation, required "risk," such as a wife's exercise of her own desires independent of those of her husband. These associations highlight the relevance of Jonson's play not only to scholarship on marriage advice literature and biblical commentary but also to the emerging field of "blue cultural studies," to borrow Steve Mentz's phrase; in the maritime metaphors that I examine here, competing notions about human exceptionalism—

1988), 1, 9–11. Parr also discusses the complex textual history of Jonson's collected works, which were set to be printed in 1631 but which did not appear until 1640–41.

12. Don E. Wayne, "'Pox on Your Distinction!' Humanist Reformation and Deformations of the Everyday in *The Staple of News*," in *Renaissance Culture and the Everyday*, ed. Patricia Fumerton and Simon Hunt (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 67–91, at 70. For more on the circulation of women especially, see Karen Newman, "Engendering the News," in *The Elizabethan Theatre, XIV*, ed. A. L. Magnusson and C. E. McGee (Ontario: Meany, 1996), 49–69. For a thorough explanation of the play's complicated paratexts—a prologue for the court and one for the stage; an induction and "intermeans" spoken by the Gossips Mirth, Tattle, Expectation, and Censure between each act; and a letter from Jonson after act 2 that seeks to correct apparent audience reactions to act 3—see Alan B. Farmer, "Play-Reading, News-Reading, and Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News*," in *The Book of the Play: Playwrights, Stationers, and Readers in Early Modern England*, ed. Marta Straznicky (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), 127–58, and Jane Rickard, "A Divided Jonson? Art and Truth in *The Staple of News*," *English Literary Renaissance* 42, no. 2 (2012): 295–316.

13. Stephen Deng, "Global Œconomy: Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* and the Ethics of Mercantilism," in *Global Traffic: Discourses and Practices of Trade in English Literature and Culture from 1550 to 1700*, ed. Barbara Sebek and Stephen Deng (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 245–64, at 258. For a discussion of the rapacious desire for news that Jonson satirizes in his play and often presents as a female desire, see Farmer, "Play-Reading."

14. Valerie Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions: Global Economics and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 3, 6.

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whether humans are separate from and have dominion over the natural world—subtend articulations about "lawful" or "proper" circulation, revealing a nexus of cultural debate about gender, authority, and the maritime world.[15] I do not want to suggest that Jonson was a democrat, feminist, or environmentalist in any concrete sense; as Stephen Wittek argues in his discussion of Jonson's participation in and critique of early news culture, "he did not see anything positive in the unfettered availability of information, and democracy probably would have struck him as a profoundly ill-conceived idea."[16] The maritime metaphors in *The Staple of News*, though, often define female initiative in foreign and domestic economic ventures as positive and necessary. This portrayal of female agency contrasts sharply with Jonson's portraits of the Gossips and female news customers, whom he describes as vapid, unthinking, and ravenous female consumers.[17] The maritime metaphors also challenge top-down models of marriage and governance: if the pilot, captain, or merchant does not make all of the decisions and control all of the money, then, by analogy, neither does a husband or monarch.

I. FROM "A FARRE," WITHIN HER HOUSE?

In the Geneva Bible version of Proverbs 31:10–31, the woman is described as an active, productive member of her society: she "laboreth cherefully with her hands" (31:13), and "She considereth a field, and getteth it: with the frute of her hands she planteth a vineyarde" (31:16). In 31:18, "She feleth that her marchandise is good," and in 31:24, "She maketh shetes, and selleth them; & giveth girdels vnto the marchant." The good wife appears to be a savvy businesswoman who can purchase land, create and sell goods, and understand and navigate the market. She makes decisions and executes her will—here, her desire to work, plant, and trade—

15. Steve Mentz, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* (New York: Continuum, 2009), 96. Mentz advocates for attention to "the sea's dominance of our physical and cultural histories" (96–97), a dominance that literary critics—as well as scholars in other disciplines—are apt to forget or ignore. Scholars such as Margaret Cohen, *The Novel and the Sea* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010); Daniel Brayton, *Shakespeare's Ocean: An Ecocritical Exploration* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2012); Elizabeth J. Bellamy, *Dire Straits: The Perils of Writing the Early Modern English Coastline from Leland to Milton* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013); and Lowell Duckert, *For All Waters: Finding Ourselves in Early Modern Wetscapes* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), have joined Mentz—who has, in his new book *Shipwreck Modernity*, further developed "oceanic literary criticism" (xxxiv)—in taking the ocean's mystery, dangerousness, and fertility as central to literary study.

16. Stephen Wittek, *The Media Players: Shakespeare, Middleton, Jonson, and the Idea of News* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015), 113.

17. The Gossips—male actors playing female theatergoers—interrupt the prologue and claim seats on the stage from which they comment on the play after each act except the fifth. For more on the Gossips, see Nova Myhill, "Taking the Stage: Spectators as Spectacle in the Caroline Private Theaters," in *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558–1642*, ed. Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 37–54.

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without reference to her husband's will. She not only buys and sells in the market but also does so at a considerable distance from her home, for, "like the shippes of marchants: she bringeth her fode from a farre" (Prov. 31:14). The woman's gathering of "fode" for her family is compared to a mercantile venture. She is capable of a venture to secure sustenance that might be as dangerous or as profitable as a maritime commercial venture in foreign waters. Her body, like a ship, is capable of bearing goods, yet the verse provides no assurance that the husband controls his wife's body in the role of a merchant, captain, or pilot.[18] Given the context of the wife's other mercantile labors in Proverbs 31, the wife herself might be the merchant in control of the ship, directing trade and procuring "fode from a farre" by means of the vessel of her body.

Despite the emphasis in the biblical text on the wife's mercantile pursuits outside the home, some early modern commentators engage in interpretive acrobatics to define "a farre" as describing only the wife's work within the home. Wilkinson addresses the words "a farre" directly, reading "she bringeth fode from a farre" (Prov. 31:14) in three distinct ways, none of which implies ventures outside the home.[19] First, he asserts that the wife takes a great deal of time to make food, shifting "a farre" from a description of distance to one of time: the wife works "*a lonquino tempore*" (30). Next, he writes that she makes household materials from scratch and that "a farre" indicates that the wife works "from the first

18. For a fascinating discussion of the Hebrew word *ba'alah*—derived from *ba'al*, meaning "master" or "owner" and rendered by the Geneva translators (and others) as "husband" in Proverbs 31—see Naomi Tadmor, "Women and Wives: The Language of Marriage in Early Modern English Biblical Translations," *History Workshop Journal* 62 (2006): 1–27, at 10. On women's work and marriage relations in Proverbs and the Hebrew Bible more generally, see Carolyn Pressler, "The 'Biblical View' of Marriage," in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 200–11; Ken Stone, "Marriage and Sexual Relations in the World of the Hebrew Bible," in *The Oxford Handbook of Theology, Sexuality and Gender*, ed. Adrian Thatcher (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 173–87; and Christine Roy Yoder, "The Woman of Substance: A Socioeconomic Reading of Proverbs 31:10–31," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 3 (2003): 427–47.

19. Albert Wolters notes two Catholic commentaries, Luis de León's *La perfecta casada* (1583) and Cornelius à Lapide's *Commentarius in Proverbia Salamonis* (1635), whose explications of Proverbs 31:14, like Wilkinson's, confine the wife to the household in their interpretations of her comparison to a ship; Albert Wolters, *The Song of the Valiant Woman: Studies in the Interpretation of Proverbs 31:10–31* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2001), 119–22. For León, the wife's supposed travels as a ship are her travels within the house. He writes, "Just as the ship travels through various lands looking for profitable goods, so she must make the rounds of all the corners of her house, retrieve from them everything which seems to be worthless, and convert it into something useful and advantageous" (quoted in Wolters, *Song*, 119). According to à Lapide, "Although she herself stays at home, and does not travel with the merchants to the remotest Indians, nevertheless, like a kind of ship conveying necessary goods from far away, she herself too 'brings her bread from afar' by giving of her own products to foreigners" (quoted in Wolters, *Song*, 122). Both León and à Lapide, like Wilkinson, choose to ignore verse 24 and other aspects of the biblical text that specifically describe the woman's mercantile activity outside the home (120–22).

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and furthest principles of nature" (31). Finally, he argues that she brings goodness, not goods themselves, to her household by praying to heaven, crossing spiritual instead of physical distance (31–32). Wilkinson uses the metaphor to proscribe the wife's activity, but he also presents marriage as a dangerous venture in which the wife has responsibility for the couple's safety and economic prosperity. Wilkinson asserts that "through [the good wife's] wisdom and diligence great things come in by her" (25) and that to be a good wife, "her victualing [ought to] amount to more than her whole voiage" (26) so that the "Merchant" (26) husband can see that he has made a good "venture" of his "estate" (8). The wife's "wisdom and diligence" enable the economic prosperity of the marriage despite Wilkinson's assurances that the "ship" does not leave the home.

In *The Excellency of Good Women* (1613), Barnabe Rich, perhaps borrowing points of emphasis from Wilkinson's sermon, largely ignores the words "a farre."[20] Although he quotes the Proverbs verses that describe the wife's mercantile activities, he does not comment on them, insisting—like Wilkinson—that the good wife brings to her marriage not material goods from the marketplace but rather her good personal qualities: "shee bringeth in by her good foresight, by her care, by her diligence, and by the wisdom of her gouernement."[21] Although he disallows an interpretation of "a farre" as referencing locations beyond the wife's house, Rich remains intent on describing marriage as dangerous and even a little exciting. Rich declares that "who so euer marries a wife may well be called a *Marchant venturer*, for he makes a great aduenture that adventures his credit, his reputation, his estate, his quiet, his libertye, yea many men by marriage do not onely aduenture there bodyes but many times their soules."[22] Although Rich begins his description of the marital adventure by stressing the wife's relationship to her husband as parallel to the ship's relation to its "*Owner*," and although he asserts that the "housbands word" ought to be the "*Routher*"—that is, the rudder—"to the ship, by the which she must be turned," he also underscores the power that the wife has to protect or destroy her husband's credit, reputation, estate, quiet, liberty, and indeed his life.[23] Although both Wilkinson and Rich seek to confine the wife's activities to the household, they also highlight the idea that a wife's "victualing" and her status as a vessel for her husband's mercantile "adventures" require her active, independent engagement

20. Barnabe Rich, *The Excellency of Good Women* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1613).

21. Rich, *Excellency*, 11.

22. Rich, *Excellency*, 9.

23. Rich, *Excellency*, 9, 8. I am indebted to Kathryn Schwarz's reading of Barnabe Rich's and William Austin's pamphlets in *What You Will: Gender, Contract, and Shakespearean Social Space* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), esp. 6–8. As she argues, in Rich's and Austin's metaphors, the wife's "obduracy sinks the boat, but a mobile acquiescence undermines any stable situation of command: assurances are itinerant and provisional, and heterosocial futurity abides in contracts that yoke feminine acts of will to masculine acts of faith" (7).

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in markets beyond her home. The confidence with which both writers assert that the mastery of a husband is akin to the mastery of a pilot, captain, or ship owner is in direct conflict with the more ambiguous situations of control that obtained on actual ships in the period, and that still exist on vessels afloat today.[24] Their attribution of maritime power and influence to various members of the ship perhaps better reflects maritime practices, but the risks of that ambiguous governance are risks that these writers are reluctant to ascribe to marital ventures. They consistently undercut their own assertions of or concessions to wifely agency in the marital ship of state.

Even commentators who do read verse 14 as describing a good wife's extradomestic mercantile activities ultimately seek to subordinate her agency to her husband's will and claim that she acts entirely for his benefit. Peter Moffett praises the good wife's "wisdome" in bringing "things which growing in other shires or countryes came from farre."[25] Although Moffett emphasizes the wife's "wisdome" and responsibility for the "plentie" of the household, he refuses to see the biblical verse as comparing the wife to the merchants, focusing instead on her vesselhood and subscribing fully to the concept of male headship.[26] The wife is "fraught as full of necessary prouision, as any vessell on the sea is with wares," and Moffett asserts that Proverbs 31 as a whole shows readers "how the vertuous woman behaueth her selfe toward her husband, who is chiefe in the familie."[27] His interpretation of the chapter leads him to reassert a familiar hierarchy: "Christ," he writes, "is the head of the man as man is the head of the women."[28] William Austin articulates a similar view in his 1638 pamphlet *Haec Homo*: he writes that "A *Merchants Shippe*, brings *her food from farre*: And, a *woman*, her *portion*, (the substance of her husbands food) from *farre*; from *another family*, another *shire*; nay, sometimes *another nation*."[29] Although Austin's good wife engages in procuring foreign goods, the foremost purpose of her "portion" is her husband's sustenance. Furthermore, Austin's good wife needs a guide: just as a "*shippe*," he asserts, "requires a well tried *Pilot*, to guide it . . . so (certainly) a good

24. Edwin Hutchins notes the development of Western systems of navigation as an example of distributed cognition, wherein "the problems that individuals confront and the means of solving them are culturally structured and where no individual acting alone is entirely responsible for the outcomes that are meaningful to the society at large"; Edwin Hutchins, *Cognition in the Wild* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 6.

25. Peter Moffett, *A Commentarie Vpon The Booke of The Proverbes of Salomon* (London: Richard Field for Robert Dexter, 1592), 312.

26. Moffett, *Commentarie*, 311.

27. Moffett, *Commentarie*, 312, 311.

28. Moffett, *Commentarie*, 321.

29. William Austin, *Haec Homo: wherein the Excellency of the Creation of Woman is described* (London: Richard Olion, 1638), 68.

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woman doth consequently require a good and honest *guide*."[30] Like Moffett, Austin reads the wife from Proverbs not as an independent merchant but rather as a vessel directed by her husband. Although Moffett and Austin pay closer attention to the wife's activity outside her home than do Wilkinson and Rich, they register a similar anxiety about the wife's ventures by circumscribing her independence and subordinating all her activity to the will and benefit of the "chiefe in the familie." Without recourse to a "guide" who can entirely master the ship, it would seem that maritime and marital risks are simply too overwhelming for these writers. The slippery metaphors, and perhaps the writers' reflections about how labor happened on actual ships, destabilize their anxious adherence to strict pilot-overship hierarchies.

II. LADY PECUNIA OR LORD PIECE: THE GENDER OF CIRCULATION

Male characters in Jonson's *The Staple of News* articulate an anxiety about the proverbial good wife's ability to bring food from "a farre" that is parallel to the worries articulated by writers of sermons and marriage advice literature. Pennyboy Senior (P. Senior)—P. Junior's miserly uncle and executor of the Pennyboy estate until P. Junior comes of age—appears maniacal at times in his desire to keep Pecunia within his house; he calls Pecunia and her ladies "whores" when they refuse to return to his control and instead opt to see the town with P. Junior, and he describes himself as wanting to "smother money / In chests and strangle her in bags."[31] He abhors the risks associated with the circulation of both women and money. Yet in act 2, scene 5, P. Senior compares Pecunia's readying of herself to meet P. Junior to a ship that takes a long time to be "rigged" (2.5.42) and that "will cost . . . much" (2.5.43) to outfit; when she enters, he calls her a "galley / Gilt i'the prow" (2.5.45). P. Senior presents the idea that by investing in what he calls the "adventure" (1.6.64) of courting Pecunia, P. Junior's initial costs will transform into "legitimate, future profit," to return to Forman's language.[32] Despite his extreme miserliness, P. Senior implies that economic profit requires money to circulate beyond one's control and even into foreign waters. In describing Pecunia as a "Gilt" ship, P. Senior figures her as either gold obtainable by overseas trade or as the vessel that will deliver this treasure to his nephew. But P. Senior also affords Pecunia the same potential for agency that appears in the metaphor from Proverbs 31:14; the marital venture requires Pecunia's circulation—like money—and her active participation in ventures outside the home. Furthermore,

30. Austin, *Haec Homo*, 70.
31. Jonson, *Staple of News*, 4.3.58; 5.4.36–7. Further references are cited in the text.
32. Forman, *Tragicomic Redemptions*, 6.

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as I show, Jonson describes the emissaries at the News Staple, the Staple itself, P. Junior, and P. Senior as vessels of better or worse rigging and seaworthiness. These seafaring metaphors compromise a view of Lady Pecunia as the only circulating, valuable body in the play. They complicate the negative, gendered associations that Jonson links to Pecunia's movements and to the male characters' desires for and schemes to acquire her.

The play's anxiety about the dangerous circulation of Lady Pecunia provokes rightful distaste in modern critics; as Karen Newman argues, "the conflation of woman and money does double work, at once foisting the dirtiness of money, its corrupting appetites and foul transactions, onto the woman, and at the same time denigrating the woman by representing her as a venal object of exchange that passes, like money, from hand to hand."[33] Newman's analysis underscores Pecunia's passivity and promiscuity in the play; indeed, in a move that makes his father accuse him of "prostitut[ing] his mistress" (4.2.126), P. Junior passes Pecunia herself from "hand to hand" among his hangers-on, as an expression of his prodigal generosity. As P. Junior's friends all sing Pecunia's praises, he exhorts her to "kiss, kiss 'em, princess" (4.2.69) and to "Kiss, kiss again" (4.2.75) and finally to "Kiss 'em all, dear madam, / And at the close, vouchsafe to call them cousins" (4.2.122–23). Pecunia silently does P. Junior's bidding throughout this scene, speaking only to carry out his command to "call [his friends] cousins" (4.2.124–25).

Pecunia in this scene is certainly "a venal object of exchange," but she is not the play's only personification of circulating money. In sharp contrast to his desire to "smother" and "strangle" Lady Pecunia, P. Senior praises the power of "my good Lord Piece" to do "all" (2.4.107); money effectively spent, for P. Senior, is *not* feminized money with its potential for prostitution and usurious, uncontrollable procreation. Rather, well-spent money is masculinized money, which he says

> Goes to the butcher's, fetches in a mutton,
> Then to the baker's, brings in bread, makes fires,
> Gets wine, and does more real courtesies
> Than all my lords, I know. My sweet Lord Piece,
> You are my lord; the rest are cogging Jacks.
>
> (2.4.108–12)

The male personification of money, in P. Senior's estimation, does the basic work of the household; that is, he feeds and waters the house's occupants, using actions reminiscent of those of the good wife from Proverbs 31 when she brings "fode from a farre." P. Senior's ascription of these tasks to "Lord Piece" instead of "Lady Pecunia" indicates his discomfort with allowing a woman to circulate,

33. Newman, "Engendering the News," 62.

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even when it is clear that her circulation makes the household function and enables the woman to feed the residents. Lord Piece engages in a one-to-one exchange: he goes out and brings food in. Lady Pecunia represents a different kind of monetary transaction: a hazardous, risky spending that makes P. Senior deeply anxious. As Deng asserts, Jonson uses Pecunia to link moral deterioration to economic deterioration and, in having Pennyboy Canter, P. Junior's father, call her a "prostitute," illustrates that she "is at once the object of desire circulating among men as well as the subject whose own monetary or sexual desires threaten the commonwealth."[34] P. Senior fears her circulation because he cannot control her sexuality, reproductive or otherwise; he cannot control how much she will gain or lose through her circulation. As a "usurer"—the Persons of the Play name him so—he desires the increase of money but not its movement; he is, at the core, a "hoarder," to use Deng's term, whose major task in the play is to learn his brother's moral and economic lesson: "the use of things is all, and not the store" (5.4.26).[35]

Questions about how "farre," precisely, outside the home or country one has to circulate to make a profit—economic, marital, political—repeatedly surface in *The Staple of News* through a blurring of the boundary between house and market, home and abroad. The word "abroad"—used in the play to describe the activities of the Staple employees—in this period could fluctuate in its meaning; it had both the modern force of traveling "out of one's own country; in or into foreign lands; overseas" ("abroad," adverb, def. 4a) but simultaneously could mean "Out of one's house or abode; outdoors; in the open" ("abroad," adverb, def. 3a), that is, out of the house or away but not in a foreign or faraway land.[36] When Thomas Barber and the Fashioner—both attending on P. Junior as he gets dressed—define the new word "emissary" (the *Oxford English Dictionary* cites this scene as the first use of the word[37]), they initially employ sense 4a of "abroad":

THOMAS: Men employed outward, that are sent abroad
To fetch in the commodity.

FASHIONER: From all regions
Where the best news are made—

THOMAS: Or vented forth—

FASHIONER: By way of exchange or trade.

(1.2.50–53)

34. Deng, "Global Œconomy," 253.
35. Deng, "Global Œconomy," 253.
36. *OED Online*, s.v. "abroad," adverb, def. 3–4.
37. *OED Online*, s.v. "emissary," noun, def. 1.

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The emissaries, like merchant ships, go "abroad" and bring home "commodities" for "exchange or trade." They direct their ventures as early modern sailors did, using the "points i'the compass" (1.2.58). Thomas and the Fashioner speak of the emissaries as though they travel far beyond their country to bring in their "commodities." They remark on the need for the emissaries to be seaworthy; one "Master Burst" is passed over for the position of "emissary Exchange" (1.2.71) because he is like an inadequately caulked vessel: he "has a rupture; he has sprung a leak" (1.2.73). Jonson presents news as a valuable foreign good that the emissaries, like ships or the men who pilot them, seek out and bring back to the News Staple. Yet the "abroad" of which Thomas speaks turns out to be no farther afield than "The Court, . . . Paul's, Exchange, and Westminster Hall" (1.2.60); although they do bring in news from other countries *picked up at* these close London locales, Thomas and the Fashioner are either exaggerating or repeating exaggerations of the emissaries' range. The foreign and the domestic blur: foreign ventures for "exchange and trade"—requiring merchant ships—are like domestic ventures for the same, and all ventures of this kind are called into question: the News Staple, as a business, is underhanded and money-grubbing. They exchange and manufacture news, not for the education of the populace but to fleece them and make a profit.

The emissaries, then, circulate dangerously and are "rigged," even if their rigging is not as costly as Pecunia's; they are vessels, some of which are leaky or otherwise inadequate. These circulating, profit-seeking ships are definitively gendered neither male nor female. Instead, they raise the issue of the difference between women who circulate and men who circulate only to trouble that difference and make its definition precarious. Cymbal—the proprietor of the News Staple—has a subsequent exchange with P. Senior about investing in the Staple that further muddies a vision of men as pilots or merchants who control female or feminized vessels for commercial profit. In response to Cymbal's proposal for P. Senior to allow Pecunia to "sojourn" (3.4.26) with the Staple so that he and P. Senior can "divide, half the profits" (3.4.27) of such a venture, P. Senior vehemently refuses: "I'll ha' no venture in your ship, the Office, / Your bark of six, if 'twere sixteen, good sir" (3.4.79–80).[38] P. Senior classes the Staple's ventures as much too "hazardous" (3.4.32) and precisely the sort of "doubtful course" (3.4.31) he seeks to avoid, as he perceives himself as "A just and upright man" who condemns the fact that modern commerce "Now . . . totters" (3.4.32–33). If the whole News Staple is a "bark of six"—likely a small vessel, perhaps having six sails—and

38. The 1640–41 Folio of the play prints "venter" in these lines, which Parr has modernized to "venture." Jonson's (or the printer's) spelling makes the fruitful double meaning of "venture" even more apparent, emphasizing the connection between selling goods and going forth—venturing, adventuring—in a ship to bring goods home.

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not a fleet of vessels, as the group of shiplike emissaries would indicate, then its ventures do not represent a sound investment.[39] As P. Senior says, those ventures would not be sound even if the "bark" of the Staple were two or three times as large. P. Senior fixates on voyages and ventures even when he negates them; he ambiguously calls attention to the necessity for English merchants to travel abroad by sea for many contemporary commercial ventures even as he almost violently, and with a long string of verbal abuse aimed at Cymbal and his associates, cuts off the possibility of such an investment.

The Staple, furthermore, is not just an inadequate vessel that P. Senior says will "overflow, / And spill all" (3.4.83–84), having taken on more "news"—commodities—than they can hold already; P. Senior asserts that Cymbal's hazardous ambitions reveal his inability to assess a seaworthy vessel in the first place. When Cymbal resorts to insulting P. Senior after having been rejected, P. Senior responds, "Still you lose your labor. / I am a broken vessel, all runs out: / A shrunk old dry-fat. Fare you well, good six!" (3.4.85–87). P. Senior compares himself not to a merchant's ship but to a "dry-fat" or a barrel, and a "broken" one at that. He classes himself as an ineffectual vessel, perhaps referring to his bad health, yet also asserting that he will not be put to use by a man he views as an ineffectual captain, pilot, or merchant. If Cymbal and his Staple are a "six" and P. Senior is a broken vessel, then neither is adequate for a commercial maritime venture. Despite his rejections and denials, P. Senior still calls attention to the idea that one *does* need a "galley / Gilt in the prow"—as he says Pecunia is or will be—to make a sound, "straight" (3.4.32) venture. He insistently reminds us of the need for unstable, dangerous journeys "abroad" to make money multiply.

III. SEA MONSTERS, WINDS, AND TIDES

Just as Pecunia is not the play's only vessel, her clothing is not the only "rigging"; the play opens in an opulent, costly dressing room with P. Junior directing his own rigging, as it were, for his postwardship venture. He describes his clothing

39. The *OED* entry for "bark/barque," noun, def. 2, cites Randle Cotgrave's 1611 dictionary as an example of the French word *barque* translated into English as "a barke, little ship, great boat." The note on the word's etymology explains that in the romance languages, *barca* or *barque* was "apparently, originally, a large ship's boat, used as a lighter; on the Mediterranean, the name continued to be applied to an open boat, even while extended to a small vessel with sails; the latter was the sense with which the word was taken from French into English." Based on this definition and note, I am speculating that P. Senior's "six" refers to the "bark's" sails, not to its crew or another aspect of its construction. By the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, "bark" came to designate a ship with a specific rig or sail plan: "a three-masted vessel with fore- and main-masts square-rigged, and mizenmast 'fore-and-aft' rigged." But this technically precise definition was not yet in force when the play was written. Bark was and, in literary spheres, sometimes still is a malleable word in terms of its reference to actual ships. Many thanks to Daniel Brayton for help in clarifying P. Senior's remarks.

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in terms that are not as explicitly maritime as his uncle's of Pecunia but that nonetheless recall a ship setting forth: P. Junior says "I do feel / The powers of one and twenty like a tide / Flow in upon me" (1.2.134–36). He "conjure[s]" the "tradesmen" (1.2.137–38)—"For profit" (1.2.139), as the Linener says in an aside—to his presence and says, "Come, cast my cloak about me" (1.2.140). Having come of age and requested his sail-like cloak, P. Junior feels the pull of the fortune he wishes to spend in the same way that a vessel prepared for a mercantile venture might feel the pull of the appropriate tide. The Linener's aside and the extravagant, mocking tone in this scene prompt the Gossips and other audience members to see P. Junior as a foolishly and perhaps too richly rigged ship, embarking on the first of several morally and economically questionable ventures. In addition, instead of bringing gold *into* England by his pursuits, he departs on his metaphorical venture laden with gold: at the start of the following scene, P. Canter says, "I come to see what riches thou bearest in thy breeches / . . . What, do thy pockets jingle?" (1.3.3–5). P. Junior's jingling pockets might raise English fears about money leaving their country. As Deng and Forman point out, many of Jonson's contemporaries saw ships exiting England loaded with specie as a major driver of England's economic woes. P. Junior sails forth with his "cloak" spread about his shoulders, a ripe target for pirates and a vessel aiming to risk fortune for future profit but without any assurance of the soundness of his ventures.

P. Junior's prodigal venture, like the ventures of the emissaries, is domestic but recalls or echoes a foreign voyage; Jonson closely links P. Junior's desire for marriage to Pecunia to a desire for foreign trade that can bolster the domestic economy. Pecunia is "a Cornish gentlewoman" (1.6.39) but is also apparently a Spanish "Infanta" (1.6.42) whose "grandfather / Was duke, and cousin to the King of Ophir" (1.6.42–43).[40] In the second Intermean, the Gossip Censure comments obliquely on the parallel between P. Junior's pursuit of Pecunia and the proposed match between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta Maria Anna, negotiations for which had failed rather spectacularly with Charles's trip to Spain in 1622–23.[41] Censure says that in Pecunia's portrayal, the playwright and actors have "abuse[d] an honorable princess" and have made the satire "[p]lain in the styling her 'Infanta' and giving her three names" (2.Int.21; 24–25). Nova Myhill observes that the Gossip Mirth, calling Censure's surmises a "vice of your inter-

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40. According to Parr, Pecunia's "pedigree . . . links Spanish riches with mythological sources. The *King* . . . suggests Solomon, who fetched gold from Ophir in I Kings, xi.28. His name was subsequently the focus of a magical tradition, and this Biblical exploit was turned into a piece of alchemical lore, transforming base metal into gold"; Jonson, *Staple of News*, 105nn42–44.

41. For an overview of this episode, sometimes referred to as the Spanish Match, see Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, *Early Modern England 1485–1714: A Narrative History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 228–30.

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pretation" (2.Int.26), "rejects Censure's claim that Pecunia is a satire of the Spanish infanta."[42] Mirth models a particular kind of "interpretive practice" for female viewers and the Blackfriars' theater audience more broadly.[43] Yet Mirth's rejection of the political resonances of Pecunia's names do not negate those resonances; she is an infanta—a Spanish princess—*and* an "infanta of the mines" (as she is listed in Persons of the Play). Those mines are foreign and mythical but also are "Cornish," that is, homegrown. Pecunia—in her role as a personification of money and as a character in whom English marital, political, and economic desires blend—represents a melding of semimythical riches from "abroad," in both senses of the word. P. Junior's desire for her and presumed eventual marriage to her underscore the frightening yet necessary circulation of women and money in both domestic and broader spheres.

Ventures abroad are hazardous, as we have seen; the vessels can be leaky or too small to manage travel in foreign waters, and even if they are seaworthy, they might need to confront storms, pirates, or other maritime threats. Contemplating Pecunia's beauty with the hack poet Madrigal, P. Junior observes,

> O, how my princess draws me in with her looks
> And hales me in, as eddies draw in boats,
> Or strong Charybdis ships that sail too near
> The shelves of love! The tides of your two eyes,
> Wind of your breath, are such as suck in all
> That do approach you.
>
> (4.2.41–47)

For Newman, P. Junior's address to Pecunia confirms Jonson's portrayal of Pecunia as an object and embodiment of lust. She argues, "These lines extend the play's ambivalent representation of femininity by likening Pecunia to Charybdis, another dangerously seductive feminine personification."[44] Yet if Pecunia is like Charybdis, then she is not an object for men to exchange, nor is she treasure that they seek to gain by mercantile venture. Rather, she is a dangerously autonomous female monster who threatens the very commercial overseas ventures on which men embark to seek profit. P. Junior's figuration makes it difficult to ascertain whether Pecunia is a valuable object that, in passing from hand to hand, sustains the English economy or whether she is a foreign, Mediterranean threat to that economy. Indeed, we are perhaps meant to see Pecunia both as exchangeable object and as autonomous threat; money is both necessary and dangerous to the

42. Myhill, "Taking the Stage," 50.
43. Myhill, "Taking the Stage," 50.
44. Newman, "Engendering the News," 63.

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economy, just as a woman who can exercise her desires beyond the home is both necessary and dangerous in forming a marriage.

Pecunia's power lies not only in her similarity to Charybdis or to a Siren, as Parr suggests (198nn42–47), but also in her likeness to the maritime environment.[45] She is like a female sea monster yet is also like the "tides," the "wind," and the swirling water—the "eddies." We can attribute some of the confusion in this collection of similes and metaphors to P. Junior's want of poetic skill, but his description of Pecunia as similar to a sucking tide and a blowing wind (and like a wind that *sucks* and a tide that *pushes*) indicates an ambivalence and anxiety about the human relationship to the surrounding world. Pecunia endangers voyages, like an errant tide, a storm, or even by becalming. Yet she also makes voyages possible, like a tide that pushes the ship or a wind that fills the sail. P. Junior frames his relationship to money and to his future wife in antagonistic terms here. If she is like a sea monster or like either a hostile or a helpful maritime environment, then he must tame her, use her, or escape from her to manage his money and his marriage. The Homeric world and characters might be capricious and beyond P. Junior's control, yet he aims to be a wily Odysseus, an epic hero who can dominate money, women, and the natural world.

In P. Junior's next speech, he undermines the hierarchies of human over nonhuman and husband over wife that he has just offered. On hearing P. Junior's comparison of her to Charybdis and to the tides and winds of the sea, Pecunia responds, "Who hath changed my servant?" (4.3.47), and P. Junior replies:

> Yourself, who drink my blood up with your beams
> As doth the sun, the sea! Pecunia shines
> More in the world than he, and makes it spring
> Where'er she favors.
>
> (4.2.48–51)

P. Junior shifts from comparing Pecunia to the sea to likening her to the sun, a figure he definitively genders male ("he"), complicating his alignment of Pecunia with monstrous femininity by classing some of her environmentally based power

45. Sirens crop up a few times in the play; Shunfield—a sea captain and one of the Jeerers—describes the fat cook Lickfinger as capable of "mak[ing] a Siren / Sing i'the kettle" (3.3.35) with his culinary skill, and P. Senior puts off the insistent jeerers, claiming, "I'll stop mine ears with [Pecunia] against the Sirens / Court and Philosophy" (2.4.20–21). These comparisons draw resemblance not between the Sirens and dangerously alluring women or money but rather between dangerously alluring food and social habits, or by extension, the dangerous economic ventures in which the jeerers would have him invest. P. Senior rejects the role of Odysseus, stopping up his ears as the sailors do instead of tying himself to the mast, and rejects both opulent food and economic or social circulation, but he must also be punished and reeducated before the end of the play, so his policy of stopping up his ears (with money) seems dubious at best.

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as masculine, or perhaps more than masculine.[46] At the same time, he compares his own body to the sea, with its ebbing and flowing tides: he is still sucked toward Pecunia when she "drink[s] . . . up" P. Junior's "blood," yet now he is like the dangerous watery element instead of her. He no longer frames himself as a ship in an antagonistic struggle with the maritime environment or sea monsters but rather as matter—stuff of the world—that moves up and down, infused with Pecunia's power. His simile can be read bawdily: Pecunia's sunbeams *raise up* his blood as the sun raises water from the ocean, and that blood or water rains down from the sky, like ejaculate, to fertilize the ground. But in P. Junior's second similes, both he and his beloved are matter, commingling as they move through the world. The similes disrupt the human/nonhuman binary and posit a more complicated relationship between wife and husband, humans and the world, and the flow of capital and the health of the state than appears in other parts of the play.

IV. THE DUTCH EEL BOAT

At the end of the play, Pecunia claims for herself the ability to educate the Pennyboys about how to correctly manage both marital and economic affairs. P. Senior, who sought utter control over Pecunia, must ultimately give up that control. As he vows to relinquish his miserliness, he says, "to my nephew, / I give my house, goods, lands, all but my vices / And those I go to cleanse, kissing this lady / Whom I do give him too, and join their hands" (5.6.54–57). Although Jonson configures the marriage relationship as one in which a woman passes from the control of one man to another, and in which a man owns his wife as he owns "goods," Pecunia's final words—the last words of the play before the epilogue—recast P. Senior's description of her as passive property. Pecunia advocates a middle way between P. Senior's "vices" of miserliness and P. Junior's prodigality:

> Pecunia herself doth wish,
> That she may still be aid unto their uses,
> Not slave unto their pleasures, or a tyrant
> Over their fair desires; but teach them all
> The golden mean: the prodigal how to live,
> The sordid and the covetous how to die:
> That, with sound mind; this, safe frugality.
> (5.6.60–66)

46. P. Junior's lines on Pecunia recall several images from Petrarch's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (1374), especially his depiction of the lover lost at sea in sonnet 189 ("Passa la nave mia")—in which the beloved is ambiguously compared to the boat, its governor, and the hostile maritime environment—and his comparison of Laura to Apollo in song 23 and songs and sonnets 41–43, among others. Francesco Petrarch, *The Canzoniere or Rerum vulgarium fragmenta*, ed. and trans. Mark Musa (1374; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 26–35, 68–71, 280–81.

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In addition to articulating a policy wherein the Aristotelian "golden mean" yields economic prosperity, Pecunia carves out agency for wives in the economic and marital partnership into which she and P. Junior are about to enter.[47] She is an "aid," not a "slave" or a "tyrant," and she will "teach them all / The golden mean" (5.6.63–64). Pecunia is not merely a "galley" to be sailed or controlled by her husband but is, like the wife of Proverbs 31, an active "aid" to and a participant in commerce. She can "teach" her husband how to run both the household economy and the hazardous exchanges with places "a farre" (Prov. 31:14), activities that might help the English economy at large to prosper. It remains difficult to ignore the sense that P. Junior will have ultimate ownership and control in the marriage and difficult to ignore P. Senior's transfer of Pecunia from the control of one man to the control of another. Yet the maritime metaphors in the play allow for fluctuations in the marital power structure. If Pecunia's desires and active will are integral to the success of the marital and economic ventures, and to the escape from "tyranny," then her marriage to P. Junior represents an unstable, collaborative marital relationship in which neither partner is "slave" or "tyrant" and that mirrors a system of governance that articulates a volatile power relationship between monarch and subject.

The volatility in the maritime metaphors speaks to a seventeenth-century debate about how humans relate to the stuff of their world; whereas a strictly hierarchical ship of state would indicate a line between the human and the nonhuman and would harmonize with the biblical command to "let [man] rule ouer the fish of the sea, and ouer the foule of the heauen, and ouer the beastes, & ouer all the earth" (Gen. 1:26), we have seen over and over that the pilot's relationship to the ship and the environment in these metaphors is mobile. The metaphors I have examined engage with another biblically derived understanding of humans in the world not as dominant over "all the earth" but rather as "dust" (Gen. 3:19); or matter; or, as Elizabeth I articulates it in her prayer "On the Defeat of the Spanish Armada, September 1588," as a part of what came into being when God did "divide into four singular parts the form of all this mold, which aftertime hath termed elements."[48] Humans are part of the "mold" and "elements," and their status as such makes the boundary between humans and their surroundings difficult to define. Jonson's play certainly articulates hierarchy: husband controls wife and father controls son, and these relationships imply a monarch—though not a tyrannical one—who controls his subjects. Yet the dramatic form's many

47. For a thorough discussion of the implications of the "golden mean" for reading this play, see Deng, "Global Œconomy."

48. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 424.

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speakers and viewpoints enable Jonson, consciously or unconsciously, to use the ambiguity and malleability of the maritime metaphors to present conflicting ideas about gender, economic circulation, and human control over money, foreign goods, ships, seas, and tides simultaneously. These many views put pressure on hierarchical relationships and on the models of governance predicated on those hierarchies.

New technologies are sometimes drivers of that pressure; the new economic concept of investment, as we have seen, produces anxiety in several of the characters Jonson stages. While switching from the "Pontifical side" (3.2.63) to the "Reformed" or "Protestant" (1.5.14) side of the News Office at P. Junior's behest, Thomas Barber also reads—twice, because of his switch—an item about the "Hollanders . . . invisible eel" that "has a nimble tail . . . with which *she* wriggles / betwixt the coasts of a ship and sinks it straight" (3.2.74, 80–82; emphasis added); this new technology constitutes a potentially hermaphroditic, destructive cyborg that has the capacity to change naval warfare if not commerce outright. The Dutch eel boat is an item of fake news, sensationalized to make it enticing to buy, but it still—even if only momentarily—disrupts the pilot/ship hierarchy and its marital and monarchical analogues. In the eel boat's challenge to English naval power, we see also a challenge to marital hierarchy, to a binary view of gender, and to the concept of human exceptionalism. Bringing a blue cultural studies lens to the play shows Jonson's ambivalence toward and engagement with a culture that was actively debating the explanatory power of binaries such as male/female, monarch/subject, and nature/culture. These debates, and the ship of state metaphor in its many iterations, indicate that oppositional binaries were not the only models available in early modern England for thinking about gender, authority, and the human relationship to the sea.

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