# Single men and manhood in early modern England, 1650-1750

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***Abstract***

This thesis explores the social experiences and cultural depictions of single men in early modern England. The existing historiography of masculinity has established that multiple concepts of manhood existed in the early modern period, but the socio-cultural importance associated with marriage has served to obfuscate single men and their gendered identities. This thesis de-centres marriage to understand both the practice and representation of bachelors and widowers in the period 1650 to 1750.

Applying quantitative and qualitative methodologies, each chapter uses a different type of source to explore how single men accessed manhood and the form their manhood took. Demographic data from tax returns, probate and testamentary records, life-writing from diaries and autobiographies, and descriptions of male singleness in prescriptive and non-prescriptive printed literature are analysed to provide a more complete picture of male singleness.

While singleness was represented negatively in print, assuming that bachelors and widowers rejected normal social and family life, this thesis will show that in reality, single men were well-integrated into society. The disparity between depiction and practice will be addressed by demonstrating single men's investment in the processes associated with the attainment of patriarchal manhood, such as heading a household. Crucially, the following work does not examine single men in isolation, instead it reintegrates them into their kin and non-kin networks. It will be argued that these relationships were strongly affective, allowing single men to cultivate positions of domestic, familial, and social authority upheld by the obedience of others. Ultimately, this demonstrates that bachelors and widowers alike could possess patriarchal manhood equivalent to that of married men. A reduced emphasis on marriage therefore highlights the importance of domestic and family life in establishing an individual's reputation as a man, ultimately enriching the historian's understanding of the operation of manhood in early modern England.

***Declaration***

I, the author, confirm that the Thesis is my own work. I am aware of the University's Guidance on the Use of Unfair Means (www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/unfair-means). This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, university.

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To my father, Graham Morgan, thank you for telling me you were proud of me.

1963-2022

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| | |
|---|---|
| Bristol Archives…….. | BA |
| Derbyshire Record Office…….. | DRO |
| Harrowby Manuscripts Trust..…….. | HMT |
| London Archives (formerly London Metropolitan Archives).…… | LA |
| National Archives…….…….. | NA |
| Staffordshire Record Office….…….. | SRO |

***Introduction – Single men and manhood in early modern England***

In 1705, Richard Waller published a posthumous compilation of works by the London-based scientist and life-long bachelor, Robert Hooke.[1] In a short biography at the beginning of the work, Waller praised Hooke's genius but also commented that:

> From [Hooke's] Youth he had been us'd to a Collegiate, or rather Monastick Life, which might be some reason of his continuing to live so like an Hermit or Cynick too penuriously, when his Circumstances, as to Estate, were very considerable, scarcely affording himself Necessaries.[2]

This image is highly evocative and in many ways affirms historians' assumptions about men who do not marry – their work (or some other position or interest) was their highest priority, and their dedication to it necessitated withdrawal from the rest of society, including rejection of the roles of husband and father. Yet Waller's statement does not accurately represent Hooke's life, or at least only represents his last few years when progressing illness made Hooke less able to leave his house. Hooke's diaries, written between his late thirties and late fifties, reveal that his rigorous work schedule was balanced by a busy social life, management of the domestic work carried out by his servants, and the raising of two young relatives who lived with him. This contradiction between Hooke's representation and his actual practice is caused by the highly central position of marriage to understandings of what it meant to be a man in early modern England. Early modern conduct treatises directed that most powerful and respectable role for men was patriarchal, literally embodying the concept of 'rule by fathers,' and therefore was 'reserved for men of adult years who had achieved householding status through marriage.'[3] Political commentators also used the conjugal household and the marital bond as metaphors to describe how the state should operate.[4] It is therefore understandable that the dominant form of manhood in early modern society included marriage as a central component. But this prioritisation has led to male singleness being treated as a deviation from the ideal, with previous histories of masculinity viewing singleness only in contrast to married life. This thesis, however, provides an alternative perspective, decentring marriage to focus on the position of bachelors and widowers in English society and culture from 1650 to 1750.

The following work provides new insights into the history of masculinities by focusing on both the lived experiences and cultural representation of single men. The first three chapters

[1] Richard Waller, *The posthumous works of Robert Hooke* (London, 1705).
[2] Waller, *Posthumous works*, p. xxvii.
[3] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 3 and p. 87.
[4] Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (London, 2014), p. 3.

of this thesis use evidence from tax records, probate, and diaries and autobiographies to argue that single men were not isolated from early modern English society; they existed within domestic and social networks which could vary in construction and size. Reconstruction of these groups contributes to the history of the family and household by delineating the involvement of single men in a variety of kin and non-kin networks within their households, families, and amongst their wider communities. Furthermore, tracing the hierarchies of authority evident in these relationships allows for the contours of single men's access to manhood to be mapped out, with their domestic and social roles providing bachelors and widowers with opportunities to engage with many of the attributes of manhood usually expected of married men, such as heading a household.

This social-historical approach to material is then counterposed in a fourth chapter which explores the tropes and characteristics associated with male singleness in printed texts across the same period. The representation of bachelor- and widowerhood in prescriptive and non-prescriptive discourses suggests that male singleness was seen as a threat to the wider social order. As in Waller's description of Hooke, this image aligns more closely with the behaviours that historians have expected single men to demonstrate yet appears obviously disparate from actual practice. The finding that representation was not reflective of lived experience presents an opportunity for this thesis to reassess the unnatural boundaries that have been imposed in the historiography of masculinity which have separated married and single men.

By bringing bachelors and widowers to the forefront of the study, this thesis provides a new perspective for historians of manhood and masculinity, as well as contributing to the emergent fields of enquiry into male domesticity and the importance of affective kin and non-kin relationships in the early modern period. In doing so, this thesis argues that single men actively supported and engaged with patriarchal ideals of manhood: they valued economic and social independence; household management; and the exertion of responsible authority over others, regardless as to whether they were single for only a few years or for the course of their entire life. Not only were these behaviours understood by single men as evidence of their manhood, but this authority was also recognised and often validated by the obedience of subordinates as well as the approval of their male peers. As such, marriage appears less important to the acquisition and enactment of early modern manhood than historians have previously assumed.

### *Historiography*

Keith Thomas's analysis of the 'comparative sexual freedom' afforded to men in the past, in contrast to the expected chastity of women, marks the first study which identified a historical code of behaviours as specifically masculine in form.[5] However, it was not until sociologist Raewyn Connell published *Gender and Power* in 1987 that a framework was established for researchers to more rigorously examine masculinity.[6] Connell proposes that within the patriarchal society that structures the modern (Western) world, one form of masculinity becomes 'hegemonic,' socially and culturally lauded.[7] All forms of femininity and, importantly, other forms of masculinity are constructed as subordinate to this hegemonic ideal.[8] Hegemonic masculinity is not accessible to all men, but the majority of men do 'consent … [and] collaborate in sustaining those images' as the ideal; Connell uses the status of a professional footballer to demonstrate how hegemonic masculinity can at once be celebrated but unattainable to most.[9] The historical importance of variable experiences of masculinity was then posited by John Tosh in his 1994 article 'What Should Historians do with Masculinity?'[10] Tosh advises that 'any serious feminist historical project' that seeks to 'understand the system of social relations as a whole' must include 'the gendered study of men.'[11] Tosh's crucial assertion is that 'gender is inherent of all aspects of social life, whether women are present or not,' using his own specialism in the Victorian era to identify the home, the workplace, and all-male social spaces as venues where men asserted masculinity over women or tested it against the masculinity of other men.[12]

The early modern workings of manhood have been explored most thoroughly by Elizabeth Foyster and Alexandra Shepard, with the former examining relationships between men and women and the latter focusing more on the relational expression of gendered difference between men. Foyster uses marriage as the 'context' for a study which examines 'what the ideal of patriarchy mean[t] for the reality of men's lives,' with a particular emphasis on 'the private lives of men in the home as sons, husbands, and fathers.'[13] Patriarchy is explored

[5] Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, 2 (1959): pp. 195-216, quote from p. 197.
[6] Raewyn Connell, *Gender and Power: Society, the Person, and Sexual Politics* (Cambridge, 2003).
[7] Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 295-305.
[8] Connell, *Gender and Power*, p. 300.
[9] Connell, *Gender and Power*, pp. 298-299.
[10] John Tosh, What Should Historians Do with Masculinity? Reflections on Nineteenth-Century Britain,' *History Workshop* 38, 1 (1994): pp. 179-202.
[11] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do:' p. 179.
[12] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do:' p. 180 and p. 184.
[13] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 2 and p. 3.

in feminist terms to understand how men attempted to gain dominance over women, and how those processes could be challenged and failed. Foyster recognises that the rewards of patriarchal authority for men were 'honour, reputation, and credit,' and therefore men actively worked to maintain patriarchal notions of difference between themselves and women, not only by marrying, but also by including the subordination of women in homosocial interactions, such as by boasting about sexual conquests in the company of friends.[14] The consequences of failing to secure patriarchal authority over others is explored in Foyster's use of depositions from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century trials for defamation and marital separation, and the letters and appeals relating to these cases. The details suggest that if a man could not control his or his wife's reputation for sexual honour, he lost his ability to claim patriarchal manhood and his designation as either adulterer or cuckold made him lose his standing within his community.[15] Foyster therefore establishes that patriarchy was central to the gendered experience of men in early modern England, but also underscores that it was also never fully secure.

Shepard expands on this understanding of patriarchal manhood by exploring what other forms of manhood existed alongside it in early modern England. She cautions against models of masculinity and manhood which suggest that men could only either achieve patriarchy or fail in that attempt. Adapting Connell's language of hegemony and subordination, Shepard argues that the gendered experiences of men were shaped by four broad and loose categories which could overlap in some contexts: patriarchal manhood, the dominant form associated with marriage and householding status; subordinate manhood, belonging to those who were dependent on other men for housing or employment, such as servants; anti-patriarchal manhood, a deliberate practice by men who engaged in various forms of excess as a rejection of patriarchy; and alternative manhood, for those men who had different values to, but did not threaten, patriarchal norms.[16] To demonstrate how men established and validated these forms of manhood between each other, Shepard uses the records of the University of Cambridge court alongside other instances of litigation to understand how townspeople, students, and the university authorities expressed and understood gendered behaviours between 1560 and 1640. Prosecutions for violent behaviour, sexual misbehaviour, and debt, and defamation litigations which addressed allegations of these behaviours, indicate the importance of claims to

[14] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 5 and pp. 43-44.
[15] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, pp. 61-65 and pp. 108-112.
[16] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 12; and Alexandra Shepard, 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500–1700,' *The Journal of British Studies* 44, 2 (2005): p. 291.

patriarchal tenets of 'thrift, order, and self-control' to many men.[17] They also reveal that a significant number of individuals either did not care to respect or could not access these imperatives, because of their age, wealth, or social group. Behaviours such as excessive drinking, though explicitly anti-patriarchal, could be rewarding to men in these situations; they provided their own manly codes through which men could gain praise for sociability, exorbitant spending, and uncivil drunken behaviour.[18] Shepard therefore argues that patriarchal manhood was the dominant mode of manhood in early modern England, but it was not the only possible option for early modern men.

Foyster and Shepard both acknowledge the importance of popular culture and print in establishing ideas about gender. Foyster's use of prescriptive guides as well as works intended to entertain, such as ballads, supports her argument that men were expected to control 'women's talk … [women's] sexual activities, and the potential for women to challenge men's position of power,' and these works laid out the consequences for those men whose behaviour was 'lax or libertine' rather than patriarchal.[19] Shepard's use of conduct literature and medical textbooks in the first part of her book similarly provides a rulebook that explains how early modern men could access the 'principle gateways' to patriarchal manhood; 'age, marital status, and more obliquely, social status.'[20] In both cases, it is clear that the manhood modelled in these texts was not, and indeed could not, directly relate to the early modern man's experience of being male. Foyster finds that the dependence of male authority on female submission was desirable, but inherently impractical, as the sexual honour which supported patriarchy 'could not be seen or proved;' control was never as complete in reality as it was in the literature.[21] For Shepard, manhood was actually far more 'contingent on context' than conduct books allowed for.[22] Fraternity among students, for example, had a powerful impact on the behaviour of young men even though it was considered 'light or lewd' to the authorities of the university.[23] Shepard also finds that men might assume multiple forms of manhood within a lifetime or even within a day, for example by appropriately embodying the role of a patriarch at home, but then assuming an alternative mode of manhood when in male company in an alehouse.[24]

[17] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 96.
[18] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 103-104.
[19] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 208.
[20] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 9.
[21] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 210.
[22] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 17.
[23] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 260.
[24] Shepard, 'Anxious Patriarchs?:' p. 291; and Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 251.

The eighteenth century is frequently depicted as a period of change in the dominant form of early modern manhood. The growth of consumer culture and the emergence of 'polite society' is linked by historians to the development of a new code of 'polite' behaviours which marked a transition in the attributes positively associated with masculinity.[25] While some attributes of manhood, particularly self-control, were retained from earlier periods, Philip Carter argues that the 'idealised manliness' associated with politeness in the eighteenth century was no longer conceived of in 'sexual' (i.e. patriarchal) terms and increasingly linked to 'social' traits.[26] Manhood was secured by displays of outward propriety, personal accomplishment, and generosity towards others as a reflection of internal moral values.[27] Rather than dominating women, Carter claims, polite manhood advocated for heterosocial interactions with women as opportunities for men to refine their manners and soften their tempers.[28] Like Foyster and Shepard, Carter finds evidence of politeness evoked in both printed conduct literature and in a selection of contemporary diaries and letters. Subsequent studies have explored the influence of ideals of politeness on elite masculine identities and on the use and display of masculine material goods to demonstrate that polite manhood could be evoked to support claims of social distinction.[29]

However, concepts of polite manhood are more strictly bound to social status and location than the models of manhood provided by Shepard and Foyster. Polite manhood was a distinctly urban phenomenon, linked mostly to London and other cosmopolitan regional centres such as Bath.[30] Even then, politeness was not a general practice but rather more specific to certain locations, such as the coffee-house, theatre, private club, or fraternal institution.[31] Although participation was technically open to all, politeness appears more as an in-group marker belonging to a select few middling sort men who participated heavily in socio-intellectual circles rather than a general driver of behaviour. Lawrence Klein also points out that it is difficult to determine the extent to which politeness was 'imposed' in these circles, highlighting tradespeople and servants as groups which may have affected politeness as a

[25] See Lawrence Klein, *Shaftesbury and the Culture of Politeness: Moral Discourse and Cultural Politics in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1994); and Lawrence Klein, 'Politeness and the Interpretation of the British Eighteenth Century,' *The Historical Journal* 45, 4 (2002): pp. 869-898.
[26] Philip Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society, Britain 1660-1800* (Harlow, 2001), p. 73 and p. 9.
[27] Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, p. 21.
[28] Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, pp. 72-73.
[29] See Henry French and Mark Rothery, *Man's Estate: Landed Gentry Masculinities, c. 1660-1900* (Oxford, 2012), p. 87, pp. 89-94, and pp. 244-245; David Kuchta, *The three-piece suit and modern masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley, 2002), p. 4 and pp. 112-113; and Ben Jackson, *Material Masculinities: Men and Goods in Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester, upcoming), pp. 23-24 and pp. 127-151.
[30] Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, pp. 36-37.
[31] Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, pp. 37-39; and Klein, 'Politeness and the Eighteenth Century:' pp. 892-896.

response to the desires of clientele and employers without putting polite manhood into practice in their personal lives.[32] As such, this thesis does not refute the position that men in eighteenth-century England may have considered politeness to be a masculine virtue and sought to model their manhood in response to its dictates. One of the diaries cited by Carter – that of law student Dudley Ryder – is also used in this thesis.[33] However, although Ryder sought out a polite form of manhood, this thesis's study of a group of single men across the geographic and socio-economic spectrums of early modern England will demonstrate that manly politeness was not desirable to all men. Instead, the following work will show that there was a significant continuity in ideals of patriarchal manhood between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

While histories of masculinity for the early modern period have been thorough in analysing different periods, locations, and sources, the position of single men within the system of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century gender relations remains obscure. For example, while Tim Reinke-Williams has explored the relationship between misogyny in print and male singleness in his own work, in his historiographical review of early modern manhood he identifies 'political masculinities' as the theme which remains 'underexplored' by historians and does not make any reference to single male identities.[34] When male singleness is mentioned in existing studies of manhood, it is often treated as occurring either pre- or post-marriage, and therefore defined by the fact that single men were not husbands. Tosh describes bachelorhood as an 'ambivalent' status, and suggests that Victorian bachelors probably prioritised all-male association while they were 'temporarily denied the full privileges of masculinity.'[35] Shepard also suggests that in prescriptive texts, the unmarried man was deemed 'incomplete' because he had no wife to make him 'whole.'[36] While Shepard does examine how this incompleteness manifested in practice, the separation of 'excesses of youthful misrule' among the bachelor students of the University of Cambridge and the 'total dependence, not dissimilar to that of young children' admitted when widowed men stated their wealth in witness testimony serves more as a reflection of youth and old age rather than single lives.[37] Furthermore, Shepard's use of depositions from trials complicates her picture of male singleness because the men she

[32] Klein, 'Politeness and the Eighteenth Century:' p. 880.
[33] Carter, *Men and Polite Society*, pp. 164-174.
[34] See Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Misogyny, Jest-Books and Male Youth Culture in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Gender & History* 21, 2 (2014): pp. 324-339; see also Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Adulthood: Single Lives' in *Early Modern Bodies*, ed. Sarah Toulalan (London, upcoming); and Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Manhood and Masculinity in Early Modern England,' *History Compass* 12, 9 (2014): p. 690.
[35] Tosh, 'What Should Historians Do?:' p. 185 and p. 187.
[36] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 74
[37] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 248, p. 239 and p. 242

studies appeared as litigants or witnesses in cases relating to unacceptable or even criminal behaviour. While this provides an opportunity to investigate how men of variable social status interacted with normative codes of manhood, it necessarily overrepresents instances where men did not achieve its tenets. The ability for single men to possess any of the attributes of patriarchal manhood without being married remains unclear as a result of this source base. The research in this thesis therefore seeks to centre sources which are concerned with the everyday practice of single men alongside the more heightened accounts presented in print.

Even when purposeful consideration is extended to single men's experiences in histories of masculinity, there is a tendency to reinforce the idea that singleness was only experienced as a precursor to married adulthood. Amanda Vickery, for example, includes a whole chapter on the living arrangements of bachelor and widowed men in *Behind Closed Doors*, but suggests that single men's 'manhood remained in suspense' during this period because men 'had to marry to benefit in full from [a wife's] housekeeping.'[38] Jon Stobart's study of the domestic arrangements and purchasing habits of the aristocrat Edward Leigh is considerate of the use of material goods in shoring up his identity as an aristocrat and intellectual but also suggests that 'the permanent absence of a wife was felt in [Leigh's] bachelor rooms and houses.'[39] These marriage-forward approaches to singleness present it as an inherently fleeting and unfulfilling experience, rendering closer study of bachelor- and widowerhood unnecessary.

Two significant studies of bachelorhood for the early modern and modern era have attempted to address these assumptions, although their focus on American history does mean that their findings cannot directly translate into English contexts. John McCurdy's book *Citizen Bachelors* explores the changing attitudes towards the manhood of bachelors in colonial-era America.[40] Examining the role of 'free and white' bachelors, McCurdy challenges the idea that 'men who did not fit the mould' of normative manhood could only be seen as 'aberrant and problematic.' [41] Comparing tax records, life-writing, and print, the author argues that throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the lack of domestic or familial responsibilities associated with bachelorhood led them to be regarded as possessing a unique form of 'masculine independence.'[42] While early American settlers perceived bachelors to

[38] Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009), p. 77.
[39] Jon Stobart, 'Rich, Male and Single: The Consumption Practices of Edward Leigh, 1742-1786,' in *Single Life and the City, 1200-1900*, eds. Julie De Groot, Isabelle Devos, and Ariadne Schmidt (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 239.
[40] John McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors: Manhood and the Creation of the United States* (Ithaca, 2009).
[41] McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors*, p. 11 and p. 7.
[42] McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors*, p. 121 and pp. 162-163.

exist outside of the structure of the family, therefore giving them no stake in wider society, McCurdy claims bachelors earned the right to be viewed as men by engaging in the 'performance of obligations such as military service and the payment of taxes' which provided structure and strength to the early American state.[43] Singleness therefore provided an alternative pathway to manhood that allowed bachelors be seen as different from, but as equally respectable as, married men, a right which McCurdy argues was enshrined in the Declaration of Independence's opening: 'all men are created equal.'[44]

This complements the findings of *The Age of the Bachelor* by Howard Chudacoff, which examines the bachelor lifestyle and its associated institutions in nineteenth-century America.[45] Chudacoff uses population data, accounts of social clubs, and extracts from magazines and newspapers to depict bachelorhood as a 'subculture' within a society that idealised the marital relationship.[46] Chudacoff describes the experiences of bachelors as 'different from the lives of married people … sometimes harmlessly … at other times at odds and even at war with a conjugal, domestic existence,' but importantly he distinguishes these experiences from 'counterculture,' stating that bachelors did not possess 'inverse or counter values that stand in opposition to those of the larger society.'[47] By taking experiential and representational accounts together, both authors demonstrate that bachelors did have access to a form of manhood which was different in parameters from the patriarchal ideal but did not necessarily oppose it, resulting in bachelorhood appearing in line with Shepard's conception of 'alternative' manhood. Yet in attempting to position bachelorhood as an alternative manhood, rather than as a 'countercultural' or, to use Shepard's term, 'anti-patriarchal' form of manhood, neither McCurdy or Chudacoff interrogate the extent to which bachelors were able or willing to engage with patriarchal ideals of manhood. This exclusion occurs because both authors assume that individualism was an inherent aspect of the single man's life, with Chudacoff explicitly framing his research as a study of 'nonfamily life.'[48] What McCurdy describes as the 'freedom' of bachelors is also based in the assumption that they were not bound by the 'obligations of childhood and the responsibilities of fatherhood.'[49] The suggestion that family roles and relationships were only meaningful to married men creates and justifies an

[43] McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors*, p. 8.
[44] McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors*, pp. 162-163.
[45] Howard Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, 1999).
[46] Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, p. 10.
[47] Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, p. 14 and p. 13.
[48] Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, p. 7.
[49] McCurdy, *Citizen Bachelors*, p. 121.

invisible barrier which prevents bachelors from being seen in patriarchal contexts, without testing whether or not such a barrier actually existed.

Subsequent research which has examined the presence of single men in early modern England has also not sufficiently addressed the separation of bachelors from the context of the family. James Rosenheim's article 'The Pleasures of a Single Life' examines the 1701 poem of the same name and argues that its existence made lifelong bachelorhood 'conceivable and visible' to middling-sort single men.[50] He suggests that while the cultural narrative of the time usually placed bachelors in a 'non-normative position *vis-à-vis* a conventional manhood,' this poem provides a perspective where single male domesticity appears as 'a settled and stable space for and mode of living' and the single life 'was resolutely worldly, serious, rewarding, and virtuous.'[51] Yet in validating single men's claims to manhood in the domestic space, Rosenheim upholds the notion of single male individualism by suggesting that the pleasures of the single life were 'books, contemplation, friendship, and solitude.'[52]

The existing historiography which touches on widowerhood does provide opportunities to reevaluate the narrative that single male experiences were defined by individualism or solitude. Margaret Pelling, who has written extensively on the 1570 Norwich Census of the Poor, finds that there was an 'almost entire absence of men living on their own' in the town, with one quarter of the town's single men described as living with their children.[53] S. J. Wright's study of the lengths of periods of widowhood amongst men and women in eighteenth century Ludlow also finds that widowers frequently co-resided with female relatives or servants, and finds that those who did so were more likely to remain single for longer than those who lived alone.[54] Wright proposes that these women may have provided informal 'support systems' to widowed men, allowing men to continue living in their own household or to carry on their occupations when it would not have been viable in other circumstances.[55]

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[50] James Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life: Envisioning Bachelorhood in Early Eighteenth-Century England,' *Gender & History* 27, 2 (2015): p. 308.
[51] Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life:' p. 301 and p. 308.
[52] Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life:' p. 308.
[53] Margaret Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry? Ageing and Inequality Among Women and Men in Early Modern Norwich,' in *Women and Ageing in British Society since 1500*, eds. Lynn Botelho and Pat Thane (London, 2014), p. 35; Margaret Pelling, 'Finding Widowers: men without women in English towns before 1700,' in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (London, 1999), p. 49 and p. 50.
[54] S. J. Wright, 'The Elderly and Bereaved in Eighteenth Century Ludlow,' in *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Margaret Pelling and Richard Smith (London, 2003), pp. 92-93, Table 4.2a-c, and p. 100.
[55] Wright, 'The Elderly and the Bereaved,' p. 85 and p. 105-106.

Wright's finding does suggest that single men were not separated from familial roles or responsibilities, but while both Pelling and Wright apply gender as an analytical category in their work, their intention is to provide quantitative demographic and social analysis of living conditions amongst elderly single men and women, and not to explore how age, poverty, or family relationships interacted with gender identity. Indeed, the relative lack of interest in male experiences is admitted by Wright in the introduction to her work, where she states that 'particular attention will be devoted to the widow in the belief that the problems she encountered were often more serious than those which faced the man.'[56] The advantages of widowers over widows are listed by Pelling: 'the loss of a wife did not affect a man's ability to hold property, his claim on his children, his civic status, his occupational definition, or his legal status,' but she also counters this by suggesting that Norwich's poor widowers were frequently 'dependent' on children or remarriage because they could not maintain households on their own.[57] This point highlights the need for further study of widowers and their relationship to manhood. If management of a household containing a wife and other subordinates have been determined to be integral elements of the acquisition of patriarchal manhood in other works, what kind of manhood did widowers possess? If a single man headed a household comprised not of a wife and children, but rather female relatives or servants, could he possess patriarchal manhood? Wright makes clear that these wifeless households existed in the early modern period, but their parameters (and their potential benefits or pitfalls) are unclear for both early modern bachelors and widowers. The following work answers the questions raised here by integrating the single man back into his social and familial networks, through the application of the methods and approaches established in the field of the history of the family.

Historians interested in the population and economy of early modern England have established a series of facts about life between 1650 and 1750; mean age at first marriage was relatively high at 27 for men and 26 for women.[58] At marriage, a couple would form a new household, rather than acting as an extension of a parent's household. Households were usually 'simple' in structure, containing either one or no married couples, with the husband acting as head of the household; other types of household formation did exist, such as a parent residing

[56] Wright, 'The Elderly and the Bereaved,' p. 85.
[57] Pelling, 'Finding Widowers,' p. 42; and Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry?:' p. 38.
[58] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871: a Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 2002), p. 255, Table 7.26.

with married children, but this 'seems to reflect temporary circumstances.'[59] The number of people per household was also relatively small, with mean household size of 4.7 persons per house.[60] While some individuals remained unmarried, these numbers were continuously falling between the mid-seventeenth and mid-eighteenth centuries.[61] This information suggests that ways of living in the past were not dissimilar to the 'small, nuclear, conjugal household of modern industrial society.'[62] The socio-cultural esteem related to a husband and wife's ability to run a household and populate it with children is therefore supported by data which suggests that most early modern people abided by this way of living.

However, a more historicised approach to the history of the family reveals that practice of the family life in the past was far broader and more varied than what can be accounted for through demography alone. In *Family and Friends*, Naomi Tadmor 'takes seriously concepts of the family used by people in the past' by studying exactly how and where the language of friendship and kinship was used in diaries, letters, and printed texts.[63] Tadmor finds that in the eighteenth century, a wide range of people could be designated as kin, within and beyond the nuclear family. Relations by marriage (such as an aunt's husband), in-laws, and half-relations were all recognised as kin.[64] These relationships were not only linguistic, as the invocation of kinship between two people carried expectations of affectivity and reciprocity; it was common to ask relatives in other households for guidance in matters of employment, for them to sign bonds, or even to migrate to be closer to kin.[65]

Tadmor's challenge to demographic models which separate households into either simple and nuclear or extended families has been developed in other research to demonstrate the complexity of the English family in the past. Work by Foyster and Maria Cannon demonstrates that relationships between parents and children did not end once those children reached adulthood and established their own households.[66] In times of pressure, such as when

[59] John Hajnal, 'Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation System,' *Population and Development Review* 8, 3 (1982): p. 451 and p. 453.
[60] Peter Laslett, 'Mean household size in England since the sixteenth century,' in *Household and Family in Past Times*, eds. Richard Wall and Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 2009), p. 138, Table 4.4.
[61] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 262, Figure 7.15.
[62] Laslett, 'Mean household size,' p. 127.
[63] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 10.
[64] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 125.
[65] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 126 and pp. 113-115.
[66] Elizabeth Foyster, 'Parenting Was for Life, Not Just for Childhood: The Role of Parents in the Married Lives of their Children in Early Modern England,' *History* 86, 283 (2001): pp. 313-327; and Maria Cannon, 'Conceptualising childhood as a relational status: parenting adult children in sixteenth-century England,' *Continuity and Change* 36, 1 (2021): pp. 309-330.

experiencing marriage troubles, debt, or when facing the uncertainties of pregnancy and childbirth, Cannon finds that adult children continued to exhibit filial duty towards their parents in return for practical or emotional support.[67] Foyster argues that adult children were also expected to provide care for parents, noting that prescriptive texts encouraged adult children to invite elderly parents to reside with them.[68] Bernard Capp's study of grandparents also shows that they were emotionally and materially invested in the lives of their grandchildren, regardless as to whether they were involved in their care on a daily basis.[69] The sibling relationship has also been shown to be significant to early modern people.[70] Patricia Crawford's chapter on siblinghood explores how the concept of 'a general Christian expectation that siblings would love and support each other' manifested in adulthood, with expectations ranging from letters and visits to the provision of accommodation or care for each other's children, depending on individual circumstances.[71] Other research has spotlighted that affective relationships could exist between non-kin in the same household, such as between apprentices and their masters.[72] Importantly, these studies do not challenge the primacy of the husband and wife in the nuclear-style household, rather they indicate that other structures could exist alongside the married norm without posing any significant challenge to it. The consideration of non-conjugal, non-nuclear kinship is extended in this study to explore the relationship networks that were inclusive of single men.

On this basis, the most important proposal in *Family and Friends* is that of the 'household-family.'[73] Tadmor's socio-linguistic approach to her sources reveals that that the eighteenth-century understanding of the word of the family was not based in an inherent notion of conjugality or nuclearity, but rather reflected the household itself, and therefore its 'diverse dependents' including 'servants, apprentices, and co-resident relatives.'[74] What Tadmor

[67] Cannon, 'Conceptualising childhood:' p. 323.
[68] Foyster, 'Parenting Was for Life:' p. 316.
[69] Bernard Capp, 'The Missing Generation: Grandparents and Agency in Early Modern England,' *History* 108, 379-380 (2023): pp. 41-63.
[70] Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies, and Families in early modern England* (Harlow, 2004), pp. 209-238; Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and Social Relations in Georgian England: Share and Share Alike* (Manchester, 2012).
[71] Crawford, *Blood, Bodies, Families*, p. 218
[72] Alysa Levene suggests that relationships between masters and servants were 'harmonious' more often than not, a claim supported by evidence of high completion rates among apprentices taken from the London Foundling Hospital and relatively high rates of transference from apprenticeship into employment with the same master, see Alysa Levene, 'Honesty, Sobriety, and Diligence: Master-Apprentice Relations in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century England,' *Social History* 33, 2 (2008): pp. 183-200 with emphasis on p. 192. Charmian Mansell also discusses that the frequency with which 'former servants' provided witness testimony in courts is indicative of the 'longevity of relationships forged in service,' see Charmian Mansell, *Female Servants in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2024), pp. 260-265.
[73] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 16 and *passim*.
[74] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 19.

describes as the 'household-family' therefore relates to 'the boundaries of authority and household management' rather than blood and marriage.[75] The household-family was fluid; it was both flexibly inclusive of a variety of participants and also subject to change over time as individuals moved in and out of a household-family group. The presence of servants, apprentices, boarders, or stepchildren in these families are at once used to demonstrate that while conjugal relationships may have formed the central component of many households, the husband-and-wife pair likely also had experience of living in household-families with individuals to whom they shared no ties of kinship.[76]

This model allows Tadmor to highlight that single men were acknowledged as heads of families in both life-writing and novels.[77] The organising concept of the household-family required 'two participating parties, the head of the family and the dependents.'[78] In cases where a single man was the head of a household and had authority over dependents, even if this meant only servants and did not include any kin, Tadmor makes clear that eighteenth-century people understood this to be a family group.[79] Tadmor notes that this was an 'extreme' version of the household-family, but nevertheless advises that historians must acknowledge that the 'single men's family' did exist.[80] More recent studies which have investigated the families of single people indicate that these relationships provided them with a powerful source of support and identity. Amy Harris posits in her microhistorical case study of the middling-sort Sharp family, where 5 of the 8 siblings that lived to adulthood either married later in life or never married, that relationships between the unmarried adult siblings provided opportunities to 'craft alternative paths to respectable adulthood … [through] a group familial identity not dependent on marriage.'[81] Co-residence by choice rather than out of necessity provided practical benefits to siblings that extended beyond emotional contentment, as Harris argues that sharing costs and domestic duties allowed siblings to live in greater comfort than if they had maintained separate households.[82] The work of Helen Metcalfe also begins to demonstrate the potential profits of a more family-focused approach to the single man. Metcalfe's thesis and subsequent publications have focused on the intersection of single men's domestic and material lives in

[75] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 24.
[76] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 35.
[77] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 23.
[78] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 23.
[79] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 22-24.
[80] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 22-23.
[81] Amy Harris, '"She Never Inclined to It:" Childhood, Family Relationships, and Marital Choice in Eighteenth-Century England,' *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 12, 2 (2019): pp. 184-185.
[82] Harris, 'She Never Inclined to It:' p. 185 and p. 190.

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. She argues that engagement with the management of the household, its use in hosting sociable gatherings, and the requisite interactions with co-resident family members, servants, or landlords meant that single and married men used their domestic space to the same ends, even if the relationships that constituted the household were different.[83] Headship of a 'successful and coherent' household-family group gave a bachelor 'paternalis[tic]' status, granting him 'social and moral credit … as valid as [that] of his married counterparts.'[84] The acknowledgement that single men could be successful householders and heads of household-families provides the foundation that supports this thesis's wider evaluation of the manhood accessible to single men.

The existing historiography about manhood in early modern England has established that the most idealised form of patriarchal manhood was restricted to few men, 'conferred along the lines of age and marital status.'[85] While Shepard has shown that other forms of manhood were available, and men could derive their identities through these codes, becoming married has been so strongly interrelated with family and household formation in these works that the access to the latter without the former has not been considered. Studies of bachelorhood which have attempted to revise the exclusion of single men from the wider history of masculinity have subtly reinforced this narrative by suggesting that singleness was desirable specifically because it provided an alternative to the cares and responsibilities of married life. Yet histories of the family have demonstrated that single men and women were embedded in familial networks across early modern England. They reveal that single men's families operated around the same organising principles of the authority of a household head and the obedience of subordinate members as would be expected in a conjugal, nuclear-style household, and therefore they were recognised as valid forms of household formation by contemporaries. Metcalfe's recent work has gone on to suggest that single men's domestic and familial practices in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries 'mirrored the lifestyles and affective ties of married men,' indicating that their manhood must not be considered an alternative, but rather 'coexisting style of masculinity.'[86]

[83] Helen Metcalfe, 'To Let or For Lease: "Small, but Genteel" Lodgings for Bachelors in and about the Late Georgian Town,' *Journal for eighteenth-century studies* 44, 1 (2021): p. 4, p. 12, p. 15; and Helen Metcalfe, 'Moving House: Comfort disrupted in the domestic and emotional life of an eighteenth-century bachelor,' in *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe: 1700-1900*, ed. Jon Stobart (London, 2020), p. 185.
[84] Helen Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood in Late-Georgian England, c. 1760-1830,' Ph.D. Thesis (University of Manchester, 2016), p. 129.
[85] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 251.
[86] Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' p. 13.

By drawing these threads of historiography together, this thesis avoids relegating single men's manhood as an alternative to patriarchal manhood. Instead it provides a perspective of coexistence within the patriarchal system, indicating instances where single men could derive powerful and meaningful identities from being complicit with its dictates while also acknowledging that they could be limited or excluded from achieving patriarchal manhood in some contexts. This thesis therefore answers Shepard's call for historians of manhood to 'challenge received chronologies … [and] rejec[t] master narratives' by revising historians' understanding of the experiences and representations of single men.[87]

### *Methodology*

The scope of this thesis responds to Shepard's call for histories of masculinity to acknowledge manhood 'as a cultural category, as a form of social status, and as experienced by a variety of men.'[88] Applying the methods and approaches of historians of manhood and of the family, the following chapters will add to both fields by reconstructing the relationships and networks that were open to men who were not married in the early modern period, and evaluating the extent to which those relationships afforded single men authority over others, bringing them esteem in gendered terms. Analysis of the narratives and tropes associated with single men in printed works provides a point of comparison, offering a more complete picture of how manhood operated in early modern England.

Before continuing further, however, it is necessary to establish what is meant by singleness and the single man in the context of this thesis. Unlike previous studies of single men and women, which have focused on the 'never-married,' this work is inclusive of bachelors, as men who had not been married before, and widowers, men who had been married but whose spouse had died.[89] Single man is used interchangeably with both terms and to refer to both groups together. The terminology of the single life, bachelorhood, and widowerhood would have been familiar to early modern people; bachelor was first used to denote an unmarried man in 1477, widower in 1529, and single life, as a counterpoint to the double or joined life forged during marriage, was first seen in an English-language printed text in 1543.[90]

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[87] Shepard, 'Anxious Patriarchs?:' p. 295.
[88] Shepard, 'Anxious Patriarchs?:' p. 289.
[89] See Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' p. 32; and Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), p. 1 and *passim*.
[90] For "bachelor," see 'The Squyers tale' in Geoffrey Chaucer, *Canterbury Tales* (London, 1477). For "widower," see Desiderius Erasmus, *An exhortation to the diligent studye of scripture, made by Erasmus Roterodamus* (Antwerp, 1529). For "single life," see Martin Luther, *The last wil and last confession of martyn luthers faith* (Basel, 1543).

The decision to study bachelors and widowers together has been made because presumptions of difference between married and single men's lives have not been helped by the linking of bachelorhood and widowerhood to separate stages of the life-cycle. Bachelorhood has been considered the condition of youths, widowerhood that of the old, and married life occurred during the golden mean of adulthood. This narrative is neat but not logical; high rates of maternal death in childbirth meant that some men were widowed young, yet they appear completely absent from the current scope of historiography. To revise this mindset, it is necessary to consider when and how the practices of bachelors and widowers could align, as well as noting where they diverged. This approach also allows periods of singleness and lifelong singleness to be evaluated alongside each other, establishing how singleness was experienced over the short and long term. Examination of bachelors and widowers together is the only way in which historians can develop a fuller understanding of the relationship between singleness and manhood in the past.

Where possible, attempts have been made to ensure that the men described as bachelors and widowers in this study were over the age of 25, as early modern prescriptive texts dictated that it was only during his mid-twenties that a man became physically and mentally mature enough to marry.[91] As will be shown in Chapter 1, this cultural marker was also reflected in contemporary legal prescription, as the English parliament's introduction of a tax on singleness also only targeted bachelors and widowers over the age of 25. Thus while marriage and courtship may have been permissible while a man was still in his youth, it was not necessarily expected until a man had reached adulthood. This study is therefore more interested in exploring singleness after the age of 25, when it became seemingly incongruous with patriarchal expectations.

It must also be stated that formally divorced and informally separated men have not been considered as single men for the purpose of this study. As Joanne Begiato states, early modern people did not distinguish between 'marital conflict, breakdown, separation, and divorce' to the same degree as historians do in the present day.[92] An emerging body of work is attempting to address the legal parameters and social repercussions of separation and divorce in gendered terms, but as divorce allowing remarriage remained rare until the mid-eighteenth

[91] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 55, Figure 3.
[92] Joanne Begiato, *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 30.

century, the possibility that a couple may reunite after separating *a mensa et thoro* makes it difficult to conceive of divorce or separation as forms of male singleness.[93]

The chronology of this thesis has been shaped by cautions given in separate studies by Shepard, Karen Harvey, and Reinke-Williams. They note a division in the approaches of researchers which has resulted in histories of masculinity for the period between 1500 and 1650 being broadly definable as social-historical, while those relating to 1650 to 1800 are mostly cultural histories.[94] This is not a problem unique to gender historians, as highlighted in an article by Paul Monod Kleber, but the difference in methodologies amongst gender historians has given the impression of a dramatic change in the perception and performance of manhood at the beginning of the eighteenth century.[95] Harvey instead attributes this difference to the 'different kinds of men sought by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century historians, and the different questions these historians ask of their subjects.'[96]

This thesis brings social history approaches into the eighteenth century, hand-in-hand with the cultural approaches more typical of the period. To recover both the social practice and cultural representation of single men between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, four types of source are consulted; records of taxation about single men produced by the Marriage Duty Assessment of 1695-1706, the wills and probate of single male testators, single men's life-writing as recorded in diaries and autobiographies, and printed texts which discussed bachelorhood, widowerhood, and the male single life. While the methodology required to examine each source is different, requiring a transition from quantitative analysis at the beginning of the thesis to qualitative analysis in its second half, the goal of each chapter is to explore similar conceptual themes, namely single men's relationships with others in his home, family, and wider community, and evaluate them in line with the attributes and characteristics associated with manhood. Each source has its own deficiencies and gaps, but they also provide their own unique perspectives, which in combination provides a far fuller and richer

[93] Emily Rhodes, '"As Man and Wyfe Ought to Doe:" Reconsidering Marital Separation in Early Modern England,' *Cultural and Social History* 20, 4 (2023): pp. 481-498; K. J. Kesselring and Tim Stretton, *Marriage, Separation and Divorce in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2022); and Joanne Begiato, '"All He Wanted Was To Kill Her That He Might Marry The Girl:" Broken Marriages and Cohabitation in the Long Eighteenth Century,' in *Cohabitation and non-marital births in England and Wales, 1600-2012*, ed. Rebecca Probert (Basingstoke, 2014), pp. 51-64.

[94] Alexandra Shepard and Karen Harvey, 'What Have Historians Done with Masculinity? Reflections on Five Centuries of British History, circa 1500–1950,' *The Journal of British studies* 44, 2 (2005): p. 276; and Reinke-Williams, 'Manhood and Masculinity:' p. 685.

[95] Paul Monod Kleber, 'Are You Getting Enough Culture? Moving from Social to Cultural History in Eighteenth-Century Britain,' *History Compass* 6, 1 (2008): p. 95, p. 100, and *passim*.

[96] Karen Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity, circa 1650–1800,' *The Journal of British Studies* 44, 2 (2005): p. 311.

understanding of the operation of manhood than if examining a single source type. For example, tax data shows the single man's household-family in terms of base composition, restricted to describing his relationships to others in the household. Probate data and life-writing add a practical element to these relationships, exploring how the household-family worked during a single man's life and how its constituent members were rewarded after his death. Printed texts suggest that single men did not have meaningful relationships with their families and existed in isolation from wider society – this disjuncture highlights that the prevailing early modern narrative of the as husband the only valid role for men has served to obscure the true shape of single men's domestic and familial experiences. Indeed, this thesis's argument that single men fully conformed to and upheld patriarchal norms in practice suggests that there were significant continuities in the prioritisation and respect afforded to patriarchal manhood identities from the earlier seventeenth-century period examined in Shepard's work.

The four source types used in this thesis also provide a necessary element of scale to support this argument. The use of data from a national tax means that a large number of single men are recovered in this thesis and located within the context of their household-family group, allowing the commonalities of single men's living conditions to be drawn out across discrete population groups in rural, urban, and metropolitan areas. The majority of this data relates to the experiences of men who earned a living by their labour, with about one-fifth of the single men captured having wealth or standing equivalent to middling status. The extremes of poverty and elite standing are also present, albeit representing a very small minority of individual bachelors and widowers. When this is used to foreground studies of probate records and life-writing, which are available for far less (but still significant) numbers of men and which reflect intimately personal experiences, it provides context to determine experiences which were either common or unusual amongst the wider set. Print also gives insight into the scale of depictions of singleness, albeit in a different way. By investigating which tropes were associated with male singleness across various styles of discourse, it becomes possible to trace the dominant narratives about bachelor and widowerhood that were being disseminated to the reading public. Taken together, these sources provide both a broad and a narrow view of the experiences and depictions of single men. This approach is also more considerate of status differences than a study which focuses solely on life-writing or on print, as the examination of scribed documents via tax data and probate makes it possible to include the experience of lower sort men with

little to no education, adding depth to previous studies by Metcalfe which have focused on 'predominantly professional and elite bachelors.'[97]

While these sources provide invaluable detail about the homosocial and heterosexual pursuits of single men, the relationship between singleness and queerness is not discussed at length in the work that follows. Historians are increasingly willing to accept that queerness did influence the genders and sexualities of early modern men and women, even if the language of homosexuality did not exist until the nineteenth century.[98] While infrequent mentions of sodomy amongst single men are present in the later chapters of this thesis, suggesting that singleness and queerness were interrelated in some contexts, homosexual activity is conspicuous by its absence. This is largely a result of the conscious choice in this thesis to avoid sources relating to court processes and criminal convictions as a means to separate general single male conduct from instances where the actions of individual bachelors and widowers were deemed to violate social norms or legal boundaries. Existing research into discourses about homosexuality in the early modern period suggest that it was acknowledged in a variety of genres of printed text in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[99] Furthermore, Rictor Norton's argument that a 'well-organised gay subculture' can be seen in depositions given in sodomy, solicitation, and blackmail trials at the Old Bailey, indicates that there are avenues for further research into the intersections of manhood identities, singleness, and queerness.[100] Although such discussion falls beyond the scope of the sources used in the present work, the following research takes these studies into account and does not assume that the single life was necessarily an exclusively heterosexual one.

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[97] Metcalfe, 'Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' p. 34.

[98] Eli Løfaldli, 'Eighteenth-Century Private Life Writing as Evidence of Men's Sexual Practices: Case Reopened,' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 55, 3 (2022): pp. 317-338, with emphasis on p. 331. See also Netta Goldsmith, 'London's Homosexuals in the Eighteenth Century: Rhetoric versus Practice,' in *Queer People: Negotiations and Expressions of Homosexuality, 1700-1800*, ed. Chris Mounsey and Caroline Gonda (Lewisburg, 2007) p. 183-194; Randolph Trumbach, 'The Transformation of Sodomy from the Renaissance to the Modern World and Its General Sexual Consequences,' *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37, 4 (2012): pp.. 832-848; and Jen Manion, *Female Husbands: A Trans History* (Cambridge, 2020).

[99] Tony McEnery and Helen Baker use EEBO to identify a range of words relating to homosexual activity including some words and collocates which were previously unknown to be related to homosexual activity, such as 'boy buggerer' (as separate from 'buggerer'), 'trug,' 'he-whore,' and 'prostitute-boy,' see Tony McEnery and Helen Baker, 'The public representation of homosexual men in seventeenth-century England: a corpus based view.' *Journal of Historical Sociolinguistics* 3, 2 (2017): pp. 197-217, p. 201, Table 1, and p. 202, Table 2; and Rictor Norton, Homosexuality in Eighteenth-Century England: A Sourcebook (2023), via http://rictornorton.co.uk/eighteen/. Accessed 25 January 2025.

[100] Rictor Norton, 'Recovering Gay History from the Old Bailey,' *The London Journal* 30, 1 (2005): p. 39; and see Randolph Trumbach, 'Blackmail for Sodomy in Eighteenth-Century London,' *Historical Reflections* 33, 1 (2007): pp. 23-39.

This varied source base and the longer chronological reach of this thesis also bypasses one of the major difficulties faced by historians who have attempted to extract experiences of singleness from English bureaucratic or legal records. As Pelling and P. J. P. Goldberg have noted, single men were not subject to legally enforceable sanctions in either the medieval or early modern period, unlike single women.[101] Thus while female singleness was consistently disclosed in official documentation, men's status as married or unmarried was rarely recorded. This has had a significant impact on previous studies which have attempted to compare male and female experiences of singleness; David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby disclose in *The Single Homemaker* that their chapter on inventories of single people's goods privileges the accounts of single women because 'in the regular series of probate it is practically impossible without detailed prosopographical information to separate the widowed and unmarried [men] from the bulk of administration.'[102] As a result, they find 'the vast majority of men who died without spouse are thus likely to be overlooked.'[103] By beginning this study with a quantitative analysis of a source in which bachelors and widowers were identified systematically, this thesis creates its own set of data about single men to ground the qualitative methods used in later chapters.

A line of continuity through these chapters, despite their differences in sources used and methods applied, is the scientist and lifelong bachelor Robert Hooke. Born in 1635 and dying in 1702/3, Hooke spent almost forty years pursuing dual roles as the Curator of Experiments and Secretary for the Royal Society and as the Professor of Geometry at Gresham College. This central position (both geographically and intellectually) in London's scientific scene meant that Hooke was not only prolific in his own writings, which included a series of diaries, but he also figured in contemporary works produced by colleagues and rivals. Furthermore, his long period of continuous residence in an apartment in the grounds of Gresham College on Bishopsgate Street removes much of the uncertainty associated with locating specific individuals from the archival record. This thesis is not a complete biography of Hooke's life, but his presence across the sources and therefore the chapters of this thesis provides a touchstone to examine the single male experience from adulthood to old age.

[101] Pelling, 'Finding Widowers,' p. 37; and P. J. P. Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking the Single Men in Later Medieval England,' in *Single Life and the City, 1200-1900*, eds. Julie De Groot, Isabelle Devos, and Ariadne Schmidt (Basingstoke, 2015), p. 117.
[102] David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 35-36.
[103] Hussey and Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker*, p. 36.

### *Chapter outline*

Each of the four chapters of this thesis explores the relationship between single men and manhood in a particular type of source. Chapter 1 uses the returns of a short-lived tax on single men to establish the demographic details of bachelor- and widowerhood in England during the last decade of the seventeenth century. The census-like returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment are analysed for parishes in Derbyshire, Bristol, and the City of London to determine the presence of single men in the English population and to clarify the impact of geography on rates of singleness. Variations in the rates of tax levied against single men as a result of their wealth or title, as well as the compositions of households headed by and containing single men, are used to gauge their economic, social, and residential standing. This data-based approach begins to illustrate how single men can be integrated into the existing understandings of early modern manhood. While some single men were seen in subordinate positions, described as lodgers, servants, or as recipients of alms from their parish, many others were captured undertaking roles of patriarchal responsibility: they were heads of household, fathers, employers of servants and masters of apprentices.

Chapter 2 builds on the demographic foundations of Chapter 1 by examining probate records relating to the single men who had been captured in the Marriage Duty Assessment. Single male testators' statements of the degree of relationship between themselves and their beneficiaries are used to determine the quantitative size and breadth of their kin and non-kin networks. The relationship descriptors used reveal the involvement of single men in familial, occupational, and religious networks which existed independently from their position within their own households. Further attention is paid to the language used when making bequests to explore how single men could use their wills to construct hierarchies of superiority and deference between themselves and their beneficiaries. It will be argued that single men's interest in retaining authority over others posthumously demonstrates the importance of the concept of familial lineages to single men, regardless as to whether or not they had children. This chapter concludes with a case study of Robert Hooke's intestacy case and the Court of Chancery's appointment of an heir to his estate, which shows how those who were not single – including those within the English legal system – used biology and effectivity to understand the relationships between single men and their wider circle of kin.

Chapter 3 uses diaries and autobiographies written by single men to understand how bachelors and widowers lived in the early modern period. Experiences of domesticity and family formation within the home, heterosocial interactions with colleagues and friends, and

their sexual and romantic pursuits are taken as objective reports of the practice of male singleness. They also provide an opportunity to address single men's subjective experiences of manhood, with life-writing additionally considered as a pathway for bachelors and widowers to present a persona that was informed by received notions of patriarchal manhood. This chapter will demonstrate that bachelors and widowers alike were willing and able to exert patriarchal authority within their homes and social circles by engaging in behaviours that are usually only associated with married men, including (but not limited to) management of household-family groups, raising children, and participating in monogamous heterosexual relationships. The limits of their authority will also be addressed, illuminating the circumstances or contexts in which single men's manhood was either called into question or completely failed. Not only did single men use their diaries and autobiographies to self-criticise, they also recorded incidents where their authority was challenged or rejected by others, which delineates the specific difficulties faced by single men when attempting to navigate the marriage-forward social order of early modern England.

Chapter 4 examines the representation of single men in the period's print to provide a cultural counterpoint to the work of the previous chapters. To explore how bachelor- and widowerhood were presented to early modern audiences, who may not have been either single or male, this chapter focuses on three kinds of early modern discourse: those relating to England's demography and economy, those intended to be humorous, and those which provided moral or theological guidance. By using prescriptive and non-prescriptive texts together, it becomes possible to see how stereotypes about bachelors and widowers were disseminated and therefore justified by authors across various genres. These depictions associated male singleness with sexual promiscuity and rejection of normative manhood, effectively placing the bachelor and widower in opposition to the married man. While this does conform to the image of singleness presented in the existing historiography, it will be argued that the single man was figuratively used in these works to address contemporary concerns about England's population, female unchastity, and the threat of popery and not intended to accurately represent the experiences of single men. The differences between representation and practice will be drawn out through examination of the apparent (mis)characterisation of Robert Hooke in Thomas Shadwell's 1676 play *The Virtuoso*. Shadwell's combination of tropes about single men and with some, but not all, elements of Hooke's life ultimately demonstrates that cultural depictions of singleness cannot be used to explain the relationship between singleness and manhood in the early modern period in full.

Marriage was central to the cultural construction of patriarchal manhood in early modern England. The strongly negative depiction of single men in print makes that clear. What this thesis demonstrates, however, is that marriage was less important to the practice of manhood than has previously been assumed. In highlighting that single men frequently pursued, upheld, or were complicit in enforcing patriarchal authority in their homes, families, and wider communities, historians gain a far richer understanding of how manhood operated in early modern England.

### *Chapter 1: Single men in the English population*

As the aim of this thesis is to recover the social roles and cultural depictions of single men in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, it is necessary to frame this research by understanding how many bachelors and widowers were living in England at that time. Conventionally, men were described by occupational rather than marital status in early modern legal documentation, but there exists one exception to this general rule. From 1695 to 1706, men who were single and childless were expected to pay a yearly fee as part of an extraordinary tax entitled "An Act for granting His Majesty certain Rates and Duties Upon Marriages, Births, and Burials, and upon Bachelors and Widowers, for the Term of Five Years, for carrying on the War Against France with Vigour," shortened here to the Marriage Duty Assessment.[1] For these fines to be extracted accurately, assessors were expected to produce a yearly return listing all the residents of a parish, their marital status, their wealth in general terms, and their position in the household; if they were not the head of the household, their relationship to that person was listed using a limited number of descriptors: wife, child, sibling, servant, lodger, apprentice.

Using the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment from three regions of England – Derbyshire, Bristol, and select parishes within the City of London – this chapter demonstrates that about 3 percent of the entire English population were adult single men at the end of the seventeenth century. The structure of the returns also allows for the social status and common household compositions of single men to be investigated, providing a statistical framework to support the transition towards qualitative approaches used in subsequent chapters. However, this chapter should not merely be interpreted as contextual. Historians of masculinity such as Alexandra Shepard position marriage as a 'gateway to manhood,' a sentiment which has led researchers to neglect the varieties and specificities of single men's experiences by making marriage appear inevitable.[2] The numbers of bachelors and widowers captured in the Marriage Duty Assessment and the descriptions of their differing social statuses and household compositions provides insight into the standards of living of single men across geographic and economic spectrums. While many adult single men were captured in subordinate positions in the social hierarchy, acting as servants or living with parents, others were seen to demonstrate authority equivalent to married men, with 7 percent of all English households seen in the

[1] Chapter number 6 & 7 Will. & Mar. c. 6. (1695). The shortened title of Marriage Duty Assessment has been chosen to distinguish it from the similarly titled Marriage Acts of 1653 and 1753.
[2] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 74.

returns being headed by either a bachelor or widower. A large-scale population study not only makes single men visible to historians, but also begins to establish the extent to which they could access positions of patriarchal authority within their families and communities.

Data was collected for use in this chapter through evaluation of 42 returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment relating to 41 unique parishes: five parishes in Derbyshire were selected, 18 in Bristol, and 18 in the City of London.[3] The name of each the parish and the date of the return used is shown in Table 1.1. By studying three regions of England, it becomes possible to understand how geography, population density, and wealth distribution affected the experience of single men in areas which can broadly be defined as rural, urban, and metropolitan, preventing assumptions of a homogenous single male experience. Comparing the data for different areas allows regional variations to be drawn out; it will be shown that while lodging was a fixture of single male life the metropole, the returns for Derbyshire and Bristol reveal that this experience was not representative of the situations of single men in rural or urban areas.

The format of the completed returns makes three types of quantitative analysis possible, which informs the structure of this chapter. First, this chapter calculates the number of single men in the English population based on the assessors' application of the descriptors of bachelor and widower. It also accounts for a small number of single men in all three regions who appear to be single fathers but who were not described as either bachelors or widowers by the assessors when making the returns. Where present, this group has been retrospectively labelled "wifeless fathers." Calculating the proportional presence of single men in the population of three sample areas allows for an evaluation and explanation of regional differences, as well as enabling comparison of the number of bachelors and widowers with spinsters and widows to underscore the differences between single men's and single women's existence in the late seventeenth century.

[3] A printed version of the return for Melbourne Kings Newton was consulted for use in this chapter and all 18 returns relating to Bristol's parishes were also sourced from a transcribed and published reproduction. See R. E. Chester Waters, 'A Statutory List of the Inhabitants of Melbourne, Derbyshire in 1695: printed from the original MS. Assessment, with a Commentary and Explanatory Notes,' *Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 7, 1 (1885): pp. 4-30; and *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696: Bristol Record Society Volume XXV*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968). For all other parishes, archival documentation was used accessed via Derbyshire Record Office and London Archives.

**Table 1.1: List of Marriage Duty Assessment returns consulted.**

| Region | Parish name | Year |
|---|---|---|
| Derbyshire | Aldwark | 1699 |
| Derbyshire | Brassington | 1699 |
| Derbyshire | Darley | 1696 |
| Derbyshire | Melbourne Kings Newton | 1695 |
| Derbyshire | Tibshelf | 1696 |
| Derbyshire | Tibshelf | 1698 |
| Bristol | All Saints | 1696 |
| Bristol | Castle Ward | 1696 |
| Bristol | Christchurch | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Augustine | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Ewen | 1696 |
| Bristol | St James | 1696 |
| Bristol | St John Baptist | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Leonard | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Mary Le Port | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Mary Redcliffe | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Michael | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Nicholas | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Peter | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Philip and St Jacob | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Stephen | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Thomas | 1696 |
| Bristol | St Werburgh | 1696 |

**Table 1.1 continued.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Bristol | Temple Ward | 1696 |
| London | Allhallows the Great | 1695 |
| London | Allhallows the Less | 1695 |
| London | St Alban Wood Street | 1695 |
| London | St Andrew Undershaft | 1695 |
| London | St Bartholemew by Exchange | 1695 |
| London | St Clement Eastcheap | 1695 |
| London | St Dionis Backchurch | 1695 |
| London | St Ethelburgh | 1695 |
| London | St Faith under St Paul | 1695 |
| London | St Helen | 1695 |
| London | St James Duke's Place | 1695 |
| London | St James Garlickhithe | 1695 |
| London | St Lawrence Jewry | No date |
| London | St Leonard Foster Lane | No date |
| London | St Margaret Lothbury | 1695 |
| London | St Martin Pomeroy Ironmonger Lane | 1695 |
| London | St Martin Vintry | 1695 |
| London | St Mary Aldermary | 1695 |

The second section of this chapter uses the recorded burial duties assigned to single men, and where present, the descriptions of their personal wealth and occupational titles to determine the variation in their social status. Shepard argues that financial independence was a crucial tenet for the attainment of patriarchal manhood, with men needing to be able to support an 'independent household' before they could access the '"privilege" of marriage.'[4] Consequently, men who relied on other men for domestic shelter or employment remained 'dependent males' and were not seen as 'fully men' in the eyes of their peers.[5] The returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment provide an opportunity to complicate Shepard's dichotomy by demonstrating that not all financially independent men were married, and not all dependent single men were deprived from access to positions of hierarchical authority.

The third and final part of this chapter investigates the composition of the households which contained single men. This process includes calculation of the average number of people included in a household-family group which contained single men, as well as an examination of the relationship descriptors used to clarify single men's links to the other members of their households. This analysis is shaped by Naomi Tadmor's insight that the use of the word family in the eighteenth century denoted co-residence under the authority of a household head and not a shared blood relationship; servants, lodgers, and apprentices were considered part of a 'household-family.'[6] As such, this chapter rejects the anachronistic method most recently proposed by Mark Merry and Philip Baker, who argue that the household-family data presented in the Marriage Duty Assessment returns ought to be separated into sub-groups of 'households' 'families' and 'units' before being analysed.[7] The use of Tadmor's household-family approach allows a more complex and historicised understanding of household composition to emerge, recovering the roles played by single men as heads of households and as subordinate members of the household-family.

Owing to the pervasive narrative among social and economic historians that men had to accrue a certain amount of resources before they could marry, it has previously been assumed that male singleness was synonymous with dependence.[8] This research challenges this

[4] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 209-210.
[5] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 210.
[6] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 22-23.
[7] Mark Merry and Philip Baker, '"For the house her self and one servant:" Family and Household in Late Seventeenth-century London,' *The London Journal* 34, 3 (2009): pp. 205-232, their methodology is outlined pp. 208-209.
[8] D. E. C. Eversley states that marriage was the factor 'most sensitive to economic change' and that it was a 'calculated act which takes into account present assets and future prospects,' see D. E. C. Eversley, 'Population,

narrative by using the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment to examine the single man's presence, social position, and household on a national scale, reinserting bachelors and widowers into the English population. This complements the recent historiographical shift seen in the work of Tadmor and Amy Froide, where the single person's household, its structure, and its composition are treated as distinct phenomena within a wider social and communal framework where the nuclear family was the ideal but not always the norm.[9] The occupation-centred relationship descriptors and wealth of single men disclosed in the Marriage Duty Assessments provide an opportunity to expand this limited perspective by highlighting the variety of positions in the social hierarchy accessible to single men. By incorporating the historicised household-family approach advocated for by Tadmor into this analysis, it becomes apparent that many bachelors and widowers lived in or headed households that were structured around the same principles of domestic authority and obedience more often associated with married men.

This provides a significant challenge to the narratives established by historians investigating manhood, the family, and the household. It is generally accepted that the ideals of patriarchal authority were upheld through instances of men exerting control over women and other men, with the home becoming an 'anvil on which adult manhood was forged' as men took up roles as husbands, fathers, and masters.[10] But because householding status is tied so closely to marriage, it has been assumed that this process was not accessible to single men who found domesticity 'fragmented and effortful' without a wife to manage the housework and affirm their patriarchal authority.[11] The statistical and quantitative data presented in this chapter broadens this perspective by locating single men in a variety of domestic scenarios, and argues for a re-evaluation on the basis that many bachelors and widowers can be seen holding positions which historians have previously only considered the prerogative of the married. Although the data reveals that single men only formed a minority group within the English population, analysis of these returns makes clear that bachelors and widowers did not adhere to one kind of pre- or post-marital experience.

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Economy, and Society,' in *Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography*, eds. D. V. Glass and D. E. C. Eversley (London, 1965), p. 39; Keith Wrightson also suggests that marriage was 'not universally obtainable' for this reason, see Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (London, 2002), p. 28.

[9] See Tadmor, *Family and Friends*; and Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005).

[10] Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009), p. 50.

[11] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 77; and see Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 246.

### *About the Marriage Duty Assessment*

The Marriage Duty Assessment was an extraordinary tax implemented in 1695, initially scheduled to run until 1701, but extended by the Parliament of 1696 to last until 1706.[12] Although the primary and titular purpose of the Marriage Duty Assessment was to finance English involvement in the Nine Years' War, the continuation of the tax after the conflict ended in 1697 highlights the tax's secondary purpose as an exercise in national demography. The political arithmetician Gregory King was a 'contact' of one of the tax's original proponents, and he prepared the rate-tables that assessors used to calculate how much each person should pay.[13] King then used the Marriage Duty Assessment returns from Gloucester and Lichfield to produce a national population estimate in 1696 titled *National and Political Observations*, which was then published with additional commentary in 1699.[14] King introduced this analysis by stating that the Marriage Duty Assessment was needed to gauge the strength of the nation at a time when 'very expensive war against a potent Monarch … seems to be at its crisis.'[15] Throughout the text, King compared the population of England to the populations of France and the Netherlands, concluding that England's population had fallen since the beginning of the war in 1688.[16]

King's personal views on single men were not explicitly stated in the text, but the presentation of his data suggests that he (and his potential audience) desired to identify the individuals responsible for population decline. Never-married individuals therefore attracted particular analytical ire; while widows and widowers appeared in their own demographic sub-category, bachelors appeared in a composite sub-group of 'sojourners and single persons,' which combined bachelors and unmarried women with 'seamen and soldiers [and] … vagrants viz. hawkers, pedlars, crate carriers, gipsies, thieves, and beggars,' suggesting that they were perceived as having little more than a transitory place in their community. Their lack of

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[12] 22 April 1695, *Journals of the House of Commons Volume 11: From November the 7th 1693, in the Fifth Year of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary, to November the 23rd 1697, in the Ninth Year of the Reign of King William the Third* (London, 1803), p. 313; and 2 December 1696, *JHoC Volume 11*, p. 607.

[13] Paul Slack, 'Government and Information in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Past & Present* 184, 1 (2004): p. 37; and Gregory King, *A scheme of the rates and duties granted to His Majesty upon marriages, births and burials and upon batchelors and widowers, for the term of five years, from May 1 1695* (London, 1695), p. 1.

[14] See Gregory King, 'Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England, 1696,' in *An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain: and of the Losses of her Trade, from every War since the Revolution. A New Edition, corrected and continued to 1801, to which is now annexed Gregory King's celebrated State of England*, ed. George Chalmers (London, 1802), pp. 405-449. King's data was published in 1699 but with a new commentary, see Charles Davenant, *An Essay upon the Probable Methods of making a People Gainers in the Ballance of Trade* (London, 1699).

[15] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 407.

[16] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 447.

communal ties was directly related to that fact that they were neither married nor legitimately reproductive.[17] While individual examples from the Marriage Duty Assessment returns make clear that not all bachelors were of such low social status, King's belief is an important indicator of prejudice towards those being assessed. That early modern popular thought could position single men outside the boundaries of normative society will be examined in further detail in Chapter 4, but in this chapter it stands as a warning to historians that although the data collected was quantitative, there was a 'social process' that necessitated and led to the collection of this data about single men, which was shaped by pre-existing bias.[18]

While the Marriage Duty Assessment was active, all marriages, births, and burials in a parish had to be registered and at each instance, an involved individual (e.g. the groom, parent of a newborn child, or a surviving family member) was made to pay a duty. An additional yearly fee had to be paid by every bachelor over the age of 25 and every childless widower. Widowers with children and men who remained single as a requirement of their profession, e.g. professors and students of the universities of Oxford or Cambridge and high-ranking members of the clergy, were exempted from the fees payable by single men but not the duties levied on births, marriages, or burials. Those who received alms were exempted from all fees and duties, although the parish was expected to make a payment on their behalf. The duties payable were measured on a thirteen-point scale, with larger duties owed by those of a greater social standing. Starting with a basic rate, the first increase in duties were for those with no title, but who either possessed a personal estate worth £600 or had an income greater than £50 per annum. This was followed by a further four middling rates for those with professional or non-hereditary honorific titles, such as doctors, collegiate deans, and knight bachelors. Finally, six high rates were applied to those with hereditary titles, bishoprics, and sergeant-at-law appointments. This scale was also gradated to include differential rates for the wives, widows, eldest sons, younger sons, and daughters of the men who held these titles or exceeded the £600/£50 wealth threshold, although examination of the returns indicates that these rules were rarely applied consistently or accurately between parishes.[19]

The level of detail required to levy the Marriage Duty Assessment makes its returns extremely comprehensive and almost census-like, although the exclusion of information

[17] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 412.
[18] Margaret Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry? Ageing and Inequality Among Women and Men in Early Modern Norwich,' in *Women and Ageing in British Society since 1500*, eds. Lynn Botelho and Pat Thane (London, 2014), p. 32.
[19] See King, *A scheme of the rates and duties*, p. 1.

relating to street address, age, and occupational status in most cases means that the returns are not as detailed as a modern census. Usually, one individual was listed per row, with household-family boundaries defined by boxing names together. The relationship between each member of the household-family and the household head was listed within the restricted definitional categories of wife, sibling, child, servant, apprentice, or lodger. Columns were used to describe each individual's 'degree or title' in cases where this would modify the duties payable, and noted how much would be due at that person's death, or if they married or had a child. The duties due after births or marriages and the fees owed by single men were recorded at the discretion of the commissioner; it appears that they assumed that only the married would pay the duties for births, and only the unmarried would pay duties for marriages. To correspond with the attribution of the bachelor and widower fee, a single man's marital status was usually given as their 'degree or title.' Less commonly their status as a bachelor or widower was given in the space immediately after their name. An example of the format of the returns, from the parish of St Ethelburgh in London, is shown in Figure 1.1.[20]

**Figure 1.1: Representative example of the format of a Marriage Duty Assessment return.**

| Names and Surnames | Degrees and Titles | Burials li. s. d. | Births li. s. d. | Marriages li. s. d. | Bachelors and Widowers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Richard Shervill | | -- -4 -- | -- -2 -- | | |
| Jane his wife | | -- -4 -- | | | |
| Jane and Mary his children | | -- -4 -- | | | |
| Samuell Blakely his apprentice | | -- -4 -- | | -- 2 -6 | |
| George Rentswell his lodger | Bachelor | -- -4 -- | | -- 2 -6 | -- -1 -- |
| Elizabeth Finch widow | | -- -4 -- | | | |
| Michael Totley | 600li | -1 -4 -- | -- 12 -- | | |
| Rebecca his wife | | -- 14 -- | | | |
| Mary Glover | | -- -4 -- | | | |

[20] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/031, St Ethelburgh (1695), f. 6r.

While all returns were compiled using this column format, some alterations had to be made to make the data comparable between regions. Generally, the returns for Bristol did not distinguish between households, so household size and composition data was created by scrutinising the assessors' application of relationship descriptors. When an individual was not described in terms of kinship or service to another person, it was assumed that they were the head of their own household. An example of this process is shown in Figure 1.2, using a section taken from the return for the parish of St James in Bristol.[21] A further issue affected the recording of single men in Aldwark in Derbyshire and St Stephen in Bristol, where bachelors, widowers, and the members of their household-families were recorded separately from the rest of the parish, with their information amended to the end of the return. As it was not possible to discern the assessors' reason for doing this in either case, it was assumed that these single men were the heads of their household-families and the guidelines described above were applied to calculate their household size.

**Figure 1.2: Example of how household groups were added to the Bristol returns.**

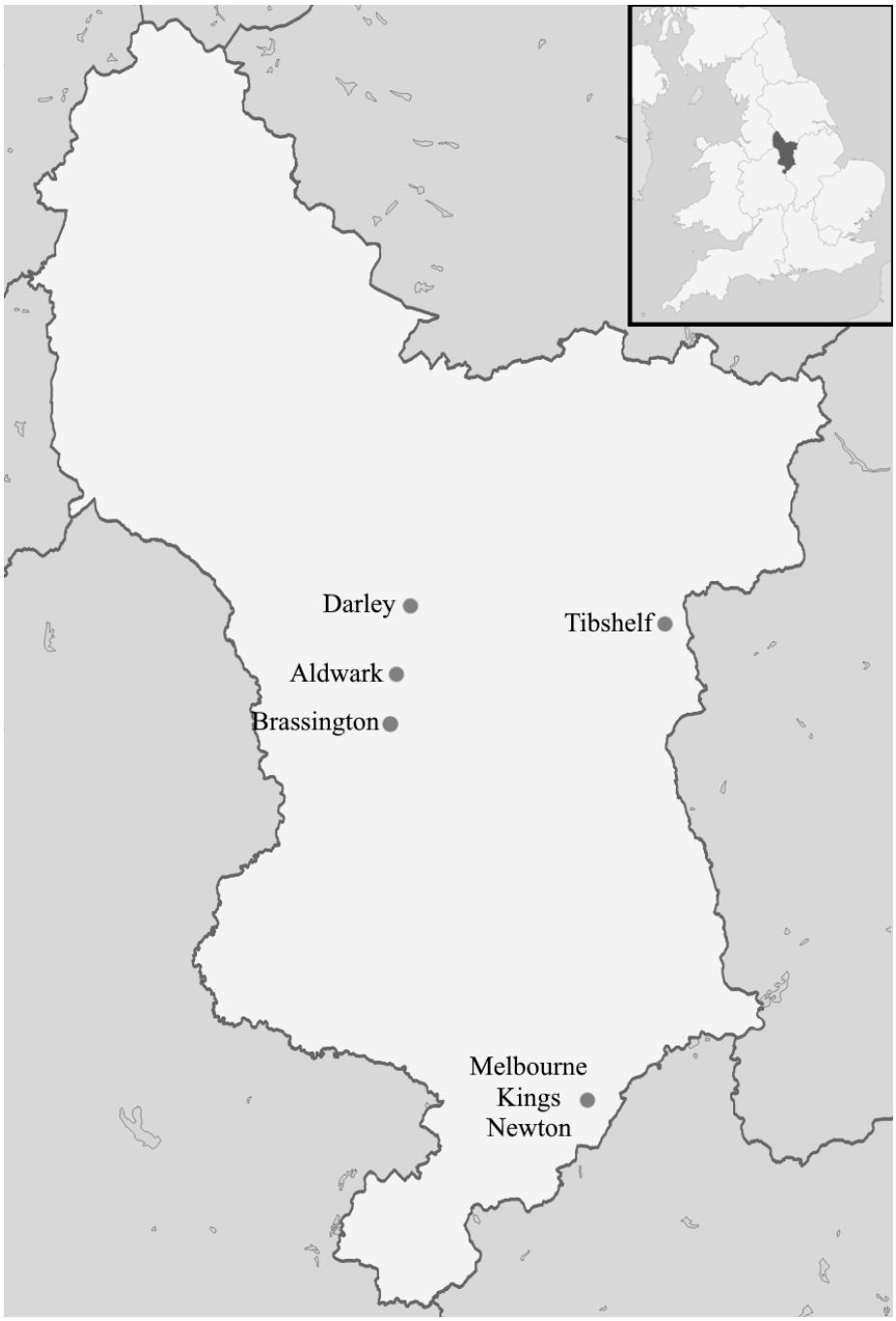
| | |
|---|---|
| James Virdue & Amy wf. | **James Virdue** and Amy, his wife |
| Thomas Wickomb lr. b. | Thomas Wickomb, his lodger, a bachelor |
| Daniel Richards b. | **Daniel Richards**, a bachelor |
| Richard Nicholls & Ann wf. | **Richard Nicholls** and Ann, his wife |
| Richard & Joseph ch. | Richard and Joseph, his children |
| Elizabeth Kincout sr. | Elizabeth Kincout, his servant |
| Mary Compton & Frances s. | **Mary Compton** and Frances, her son |
| A transcription of the return from the parish of St James in Bristol is shown on the left, with the added household divisions shown on the right. The individual assumed to be household head has been made bold and the relationship descriptors have been expanded for clarity in reading. All of these individuals were assessed at the basic rate. | |

[21] 'St James: A Rate and Assessment,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), pp. 55-56.

It must also be acknowledged that the returns for the Marriage Duty Assessment cannot be taken as a complete list of all residents of a parish. Vanessa Harding has shown that the London returns underestimate the population by between 10 and 20 percent when compared with population lists taken from other contemporary taxes.[22] Whether an accidental or purposeful exclusion, Harding notes that undercounting appears to have mostly affected transitive and temporary populations, which constitutes 'a more serious problem in the poorer, extramural parishes.'[23] This was evidently also a problem outside London, as King's contemporary analysis of the Lichfield and Gloucester returns estimates that 10 percent of bachelors and 5 percent of widowers escaped capture in the returns because they were 'omissions, frauds, and insolvent.'[24] If undercounting represented a problem in England's largest city as well as significantly smaller ones, it must be assumed that this effect was felt nationwide. It is beyond the scope of the thesis to address these errors at this stage, although Gill Newton has proposed a method which appears to be effective in recovering children who were displaced in the returns, suggesting avenues for further research are possible.[25] Nevertheless, the problematic aspects of the Marriage Duty Assessment are outweighed by the visibility that they provide in establishing the single male population of England. Not only do the returns show how many single men lived in a community; they also begin to clarify the single man's place within that community. The outlines of single men's occupation, wealth, their status as head of the household, and the recording of relationships with other household members allows for the dynamism of the bachelor and widower's social roles to be revealed.

[22] Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London, 1550-1700: a review of published evidence,' *London Journal* 15, 2 (1990): p. 118.
[23] Harding, 'The Population of London:' p. 118.
[24] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 434.
[25] Gill Newton compares parish books to the households described in the Marriage Duty Assessment to reconstruct which families sent babies out of the parish to wetnurses in other areas. Because this requires focus on a single parish and was reliant on children being born in the parish that they had migrated out of, it was not possible to test the scalability of this method in this chapter, despite its potential. See Gill Newton, 'Infant Mortality Variations, Feeding Practices and Social Status in London between 1550 and 1750,' *Social History of Medicine* 24, 2 (2011): p. 271, p. 278, and p. 273, Figure 4.

**Figure 1.3: Map of the parishes selected in Derbyshire.**




This image was derived from an original version titled "Derbyshire UK district map (blank)" by Nilfanion, created using Ordnance Survey data.

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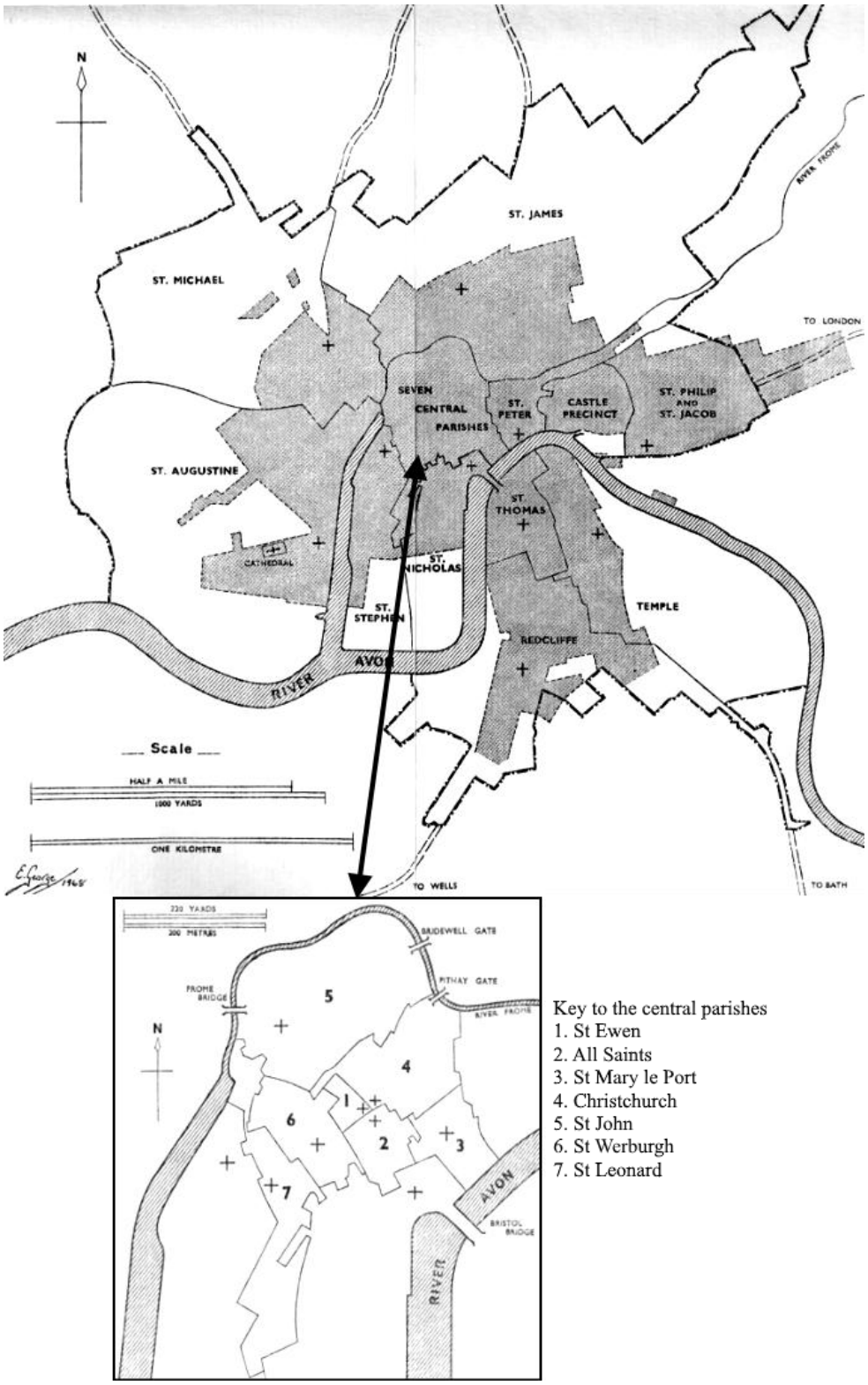
The five parishes selected for study in Derbyshire are shown on a county map in Figure 1.3. Although the sample of parishes is smaller for Derbyshire than the other regions, owing to lower rates of archival survival, the available returns are useful in that they provide insight into two kinds of rural life. The southern parish of Melbourne Kings Newton and the easterly parish of Tibshelf were primarily agrarian, with both villages engaging plant and animal agriculture. Furlong strip farming had been implemented in both areas, but enclosure had not fully taken hold at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment. Melbourne Kings Newton had 600 acres of common, part of which was used as a rabbit warren, while Tibshelf retained 400 acres at the end of the seventeenth century.[26] The economies of the western parishes of Brassington, Aldwark, and Darley were shaped by a rural employment unique to Derbyshire. Under the jurisdiction of the Barmote Court, individuals in the north-west of Derbyshire had the right to free mine on any part of the land they wished, regardless of its ownership. Furthermore, some parishes, including Brassington and Darley, exempted free-mined ores from tithes.[27] Yet the right to free mine did not mark out these parishes as more prosperous than those in other parts of Derbyshire. Local histories indicate that the Peak Country area was characterised by its poverty; miners from Darley successfully petitioned against the introduction of a tithe on ores in 1687, claiming that its imposition would leave them unable to afford to purchase food.[28] Brassington and Aldwark were similarly characterised by Ron Slack as villages of 'very poor people,' with 46 of 94 households exempted from the 1664 Hearth Tax, and only nine households having two or more hearths.[29] The extremity of this poverty continued into the eighteenth century; when Daniel Defoe visited Brassington in 1724, he was surprised to find one miner's family living in a cave.[30] As such, despite the smaller number of rural parishes available for sampling in comparison to the number of urban and metropolitan parishes, the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment for these areas provide invaluable data about single men within generally impoverished communities.

[26] Albert Stanley Jacques, *Melbourne: An Account of its History, Manor, Castle, Churches, Inhabitants, Institutions, Industries, with notes for further history* (Derby, 1933), p. 45; and Cecil Hill and Sarah Hill, *Tibshelf Memories: Book 7* (Tibshelf, 2010), pp. 39-48.
[27] Andy Wood, *The politics of social conflict: the Peak Country, 1520-1770* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 303-304.
[28] Wood, *The politics of social conflict*, p. 102 and p. 304.
[29] Ron Slack, *Lands and Lead Miners: A History of Brassington in Derbyshire* (Stroud, 2007), p. 73.
[30] Daniel Defoe, *A Tour thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain: Volume III* (London, 1724), pp. 45-49.

**Figure 1.4: Map of the parishes selected in Bristol.**

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Bristol was comprised of 18 parishes at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment and a return for every parish survives for the year 1696, providing a rare survey of an entire city. The centre of Bristol was distinctly urban, although the parishes on the edge of the city, such as St James in the north and St Philip and St Jacob in the east, were less built up.[31] At the time of the Assessment, Bristol was the third most populous and third most prosperous city in England, after London and Norwich.[32] Its importance as a port town was rapidly increasing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries thanks to its role in the transatlantic trade of tobacco, sugar, and enslaved people.[33] Bristol's domestic industries also served this outward trade, with parishes abutting the River Avon, such as St Mary Le Port, defined by their soap and leather industries, while the southern parishes of Temple and St Mary Redcliffe were responsible for the manufacture of cloth for sails.[34] Bristol's urban and civic elite had traditionally inhabited the central seven parishes to the north of the river, although the Hearth Tax returns show that there were few 'great' houses containing 15 or more hearths in the mid-seventeenth century.[35] Instead, research by Roger Leech, Johnathan Barry, and Richard Stone has shown that many of Bristol's largest buildings - even those in the central, wealthy parishes - were commercial or industrial rather than residential. Most inhabited buildings with more than 10 hearths were inns, while warehouses had many hearths owing to their use in manufacturing or storing sugar.[36]

Bristol's mercantile associations also fed into its other defining characteristic: its religious diversity. Barry has traced the settlements of Moravian, Catholic, and Jewish people to Bristol's trade links with continental Europe, which also encouraged the establishment of a significant congregation of Huguenot refugees.[37] Yet Bristol was perhaps better known for the size of its non-conformist congregations, with Kenneth Morgan calculating that at least 20 percent of Bristol's adult population attended non-conformist services in the early eighteenth

[31] Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams, 'Introduction,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. xxii.
[32] Peter Borsay and Keith Thomas, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), p. 8 and p. 10; and Walter Minchinton, 'The Port of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century,' in *Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Patrick McGrath (Newton Abbot, 1972), p. 127.
[33] Minchinton, 'The Port of Bristol,' p. 128 and p. 131.
[34] Roger Leech, Johnathan Barry, and Richard Stone, 'Bristol in the 1660s and 1670s,' in *The Bristol Hearth Tax, 1662-1673*, eds. Roger Leech, Johnathan Barry, Alison Brown, Catherine Ferguson, and Elizabeth Parkinson (Bristol, 2018), pp. 47-48.
[35] Leech, Barry, and Stone, 'Bristol in the 1660s and 1670s,' p. 54.
[36] Leech, Barry, and Stone, 'Bristol in the 1660s and 1670s,' pp. 57-58, p. 70.
[37] Johnathan Barry, 'Introduction,' in *Reformation and Revival in Eighteenth-Century Bristol*, eds. Johnathan Barry and Kenneth Morgan (Bristol, 1994), p. viii.

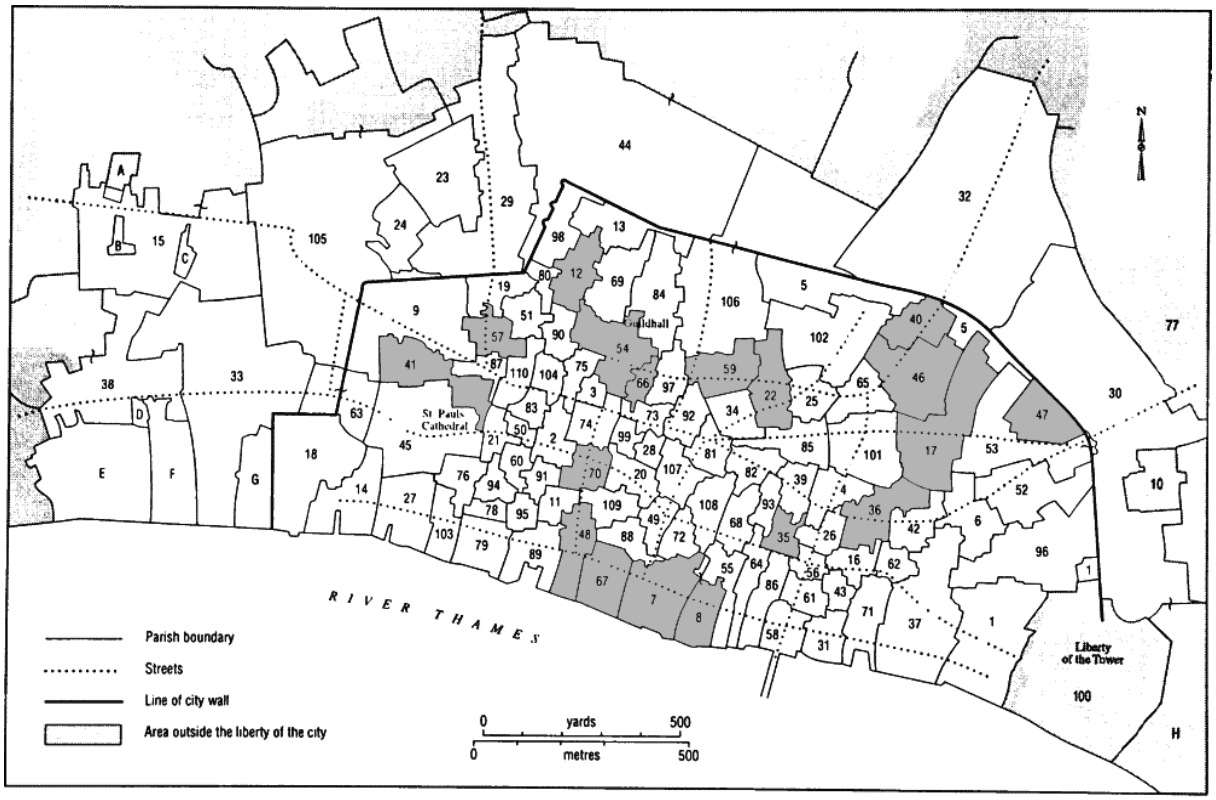
century, twice the national average for the period.[38] Its Quaker meeting was the largest in England, with about 2,000 attendees, and contemporary commentators were struck by how successful, both economically and politically, Bristol's non-conformist groups could be. John Evans, an eighteenth-century non-conformist minister in London, described Bristol's 'great Body of Quakers' as 'large Traders and very rich … the Strength of all the Dissenters in Bristoll may justly be reckoned much more than that of all the Low-Church Party there.'[39] Despite the riches of trade, however, there were pockets of poverty in urban Bristol. Not only were servants and less-skilled labourers required to supply the physical labour to Bristol's shipping and market trades, the very nature of overseas profit by adventure led to a large proportion of disadvantaged women in the town. Leech, Barry, and Stone's analysis of Bristol's Hearth Tax returns from 1662 to 1673 indicates that 'a high proportion' of those exempt from the tax on the grounds of poverty were female heads of household, the majority of whom were widows.[40]

The City of London was approximately forty times smaller than Bristol by area, but had a population about two and a half times as large at the end of the seventeenth century.[41] Its population density was matched by the density of City parishes; the intramural area of the City of London proper contained 97 parishes, with Marriage Duty Assessment returns surviving for 80 parishes.[42] In order to cultivate an appropriately sized sample to allow for comparison with the returns from Derbyshire and Bristol, 18 intramural City parishes were selected to form the sample as highlighted on the map in Figure 1.5. The Great Fire of 1666 had caused significant destruction in the City, and the consequences most relevant to this chapter was that the parish churches of Allhallows the Less, St Leonard Foster Lane, St Martin Vintry, St Martin Pomeroy Ironmonger Lane, and St Faith under St Paul (a chapel within the old cathedral) were not rebuilt after the fire, although the parishes themselves were retained for administrative purposes. Harding argues that this encouraged mobility amongst metropolitan residents, who begun to reject the idea of a traditional 'parish life' based on residential and spiritual co-existence and

[38] Kenneth Morgan, 'The John Evans List of Dissenting Congregations and Ministers in Bristol, 1715-1729,' in *Reformation and Revival in Eighteenth-Century Bristol*, eds. Johnathan Barry and Kenneth Morgan (Bristol, 1994), p. 67.
[39] John Evans quoted in Morgan, 'The John Evans List,' p. 71.
[40] Leech, Barry, and Stone, 'Bristol in the 1660s and 1670s,' p. 71.
[41] Harding, 'The Population of London:' pp. 112-113, Table 1. N.B. Harding's figures are derived from the Marriage Duty Assessment returns combined with the record of the Bills of Mortality.
[42] The series of surviving intramural parishes runs LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/001-081, with 010 missing. An extension of the series runs LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/098-110, including returns for eleven extramural parishes and two extra parochial areas.

increasingly sought to travel beyond their parish to attend religious services.[43] Not all of these religious communities were Christian; St James Duke's Place had a large Jewish community, and the Great Synagogue was founded there in 1690.[44]

**Figure 1.5: Map of the parishes selected in the City of London.**



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This mobility also affected other aspects of everyday life, including employment. While certain parishes were known as hubs for particular trades, such as in John Strype's comment

[43] John Marriott, 'The Spatiality of the Poor in Eighteenth Century London,' in *The Streets of London: From the Great Fire to the Great Stink*, eds. Tim Hitchcock and Heather Shore (London, 2003), p. 124; and Vanessa Harding, 'City, capital, and metropolis: the changing shape of seventeenth-century London,' in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720*, ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), p. 138.
[44] C. Roth, 'The Membership of the Great Synagogue, London, to 1791,' *Jewish Historical Society* 6, 1 (1962): p. 175.

that St Clement Eastcheap had a 'Flesh-Market of Butchers, there dwelling on both sides of the Street,' no trade was the specialty of one parish as it might have been in other parts of England.[45] Instead, the City of London had command over all aspects of the manufacturing process; refinement of raw materials, creation of wholesale product, domestic and foreign export, local manufactory of retail goods, and retail sale of finished products.[46] This created both a variety of work and a variety of rates of pay, and was reflected in the very structure of the parishes themselves. Parishes that abutted the City walls tended to command cheaper rents than those in the centre, but this did not constitute an absolute social stratification.[47] Rather, rich and poor lived in close proximity, often separated by just a few streets. This was made clear in Strype's description of Thames Street, passing from Allhallows the Great to St James Garlickhithe, as its access to 'the several Wharfs … render it a Place of a considerable Trade, and to be well inhabited,' but the streets running to the water were at best 'narrow and ordinary' and at worst 'mean, narrow, and long.'[48] Peter Earle has shown that periods of continuous residence were common amongst older, wealthier heads of household in this period, estimating that 40 percent of middling sort men over 40 and 50 percent of middling sort men over 50 had lived in the same City parish for 15 years or more.[49] But this was not always true for the constant stream of new migrants to the City, where the poorest often resorted to moving frequently (between both parishes and accommodations) to save money.[50] As a result, City authorities were 'overwhelmed' by the difficulty of locating, assisting, or removing the poorest migrants and therefore they were able to reside unchecked in many areas.[51] As such, two distinct kinds of metropolitan life existed alongside each other.

### *The number of single men*

The returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment for the selected parishes in Derbyshire, Bristol, and the City of London, therefore, provide three variegated and contrasting population samples to work with, as shown in Table 1.2. In Derbyshire, the five parishes studied were far larger in area than the eighteen parishes respectively selected in both Bristol and London, but

[45] John Strype, *A Survey of the Cities of London and Westminster: Volume I, Book 2* (London, 1720), p. 182.
[46] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (London, 1991), pp. 20-21.
[47] Harding, 'City, capital, and metropolis,' p. 131 and p. 128.
[48] Strype, *Survey of London: Volume I, Book 2*, p. 207 and pp. 207-208.
[49] Earle, *Making the English Middle Class*, p. 241, Table 9.1.
[50] Jeremy Boulton, '"It is Extreme Necessity That Makes Me Do This:" Some "Survival Strategies" of Pauper Households in London's West End During the Early Eighteenth Century,' *International Review of Social History* 45, 1 (2000): p. 56.
[51] Marriott, 'Spatiality of the Poor,' p. 124.

each parish was more sparsely populated. The least populated parish, Aldwark, had only 87 inhabitants and 39 household-families while Melbourne Kings Newton was the most populous with 651 inhabitants across 190 households.[52] In comparison, the most populous parishes in Bristol and London were extremely large. The most populous City of London parish was St Faith under St Paul, with 1,300 inhabitants forming 189 household-families.[53] The parish of St James in Bristol had a larger population than the entirety of the Derbyshire population sample, totalling 2,875 inhabitants and 1,019 household-families.[54]

**Table 1.2: Total population and number of household-family groups captured in the returns.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London | All regions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 2,648 | 20,014 | 14,783 | 37,445 |
| Households | 619 | 6,092 | 2,421 | 9,132 |

Single men were captured in all 42 returns for the 41 unique parishes analysed in this chapter. The parish with the fewest formally identified single men, St Ewen in Bristol, nevertheless counted six bachelors among its 152 residents.[55] Assessors took care to differentiate between bachelors, childless widowers, and widowers with children, and the number of single men as well as their proportional presence in the total population of each region is shown in Table 1.3. Because the Marriage Duty Assessment was primarily focused on those who were not married, assessors were not required to record age beyond confirming that bachelors were over the age of 25. 'Child' was used as a descriptor in the returns, but it indicated a biological relationship to the household head rather than minority age; in Froide's analysis of the Marriage Duty Assessment returns for Southampton, her survey of 40 women described as 'daughters' reveals that all were over the age of 18, with the two eldest daughters aged 41 and 39 respectively.[56] As such, it was not possible to exclude those under the age of

[52] See DRO: D5759/4/1, Assessment for Brassington and Aldwark (1699), ff. 2v-3r; and Chester Waters 'Inhabitants of Melbourne:' pp. 7-23.
[53] See LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/032, St Faith Under St Paul (1695), ff. 1r-14v.
[54] See 'St James,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, pp. 52-85.
[55] See 'St Ewen: An Assessment,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), pp. 49-51.
[56] Froide compares the returns for the eight Southampton parishes to the parish books, see Amy Froide, 'Hidden Women: rediscovering the singlewomen of early modern England,' *Local Population Studies* 68, 1 (2002): p. 33.

25 from the sample in a consistent manner, so the presence of single men can only be accurately calculated as a proportion of the entire population.

In quantifying the single men who had been identified by the assessors, a fourth categorisation of single maleness emerged which had escaped contemporary notice. In small numbers across all three regions, men were identified as the sole parent to a child or children, but despite the lack of a co-resident wife they were not described as widowers. Margaret Pelling finds the same phenomena in her study of Norwich's Poor Law Census, where three men were apparently 'spouseless' yet had children between the age of eight and 16.[57] Pelling concludes that 'a man with no wife but with children [was] probably a widower,' but urges caution by pointing out that the census-takers evidently applied a gendered perspective to reports of marriage breakdown; census-takers recorded instances of women who had been reduced to poverty after being deserted by their husbands, yet Pelling found that no men were described as being deserted by or having deserted their wives.[58]

**Table 1.3: Total number of single men captured in the returns and their proportional presence in the population of the region.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | | All regions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Bachelors | 61 | 2.30 | 251 | 1.25 | 672 | 4.55 | 984 | 2.63 |
| Childless widowers | 23 | 0.87 | 46 | 0.23 | 81 | 0.55 | 150 | 0.40 |
| Widowers with children | 21 | 0.79 | 19 | 0.09 | 47 | 0.32 | 87 | 0.23 |
| Wifeless fathers | 16 | 0.60 | 90 | 0.45 | 44 | 0.30 | 150 | 0.40 |
| All single men | 121 | 4.57 | 406 | 2.02 | 844 | 5.71 | 1,371 | 3.66 |

[57] Margaret Pelling, 'Finding Widowers: men without women in English towns before 1700,' in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (London, 2014), p. 50.
[58] Pelling, 'Finding Widowers,' p. 44.

While originally given no label by the assessors of the returns, where present in the returns for the Marriage Duty Assessment these single men have been styled as "wifeless fathers," adapting the terminology used by Pelling. In order to clarify the position of wifeless fathers, the return for Darley in Derbyshire, the parish with the highest proportion of these men, was cross-referenced with the parish's registers of births, marriages, and burials. In doing so it becomes clear that four of the five wifeless fathers were indeed widowers. The wives of Thomas Statham, John Allen, Ralph Typing, and John Supper had been buried in-parish between 1689 and 1692.[59] The case of the fifth wifeless father, Robert Barker senior, remained unclear.[60] His own burial occurred in 1704 and he had not remarried in the period between being assessed in 1696 and his death.[61] The absence of his wife from the return and the parish book also suggests physical absence from the parish, though the cause cannot be ascertained. As Pelling suggests, Barker's case could have been one of marriage breakdown, but it is also possible that his wife had died either in another parish or before the parish book began in 1678. It may even be that Barker senior was not a widower at all, and that his wife's absence from the Marriage Duty Assessment was a result of a lapse in record-keeping, albeit a lapse that was common enough to occur in the returns for Derbyshire, Bristol, and the City of London. Due to this uncertainty, this chapter has not combined wifeless fathers with the group of widowers with children and has instead quantified them separately.

From the data in Table 1.3 it can be seen that slightly more than 3.6 percent of the total population sample were single men. While technically single men therefore represented only a small part of the early modern English population, the immediate significance of this data is seen in the considerable variations between the three regions examined. In Bristol, single men made up only 2 percent of the population, but in London, nearly 6 percent of the population were described as bachelors or widowers. This is despite the fact that the London returns provided a smaller population sample than that of Bristol, as shown in Table 1.2. King acknowledged the possibility of regional variations between 'London, the great towns, and the villages' in his contemporary estimate, and suggested that 3 percent of rural populations, 4.5 percent of urban populations, and 6 percent of the metropolitan population consisted of single

[59] DRO: D7674/BAR D/728, Marriage Duty Assessment for Darley (1696), ff. 1v-2v; and DRO: D1978/A/PI/1/2, Register of Burials for Darley (1678-1778), ff. 11r-12r.
[60] DRO: Assessment for Darley, f. 2r.
[61] DRO: Burials for Darley, f. 21r.

men.[62] This chapter's analysis of the City of London returns correlates with King's estimate, but the rural and urban figures both surpass and fall below his expectations.

The format of the returns was intended to assist efforts to gauge the size of the English population, not to elucidate why certain groups were predominant in some areas and not in others. Nevertheless, the variations in the number of single men in each region does allow for a greater understanding of regional differences, and *vice versa*. That relatively few single men were found in Bristol in contrast with Derbyshire and London may be suggestive of a trend which was unique to urban areas; Froide's assessment of the Southampton returns, an area with some topographical similarities to Bristol, recovered a similar proportion of single male residents. Southampton and Bristol were both port towns, although Southampton had entered a period of economic decline and population dearth after an outbreak of plague in 1665, which had reduced the town's reputation as a 'luxury and long distance trading port.'[63] Bristol, in comparison, was nearly ten times as populous and nearing its economic peak by 1700.[64] Yet Froide's most conservative estimate (using only those who were described as single by the assessors) suggests that 2.27 percent of Southampton's population were adult single men, while in Bristol this figure was 2.02 percent.[65] Access to maritime employment must have been one factor that contributed to this figure. Port books do not consistently survive for Bristol, but between 1698 and 1699, 449 ships departed from its docks.[66] These ships would have been staffed exclusively by men, and as Bristol's trade increasingly focused on the Atlantic, the crews of these ships would have been absent from the city for months at a time. Evidence from wills used in Chapter 2 also indicates that some of Bristol's single men were employed in the service of the Navy.[67] Many of Bristol's single men, therefore, may not have been resident in the town proper at the time the Marriage Duty Assessment returns were made.

That relatively few single men were recovered from these urban populations is compounded by the fact that Bristol had a large single female population. While the English

[62] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 415.
[63] Froide, 'Hidden Women:' p. 28; and Froide, *Never Married*, p. 136.
[64] Kenneth Morgan, 'Building British Atlantic Port Cities: Bristol and Liverpool in the Eighteenth Century,' in *Building the British Atlantic World: Spaces, Places, and Material Culture, 1600-1850*, eds. Daniel Maudlin and Bernard Herman (Chapel Hill, 2016), p. 213.
[65] Froide, 'Hidden Women:' p. 30, Table 1. These percentages are based on the numbers given in the rows labelled "widowed" and "unmarried (either single or widowed)."
[66] W. E. Minchinton, 'Bristol - Metropolis of the West in the Eighteenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4, 1 (1954): p. 72.
[67] Edward Taylor, resident of Christchurch, Bristol, in 1696 died while in service onboard HMS Adventure in 1698, see 'Christchurch: An Assessment' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 26; and BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1698/4, Will of Edward Taylor of Bristol (1698), frame 38. See also Chapter 2, pp. 91-92.

population tended to contain slightly more women than men overall, the ratios of difference between single people were extremely pronounced in Bristol. While 406 single men were captured in the Bristol returns, there were 1,035 single women, over 60 percent of whom were widows. That would suggest that there were 2.5 single women for every single man. It is possible that employment opportunities attracted single women to these towns and subsequently allowed them the economic freedom to live single if they wished. Beyond domestic service, girls could be taken as apprentices and widows were permitted to train them, so Bristol's businesses could be operated by single women, at least within certain restricted parameters.[68] Froide also finds that single women were prominent in Bristol's organised moneylending scene, including banking money for the local Court of Orphans, which allowed them to generate income through investment.[69] While this accounts for a general sense of difference, historians must also acknowledge that the specific conditions of the end of the seventeenth century may have caused this ratio to be more exaggerated than at other periods in Bristol's history. The Marriage Duty Assessment was prompted by war against France, which impacted Bristol in more ways than just a tax on its single men. Between the outbreak of the war in 1688 and the time that the returns were made in 1696, 202 ships which had departed from Bristol had been captured or sunk by the French.[70] This would have, at least temporarily, increased the number of widows in the town whilst also decreasing the number of single men.

In Derbyshire and London, however, single men slightly outnumbered single women within the total populations of each region. In Derbyshire, single men and women were present in nearly equal numbers, with 121 single men and 114 single women, while in London 844 single men contrasted with 417 single women. The gulf between the number of single men and single women in London was driven by the far greater number of bachelors in the metropole, a difference not seen in the rural and urban returns. Three-quarters of all single men in London were bachelors. King had stated that along with the differences between the number of single men in each region, bachelors and widowers would also be present in different proportions. He suggested that while widowers would constitute 2 percent of metropolitan populations, male 'sojourners' would form an additional 4 percent.[71] That these figures were accurate (while his findings for other areas do not invite comparison) is suggestive of the greater social and cultural

[68] Peter Fleming, 'Women in Bristol, 1373-1660,' in *Women and the City: Bristol 1373-2000,* ed. Madge Dresser (Bristol, 2016), p. 25.
[69] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 137 and p. 130, footnote 50.
[70] Chris Minns and Patrick Wallis, 'Rules and Reality: Quantifying the Practice of Apprenticeship in Early Modern England,' *The Economic History Review* 65, 2 (2012): p. 560.
[71] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 415.

scrutiny placed on metropolitan single men, which was evident in other demographic works from earlier in the seventeenth century. The narrative that single men migrated to London seeking work and disrupted expected patterns of marriage and nuptiality was clear in John Graunt's observations on the Bills of Mortality, published in 1662. Graunt partially attributed the 'less breeding' done to the 'many Apprentices of London, who are bound seven, or nine years from Marriage,' as well as the 'persons com[e] to live in London out of curiosity, and pleasure' rather than 'retire, and live privately [with a wife].'[72] As the Marriage Duty Assessment determined bachelorhood to begin at 25, no bachelors captured in this sample were also described as apprentices by the assessors. Yet Graunt cautioned that upon finishing their apprenticeships, men 'do often stay [single] longer … voluntarily.'[73] This was both a demographic and a moral problem by the end of the seventeenth century, with King commenting that London was prone to 'more frequent fornications and adulteries … greater luxuries and impertinence' than other parts of the country.[74]

The rural sample provides a balance between the high numbers of single men in the metropole and the very low urban numbers. Historians have already commented on the particularities of marriage patterns amongst early modern people in rural areas, with R. B. Outhwaite finding that male farmers had a higher age at first marriage than textile workers, labourers, artisans, and tradesmen between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.[75] Richard Wall later attributed this difference to the pattern of yeomen's sons having to acquire land before they married, usually gained through inheritance. This meant that age at first marriage in rural areas increased in line with the rise in life expectancy.[76] While this might explain the number of bachelors seen in Derbyshire in Table 1.3, it does not explain why there were so many widowers - there was a proportionally higher percentage of widowers in the population sample from Derbyshire than in either Bristol or London. Nor can this explanation be suitably extended to the Peak Country parishes of Darley, Brassington, and Aldwark, as the residents' engagement in mining as a primary occupation would have reduced the importance of arable land ownership in determining marriage patterns.[77] It may well have been that widowers in

[72] John Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations Mentioned in a Following Index, and made upon the Bills of Mortality* (London, 1662), pp. 44-45.
[73] Graunt, *Natural and Political Observations*, p. 44.
[74] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 420.
[75] R. B. Outhwaite, 'Age at Marriage in England from the Late Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23, 1 (1973): p. 61.
[76] Richard Wall, 'Real property, marriage, and children: the evidence from four pre-industrial communities,' in *Land, Kinship, and Life Cycle*, ed. Richard Smith (Cambridge, 1985), p. 445.
[77] Wood, *The politics of social conflict*, pp. 94-95.

rural areas, and particularly those in the Peak Country parishes, had less marital choice than their urban and metropolitan peers. The Peak Country parishes maintained the almost-equal ratio of single men to single women characteristic of the rest of the county, but it appears that widowed men in these areas lacked the ability to make matches. Pelling has shown that Norwich's poorest and most elderly single men could marry significantly younger women, a fact which Pelling attributes to the constant influx young female migrants who arrived seeking work only to realise that their economic prospects were insecure and their 'chances of an independent existence were … restricted,' leading them to marry older men out of desperation. [78] Migration did not provide single men in the Peak Country with such opportunities; Andy Wood emphasises that 'free mining opportunities persuaded many people to remain in or near their place of birth' because Barmote Law, and thus claims to certain mines, were transmitted orally and upheld by popular culture and custom.[79] Furthermore, when the price of lead became severely depressed between 1670 and 1700, Derbyshire authorities took measures to prevent the settlement of poor immigrants in Peak Country parishes.[80] This meant that Derbyshire's parishes were not only geographically isolated from each other, but also that their populations were not refreshed with new arrivals, as would have been commonplace in Bristol and London.

Regional differences between rural, urban, and metropolitan experiences of singleness were further compounded when examining the numbers and percentage proportions of households headed by individuals of differing marital statuses, as shown in Table 1.4. This data shows that 687 of 1,371 single men, 50 percent of all single men, were described as household heads in the returns.

[78] Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry?' p. 38.
[79] Wood, *The politics of social conflict*, p. 134.
[80] Wood, *The politics of social conflict*, p. 111.

**Table 1.4: The aggregated number and proportion of households headed by single men, single women, and other individuals as shown in the returns.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | | All regions | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Single men | 103 | 16.63 | 332 | 5.45 | 252 | 10.41 | 687 | 7.52 |
| Single women | 112 | 18.09 | 948 | 15.56 | 245 | 10.12 | 1,305 | 14.29 |
| Married or minority-age household heads | 404 | 65.27 | 4,812 | 78.99 | 1,924 | 79.47 | 7,140 | 78.19 |

What immediately emerges from this data is that twice as many single women as single men were described as heads of households in the returns. This affirms Wall's suggestion that that 'single and widowed men are at almost every age less likely to be heading their own household of women of the same marital status.'[81] That single women would appear so prominently from the data is suggestive of the experiences of widows only, not all single women. Over 97 percent of the single female heads of households were widows. This was because widows were not subject to the same legal barriers as never-married women in terms of property ownership and occupation; they were entitled to one-third of any freehold land belonging to the deceased husband and often were able to carry on his trade without guild restrictions.[82] This fact, however, raises questions about single male household headship. Evidently, households headed by single men did exist, even if these household-family groups were not necessarily as dominant in the overall picture of the population. This complicates the interrelation of household headship and marriage assumed by most historians of masculinity, with Shepard stating that a man who never achieved household headship would not have marriage as an 'option.'[83] Yet household headship evidently did not guarantee marriage, either.

[81] Richard Wall, 'Woman alone in English Society,' *Annales de Démographie Historique* 26, 1 (1981): p. 307.
[82] Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry?:' p. 33; and Amy Erickson 'Common Law versus Common Practice: The Use of Marriage Settlements in Early Modern England,' *The Economic History Review* 43, 1 (1990): p. 34.
[83] Alexandra Shepard, 'Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c.1580-1640,' *Past & Present* 167, 1 (2000): p. 99.

Of the 687 households headed by single men, 369 were bachelors and the remaining 318 were widowers.

Comparison of the figures in Tables 1.3 and 1.4 suggests that household headship was relatively attainable for single men in rural and urban areas. Derbyshire is significant in that a high proportion of households were headed by single men and women, and it is clear that this was because most single people captured in the returns were also acting as the head of their household. 85 percent of the single men recorded in Table 1.3 were subsequently captured as the head of a household in Table 1.4. This figure was almost equivalent for Bristol, even though the region contained proportionately fewer single men overall. 82 percent of Bristol's bachelors and widowers were described as the head of their household. It is in the City of London where the disparities begin to emerge between the two tables. While 10 percent of households in London were headed by single men, this constituted a relatively low rate of correlation between the number of single men in the metropole and the likelihood of household headship. Only 30 percent of the single men in the City of London seen in Table 1.3 were described as heads of household in Table 1.4. This is at once broadly reflective of the life in the metropole and the common practice of lodging, which will be expanded on in a following section in this chapter, but it more specifically signals a difference between bachelor and widower experiences. Less than 20 percent of bachelors in London were listed as the head of their household, in comparison to 70 percent of widowed men and wifeless fathers. In this context, King's description of bachelors as 'sojourners' and 'transitory people' seems most accurate.[84]

In establishing how many single men could be found in these three regions of England, it becomes necessary to further examine how the assessors imposed notions of difference between them. Men were not only described in terms of bachelor- or widowerhood, but assessors also made value judgements by performing assessments of the wealth and, to lesser extent, the occupations of single men. Further examination of the meaning and application of these descriptors in the rural, urban, and metropolitan samples therefore begins to establish the single man's social status.

[84] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 412.

### *The social status of single men*

Due to the application of higher fees for those who were perceived to possess greater economic or occupational standing, the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment provide invaluable insight into the relationship between singleness, manhood, and social status. As wifeless fathers and widowers with children were exempted from the bachelor and widower fees, Table 1.5 draws on the variations of the burial duty. The burial duty was consistently four times greater than the bachelor and widower fee across all thirteen categorisations of wealth and title, although it was only due when the named individual died. Table 1.5 indicates that 994 single men captured in the Marriage Duty Assessment were assessed at the basic burial duty rate of four shillings. Those who were described as paupers, pensioners, or alms recipients (enumerated together under the categorisation of "in poverty") were also banded by the four shilling burial duty, although it would have been paid by the parish on their behalf. As the basic burial duty rate required no justification in its application by the assessors, while higher rates had to be explained through additional notes, where no title, degree, or burial duty value was given, it has been assumed that the burial duty owed would also have been four shillings. No single men assessed in this sample of returns held hereditary titles, so no burial duties exceeded the rate of £10 4s.

Shepard is clear in stating that the experience of men in early modern society was structured through assessment of 'what people had … an individual's worth was integral to reputation.'[85] Financial independence was therefore closely tied to a man's status as socially independent. This appeared to influence King's contemporary assessment of single men as one of the groups responsible for 'Decreasing the Wealth of the Nation' thanks to their failure to contribute to the economy either by their occupation or their household management.[86] Yet the basic burial duty rate encompassed an extremely wide group of people, from those who earned very little up to those earning £50 per year or had estates worth £600. The extremes encompassed by these figures, and therefore the variances of single men within this massive category, can best be illustrated by the examples given in the returns of a rural and metropolitan parish.

[85] Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status and the Social Order in early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015), p. 2.
[86] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 424.

**Table 1.5: The number and proportion of single men associated with the differing burial duty rates in the returns.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # | % | # | % | # | % |
| No duty recorded | 43 | 35.54 | 5 | 1.23 | 2 | 0.24 |
| In poverty | 4 | 3.31 | 2 | 0.49 | 3 | 0.36 |
| £0 4s 0d | 74 | 61.16 | 338 | 83.25 | 582 | 68.96 |
| Charged basic rate or non-payers | 121 | 100.00 | 345 | 84.96 | 584 | 69.19 |
| £0 14s 0d | - | - | 5 | 1.23 | 16 | 1.90 |
| £1 4s 0d | - | - | 52 | 12.81 | 225 | 26.66 |
| £5 4s 0d | - | - | 3 | 0.74 | 16 | 1.90 |
| £10 4s 0d | - | - | 1 | 0.25 | 3 | 0.36 |
| Charged above basic rate | - | - | 61 | 15.02 | 260 | 30.81 |

Only three individuals in the sample of Derbyshire's population were determined to owe more than the four shilling burial duty rate, with all single men in Derbyshire were assessed as owing the basic rate, making it likely that most of Derbyshire's men were cash-poor and earned their living through their own labour. But it is clear that earning a living by labour did not always equate to a meagre existence. The identification of John Radclif, a wifeless father from Melbourne Kings Newton, as a yeoman suggests that he owned the land on which he worked.[87] Although these holdings were not so large or so valuable as to exceed a value of £600, his life experiences would have been significantly different from that of the

[87] Chester Waters, 'The Inhabitants of Melbourne:' p. 10; for information about landownership and the yeomanry, see Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580–1680* (London, 2013), pp. 33-34 and p. 39.

bachelor 'journeyman' William Weston in St Margaret Lothbury, London.[88] Weston was only a lodger, not an independent household head, and his journeyman status suggested that he had recently completed an apprenticeship but did not yet work for himself. While it is likely that Weston's social status would improve once he established his position in his occupational community, his situation starkly contrasts with the greater independence afforded to household head, landowning Radclif. Thus it should not be assumed that the basic burial duty rate was representative of a certain standard of experience.

About 0.5 percent of all bachelors and widowers appeared to fall within the conventional categorisation of poor people as indicated by their status as recipients of formal charitable relief. This is vastly below what should be expected from any assessment of the English population, as Paul Slack calculates that up to 5 percent of the English population were receiving support from their local authorities by 1700.[89] It is also significantly less than King's estimate that 5 percent of all bachelors and 20 percent of all widowers would have been alms recipients at the time of the returns.[90] As tax exemptions were given to single men in receipt of alms, the very small number of men apparently living in poverty is more likely a deficiency of the returns than a reflection of reality. However, the data returned for the male paupers in the Bristol returns reveals notable variations in experience. There was a gendered barrier to formal support in the early modern period, with men who appeared able-bodied and of working age not given any 'privileged authority' under the Poor Law.[91] This was a consequence of the centrality of self-management as a tenet of manhood. For a man to be considered deserving of relief, he would have needed to be in some way prevented from engaging in the expected practices of provision and self-maintenance. It is therefore striking that Bristol's single men were captured in the process of receiving indoor relief in almshouses and outdoor relief in their own homes; the bachelor Nathaniell Gill was listed as a resident of Foster's Almshouse in the parish of St Michael, while in the parish of St Thomas the widower Richard Beeks and his three children were labelled as 'receaves almes.'[92] The type or value of the assistance given to Beeks was not clear, but Jeremy Boulton finds that childcare could be provided to widowers in

[88] LMA: St Margaret Lothbury, f. 6r.
[89] Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (Harlow, 1993), p. 172-173
[90] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 434.
[91] Pamela Sharpe, 'Poor widows and widowers in Industrial England,' in *Widowhood in Medieval and early Modern Europe*, eds. Sandra Cavallo and Lyndan Warner (London, 1999), p. 222.
[92] 'St Michael,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 131; and 'St Thomas: A Rate and Assessment,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 220.

London as an immediate form of relief.[93] Keith Wrightson also provides evidence to suggest that alms payments to widowers were intended as an interim support, stopping if they remarried.[94] While Beeks and Gill were both found in a state of dependence on their parish at the time the returns were made, it must also be noted that Beeks possessed some status qualifiers that separated him from the more abject inmate status afforded to Gill. Beeks had an identity as a father and householder, and might possibly have recovered some financial security if he remarried. Thus despite his poverty, Beeks retained some semblance of independence through his access to patriarchal and domestic authority.

As the first increase in duties over the basic rate was intended to reflect those individuals with annual incomes over £50, estates worth over £600, or those who were identified as 'gentlemen or so reputed' by the assessors, the burial duties do provide a rough estimate of access to middling-sort status amongst single men.[95] Yet, as with the single men charged burial duties at the basic rate, it is clear that there was no homogenous middling-sort status. Wrightson describes the boundaries of middling status as 'elastic,' and this was reflected in the format of the Marriage Duty Assessment itself.[96] That a distinct threshold was provided alongside the more nebulous and self-defined category of 'gentleman' suggests that middling status was flexible, as long as individuals could surpass the economic and socio-cultural boundaries that made them distinct from both the labouring classes and the traditional landed gentry.[97] 321 of the 1,371 total single men, 23 percent of the sample, were assessed as having burial duties in excess of 14 shillings and were present across the urban and metropolitan environment, present in all parishes except Christchurch and St Philip and St Jacob in Bristol.[98]

While some parishes had only a few better-off single male residents, with William Landsdowne being the only single man assessed above the basic rate in the parish of St Michael, Bristol, other parishes had extremely large contingents of middling sort single men.[99] 57 of 87 single men in the parish of St Margaret Lothbury, London, had achieved middling sort status, and as this parish took additional notes relating to occupation it is possible to determine

[93] Boulton, 'Survival Strategies of Pauper Households:' p. 53.
[94] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 185.
[95] King, *A scheme of the rates and duties*, p. 1; and Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 170. Wrightson suggests that an income of £40 per year would probably mark out the lower boundary of admission to the middling sorts, see Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 179.
[96] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 170.
[97] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 170.
[98] 'Christchurch,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol*, pp. 21-30; and 'St Philip and St Jacob,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol*, pp. 167-182.
[99] 'St Michael,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 125.

that these were mostly working professionals; 26 were merchants while 12 were gentlemen.[100] As Shepard shows, claims to gentility were not restricted to any particular occupation at the end of the seventeenth century, so its invocation by the assessed (or its application by the assessors) constituted a 'direct claim to social status' which was intended to supplement understandings of local hierarchy.[101] The higher burial duties of £5 4s. and £10 4s., though relevant only to a few single men in Bristol and London, represent a further stratification of social status. These men should be classed as upper middling, either as a reflection of their occupational accomplishments or because their title abutted gentry status. Their wealth and relative social power would have been far greater than those charged the lesser £1 4s. duty. For example, 'esquires' were subject to the £5 4s. burial duty. The application of this title captured single men whose occupation related to service to the crown, such as lawyers and sheriffs, as shown in the example of William Ivatt, a widower with children and one of the assessors of the Marriage Duty Assessment in the parish of St James Garlickhithe.[102] It also captured single men who were sons of knights, such as the bachelor Thomas Knight who lived with his mother and sisters in the Temple Ward of Bristol.[103] The extremely high £10 4s. duty similarly reflected the pinnacle of occupational success or non-hereditary titles, applied only to the Dean of Bristol Cathedral and three Knights Bachelor in London.[104]

Not all middling sort men were making their own living, however. The burial duty of 14 shillings indicated that a single man lacked the income or personal wealth to be listed in a higher tier, but that he had a parent or parents whose wealth exceeded the £50/£600 boundary. Although the terms of the Marriage Duty Assessment allowed for this categorisation to be applied to both bachelors and widowers, in the returns used in this study, only bachelors were described in relation to the wealth of their parents.[105] These bachelors had reached a majority age, but their status (or lack of it) was derived through their standing as someone's child rather than their own occupation or wealth. This even occurred in seven instances where single men did not live with their parents, as demonstrated by Francis Saville, a bachelor who appeared as

[100] LA: Margaret Lothbury, ff. 1r-32r.
[101] Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, pp. 271-272.
[102] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/038, St James Garlickhithe (1695), f. 12v
[103] 'Temple,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 227.
[104] The title of Knight Bachelor indicates an individual has been knighted but is not part of a chivalric order; it is not related to bachelor as a marital status. See Robert Jeffreys in LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/014, St Andrew Undershaft (1695); Edward Wiseman in LA: St Faith Under St Paul, f. 7v.; and Richard Piggot in LA: Margaret Lothbury, f. 3r; and for the dean of Bristol Cathedral see George Royce in 'St Augustine: An Assessment,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 44.
[105] King, *A scheme of the rates and duties*, p.1.

a lodger in the parish of St Andrew Undershaft yet whose burial duty was given as 14 shillings.[106] Rather than a shameful identity, Shepard suggests that admitting reliance on parents could be interpreted as a confirmation of 'sufficient resources … [and] demographic good fortune,' essentially heightening rather than discrediting claims to middling sort status among men.[107] Crucially, for a single man to define himself in relation to his parent he evoked a subordinate social position under the premise that he would eventually assume a more significant economic and occupational role, and therefore ascend in the social hierarchy, once their parent(s) died. This process was epitomised in the return of St Martin Pomeroy, London, where Thomas Symonds junior was emphatically styled as the bachelor 'eldest sonn' of a mother and father worth £600, demarcated separately from their other 'children.'[108]

Although the recording of the occupations of household heads was performed at the discretion of assessors (and therefore occupational data appears both rarely and inconsistently), there was one circumstance where a single man's occupation needed to be recorded. Alongside those single men dependent on their parents, it can also be seen that some single men were dependent based on their position as an employee. As employment as in service necessitated living with an employer, 'servant' was used in all three regions as a means of delineating a single man's relationship to the head of his household. 83 men in total, 9.8 percent of the metropole's single men, were described as servants by the assessors of the Marriage Duty Assessment.[109] Very rarely other terms of service were used, as in St Dionis Backchurch, where William Muckler was described as a bachelor 'bookkeeper' to Walter Benthall. Service among single men was captured far less often in Derbyshire and Bristol, with 1 documented instance in Derbyshire and 6 in Bristol.[110] The intertwining of manhood and authority with economic independence provided order to communal and occupational hierarchies, but it also worked against those who were not wealthy. The rise of life-long service in the seventeenth century (as opposed to the life-cycle periods of service before gaining social and economic independence more often associated with the sixteenth century) is seen by Shepard as an important marker of the emergence of a new 'permanently dependent' group of men who remained 'subordinate to

[106] LA: St Andrew Undershaft, f. 18r.
[107] Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, p. 214.
[108] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/053, St Martin Pomroy Ironmonger Lane (1695), f. 1r.
[109] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 209-210.
[110] See DRO: D1091/A/PO/2, Item 50, Marriage Duty Assessment return for Tibshelf (1696), f. 3r; and 'St Augustine,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 37; 'St Leonard,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 97; 'St Michael,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 126; and 'St Thomas,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 206, p. 208, and p. 209.

householders' by the terms of their employment.[111] These men, though earning a living by their labour, were among the lowest ranks of the social hierarchy as their income, living situations, and work duties were directed by another person. Usually this was a man, but the employment of Bristolian bachelor Walter Keinton in the household of middling sort singlewoman Elizabeth Bishop and his appellation as 'her man' indicates that single men could and did work for women.[112] Wrightson suggests that service was linked to the achievement of positive attributes amongst the young, where time spent working for others prepared them for the 'future assumption of adult responsibilities as householders.'[113] But as single men had to be at least 25 to appear in the returns, they would have been regarded by their contemporaries as well into their adulthood while working as servants.[114] While the returns give little insight into change over long periods of time, the idea that service was becoming a life-long employment may be evidenced by the fact that two single male servants were identified by the assessors as widowers without children; James Suthurst of St Michael parish, Bristol, and Lawrence Dredge of St Alban Wood Street in the City of London.[115] Suthurst and Dredge's appearance in the returns indicates that service remained open to men who had traditionally progressed past that stage of the life-cycle. The employment of widowers as servants might also be taken an indication of the economic and social precarity caused by the death of a spouse, with the destabilising of their own household-family groups necessitating that they return to employment by others as either a temporary or permanent survival strategy.

The use of relationship descriptors to define the boundaries of household-family groups also reveals that single men held positions of seniority in their professional fields even when those occupations were not stated, owing to the presence of apprentices in the household-families of some single men. 2 single men in Derbyshire, 1 man in Bristol, and 33 men in London were described as responsible for a total of 41 apprentices, all of whom were male. Apprenticeship was intended to provide youths with practical instruction under the paid supervision of a skilled master, but as Wrightson points out, the co-residence that apprenticeship necessitated meant that masters had a constant 'quasi-parental' duty of care.[116] For this reason, it is perhaps unsurprising that widowers were somewhat overrepresented

[111] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 209-210 and p. 252.
[112] Elizabeth Bishop was described as having wealth in excess of £600, see 'St Augustine,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 37.
[113] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 42-43.
[114] See Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 55.
[115] 'St Michael' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 156; and LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/011, St Alban Wood Street (1695), f. 11r.
[116] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 34.

amongst the single male masters of apprentices; while only 28 percent of single men captured in the Marriage Duty Assessment could be classified as widowed, they made up 41 percent of masters. Whether they had children or not, the fact that they had been married confirmed achievement of one of the most traditional markers of patriarchal authority, making them more readily identifiable as suitable instructors to youths who sought to learn trades. It is also possible to infer that having been married previously, widowers were probably older than bachelors, and thus they had likely been engaged in their occupation and had been running their own business for a longer time, and thus were in a better position to offer training.

Yet it is equally important to recognise that marital status was not a bar to the training of apprentices. 20 of the single male masters in London were bachelors. Where occupational data is provided, a spectrum of practical and intellectual trades were represented, from John Smithiers, a blacksmith worth £600 in the parish of St Margaret Lothbury, to Esquire 'Jos' Lawson in St Mary Aldermary.[117] Bachelor masters were an exclusively metropolitan occurrence, but it highlights that bachelors in these areas were well integrated in their local communities and guilds. Christopher Brooks shows that by the turn of the eighteenth century, migrants to the City were usually entering directly into trades rather than undertaking formal apprenticeships. This meant that London guilds were relatively 'inbred' compared to other areas of England, with increasing numbers of apprentices being sons of 'resident merchants and craftsmen.'[118] That bachelors might act as masters in these circumstances suggests that their married peers were willing to acknowledge a bachelor's professional knowledge and were able to trust a childless man with the care and instruction of their offspring.

Engagement with the training of apprentices brought a financial premium, but it also provided an opportunity for single men to assume positions of authority in their trades, which would outwardly be perceived as contributing to the reproduction of society and the social order. It is therefore not surprising that both poorer and middling sort single men were found in the process of training the apprentices in the returns. More unusually, however, there was also one instance of a bachelor 'pentioner,' in receipt of formal support, engaged in the training of two apprentices in the parish of St Helen, London.[119] Richard Duppa's occupation was not

[117] LA: St Margaret Lothbury, f. 2r; and LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/060, St Mary Aldermary (1695), f. 17r.
[118] Christopher Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800,' in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800*, eds. Johnathan Barry and Christopher Brooks (Basingstoke, 1994), pp. 64-65.
[119] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/036, St Helen (1695), f. 13r. Owing to the partial survival of the military and naval pension lists, it was not possible to determine whether they received these pensions from their parish, from the Chelsea Hospital, or as a result of military service. With thanks to Dr Ismini Pells for cross-referencing names

clear in the Marriage Duty Assessment, but a contemporary legal dispute indicates that he was a vintner at Great James Tavern on Bishopgate Street.[120] Boulton has pointed out that the poor relief provided by London parish authorities was very low, with one weekly payment often only equal to the daily wage of a labourer, so by-employments were still necessary as a 'survival strategy.'[121] Training apprentices may have provided necessary additional income, but that work also possessed far greater social importance; it suggests that single men of all social statuses were understanding, interacting with, and upholding patriarchal norms relating to work and provision to the greatest extent that they could manage. Even though the language of the Marriage Duty Assessment highlights Duppa's financial dependence as a pensioner over his labouring identity, his situation was distinctly different from the dependence of single male servants. Crucially, servants were denied access to household headship, but all single men recorded as training apprentices were seen heading their own households. Thus it becomes as important to consider the single man's position in his household-family group as his wealth when attempting to ascertain the place of single men in early modern society.

### *Single men's households*

The census-like format of the returns for the Marriage Duty Assessment allows the single man's household to be analysed in two ways: average number of people per household-family and variations in household-family composition. Average household size is a common metric used by demographers and it is well established that average household size was relatively consistent from the late-sixteenth to the early twentieth century at 4.75 persons per house, although 'individual settlements were evidently liable to vary quite widely from one another.'[122] King also returned a similar figure from calculations made at the end of the seventeenth century, using the returns for Gloucester to suggest that there were 4.5 persons per house on average, with the caveat that London's households would be slightly larger at 5.5 persons per house.[123] The average sizes of the household-families seen in the returns for Derbyshire, Bristol, and London therefore provide an opportunity to examine the extent to which the households of single men aligned with these expectations. This analysis is shown in Table 1.6.

against the surviving army and navy pensioner's lists for 1640 to 1695; via personal communication with Ismini Pells, 5 July 2023.

[120] NA: C 8/858/48, Howells vs Weston (1700); and NA: C 8/585/58, Howells vs Weston (1700).

[121] Boulton, 'Survival Strategies of Pauper Households:' p. 51.

[122] Peter Laslett, 'Mean household size in England since the sixteenth century,' in *Household and Family in Past Times*, eds. Richard Wall and Peter Laslett (Cambridge, 2009), p. 139.

[123] King, 'Natural and Political Observations,' p. 410 and pp. 446-447.

**Table 1.6: Average number of people per household-family captured in the returns.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London | All regions |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| All households | 4.28 | 3.29 | 6.10 | 4.10 |
| Single male is head of household | 2.08 | 2.21 | 4.69 | 3.10 |
| Containing single male but not as head | 5.02 | 4.42 | 8.00 | 7.53 |

From this table it is clear that the average number of people per household-family captured in the returns falls slightly below historiographical expectations, at 4.1 persons per household-family. This is entirely due to the small average household size in Bristol, which in turn was a result of the very small average household size in Bristol's most populous parish; St James had an average of 2.82 persons per household-family. The metropolitan household seems inflated in comparison. The disparity in average household size between the metropolitan and the rural and urban samples is an indicator of the centrality of lodging to life in the capital. Although not completely absent from the other two regions, the practice of opening a household to lodgers was commonplace in London, with estimates drawn from Poll Tax of 1692 suggesting that lodgers were present in almost half of all metropolitan households.[124] This practice influenced the size of households headed by and containing single men, as bachelors and widowers across London were captured living as lodgers as well as acting as landlords.

Even though each of the three regions returned a different average household-family size, household-families headed by single men were smaller in each case. An obvious contributor to this difference was that single men, lacking wives, could not cultivate traditional nuclear family groups. This is particularly evident in Derbyshire, where the single man's household-family constituted less than half the size of the average household-family group, with a large number of single men appearing to live completely alone. However, not all single men's household-families were vastly different from what was common in that region. In Bristol, single men's household-families were almost as small as those in Derbyshire, but also

[124] Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home Is His Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House,' *Past & Present* 199, 1 (2008): p. 158.

the average number of persons per household-family was also very small. This suggests that many married couples and single women in Bristol also lived in very small household-family groups that were not nuclear in structure. In contrast, when single men were not the head of their household, the household-families they participated were consistently larger than the size of the average household-family for that region. With bachelors and widowers present in the homes of a variety of kin and non-kin individuals as their lodgers, servants, or relations, this speaks to a different kind of single male experience, but once again this experience differed from the ideal of a strict nuclear or natal household-family structure.

Average household size increased even further for middling sort single men. The average household size for single men of the poorer and middling sort (based on the division of the basic and higher rates of the burial duties), separated by their status as head of the household or constituent household-family member, is shown in Table 1.7.

**Table 1.7: Average number of people per household-family for poorer and middling sort single men.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Poorer | Middling | Poorer | Middling | Poorer | Middling |
| Single male is head | 2.08 | - | 2.07 | 3.08 | 3.97 | 5.70 |
| Single male is not head | 5.02 | - | 4.26 | 5.15 | 7.85 | 8.42 |

Two factors contributed to this difference. Firstly, when middling sort men acted as landlords, on average they took more lodgers than their poorer sort counterparts. In London, 38 percent of middling sort single men had lodgers, averaging 3 lodgers per house. In Bristol, 4.2 percent of middling sort single men took lodgers with an average of 1.5 lodgers per house. While modern perceptions of privacy would lead historians to assume that a smaller and therefore more private house would be preferred, Gilliam Williamson has shown that taking lodgers could positively affirm middling sort status on the grounds that it represented 'thrift' while the attendant income 'maximis[ed] one's assets and opportunities.'[125] On a more practical level, the potential income gained from lodgers was balanced with a landlord's ability

[125] Gillian Williamson, *Lodgers, Landlords, and Landladies in Georgian London* (London, 2021), p. 64.

to accommodate them, as both extra space and a material outlay would be required to provide 'a sufficient stock of linen, crockery, [and] cutlery' for residents.[126] Middling sort single men were therefore better placed to act as landlords than those among the poorer sort, and would also have been able to position their status as landlords as a reflection of their status and authority. The second reason that middling sort single men tended to be captured in larger household-family groups than their poorer counterparts was because they retained servants in greater numbers. In Bristol, every middling sort single male head of household employed at least one servant, and in London they employed at least two. Even middling sort single men who were not heads of their own households tended to live in close proximity to greater numbers of servants. Part of a lodger's rental payments would cover 'attendance,' a sum which ensured that a landlord's servants would also service the lodger's room. [127] Middling sort single men could therefore afford to make discriminating choices and select accommodation where a servants would be available to meet their needs. These circumstances are well illustrated by Simon Cole, a gentleman and bachelor in St Bartholomew by Exchange, London. He was the only lodger in Grace Winigate's household-family, yet residence with her and her two children provided him with access to four servants.[128]

Cole's example also shows that household composition is as important in understanding single men's experiences as household-family size. Examining who lived with single men provides a new perspective to the historiographic narrative that early modern England was composed of small household-family groups which were overwhelmingly nuclear in structure.[129] While common elsewhere in early modern Europe, 'extended' (containing two or more adults who share a blood relationship but are not parent and child, alongside their spouses/children) and 'stem' (containing an older parent, their adult child, and the child's spouse/children) families are generally absent in demographic reconstructions of English parishes for the same period.[130] Yet the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment demonstrate

[126] Williamson, *Lodgers, Landlords, and Landladies*, p. 65.
[127] Williamson, *Lodgers, Landlords, and Landladies*, p. 111.
[128] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/020, St Bartholomew by Exchange (1695), f. 6v.
[129] John Hajnal, 'Two Kinds of Preindustrial Household Formation System,' *Population and Development Review* 8, 3 (1982): p. 451; Mikołaj Szołtysek and Bartosz Ogórek, 'How Many Household Formation Systems Were There in Historic Europe? A View Across 256 Regions Using Partitioning Clustering Methods,' *Historical Methods* 53, 1 (2020): p. 57; and Laslett, 'Mean Household size,' p. 126.
[130] This terminology was devised by E. A. Hammel and Peter Laslett, see E. A. Hammel and Peter Laslett, 'Comparing Household Structure Over Time and Between Cultures,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 16, 1 (1974): p. 87 and pp. 95-98; and their applicability in English contexts has been analysed in Richard Wall, 'Economic Collaboration of family members within and beyond households in English society, 1600-2000,' *Continuity and Change* 25, 1 (2010): pp. 87-88; and Steven Ruggles, 'Stem Families and Joint Families in Comparative Historical Perspective,' *Population and Development Review* 36, 3 (2010): p. 574.

that households containing or headed by single men could be incredibly compositionally complex and contain extended or stem elements, even when their average household-family size was relatively small. In some circumstances, these household-family groups allowed single men to take patriarchal positions of domestic authority even though they were not married, with these positions being recognised and validated by those outside the household.

Take, for example, the case of two bachelors in the parish of St Helen in London who were both assessed at the basic burial duty rate. George Hill was captured in the returns as a resident in a household-family headed by his mother, and additionally containing one female servant and one female lodger.[131] Only a few houses away, William Stephens was described by the assessors as the head of a household-family that included his widowed mother, one female servant, and four lodgers.[132] Excepting the greater number of lodgers in Stephens's household-family, the composition of the two households was identical; two bachelors living with a widowed mother, servant, and lodger(s). Yet the assessors of the Marriage Duty Assessment recorded the headship of these household-families differently, suggesting that they saw Hill as a subordinate to his mother while Stephens had authority over his household. It is not possible to determine what contributed to this difference; disability or the employment status of the mother or son may have been important but unrecorded factors. What this should suggest to historians is that early modern people dynamically applied the categorisation of the head of the household. They may have been guided by hierarchies of age, gender, or marital status, but not possessing these attributes did not prevent a man from acting as the head of his household, nor did it prevent others from recognising him as such. Stephens's status as the head of his household was confirmed by his ability to perform the role to the standard expected by other men, reflecting and enforcing normative codes of conduct.

Household headship is integral to the researcher's approach to manhood, with Shepard establishing that a man's role as a 'provider' was 'as important a tenet of patriarchal ideology as the expectation of chastity in women.'[133] Stephens was evidently recognised as a 'provider' in a way that Hill was not. Furthermore, when historians acknowledge that Stephens was the patriarch of a family group, his mother can be understood as acting a substitute for the role played by a wife. In this context, the structure, and therefore the operation of this household would have been similar to the households of many married men. Although it was not nuclear

[131] LA: St Helen, f. 12r.
[132] LA: St Helen, f. 7r.
[133] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 186.

in structure, it maintained the ideals of the nuclear family's hierarchies of authority and obedience. S. J. Wright's work on Ludlow has demonstrated that single men who could effectively replace the role (and therefore the related domestic duties) of a wife could remain single for extremely long periods, finding that three-quarters of widowers who had been single for 10 or more years had consistently lived with a female assistant of some kind.[134] The types of work carried out by these women and their relationships with single male heads of household are examined in greater detail in Chapter 3, but what emerges here is that single men across all three regions were captured acting as household heads, and therefore were able to demonstrate patriarchal authority over household-family groups that included a variety of kin and non-kin participants.

A general breakdown of the compositions of single men's household-families as seen in the returns are shown in Table 1.8 and Table 1.9, with the number of single men with that household type given on the left and their proportional presence among single men in that region given on the right. This is a priority list, designed to indicate who single men were most likely to be receiving domestic support from, so servants and lodgers may also have been present in households where single man's parents were co-resident or when a single man's brother was described as the household head *etc*. The category of "other or unknown kin" was applied to single men whose household-family contained one or more individuals who shared his last name but were not described as his kin in the return. These may constitute accidental exclusions made during recording, but they also elucidate the limits of the descriptive terms used by assessors. Specificity was only required for direct relations: parents, children, and siblings, so these other kin may have been more distant relations: aunts, uncles, cousins, or relations by marriage. "Extended and stem households" are used to indicate where a single man lived with at least two distinct generations of kin, incorporating either horizontal or vertical branches of his family tree (and sometimes both), such as in the case of Robert Yate of Bristol, a widower without children of his own but whose household-family included his sister and her grandchild.[135]

[134] S. J. Wright, 'The Elderly and Bereaved in Eighteenth Century Ludlow,' in *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Margaret Pelling and Richard Smith (London, 2003), p. 100.
[135] 'St Werburgh: An Assessment' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 223.

**Table 1.8: Household-family compositions for single men who were heads of household.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Parent(s) co-resident | - | - | 4 | 1.20 | 6 | 2.38 |
| Children/grandchildren | 32 | 31.07 | 94 | 28.31 | 66 | 26.19 |
| Sister(s) co-resident | - | - | 14 | 4.21 | 9 | 3.57 |
| Brother(s) co-resident | 5 | 5.83 | 6 | 1.81 | 4 | 1.59 |
| Mixed-sex sibling group | 1 | 0.97 | 1 | 0.30 | 2 | 0.79 |
| Extended or stem household | 5 | 4.85 | 13 | 3.92 | 12 | 4.76 |
| Other/unknown kin resident | 6 | 5.83 | 5 | 1.51 | 12 | 4.76 |
| Total living with kin | 49 | 47.57 | 137 | 41.27 | 111 | 44.05 |
| Total living with non-kin | 10 | 9.71 | 42 | 12.65 | 133 | 52.78 |
| Completely alone | 44 | 42.72 | 153 | 46.08 | 8 | 3.17 |
| Total single male heads of household | 103 | - | 332 | - | 252 | - |

**Table 1.9: Household-family compositions for single men who were not heads of household.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| Parent is household head | 4 | 22.22 | 18 | 24.32 | 46 | 7.77 |
| Child is household head | - | - | - | - | 2 | 0.33 |
| Brother is household head | 4 | 22.22 | 3 | 4.05 | 12 | 2.03 |
| Other/unknown kin is household head | 3 | 16.67 | 16 | 21.62 | 16 | 2.70 |
| Total living with kin | 11 | 61.11 | 37 | 50.00 | 76 | 12.84 |
| Was a servant | 1 | 5.56 | 3 | 4.05 | 83 | 14.02 |
| Was a lodger | - | - | 24 | 32.43 | 153 | 25.84 |
| Either servant or lodger | 6 | 33.33 | 9 | 12.16 | 280 | 47.30 |
| In alms house | - | - | 1 | 1.35 | - | - |
| Total living with non-kin | 7 | 38.89 | 37 | 50.00 | 516 | 87.16 |
| Total single males not head of household | 18 | - | 74 | - | 592 | - |

Single men living completely alone appeared to be more common in the returns than would be expected based on the conclusions of Pelling and Wright.[136] In their work, while some single men were found living alone, they form a minority among a minority and do not approach the figures seen here. Although never the most common form of household composition in any of the three regions, nearly half of all single male heads of household in the rural and urban regions were apparently lacking other household-family members at the time that the returns were made. Those living alone in urban areas, as Wright suggests, might 'table with an employer, or, failing that, eat in a local alehouse,' although this seems less conceivable for the more geographically isolated rural single men in Derbyshire.[137] A secondary possibility was that a single man could technically live alone but remain in close proximity to kin, evidenced by the frequency with which neighbours in Derbyshire shared last names. In Darley, the immediate neighbours of the childless widower Anthony Bestall were George and Samuell Bestall.[138] It was not the purpose of the returns to delineate the existence of relationships between households, but a wider analysis of the social networks open to single men is performed in Chapter 2 and this reveals that Bestall named George as his brother and Samuell as kin when making bequests in his will.[139] It thus seems probable that George, Samuell, and their children or servants may have been employed in assisting Bestall with his household management, or else Bestall may have employed a charwoman or had access to other non-residential help from his community.

In London, where space was at a premium, living completely alone was only the prerogative of a few men. The most common household composition for single men in the metropole was what Tadmor calls the 'single person's family,' household-family groups made up only of a single male master, with servants and lodgers but no kin.[140] These groups were not restricted to the metropole, and were also seen in rural and urban areas, albeit less frequently. These household-families could be small and uncomplicated in composition, as was the case the scientist Robert Hooke, the Professor of Geometry at Gresham College. In the returns for St Helen, London, the assessors described him as a 'gentleman' (thus assigned a burial duty of £1 4s.) and employer of one servant, Mary Marshall.[141] But they could also be large, with

[136] Pelling, 'Who most needs to marry?,' p. 34; and Wright, 'Elderly and Bereaved,' p. 100.
[137] Wright, 'Elderly and Bereaved,' p. 100.
[138] DRO: Assessment for Darley, f. 1r.
[139] Staffordshire Record Office: B/C/11, Will of Anthony Bestall of Derbyshire (1697), frame 2; and see Chapter 2, p. 99.
[140] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, pp. 22-23.
[141] LA: St Helen, f. 2v.

complex internal hierarchies which gave single men opportunities to engage with household management. The bachelor Dr Edward Tyson, a physician in St Dionis Backchurch, London, was the head of a 'single person's family' with six household-family members: two male servants, two female servants, and two lodgers.[142] The very largest 'single person's family' found in the returns contained 18 residents and was headed by a bachelor 'gentleman' called Edward Cook; his household-family included four lodgers and 13 servants, presumably employees in a business operated from his home.[143]

Servants were present in 42 percent of households headed by single men. In many cases, they would have fulfilled single men's needs for women to perform sex-segregated household chores, like cooking and cleaning, which supplemented spousal labour. R. C. Richardson has also shown that in smaller or poorer urban households, servants could also perform a range of peripatetic duties, fulfilling provisioning roles like shopping, a task increasingly styled as women's work as the seventeenth century progressed.[144] For this reason, the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment indicate a slight preference for female servants, with 55 percent of servants in London and 63 percent in Bristol being identified as women. The gendered division of labour was even more apparent in the households of widowers with children and wifeless fathers, as these men needed women to perform childcare. London's returns show 59 percent of servants employed by widowers with children were female, rising to 74 percent in Bristol. Comparison with the Derbyshire sample is somewhat complicated, as the names of servants were not always recorded, making it difficult to distinguish their gender. Servants of some kind were found in 15 percent of bachelor or widower households, and in some cases assessors highlighted servants as having a particularly high status in a single man's household. In Melbourne Kings Newton, the female servants in the households of widowers Brian Knight and Thomas Heap were styled as 'housekeepers,' deviating from the standard 'servant' terminology used elsewhere in the return.[145] Housekeeping suggested that these women were responsible for overseeing the management of the whole household, and was strongly connotated with the duties of married women, suggesting that Knight and Heap were heading households just as efficiently as their married peers.

[142] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/028, St Dionis Backchurch (1695), f. 4v.
[143] LA: St Bartholomew by Exchange, f. 11r.
[144] R. C. Richardson, *Households Servants in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 2010), p. 112; and Bridget Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1994), p. 39.
[145] Chester Waters, 'Inhabitants of Melbourne:' p. 14 and p. 17.

Kin were also integral to the organisation of the single man's household-family. Peter Laslett has calculated that between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, 10.1 percent of households contained 'resident kin' that were not the biological offspring of the household head.[146] In cases where single men were described as the head of their household, kin were more prominent than Laslett suggests. 16.5 percent of single men in Derbyshire, 13.0 percent of those in Bristol, and 17.9 percent of those in London included kin in their household-family. Yet kin featured even more prominently in household-family groups where the single man was not listed as the head. Wall recognises that 'in a personal crisis situation (such as bereavement) men [were] more likely to become dependent on the support of others than would similarly situated women … more men than women [were] accepted into the household of others.'[147] The data calculated here not only confirms this to be true, but also reveals that bachelors were also highly likely to reside in a household headed by a member of their family. In Derbyshire, 61.1 percent of non-household head single men resided with a blood relation, and in Bristol the figure was 50 percent. In London, the prominence of lodging made these household-families slightly less common, but still 12.8 of single men resided with kin. Co-residence with kin must have been desirable for men in a variety of situations, as even when single men were described as lodgers a few can be seen lodging with their brothers or sisters too, as demonstrated by the childless widower William Croft, his sister Elizabeth and his brother Robert all lodging in the house of Thomas Smith in the parish of St Leonard Foster Lane in London.[148]

Describing single men as residing "with kin" is not sufficient to fully understand the hierarchies of domesticity and authority at work in their households. Tadmor advocates for an understanding of 'adaptable networks of relatedness' that emphasises co-residence with kin as mutable concept, shaped by individual circumstances, and influenced by 'migration, mobility, and occupational ties.'[149] Having children and demonstrating good care of them was a key marker of patriarchal status, but there also existed contemporary notions of reciprocal care that worked from children towards their parents. Elizabeth Foyster highlights that old age was a time when parent-child relationships could be 'renegotiated,' and the presence of a widowed man whose first and last name were simply given as 'Aged Father' in the London home of Matthew Wagg certainly highlights that children were willing to support and care for their

[146] Laslett, 'Mean household size,' p. 148 and p. 149, Table 4.12.
[147] Wall, 'Woman Alone:' p. 307.
[148] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/047, St Leonard Foster Lane (no date), f. 9r.
[149] Naomi Tadmor, 'Early modern English kinship in the long run: reflections on continuity and change,' *Continuity and Change* 25, 1 (2010): p. 34.

widowed parents when the situation arose.[150] On the other hand, returning to a parents' household may have provided a single man with reprise in a difficult time. While the duration of his co-residence cannot be ascertained, that John Gandy junior, a childless widower, was captured living in his parent's home at the time of the returns suggests that he was probably emotionally, if not financially, dependent on them at that time.[151]

Yet mutual support was not only the prerogative of parents and children. Recent scholarship about single person's households has brought new attention to the concept of the 'alternative conjugal couple,' originally proposed by Froide and expanded upon by Amy Harris.[152] These couples were comprised of a co-resident brother and sister who 'enabled' the bachelor household through the provision of material and emotional support to each other.[153] These partnerships evoked the form and structure of a nuclear household in a very literal way, with the siblings assuming spousal roles so that their household-family operated on the same principles of gender difference and mutuality as a marital household. The Marriage Duty Assessment returns show alternate conjugal couples existing in the rural, urban, and metropolitan samples amongst both the poorer and middling sort of single men. They were more popular in Bristol than in other areas; intriguingly, also the only region of the three where the returns captured more single women than single men. William Whipp and his sister Sarah provide an archetypal example, living with each other and without any other servants or lodgers in the parish of St Stephen.[154] Alternate conjugal couples were not only limited to those who had never been married before. 48 percent of alternate conjugal couples, 14 in total, were comprised of wifeless men or widowers with children, as seen in the return for Melbourne Kings Newton, where John Martin, his daughter Anne, and his sister Elizabeth were listed as a household-family group.[155] Alternative conjugal couples with children were found in all three regions, and that sisters would choose to live with their brother after the death of their brother's spouse fully reinforces the idea that these pairings provided a viable alternative to (re)marriage. While securing childcare can be assumed to be integral to a single man's decision to create an

[150] Elizabeth Foyster, 'Parenting Was for Life, Not Just for Childhood: The Role of Parents in the Married Lives of Their Children in Early Modern England,' *History* 86, 283 (2001): p. 317; and LA: St Leonard Foster Lane, f. 5v.
[151] 'St John Baptist A Rate and Assessment,' in *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 95.
[152] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 55; and Amy Harris, '"She Never Inclined to It:" Childhood, Family Relationships, and Marital Choice in Eighteenth-Century England,' *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 12, 2 (2019): pp. 185-186.
[153] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 75.
[154] 'St Stephen,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1698), p. 202.
[155] Chester Waters, 'Inhabitants of Melbourne:' p. 12.

alternative conjugal couple, the willingness of sisters to participate in these household-families suggests that they must have benefitted both parties.

The visibility of the alternate conjugal couple also highlights the existence of a comparable structure that has not been covered in the existing historiography. In all three regions, amongst both the poorer and middling sort of single men, bachelors were found living in households with their brother(s). While alternative conjugal couples were stabilised through their ability to emulate the form of a nuclear household, these brother-brother households diverge from the expectations of what the early modern English household might entail. These households show some similarities to the concept of 'spinster clustering' first outlined by Olwen Hufton in her article 'Women without Men.'[156] Hufton finds spinster clusters in the lace-making regions of France, where skilled women's wages were so low that they could neither build up a dowry nor afford to live independently.[157] Living together allowed unmarried women to manage the costs and domestic labour of the household without marrying, which also appears to be the purpose of these cases of "brother clustering" in England.[158] Instances of brother clustering were almost comparable in number to alternative conjugal couples, but unlike their mixed-sex counterpart, they were far more common in Derbyshire than elsewhere, exemplified by the shared household-family formed by the three bachelor brothers Henry, John, and William Cooper and their three servants.[159] While spinster clusters were formed of older women who were established in their professions, the data from the returns would suggest the inverse was true for men; although the cost saving measure would have been equivalent, brother clustering was only practiced by bachelors, suggesting a less independent position in their social or occupational hierarchy. Nevertheless, brother clustering might have offered more security than alternate conjugal couples in one particular circumstance; a marriage would not necessarily break up the cluster. The point of a shared 'economic and emotional relationship' between a brother and his sister was to emulate the spousal relationship, and therefore if one sibling chose to marry it would necessarily break apart the existing arrangement.[160] Across all three regions, no single men were found living with a married sister, yet it seems acceptable, if uncommon, for a bachelor to reside with his married brother as an extension of the brother's existing household-family. Thus we find bachelors like Calamy Baley residing with his married

[156] See Olwen Hufton, 'Women without Men: Widows and Spinsters in Britain and France in the Eighteenth Century,' *Journal of Family History* 9, 4 (1984): pp. 355-376.
[157] Hufton, 'Women without Men:' p. 361.
[158] Hufton, 'Women without Men:' p. 361.
[159] Chester Waters, 'Inhabitants of Melbourne:' p. 8.
[160] Harris, 'She Never Inclined to It:' p. 187.

brother Samuell, who was described as a gentleman 'silkman,' and Samuell's wife and two children.[161] That this brother cluster was formed on the basis of esteem, rather than desperation, might be evidenced by the fact that Samuell's son was also called Calamy.

For those who did not live with kin, lodging was the most popular option. 178 single men were described as lodgers in the returns, but alongside this clearly marked group, a further sub-set of single men escaped identification by assessors. 280 of the 592 single men in London were captured participating in a household-family but were not described as kin, servant, or lodger by the assessors. The fact that these single men were not categorised, or possibly defied categorisation, suggests that the boundaries between lodging and service were not always obvious in the late seventeenth century. In Wright's study of lodging in Ludlow, she describes how lodgers 'would sometimes help in the [landlord's] workshop' without necessarily being described as his servant or employee by contemporary onlookers.[162] Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe similarly posit that a lack of separation between homeowners and their genteel lodgers was beneficial in 'form[ing] the basis of reciprocal [personal and professional] relations … if nothing else, these encounters furnished young people with the experience of living in other people's houses.'[163] The relationship descriptors used in the Marriage Duty Assessment were inflexible, covering only simplistic relations between individuals, so their non-application in certain circumstances hints at a more structurally fluid basis to household composition than normally accounted for in demographic histories.

This does not mean that all lodging was offered on an *ad hoc* basis. In London, the returns evidence the existence of what can only be described as professionally run boarding or lodging houses. Such households were not given any special definition or indication in the outline of the Marriage Duty Assessment, yet the listing conventions used highlight household-family groups across London where the number of lodgers equalled or exceeded the number of blood relations in the landlord's family. These situations must have provided a significant, if not primary income for the landlord, as well as giving lodgers an opportunity to have their domestic needs professionally dealt with. In most of these lodging houses, the number of lodgers only slightly surpassed the size of the landlord's blood family, such as in the case of Captain Hugh Ridley in St Dionis Backchurch. Ridley, a childless widower, was one of five

[161] LA: St Faith Under St Paul, f. 4v.
[162] Susan Wright, 'Sojourners and lodgers in a provincial town: the evidence from eighteenth-century Ludlow,' *Urban History* 17, 1 (1990): p. 29.
[163] Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, '"It buys me freedom:" genteel lodging in late-seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London,' *Parergon* 24, 2 (2007): p. 145.

lodgers in the household-family of John Cary, whose wife and two sons completed his kin group.[164] Yet lodging houses could also inflate to extreme sizes; bachelor Richard Clutterbuck was the first-listed of 20 lodgers in a household-family in St James Duke's Place, a parish which contained one of the main routes in and out of the City.[165] These extremely large lodging houses were not only restricted to the parishes bordering the walls, however. There were 10 further examples where single men were counted as one of 10 or more lodgers in household-families across the City of London, with two such lodging houses being found in St Bartholomew Exchange, a central intramural parish well-known at the time for its 'Taverns, Coffee-houses, and other publick Places of Entertainment.'[166]

Lodging appears very differently in the returns for Bristol, suggesting that the urban environment was not so overwhelmed by transplants to the town. The majority of urban households with lodgers accommodated less than three additional household-family members. Only Richard Harding of St Stephen's parish appeared to have lived in a formally-organised lodging house, as he and his four children were counted alongside two other widowed mothers and their children as 10 lodgers in the house of the widow Katherine Perry.[167] This is also the only example in all three regions of a lodging house exclusively occupied by single-parent groups, and may well have been a privately-arranged charitable organisation, although it has not been possible to verify this through other records. Only one middling-sort single man could be found lodging in Bristol; the bachelor James Crofts, described in the return for St Nicholas as a gentleman residing in the household-family of John Bennett, his wife Ann, and his son Robart.[168] Again, this marks a distinction between urban and metropolitan experiences of singleness. In London, 56 of 153 lodgers were assessed above the basic burial duty rate, so more than one third of metropolitan single male lodgers were of the middling sort. Such a situation should emphasise that lodging could be a preferable, even desirable arrangement, for well-off as well as poor single men. McEwan and Sharpe emphasise that many genteel men and women chose to lodge even when they could afford to do otherwise.[169] In return for

[164] LA: St Dionis Backchurch, f. 12v.
[165] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/037, St James Duke's Place (1695), f. 18r.
[166] Lodging houses are seen in LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/003, Allhallows the Great (1695), f. 13v; LA: St Bartholemew by Exchange, f. 3v and f. 11v; LA: St Faith under St Paul, f. 2v; LA: St James Garlickhithe, f. 13r; LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/044, St Lawrence Jewry (no date), f. 32r; LA: St Leonard Foster Lane, f. 2r and f. 9r; LA: St Margaret Lothbury, f. 6r; LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/057, St Martin Vintry (1695), f. 15r; and Strype, *Survey of London: Volume 1, Book 2*, p. 132.
[167] 'St Stephen,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, p. 189.
[168] 'St Nicholas,' in *Inhabitants of Bristol*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1698), p. 139.
[169] McEwan and Sharpe, 'Genteel lodging:' p. 161.

compromised domestic privacy, a lodger did not need to engage in household management and they would benefit from an exemption from assessed taxes, as these were usually levied against the head of the household only.[170] The Marriage Duty Assessment was a rare exception to this rule, evidently designed with the intention of taxing these wealthier, lodging single men. Although single men who appear as lodgers in the returns did not adhere to the paternalistic, home-owning ideals of manhood outlined by Shepard, single men who lodged did not necessarily deny themselves opportunities to engage in, or learn about, the practice of running a household.[171] The returns provide a number of examples of single men retaining some autonomy within their own quarters even as they existed as a part of a larger household-family. Richard Richardson, a widower without children in the parish of St Margaret Lothbury in London, lodged in the house of John Amison. Amison had five servants of his own, but Richardson was explicitly described as retaining Mary Walker as 'his' servant separately from the rest of the household.[172] Even if their living space amounted to just rented rooms, single men were still invested in upholding ideals of domestic authority and household management by getting women to carry out their domestic work.

### *Conclusion*

The returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment reveal that bachelors and widowers made up a significant minority of the English population by the end of the seventeenth century. Although less in number than single women, they were represented among the nation's householders and were visible among the ranks of the burgeoning middling sort. The variations in numbers, wealth, and household structures of single men seen in the returns provides a new perspective for researchers interested the operation of patriarchy in early modern English society. While some single men were found in the dependent position often associated with youth and singleness, it is clear that other single men had fuller access to the operation of patriarchal authority even though they were not married. That bachelors and widowers across England were seen heading households, taking charge of household-families, and accruing wealth or cultivating occupational status begins to illuminate how manhood was constructed when separated from the expectation that marriage was its central component.

[170] For the intrusion of landlords into lodgers' domestic spaces, see Vickery, 'Home Is His Castle?:' pp.150-151; and McEwan and Sharpe, 'Genteel lodging:' p. 144 and pp. 150-151.
[171] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 70.
[172] LA: St Margaret Lothbury, f. 13r.

The Marriage Duty Assessment has overcome one of the most significant problems in the study of single men; that of identification. While given high value by demographers as an account of the English population before censuses were commonplace, the listing conventions of the returns and its focus on marital status should encourage historians of gender to engage with macro as well as micro approaches to the field. Large-scale analysis of single male experiences has revealed significant differences between the lives of single men in rural, urban, and metropolitan parts of England. What the Marriage Duty Assessment does not give a sense of, however, was change in the lives of bachelors and widowers over time, nor any perception of the social and occupational networks they had access to beyond their immediate household-family group. Chapter 2, then, uses the single men identified here as a lens to examine the experiences of bachelors and widowers beyond this short period at the end of the seventeenth century.

***Chapter 2: Single men's wills***

The use of the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment in Chapter 1 has illustrated the place of single men at the micro and macro levels of society, within their household-families and as parts of the overall population. This chapter aims to explore what might be described as the intermediate societal level: the place of the bachelor or widower within his extended family and local community. This chapter analyses probate material, in particular the will and testimonies made by single men, in order to recover the meaningful relationships that existed both within and beyond their household-family group. The basic function of the will was to dispose of a testator's goods and property, but historians have long understood that this process was loaded with additional socio-cultural meaning. Keith Wrightson emphasises that the bequests made in wills were intended to 'recall and recognise those close to [the testator] in affection, to acknowledge wider ties of obligation or gratitude, and to implant their memory in the continuing lives of others.'[1]

The examination of probate documentation in this chapter therefore provides a way to demonstrate the size and shape of the single male social network and to understand how single men reinforced their place within a social or family group by making and rewarding connections with kin and non-kin. Moving beyond the existing historiography of the culture of will-making, this chapter will also argue that wills provided an avenue for single men to access manhood by creating hierarchies of authority and dependence between themselves and their beneficiaries. By giving gifts through an inscribed, witnessed, and signed document such as a will, bachelors and widowers alike could made definitive and legally enforceable claims about their status as providers and protectors.

Applying both quantitative and qualitative approaches to probate material, this chapter is comprised of three sections. The first section of this chapter examines the beneficiaries nominated by single male testators, including how many appeared in an average will, their relationship as either kin or non-kin to the testator, and the gender distribution of beneficiaries in order to ascertain the range and limits of the single man's social and familial network. The second section of this chapter more closely examines relationships of particular importance to single men by examining the language used to describe certain beneficiaries, the types of gifts they received, and the way certain bequests were structured with caveats. The aim of this section is to discern how these relationships could be drawn on to enhance the familial or social

[1] Keith Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer: a Scrivener, His City, and the Plague* (New Haven, 2011), p. 92.

status of a deceased bachelor or widower. Particular attention will be paid to conditional bequests, gifts only given once the beneficiary met certain conditions, as a method by which single men could use the financial dependence of their beneficiaries to establish a superior position for themselves within their familial hierarchy. The third and final section of this chapter seeks to explore the outward perceptions of the single man's place within his familial and social networks through a close reading of the intestacy case relating to the London-based scientist and bachelor Robert Hooke. A draft will attributed to Hooke can be found in the National Archives' collection.[2] However, the document was not valid as a will as it was neither signed nor witnessed; Hooke's alleged intentions were disregarded and his estate was distributed by the courts. This case, though exceptional in its detail and in the wealth of the testator involved, serves to demonstrate how single men's networks did or did not fit into the normative framework of the extended family as understood by other adult men in the early modern period.

In adopting this approach, this chapter contributes to the existing historiography on wills and social relationships in two ways. Firstly, it surmounts the general issue of the systemic failure to describe men as either bachelors or widowers in early modern probate documentation by making use of the sample of men identified as single in the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment in Chapter 1. This bypasses a barrier which has impacted previous attempts to compare single men's and single women's wills as seen in the work of Judith Spicksley and the book *Single Homemakers* by Margaret Hussey and David Ponsonby.[3] Secondly, it is intended to provide an individual, masculine perspective that mediates between the arguments made by Naomi Tadmor in *Family and Friends* and Amy Froide in *Never Married*. In *Family and Friends*, Tadmor proposes the concept of the 'lineage-family' which was composed of 'notions of ancestry, pedigree, and lineal descent … essentially transmitted through birth and blood.'[4] In her study of life-writing, Tadmor suggests that individuals rarely saw themselves as possessing lineage-families, and more often outwardly projected the term to describe 'ancient' families such as local nobility or the monarchy.[5] By contrast, Froide argues that will-making was extremely significant for single women who wished to cultivate a 'never-married

[2] NA: PROB 20/1315, Unsigned draft will attributed to Robert Hooke of London (1702/3). The National Archives catalogue entry for the document is given as "Hooke, Robert: London, surveyor (1703)."
[3] Judith Spicksley, '"Fly with a Duck in Thy Mouth:" Single Women as Sources of Credit in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Social History* 32, 2 (2007): p. 202-203; and David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham, 2012), p. 36.
[4] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 73-74 and p. 73, footnote 1.
[5] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 75 and p. 79.

identity.'[6] A will allowed a single woman to 'present her life … display her relationships, and … perpetuate her memory' in order to 'ensure that they lived on in the recollections of their extended family' even if she died without a direct family line.[7]

This chapter argues for a middle path which suggests that single men, like single women, used their wills to present an idealised version of themselves, but this construction did not amount to a single male identity in line with Froide's findings for single women. Rather, single men cultivated notions of the lineage-family by recreating the hierarchies of a nuclear family through their choice of beneficiaries and the structure of their bequests. This approach to probate material is shaped by Lloyd Bonfield's argument about the legal control afforded to male testators in the Elizabethan period: 'first, there is control over the estate … second, there is control over his children … because the final instalment of the birthright is forthcoming only in the father's ultimate direction: his will.'[8] Bonfield made this statement before the advent of the history of masculinity but nevertheless it serves to highlight how patriarchal authority could still be accessed by men after their deaths. By applying Bonfield's argument to examine single men, it becomes possible to assess how bachelors and widowers also upheld the principles of patriarchy, and the extent to which their manhood was respected, obeyed, and/or subverted by their beneficiaries.

Wills emerge as the obvious choice for the analysis of the single man's social network because, barring some restrictions for citizens of the City of London, early modern people possessed freedom of testation – the right to divide their estates as they wished and to distribute them to whomever they chose.[9] While England certainly existed under the influence of what Peter Grajzl and Peter Murrell call 'cultural primogeniture,' testators could technically nominate anyone as an heir, and *vice versa* disinherit others.[10] Bearing in mind that the number of will-makers in early modern England only ever represented a minority of the overall population, will-making was accessible to men of all social classes, especially when compared

[6] Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), p. 195.
[7] Froide, *Never Married*, pp. 79-80.
[8] Lloyd Bonfield, 'Marriage, Property and the "Affective Family,"' *Law and History Review* 1, 2 (1983): pp. 299-300.
[9] Until 1724, citizens of the City of London had to devise one-third of their personal estate to their wife and one-third had to be divided equally between any living children or grandchildren. The remaining third, and any real estate, could be bequeathed freely. Single male citizens tended to follow the pattern of this rule even if they had never married and did not have children. This rule also applied to the Province of York until 1692 and to all residents of Wales until 1696, although this had no bearing on the wills used in this chapter. See Roger Kerridge, 'Family Provision in England and Wales,' in *Comparative Succession Law Volume III: Mandatory Family Protection*, eds. Kenneth Reid, Marius de Waal, and Reinhard Zimmermann (Oxford, 2020), p. 386.
[10] Peter Grazjl and Peter Murrell, 'Of Families and Inheritance: Law and Development in England before the Industrial Revolution,' *Cliometrica* 17, 3 (2023): p. 392.

to other forms of self-recording that required full literacy.[11] The long-established practice of will-making meant that most wills followed a common form even if self-written or nuncupative. The only requirement was that the document itself be signed by the testator and observed by witnesses.[12] As Wrightson summarises, this made the early modern will at once 'generic and unique,' making it possible for researchers to compare and contrast documents produced in different areas and for people of different religious beliefs or levels of wealth.[13]

The wills used in this chapter were selected by comparing the names of single men identified in the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment in Chapter 1 to extant archives of probate documentation.[14] The geographical coverage of this chapter is therefore mostly the same as in Chapter 1, recovering wills for single male testators who died in Derbyshire and Bristol as well as London - slightly expanding the scope of the previous chapter to cover deaths that occurred both within and without the City walls. In Derbyshire and Bristol, probate material fell under the jurisdiction of the local Consistory courts, respectively conducted by the diocese of Lichfield and Coventry and the diocese of Bristol.[15] In London, wills were more widely published across Commissary, Consistory, Archdeaconry, and Peculiar courts.[16] The records of the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury were also consulted as they governed cases where the deceased possessed personalty worth £5 or greater across two or more diocese, and as such captured the wealthiest single male testators from Bristol and London.[17] No single male testators in Derbyshire had a will proved through the Canterbury court. This regional approach means that, as in Chapter 1, the differences between single male networks in rural, urban, and metropolitan areas can be ascertained rather than assuming that experiences were homogenous.

To avoid false-positive identifications, wills were only selected as part of the sample if identifying information such as the name of a near-neighbour or fellow household-family

[11] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 45. Margaret Spufford also found in a study of will-making in Cambridgeshire that 'the poorer groups … produced the most wills,' see Margaret Spufford, 'Peasant inheritance customs and land distribution in Cambridgeshire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries,' in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200–1800*, eds. Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson (Cambridge, 1976), p. 171.
[12] This practice was formalised in the Act for the prevention of Frauds and Perjures (1677) also known as the Statute of Frauds, chapter number 29 Cha. 2 c. 3.
[13] Wrightson, *Ralph Tailor's Summer*, pp. 96-97.
[14] The specific parishes consulted in Derbyshire, Bristol, and the City of London are shown in Chapter 1, pp. 37-38, Table 1.1.
[15] The courts that published these wills were the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry, accessible via Staffordshire Record Office; and the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Bristol, stored at Bristol Record Office.
[16] Wills were recovered from the Commissary Court of London, the Archdeaconry Court of London, the Archdeaconry Court of Middlesex, the Peculiar Court of the Dean and Chapter of St Paul's, and the Commissary Court of Bishop of Winchester. These were accessed through London Archives.
[17] These wills are now stored in the National Archives.

member was present in both the return of the Marriage Duty Assessment and the surviving probate documentation. Slightly more than 10 percent of single men identified in Chapter 1 were matched to a will; 138 wills were recovered in total.[18] While this study attempts to de-centre marriage to the fullest extent possible, it is worth noting that 47 of these wills featured a bequest to a living wife, suggesting that 34 percent of those men who had been single at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment subsequently (re)married. This relatively low rate of (re)marriage is not necessarily fully accurate; the laws surrounding intestacy meant that a deceased person's estate would be split between his wife and any living children if he died without a will, and as such most early modern people died intestate.[19] Only if an individual wanted to nominate multiple beneficiaries or make bequests to those outside of his immediate family did he need to make a will – both Bonfield and Richard Wall have commented that 'family circumstances,' such as the lack of a clear heir, may have made single people more likely to write a will than their married counterparts.[20] The actual rate of (re)marriage therefore likely exceeded the one-third figure calculated here. In any case, this chapter focuses on the 91 wills made by bachelor or widowed testators, published between 1695 and 1754. The number of wills recovered, the regional differences in recovery, and the marital status of testators is shown in Table 2.1.

The majority of these 91 wills followed the standard scribe-written, witnessed, and signed format, although a small minority of estates were distributed through non-standard documentation which is necessary to mention here. In Derbyshire, three single men died intestate and had their property distributed on their behalf by the court. The ecclesiastical court issued letters of administration which only allowed one beneficiary, and this beneficiary had to be the nearest living relative to the deceased. Two men each in Bristol and London died while in service to the navy, and these wills also included unique traits. The will itself consisted of a printed form with spaces for the testator to add their own name, the ship they were travelling on, and the name of and relationship to one beneficiary. An important distinction between letters of administration and naval wills was that the latter allowed the testator to choose their own beneficiary, with whom they did not have to share ties of kinship. This chapter

[18] 1,371 single men were identified through analysis of the Marriage Duty Assessment. See Chapter 1, p. 54, Table 1.3.
[19] Lloyd Bonfield, 'Seeking Connections Between Kinship and the Law in Early Modern England,' *Continuity and Change* 25, 1 (2010): pp. 58-59.
[20] Lloyd Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, and Dispute: probate litigation in early modern England* (London, 2016), pp. 19-21; and Richard Wall, 'Bequests to widows and their property in early modern England,' *The History of the Family* 15, 3 (2010): pp. 222-223.

also examines the unusual case of the unsigned draft will attributed to the London-based scientist Robert Hooke, and the consequent Chancery court case that followed to mediate the distribution his unexpectedly cash-rich estate.

**Table 2.1: Number of wills recovered for single men present in the Marriage Duty Assessment returns from Derbyshire, Bristol, and the City of London.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total wills recovered | 24 | 42 | 72 | 138 |
| Died married | 11 | 11 | 25 | 47 |
| Died bachelor | 6 | 15 | 24 | 45 |
| Died widower without children | 1 | 5 | 7† | 12 |
| Died widower with children | 6 | 11* | 16* | 34 |
| Total died single | 13 | 31 | 47 | 91 |

† Denotes the inclusion of a single man who was identified as a widower with children at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment but did not leave bequests to biological children at his death.

* Denotes the inclusion of a single man who was identified as bachelor at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment but left bequests to biological children at his death.

There are some difficulties inherent when using wills to assess the extent and meaningfulness of single men's social and communal relationships. Firstly, the methodology applied in the selection of wills is inherently limiting. Given that the Marriage Duty Assessment only described wealth in general terms and rarely mentioned occupation, it is extremely difficult to correctly identify an individual if wills for multiple similarly-named men were available in one region. Furthermore, migration can only be captured in a limited way when sampling data from the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment. Movement between parishes within one region can be seen, but if an individual died outside of the boundaries of their local ecclesiastical court, tracing their records became unfeasible unless their wealth led to their will being published by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. This will have had the greatest impact

on single men living in the City of London at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment, an area characterised by its large population and high rates of migration.[21] While a greater number of wills were recovered relating to men from London than either Derbyshire or Bristol, the unparalleled size of the population of the city at that time means that the accessible data captures proportionally less of the metropolitan single male population than in the other two areas.[22]

Secondly, the situations in which wills were produced means that the full spectrum of relationships were not necessarily represented. Whereas modern wills are carefully planned, usually in the wake of a major life event such as a marriage or birth of a child, the typical early modern will was produced only when the testator faced imminent death, whether because of illness or when considering the dangers of a sea voyage.[23] This means that the content of most early modern wills reflects only the relationships most valued at the end of a (sometimes long) life. Only in rare cases were wills published significantly after they were initially written, and the choice for contemporaries to accept these documents as acceptable wills is unclear. Among the sample of wills used in this chapter, the most glaring example is found in the will of John Hoyle, a wifeless man in St James Garlickhithe, London. His will marks the extreme end of the sample, being published in 1754, but it was only possible to conclusively link it to his presence in the Marriage Duty Assessment because it was originally written in 1712.[24] A long period of Hoyle's life, and any important relationships forged during those intermediate years, have therefore been lost. Furthermore, unless a testator requested to be buried in an existing grave, relationships with people who had predeceased the testator are also not mentioned in the majority of wills. Parents, aunts, and uncles are rarely mentioned by single male testators, and grandparents are completely absent from bachelor and widower wills. While other studies have suggested that children retained strong links to their parents well into adulthood, the tendency for children to outlive their parents means that the data from wills does not provide sufficient evidence for historians to evaluate the relationships between adult single men and their

[21] London was a magnet for national and international migrants. For the national context, see Vanessa Harding, 'City, capital, and metropolis: the changing shape of seventeenth-century London,' in *Imagining Early Modern London: Perceptions and Portrayals of the City from Stow to Strype, 1598-1720,* ed. J. F. Merritt (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 117-143. For assessment of the number and role of foreign migrants to London see Jacob Selwood, *Diversity and Difference in Early Modern London* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 2-4; and Lien Bich Luu, *Immigrants and the Industries of London, 1500-1700* (London, 2016), pp. 302-304.
[22] Based on comparison with Chapter 1, p. 54, Table 1.3.
[23] Lloyd Bonfield, *Devising, Dying and Dispute: Probate Litigation in Early Modern England* (London, 2016), p. 35; and Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2008), p. 121.
[24] NA: PROB/11/808/130, Will of John Hoyle of London (1754), pp. 1-3.

parents.[25] Other individuals might be excluded from wills because they had been disinherited, or because they had received a gift of property or money *inter vivos*, which did not have to be declared in a will.[26] Kin and friends might then be absent from probate documentation even though they had a good relationship with the deceased, something which certainly affected the depiction of married, adult children in the wills of widowers. Only in a few cases was the decision to exclude well-loved beneficiaries made explicit, such as in Jeremiah Elwes's statement that he would give nothing to his daughters because 'I have fully advanced them in marriage and given them large portions.'[27] The full extent of silent exclusions cannot be determined.

Despite the problems evident when using wills as a source base, they do provide valuable insight into the single man's relationship with his kin and community. Wills fostered commemoration that worked in two directions. As a single male testator described and rewarded the relationships that were most important to him at the end of his life, the gifts of money or items that he bestowed upon his beneficiaries would ensure that he lived on in their memories after his death.

### *Identifying beneficiaries*

What becomes immediately apparent when examining single men's wills is that lacking a spouse did not indicate a dearth of other meaningful social relationships. On average, a will written by a single male testator in Derbyshire would name seven beneficiaries, rising to between 12 and 13 beneficiaries in London and Bristol. The general relationship between single male testators and their beneficiaries is shown in Table 2.2. This data enumerates the number of unique beneficiaries named in a will, rather than the total number of bequests made, as it was not uncommon for beneficiaries to receive separate bequests of property, goods, and/or money. It is clear that single men demonstrated a distinct preference for kin, with about two-thirds of beneficiaries in each region being classed as such. The remaining third of beneficiaries were not of one type, however, and did not all discretely fit within the category of non-kin.

[25] Froide makes a strong argument to suggest that single women maintained very strong attachments to their parents well into adulthood. See Froide, *Never Married*, p. 46. See also Maria Cannon, 'Conceptualising childhood as a relational status: parenting adult children in sixteenth-century England,' *Continuity and Change* 36, 1 (2021): pp. 309-330; and Elizabeth Foyster, 'Parenting Was for Life, Not Just for Childhood: The Role of Parents in the Married Lives of their Children in Early Modern England,' *History* 86, 283 (2001): pp. 313-327.
[26] Bonfield, 'Kinship and the Law:' p. 52; and Froide, *Never Married*, p. 46.
[27] NA: PROB/11/438/402, Will of Jeremiah [Jeremy] Elwes of London (1697), p. 1.

**Table 2.2: Total number of beneficiaries named in single men's wills.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total number of wills used | 13 | 31 | 47 |
| Beneficiary identified by name only | 26 | 79 | 100 |
| Individual beneficiary described as kin | 58 | 225 | 338 |
| Group of beneficiaries described as kin | - | 12 | 6 |
| Individual beneficiary described as non-kin | 8 | 78 | 107 |
| Group of beneficiaries described as non-kin | 1 | 2 | 13 |
| Total beneficiaries named | 93 | 396 | 564 |

In all three regions, a number of beneficiaries were identified by name only, with the testator stating no relationship to them. There was no claim to kinship and no attempt to class these individuals as friends, employees, or any other kind of non-kin relationship. Comparison with the Marriage Duty Assessment provides a way to minorly redress these gaps, indicating that the majority of these name-only beneficiaries were either neighbours or in the same occupational field as the dying single man. In the case of William Dowding, a widower living in St Stephen's parish, Bristol, a £5 bequest to the distinctively-named Elizabeth Yeff 'widow of Bristol' makes her readily identifiable as a fellow parish resident in 1696.[28] It is possible to imagine that a friendly, neighbourly relationship may have made Yeff worthy of a generous bequest by the time of Dowding's death in 1709, but it is also possible that their lives overlapped in other ways that brought them into regular contact. That occupational ties could be preserved in wills is outlined more clearly in the will of John Briggs, a bachelor apothecary from London. He claimed no relationship to the widow Elizabeth Gilbert, but he requested that his executor repay a bond of £200 to her as well as to forgive 'every such debts and money …

[28] "Yeff" was a unique last name in Bristol at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment in 1696, see *The Inhabitants of Bristol in 1696: Bristol Record Society Volume XXV*, eds. Elizabeth Ralph and Mary Williams (Bristol, 1968), p. 192 and p. 301; and NA: PROB/11/507/220, Will of William Dowding of Bristol (1709), p. 2.

oweing … out of my Shop Books *by and from* the said Elizabeth [emphasis added].'[29] With Gilbert classed as both a financial backer and customer of Briggs, it seems clear that they shared some kind of working relationship that Briggs thought deserving of reward and commemoration. This acts as a pertinent reminder that not all meaningful social relationships could easily or usefully be described in relational terms, providing potential avenues for future research, although somewhat restricted by the scope of the present study.

That these two examples described relationships with women in no way marks out Dowding and Briggs as outliers amongst the sample. Across all three regions, single male testators nominated male and female beneficiaries alongside each other. Comparable work by Froide suggests that this was not the case for single female testators in the period 1550 to 1775. In her study of will-making in Southampton, Hampshire, Bristol, and York, Froide finds that more than half of beneficiaries nominated by single women were other women, and this rose to nearly 70 percent of beneficiaries in Oxford.[30] As such, the gender distribution of single men's beneficiaries shown in Table 2.3 provides a significant contrast to Froide's 'women-identified testators.'[31] A preference for male beneficiaries is evident in wills from Derbyshire, Bristol, and London, but the proportions remained relatively consistent across the three regions and male recipients never constituted more than 50 percent of all beneficiaries. The number of female beneficiaries was subject to greater regional variation, and echoes some of the regional characteristics associated with single men's household-families as seen in Chapter 1. The comparative dearth of female beneficiaries in Derbyshire when compared to either Bristol or London appears to align with the finding that, at the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment, single men in Derbyshire were more likely to live alone, while servants (usually female) were an ever-present factor in the urban and metropolitan household-family groups.[32] Yet it should be stressed that even the wills from Derbyshire demonstrate that single men were not relegated to a wholly masculine network. Women were obviously present across the spectrum of bachelor and widower wills, indicating that by no means did being single prevent men from interacting with, and developing emotional connections with, the women in their communities.

[29] NA: PROB/11/434/165, Will of John Briggs of London (1696), p. 2.
[30] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 48.
[31] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 48.
[32] See Chapter 1, p. 56, Table 1.8 and p. 57, Table 1.9.

**Table 2.3: Gender distribution of beneficiaries.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number | % | Number | % | Number | % |
| Male | 45 | 48.4 | 179 | 45.2 | 273 | 48.4 |
| Female | 27 | 29.0 | 172 | 43.4 | 215 | 38.1 |
| Unstated or unclear | 21 | 22.6 | 45 | 11.4 | 76 | 13.5 |

The data in Tables 2.2 and 2.3 also indicates that there was a degree of non-specificity inherent in the process of will-making, thanks to the ability of testators to leave bequests to groups of people, leaving the gender of beneficiaries either unstated or unclear. These groups were defined in terms of their relationship to the testator, and thus were missing fine details. Tadmor has emphasised the extent to which the household-family group was 'both flexible and permeable,' and bequests to grouped beneficiaries indicate how individual single men pre-emptively accounted for changes in their household-families over time.[33] In London, where the trend of grouping non-kin beneficiaries was most evident, the common cause tended to be bequests that were be shared between 'such household servants that shall be dwelling with me at the time of my death,' as the apothecary John Briggs phrased it.[34] In this way, recognition of the relationship between a single man and another individual was not necessarily shaped by kinship but was solely dependent on their place in his household. This tacitly acknowledged the household's hierarchies of authority and obedience and the due rewards for faithful service, but also accounted for the temporary nature of household-based ties. In Briggs's case, his servants also served to reflect the greater propriety of his home and presumably his business, as he additionally requested that his servants receive 'such Mourning [clothes] as my Executor … shall think fit.'[35]

When single men grouped their kin beneficiaries, the lack of specificity applied to bequests also accounted for the changeable and perhaps untraceable shape of the extended

[33] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 23.
[34] NA: Will of John Briggs (1696), p. 1.
[35] NA: Will of John Briggs (1696), p. 1.

family network. Single male testators could facilitate the inclusion of as wide a group as possible while also obfuscating exact numbers of relations and minimising the need to recall the names of the individuals set to benefit. This was most commonly seen when bequests were intended for children, as in the will of William Wells, a bachelor in London, who bequeathed 'unto my loveing sister Judith Stopes the summe of Tenn pounds … And also the summe of five pounds a peece to all and every [one] of her Children.'[36] He repeated this phrasing when making bequests to his nephews and nieces by his second sister, Mary Lucas, but he was able to state precisely that his brother Francis Wells had six children.[37] Use of this terminology would have aided in avoiding any complications that might arise after a death or birth among these extended family groups, ultimately ensuring that all relationships of a similar kinship breadth and depth were given equitable treatment. Grouping relations could also counter the effects of geographical distance, as in Robert Yate's bequest of £100 to 'my poor relations at Ensham' and Thomas Padgett's gift of one shilling each to 'all and every person who shall lawfully and justly claime kin to me on my late fathers side living in the North Countrey.'[38] When seen as a form of linear transmission, as goods or money gifted from a dying person to a living person, it makes little sense as to why those kin who seemingly lacked a day-to-day relationship with the testator should benefit. Yet when seen in the context of David Cressy's statement that kinship was bound 'not [by] how far apart you lived or how often you saw each other, but what the relationship was worth,' it becomes possible to understand the reciprocity inherit in single men's ties with their extended family group.[39] Claiming kinship with others, however uncertain or loosely defined the actual parameters of that relationship, facilitated the memorialisation of individuals across the widest possible network.

Indeed, further examination of the relationship descriptors applied by single men to their beneficiaries makes evident that the most frequently used terms were also the most general. Tables 2.4 and 2.5 show the descriptors used to label specific relationships with kin and non-kin beneficiaries. In total, single male beneficiaries across all three regions named 17 types of kin relationship (21 if affinal "in-law" relationships are counted separately) and 10 types of non-kin relationship were mentioned.[40] In Derbyshire, the most often benefitted group

[36] NA: PROB/11/558/310, Will of William Wells of London (1717), London, p. 2.
[37] NA: Will of William Wells (1717), p. 2 and p. 1.
[38] NA: PROB/11/687/109, Will of Robert Yate of Bristol (1738), p. 2; and NA: PROB/11/475/56, Will of Thomas Padgett of Bristol (1704), p. 1.
[39] David Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England,' *Past & Present* 113, 4 (1986): p. 49.
[40] An effort has been made to retain intent whilst also simplifying language use, therefore terms like 'the daughter of my brother' was considered synonymous with the category of 'niece,' while 'the daughter of my cousin' was considered distinct from the categorisation of 'cousin.'

fell under the label of 'kinsman' or 'kinswoman,' while in Bristol and London the term 'cousin' was used most often. These terms have specific meanings in modern parlance, but Tadmor and Cressy both stress that these terms were more inclusive in the past.[41] This is not to suggest that early modern people did not understand the terminology of kinship or cousinage, but rather that they carried additional levels of meaning which are no longer used today. Tadmor argues that the wide application of the terms cousin and kin, as well as the inconsistent use of modern affinal terminology (such as describing your sister's husband as your brother rather than brother-in-law), was deliberately done to 'recognis[e] relationships while potentially concealing their degree,' echoing the trend of bequests to grouped kin by suggesting that single men placed high value on kinship of any kind.[42] The use of these terms appears to have a regional aspect, as cousinage was absent from the sample of Derbyshire wills, and in Bristol and London, kinship was applied infrequently.

This provides a very different perspective to previous studies of wills and beneficiaries that have examined the bequests made by married men. In Will Coster's study of one urban parish in York and two rural parishes in the West Riding of Yorkshire, he finds that wills published between 1500-1650 'unquestionably' made the most bequests to 'wives, sons, and daughters … by comparison other forms of kin appeared very infrequently as beneficiaries.'[43] Even Cressy, who asks historians to see kinship as 'valuable, versatile and wide-ranging rather than narrow, shallow and restricted' also concludes in his study of wills made in Essex in the 1680s that 'wives, children and grandchildren were the principal focus of giving, while other relations outside the nuclear family were likely to be ignored.'[44] Of course, single men could still make bequests within the scope of the nuclear family; there were widowers in all three regions who left bequests to children, but even these single men made bequests to other kinds of kin within the same document. Anthony Bestall of Darley in Derbyshire, for example, was a widower with a son but also made more bequests than any other single male testator in Derbyshire, naming 33 other beneficiaries, 12 of whom he described as kin.[45] This included a brother, a sister, kinsmen, and four nephews.

[41] Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction:' p. 66; and Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 147.
[42] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 152 and p. 156.
[43] Will Coster, *Kinship and inheritance in early modern England: three Yorkshire parishes* (York, 1993), p. 10.
[44] Cressy, 'Kin and Kin Interaction:' p. 53 and p. 56.
[45] SRO: B/C/11, Will of Anthony Bestall of Derbyshire (1697), frames 2-3.

**Table 2.4: Relationship descriptors used by single male testators to describe kin.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London |
|---|---|---|---|
| Uncle | - | 1 | 4 |
| Aunt | - | 6 | 6 |
| Father | - | 1 | 1 |
| Mother | - | 4 | 3 |
| Brother and in-laws | 6 | 24 | 24 |
| Sister and in-laws | 4 | 30 | 34 |
| Cousin | - | 34 | 62 |
| Son and in-laws | 9 | 22 | 17 |
| Daughter and in-laws | 7 | 16 | 28 |
| Stepchild | 1 | - | 1 |
| Godchild | - | 1 | 11 |
| Nephew | 12 | 25 | 46 |
| Niece | 2 | 32 | 42 |
| Child of cousin | - | 7 | 17 |
| Grandchild | 3 | 18 | 21 |
| Grandnephew/niece | - | 9 | 4 |
| Kinsperson | 14 | 9 | 23 |

**Table 2.5: Relationship descriptors used by single male testators to describe non-kin.**

| | Derbyshire | Bristol | London |
|---|---|---|---|
| Friend | - | 25 | 36 |
| Servant or employee | 2 | 14 | 24 |
| Apprentice | - | - | 3 |
| Neighbour | - | 1 | 3 |
| Tenant | 3 | - | - |
| Landlord | - | - | 3 |
| Donation to religious organisation | - | 12 | 13 |
| Donation to guild or professional body | - | 1 | 3 |
| Other charitable donation | 3 | 18 | 26 |
| Forgiveness of debts | 1 | 7 | 9 |

It is also notable that nieces and nephews were nominated more often as beneficiaries than daughters and sons across all three regions, excepting the very small number of nieces named in the Derbyshire sample. The importance of nephews as beneficiaries is mentioned by Coster, and additionally by Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, who suggests that nephews may have been 'the most important category of kin' outside the immediate family.[46] Yet the emphasis in these studies tends to highlight the fact that goods were being transmitted into the extended family, with Coster suggesting that bequests to nephews were 'as much to do with relationships between testators and their siblings, as with direct relationships with members of the next

[46] Coster, *Kinship and Inheritance*, p. 17; and Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 49.

generation.'[47] However, the frequency with which single men nominated nephews and nieces as beneficiaries should suggest to researchers that the role of uncle held value. For single men, bequests to nieces and nephews (and less frequently, grandnieces, grandnephews, and the children of cousins) provided an alternative method to access the primogenital pattern that shaped the transmission of goods from fathers to children. Technically these bequests were being made laterally, into the extended family, but practically single men were fulfilling an obligation to the next generation of their family, keeping money and property within the control of a lineal family group.

In highlighting this preference for succession within the extended family, another difference between the wills of single men and the wills of single women becomes apparent. Froide describes siblings as 'the most prominent relatives' receiving bequests in all five towns used in her study, with sisters appearing in 45 to 65 percent of wills, and brothers appearing in 25 to 40 percent of wills.[48] This pattern does not transfer onto the experiences of single men, where siblings were nominated to receive bequests far less frequently. This is not to suggest, however, that sibling relationships were unimportant to single men. Single male testators in Bristol, for example, showed a particularly strong affinity for their sisters, with 16 of 31 testators leaving bequests to a sister or sisters in their will. This marks a continuity in of regional experiences first made apparent in Chapter 1, where it was found that single men living in urban Bristol were far more likely to live with their sister(s) than single men in rural or metropolitan areas.[49] Evidence from wills suggests that men from Bristol who remained single in the long term continued to value their relationships with their sisters, even when the parameters of their relationships changed. Richard Prigg co-resided with his sister Sarah Prigg and one servant in 1696 - at the time of his death 1711 he left a gift of money and a mourning ring to his sister 'Sarah Clarke.'[50] Her marriage may have broken up their shared household-family group but their relationship had persevered and Prigg felt it worth commemorating.

Amy Harris suggests that there was an expectation of 'natural ... solidarity and unity' to exist between siblings by the eighteenth-century, and points to examples in letter-writing to show how affection was expressed from a distance.[51] Bequests made in wills from single male

[47] Coster, *Kinship and Inheritance*, p. 17; and Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, pp. 48-49.
[48] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 52.
[49] See Chapter 1, p. 76, Table 1.8.
[50] *Inhabitants of Bristol*, eds. Ralph and Williams, p. 3; and NA: PROB 11/596/241, Will of Richard Prigg of Bristol (1724), p. 1.
[51] Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations in Georgian England: share and share alike* (Manchester, 2012), p. 57 and pp. 61-62.

testators to their brothers adds an additional component to illuminate how unity and solidarity was expressed through practical support. In Chapter 1, the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment indicated that a viable, if uncommon, method of household-family formation was for a single man to live with his married or single brother(s). These "brother clusters" appeared marginally in all three regions, but were by far the most common in Derbyshire, where bachelors were as likely to live with their brother(s) as with their parents.[52] Wills from the parish of Melbourne Kings Newton demonstrate the longevity of these brother clusters and the mutual aid maintained between single men and their brothers. At the time of the Marriage Duty Assessment, William, Henry, and John Cooper were three bachelor brothers who lived together alongside three servants.[53] Their wills suggest that rather than a temporary convenience, these brothers engaged in a lasting pattern of financial and physical support for one another. John Cooper, who had remained a bachelor until his death in 1719, left two houses, a close, and all his field-land to his elder brother Henry and an annuity of £3 to his younger brother William, along with several small bequests to other beneficiaries.[54] Seven years later, Henry Cooper died, also having remained a bachelor, and chose to concentrate his estates and the property inherited from John in the hands of the last living brother, William. Unlike John, he named only two other beneficiaries, including a legacy of £10 to his 'kinswoman' Ursula Cooper 'who now lives with me.'[55] William Cooper's will, published in 1730, makes it clear that he was the only one of the brothers to marry, but died childless; he identifies his wife as the aforementioned Ursula, who he appointed his sole beneficiary.[56] Even though the Cooper brothers had established their own, separate households some time after their appearance in the Marriage Duty Assessment, they evidently continued to participate an active and reciprocal network of support, evidenced both in the transfer of money and lands between each other but also in the functional presence of Ursula Cooper in two of the brother's households.

While the majority of bequests were given to kin, non-kin beneficiaries were present in the wills of men in Derbyshire, Bristol, and London. These relationships help to illustrate the fullest limits of the single man's social network, with ties not determined by shared blood. It is to be expected that servants and other employees would have received at least small bequests

[52] See Chapter 1, p. 76, Table 1.8 and p. 77, Table 1.9.
[53] See R. E. Chester Waters, 'A Statutory List of the Inhabitants of Melbourne, Derbyshire in 1695: printed from the original MS. Assessment, with a Commentary and Explanatory Notes,' *Derbyshire Archaeological and Natural History Society* 7, 1 (1885): p. 8.
[54] SRO: B/C/11, Will of John Cooper of Derbyshire (1719).
[55] SRO: B/C/11, Will of Henry Cooper of Derbyshire (1726).
[56] SRO: B/C/11, Will of William Cooper of Derbyshire (1730).

from their single male employers. As previously stated in this chapter, servants were a vital, if changeable, part of the household-family group and single men did acknowledge that role. James Boddington, a widower with children from London, made space in his will to praise his 'true and faithfull servants' who had been 'very good ... to all my family.'[57] Bequests to servants have been found in other studies of early modern wills, but single men's recognition of ties of friendship seems somewhat more unusual.[58] Cressy, for example, combines bequests to friends and servants into a single category, which appeared in less than 10 percent of his sample of Essex yeomanry and tradesmen's wills.[59] Friends appeared in Froide's single women's wills, most often in the port towns of Bristol and Southampton, but again only in small numbers.[60] Single men's wills, however, give the distinct impression of involvement in a complex homosocial culture, at least in urban and metropolitan areas. Although Tadmor has shown that ties of friendship and kinship could overlap, particularly amongst more distant relations, most single male testators applied descriptors of friendship separately from their claims of kinship.[61] Only in the will of the bachelor Thomas Belgrave did they amorphously overlap; he left £6 to buy 12 mourning rings to be distributed amongst 'my Relations and friends.'[62] Non-conformist testators were also clear in distinguishing between the title of Friend as used by Quakers and its emotive non-religious meanings.[63] Thomas Padgett of Bristol's application of personal pronouns in his will makes clear that his bequests to the three men who were 'my loveing friends' was different in intent to his charitable bequest 'for the advantage of poor friends called Quakers.'[64]

Instead, the use of the descriptor 'friend' in single men's wills aligns with Tadmor's suggestion that it denoted 'a special and different relationship,' founded in shared experiences and genuine personal affinity.[65] In some cases, the foundations of these relationships are quite clear; the widower Robert Knoakes identified himself as a baker by profession and nominated three friends in his will, who he also described as bakers.[66] In other instances, the origin of the

[57] NA: PROB 11/649/278, Will of James Boddington of London (1732), p. 2.
[58] Carmel Biggs finds that bequests to non-kin beneficiaries in women's wills published in Northamptonshire in the seventeenth century were 'concentrated into the hands of servants.' See Carmel Biggs, 'Women, Kinship, Inheritance: Northamptonshire 1543-1709,' *Journal of Family History* 32, 2 (2007): p. 116.
[59] Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction:' p. 55, Table 1.
[60] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 47, Table 3.1.
[61] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 167.
[62] NA: PROB 11/432/150, Will of Thomas Belgrave of London (1696), p. 1
[63] The formal name of the Quaker movement is the 'The Society of Friends,' see Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 168.
[64] NA: Will of Thomas Padgett (1704), p. 1.
[65] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 174.
[66] BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1695/3, Will of Robert Knoakes of Bristol (1695), frame 23.

relationship is less clear but the sentiment remains evident. William Wells, a bachelor goldsmith, left money to his 'friend Edward Clunes and Mary his wife ... to buy them Rings to weare in rememberance of me.'[67] These examples appear to contrast sharply with the fact that single male testators in Derbyshire did not reference friendship in their wills. This should not, however, suggest that single men in Derbyshire were deprived of meaningful non-kin connections. Tadmor's use of the diary Thomas Turner indicates that the rurally-situated shopkeeper did not describe his neighbours or his other 'close peers and companions in the village' as his friends.[68] The parishes of Derbyshire consulted for use in this study were extremely isolated when compared to the densely populated cities of Bristol and London. Some parishes, such as Brassington and Aldwark in the Peak Country area of Derbyshire, were characterised by extremely low levels of migration in the seventeenth centuries so residents may not have possessed significant intra-parish relationships.[69] Instead, these men likely had a greater reliance on, and thus were more likely to benefit, their local networks of kin and neighbours to the exclusion of ties of friendship.

Besides friendship, single men also used their wills to reinforce their links to their local communities through bequests made to charity. Krausman Ben-Amos has shown that the practice of adding a non-recurrent gift to charity in a will was 'common and ingrained in rural and urban communities' by the mid-seventeenth century, and thus the single men's participation in this process is not necessarily unusual.[70] Some of these bequests were large and extremely generous, even when weighed up against the total value of the estate. William Jordan, a widower without children who died in London in 1715, left £400 worth of bequests in his will, £175 of which was intended for charitable causes, with his executors to 'dispose of [the money] as they see meet [sic].'[71] However, a contemporary expectation that wills would contain charitable bequests was not the only driver that facilitated gifts of this kind. It is also evident that some single male testators were regularly involved in charitable giving. John Carter of Melbourne Kings Newton in Derbyshire asked his executors to pay 'double dole' to the poor the following year.[72] Carter's inventory was valued at £36, suggesting that he only possessed one-tenth of Jordan's wealth, but his use of the phrase 'dole' indicates that he

[67] NA: Will of William Wells (1717), p. 2.
[68] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 174.
[69] Andy Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict: the Peak Country, 1520-1770* (Cambridge, 1999), p. 111. The north-western parishes including Brassington, Aldwark, and Darley were particularly 'homogenous,' p. 90.
[70] Krausman Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 116.
[71] LA: MS 9172/109/254, Will of William Jordan of London (1715), frame 1.
[72] SRO: B/C/11, Will of John Carter of Derbyshire (1698), frame 1.

regularly engaged in semi-formal efforts to support the local poor.[73] Rather than a single instance of generosity, Carter evidently valued his involvement in this process and wanted to maintain his ties to his parish community even after death. Other single male testators used charitable bequests to align themselves with specific causes. Bequests to the parish poor were made across all three regions but were adapted by some testators to suit their professional or religious ideals. Francis Francia, one of two Jewish single male testators, made the very first bequest in his will for the benefit of 'the poor of the said Portuguese Jews' whose diaspora had led them to settle in London.[74] Similarly, Richard Sadler, a 'hat haberdasher' in Bristol, named three parishes in Gloucestershire where he wished to leave bequests to poor people 'not receiving almes of that parish and being a hatmaker.'[75] Religious sentiment may have prompted single men to engage in charitable giving, but there was also room for testators to express personal preferences when making their bequests.

Although gifts to non-kin carried positive associations with charity and friendship, non-kin rarely appeared as the sole beneficiaries of single men's wills. This perhaps goes against modern-day expectations of single men's will-making behaviour; researchers studying patterns of inheritance in both the early modern period and the present day often stress freedom of testation as something which could empower an individual to 'disinherit the lot' or 'leave everything to their cat, or to the cats' home, if they wish.'[76] Only in five of the 91 wills sampled in this chapter were kin completely absent from single men's wills. These cases, though unusual, also suggest that there was no homogenous single male experience that led to this decision. Three cases encompassed situations where the testators were likely quite poor; Lewis Adams of Bristol and Johnathan Cook of London both made naval wills and both named a seemingly unrelated female 'spinster' as their sole beneficiary.[77] Similarly, Robert Pidcocke of Darley in Derbyshire left his entire estate to the son of an apparently unrelated male in the

[73] Steve Hindle defines dole separately from other charitable donations such as endowments and alms as 'characteristically small gifts, made by lay people and the clergy alike, for direct and immediate use,' see Steve Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), p. 97 and p. 134.
[74] NA: PROB 11/524/202, Will of Francis Francia of London (1711), p. 1. The Spanish and Portuguese authorities had expelled their Jewish populations in 1492 and 1497 respectively, with the resulting diaspora retaining a distinct cultural and religious identity.
[75] NA: PROB 11/559/225, Will of Richard Sadler of Bristol (1717), pp. 1-2. The parishes Sadler named were Frampton Cotrell, Winterbourne, and Westerleigh.
[76] Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 203; and Gillian Douglas, Hilary Woodward, Alun Humphrey, Lisa Mills, and Gareth Morrell, 'Enduring Love? Attitudes to Family and Inheritance Law in England and Wales,' *Journal of Law and Society* 38, 2 (2011): p. 248.
[77] BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1732/1, Will of Lewis Adams of Bristol (1732), frame 4; and LA: DW/PC/5/1722/7, Will of Johnathan Cook [Cooke] of London (1722), frame 1.

nearby village of Wensley.[78] Yet the remaining two cases indicate that wealthy and metropolitan single male testators could also prefer non-kin beneficiaries. Maurice Williams left his Bow Street home, its contents, and the sum of 7,150 guilders for the sole use of his housekeeper, Elizabeth Bale.[79] If Robert Hooke's draft will is to be believed, his intention was to leave his entire estate to four friends, although they were only identified as 'A, B, C, and D.'[80] The sum of money was not specified, but the inventory made after his death suggests that the amount would have been in excess of £2,000 per person. In no case was the testator clear in stating that he had no surviving kin or if his intention was to deliberately deprive them, but it is evident that these wills were made because personal circumstances had led the single male testator to prefer will-making over dying intestate. The differences in types of relationship benefitted (including the fact that some relationships were not precisely articulated), and the infrequency with which these cases appeared within the overall sample of wills serves to reinforce the general rule that most single men existed within large and varied social networks.

That kin and non-kin were present alongside each other in single men's wills rather than in opposition to each other is most neatly demonstrated in the process of naming executors. It was the responsibility of the executor to distribute the estate of the deceased, following the directions given in the will, as well as to ensure that any outstanding debts due or owing were settled, including those relating to the deceased's occupation. In 16 wills, single men also declared that 'my Body I committ to the Earth from whence it came to be buried at the discretion of my Executor.'[81] The formulaic nature of this statement somewhat obscures that fact that this would have been an intimate task of significant spiritual importance.[82] As such, the role of the executor epitomised a single male testator's need to balance affection for his beneficiaries with the pragmatic desire to ensure his estate was handled in a way suitable to his legacy. Bonfield indicates that married men most often appointed their wives as executrix, followed by their children, but the data shown in Table 2.6 reveals that single men drew from a much wider group.[83] Although bachelor and widowed testators nominated kin as executors in some cases, this was overshadowed by a preference for non-kin executors in all three regions and was particularly pronounced in Bristol and London.

[78] SRO: B/C/11, Will of Robert Pidcocke of Derbyshire (1751), frame 1.
[79] NA: PROB 11/498/181, Will of Maurice Williams of London (1707), p. 1.
[80] NA: Unsigned draft will attributed to Robert Hooke of London (1702/3), p. 1.
[81] NA: PROB 11/569/261, Will of Anthony Swymmer of Bristol (1719), p. 1.
[82] Bonfield describes this as 'one of the most personal tasks' carried out after a person died in the early modern period; see Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 27.
[83] Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 28.

**Table 2.6: Five most frequently nominated executors in single men's wills.**

| | Derbyshire | | Bristol | | London | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Frequency mentioned | Relationship | Number | Relationship | Number | Relationship | Number |
| 1st – most often | Identified by name only | 5 | Identified by name only | 16 | Friend | 15 |
| 2nd | Brother | 4 | Friend | 11 | Brother / Son | 10 |
| 3rd | Son | 3 | Brother | 9 | Identified by name only | 6 |
| 4th | Nephew / Daughter / Kinswoman | 1 | Son | 4 | Daughter | 5 |
| 5th | - | - | Mother | 3 | Nephew | 4 |

A preference for non-kin executors has also been seen in the wills of early modern single women, with Froide suggesting that the cause may have been that '[the deceased] did not want to privilege any one relative over another ... testamentary freedom led to legal complexities and competition among prospective heirs.'[84] Legal complexities were certainly present in the wills of widowers who faced the prospect of leaving their children orphaned, and executors provided an opportunity to address this issue either temporarily or permanently. John Feathers, a weaver in London, split his estate equally between his three children but stressed their status as 'Minors' and stated that his 'Will and Meaning is that they be brought up under the care and discretion of my Two Loveing Friends William Ittery and John Ittery,' who not only executed Feathers's estate but also to whom he 'committ[s] my Three Children by them to be so managed, bestoed [sic] and Disposed of as they shall think fitt.'[85] This example adds

[84] Froide, *Never Married*, pp. 83-85.
[85] LA: DCP/K/C/06/MS 25628/64/32, Will of John Feathers of London (1723), frame 1.

an additional layer of nuance to the finding that the majority of single men's executors drew on ties beyond the kin network. Feathers made no mention of other members of his natal or extended family in his will – perhaps this was because they had died, or he had no contact with them, and thus had to rely on friends to be executors due to their physical proximity to him. Yet Feathers's willingness to place such a huge responsibility on the shoulders of his friends (and his assumption that they would accept this imposition) suggests that there was significant trust between the two parties which should not be underestimated. The fact that the data in Table 2.6 indicates that friends frequently acted as executors in Bristol and London, while executors identified by name only were the most commonly chosen in both Derbyshire and Bristol, should also indicate that Feathers's situation may have been extreme but it was not necessarily unique. It should not be assumed that single male testators appointed executors randomly, for want of wives or children, but that testators carefully considered their options and selected whomever they thought best equipped for their job, regardless of their gender or as their status as kin or non-kin.

### *Structuring bequests*

Of course, single male testators did not split their estates equally between their beneficiaries. Kinspeople and cousins may have been the most frequently nominated beneficiaries across all three regions, but in most cases they received gifts with little monetary value. It must also be borne in mind that some beneficiaries were named for the purpose of disclaiming the relationship that they shared with the single male testator. George Hudson, a bachelor in Bristol, left £5 each to his cousins, with 'William Gilbert only excepted to whom I give five shillings.'[86] Justifications were added to some bequests, giving the testator the ability to criticise or shame those in their domestic or familial circle, with Thomas Barnesley leaving £10 to his nephew with the additional note that he had 'behaved himself ill and ought to be forgotten.'[87] Richard Prigg went as far as to amend an earlier version of his will with a codicil to reduce the gifts to his servants from £50 and £5 respectively to one shilling each, claiming that they had 'in many respects disobliged me' in the interim five-year period.[88] Examples like these, though uncommon across the sample as a whole, indicate that historians should not assume that the number of beneficiaries alone fully illustrates the dynamism of the social man's

[86] NA: PROB 11/514/177, Will of George Hudson of Bristol (1710), p. 1.
[87] NA: PROB 11/455/65, Will of Thomas Barnesley of London (1700), p. 2.
[88] NA: Will of Richard Prigg (1724), p. 1 and p. 2. The original will was dated 6 October 1711, the codicil 5 April 1717.

network. Attention must also be paid to the qualitative value assigned to relationships through the additional information presented about recipients and the types and value of the gifts given as bequests. In this way, much more can be revealed about the position of single men within their family and community.

In some instances, single male testators used positive descriptors to demarcate personally important relationships. The word 'loving' or phrase 'token of love' was used to describe 50 relationships in 2 wills in Derbyshire, 5 in Bristol, and 15 in London, and encompassed both kin and non-kin relationships. Other positive descriptors such as 'trusty and wellbeloved,' 'companion,' and 'dear' were also used, although far less often. Dear was used four times across the whole sample of wills; the other two terms were unique.[89] In a small number of cases, single men heaped praise on all or at least most of their beneficiaries. John Buxton of St Margaret Lothbury in London described all four of his beneficiaries as 'loveing,' further describing the brother who received the majority portion of his estate as 'very loveing.'[90] It was more usual, however, for a single man to identify specific beneficiaries as having a more intimate and personal connection. Thomas Barnesley named 26 beneficiaries across his will, but only called one female cousin and one nephew his 'loving' relatives.[91] If the types of kin and non-kin relationship used to describe beneficiaries presents the full scope of the single man's social network, the use of positive descriptors concentrates these networks into their key components. 11 types of kin were described as 'loving,' cutting across generations with sisters, brothers, sons, and daughters most often described as such – although there are also respective mentions of a 'loving' mother and uncle in the wills of William Redding and Francis Hopegood, which suggest that even though parents were underrepresented across the whole sample of bequests, in cases where they were still living they could possess positions of significant importance in single men's lives.[92] The only type of non-kin to be described as 'loving' were friends, with the term 'loving friend' appearing three times in single men's wills from Bristol and 14 times in London wills. The general pattern seen in Table 2.2

[89] For 'dear,' see LA: MS 9052/33/127, Will of John Buxton [Buckston] of London (1703), frame 1; NA: Will of Jeremiah Elwes (1697), p. 2; NA: Will of James Boddington (1732), p. 1 and p. 2. For 'my trusty and wellbeloved friend,' see LA: DW/PA/5/1710/109, Will of William Stackhouse of Southwark (1710), frame 1. For 'friend and companion,' see NA: PROB 11/603/244, Will of William Wright of London (1725), p. 1.
[90] LA: Will of John Buxton (1703), frame 1.
[91] NA: Will of Thomas Barnesley (1700), p. 2 and p. 3.
[92] LA: MS 9052/38/112, Will of William Redding of London (1718), frame 1; and NA: PROB 11/567/321, Will of Francis Hopegood of London (1719), p. 2.

is thus replicated in the use positive descriptors, with kin being described as 'loving' more than twice as frequently as it was used to describe non-kin relationships.

'Loving' often carried greater symbolic meaning than actual benefit for the beneficiaries it described. Thomas Durbin split his estate between three of his five children, excepting one gold guinea for his oldest son and £5 given to his second-oldest, which he described as 'a token of my love.'[93] Rather than slighting a bad relationship, Durbin was clear in stating that he had given the two boys their 'portion upon marriage' and as such they had already received their share.[94] Bequests of items could also carry important symbolic meaning about the nature of the relationship between the testator and his beneficiaries, without necessarily demanding that the objects themselves carry a high value. Miles Lambert highlights the importance of bequests of wearables as they constituted 'appropriate social gifts' while also facilitating 'ritual[s] of commemoration' when beneficiaries used them.[95] The giving of mourning rings (or gifts of money for the purpose of purchasing mourning attire) was an established practice in late seventeenth-century England and was seen in single men's wills published in both Bristol and London. Wearing a mourning ring made a display of a beneficiary's relationship to the testator, and so they had an important role in strengthening links between single men and their adult male peers. This was further reinforced by tying mourning rings to funerary custom, with Richard Prigg leaving 15 mourning rings worth a guinea each to brothers, sisters, nieces, and an aunt, with another six given 'to each of my [Pall] Bearers.'[96] William Wright initially specified that all attendees of his funeral receive a ring worth 20 shillings, but later extended his obligation with a codicil to leave rings to 'such others … [who] may be Agreeable to me (and especially where I have received Civilities of the like nature).'[97] These examples demonstrate that single men acknowledged the importance of reciprocal gift exchanges as a mark of service and obligation between themselves and their male peers. Their participation in this process strengthened a single man's ties to others in his local community. Another type of ring-giving, specific to widowers, further illustrates the powerful affective meaning associated with the gifts of wearable goods. In two wills, widowed testators left their deceased wife's wedding ring to their child; Edward Glasbrook of London

[93] NA: PROB 11/516/89, Will of Thomas Durbin of Bristol (1710), p. 1.
[94] NA: Will of Thomas Durbin (1710), p. 1.
[95] Miles Lambert, 'Death and Memory: Clothing Bequests in English Wills 1650–1830,' *Costume* 48, 1 (2014): p. 55 and pp. 53-54.
[96] NA: Will of Richard Prigg (1724), p. 1.
[97] NA: Will of William Wright (1725), p. 3.

left the 'diamond ring wch formerly was her mothers' to his daughter Mary, while John Roworth of Bristol bequeathed 'unto my saide son John his mothers wedding Ring.'[98]

Mourning rings were not given by single male testators in Derbyshire, but there is also little evidence to suggest that this was due to a distinctly rural culture of will-making in effect by the turn of the eighteenth century. There are almost no similarities to Coster's early seventeenth century wills, where bequests of sheep and cereal crops were 'frequently' mentioned in bequests made by the cash-poor residents in rural Yorkshire.[99] Robert Pidcocke was the only single male testator in Derbyshire to make explicit reference to the specificities of local employment; in a single bequest which gave away 'all my Real and personall Estate' he included his 'Leadmines and hereditaments,' although without further detail.[100] In the vast majority of cases, Derbyshire's single men described their bequests in terms of cash value, or when bequeathing property, described its location or acreage rather than its potential use. By not defining their bequests in terms of their occupational role or their rural status, bequests by single men in Derbyshire seem relatively modern, more similar to those made by their single male contemporaries in Bristol and London than those made by other rural testators a century earlier. When Derbyshire testators bequeathed objects, the intent certainly appears to have been to encourage commemoration, as mourning rings were intended to do, although the objects given were of significantly lower value than those mentioned in Bristol or London. Here, more so than in other aspects of the will-making process, the difference in financial standing between the rural and urban single male testators is clear. William Allsopp, for example, left his 'wearing clothes' to his son Robert, amounting to a value of £1 1s.[101] Allsopp also left a 'gown and petticoat' worth 10 shillings to his daughter Mary, likely previously belonging to his now-deceased wife.[102] Another small and presumably symbolic gift was made by John Carter, who gave a 'chest' to the daughter of his tenant, Ann Sheepy; valued in his inventory as part of a job lot with Carter's 'other Lumber' this gift was probably worth around two shillings.[103]

Lambert suggests functional gifts given by male testators were as much about 'individual personality … as any specific gender behaviour,' but if the giving of objects as bequests was not in itself a masculine activity then the recipients of certain goods were certainly

[98] LA: MS 9172/95/83, Will of Edward Glasbrook of London (1704); and BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1697/3, Will of John Roworth of Bristol (1697), frame 33.
[99] Coster, *Kinship and Inheritance*, p. 2 and p. 14.
[100] SRO: Will of Robert Pidcocke (1751), frame 2. See Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict*, p. 134.
[101] SRO: B/C/11, Will of William Allsopp of Derbyshire (1729), frame 4 and frame 2.
[102] SRO: Will of William Allsopp (1729), frame 4.
[103] SRO: Will of John Carter (1698), frame 3.

separated by notions of gendered difference.[104] Men who were peers of the single male testator were notably given gifts of books, and this has the appearance of entrenching a dying single man's position within his intellectual or religious circle. William Jordan expressed his Quaker faith through his gifts of his 'great bible' to his brother, and 'my book called George foxes journal … [and] my book intityled Robert Barcalys Apology' to two unrelated males, while Jacob Mazahod alluded to a much larger library, dividing his books between three unrelated men based on whether the text was in Spanish, Portuguese, French, or English.[105] The feminine opposite to this practice was the tendency for single male testators to leave bedroom furniture, and particularly beds or bed clothes, to the women with whom they shared the closest relationship. This may well have been done to address the difficulty of moving or disposing of large pieces of furniture when living in rented accommodation, or in acknowledgement of the saleability of such items, but the specificity with which bedroom furniture was described also highlights a much more personal and domestic association. Ezekiell Longman divided his 'household stuffe' equally between his two eldest sons and only daughter, but made the proviso that his daughter Mary should receive 'my wroted Curtains with the Bed and all furniture thereunto belonging.'[106] Similarly, but rather more bodily, William Jackson left his niece Elizabeth 'the wrought Bed I now lye in and also the Counterpane.'[107] If no related women were present in the household at the time of death, female servants were also infrequently made recipients of gifts of beds or bedding.[108] For both male and female beneficiaries, the intent of these bequests was that regular or indeed daily use of such items would facilitate recollection of the deceased, but the division of the types of goods given helps to illustrate how single men traversed their relationships with their domestic space, and thus their day-to-day relationships with their household-family, and its difference to the social networks that they sought to pursue and cultivate outside the home.

Will-making provided single men with the invaluable opportunity to enforce another kind of commemoration, by asserting patriarchal manhood over their beneficiaries. Conditional bequests allowed a testator to promise a gift which would only be given when the beneficiary met certain criteria. This practice was not limited to single male testators, nor has it become a

[104] Lambert, 'Death and Memory:' p. 57.
[105] LA: Will of William Jordan (1715), frame 1; and NA: PROB 11/564/157, Will of Jacob Mazahod of London (1718), p. 1.
[106] NA: PROB 11/505/136, Will of Ezekiell Longman of Bristol (1708), p. 5 and p. 4.
[107] NA: PROB 11/552/51, Will of William Jackson of Bristol (1716), p. 6.
[108] See NA: PROB 11/712/369, Will of Richard Dockwra of Surrey (1741), p. 1; and NA: Will of Jacob Mazahod (1718), p. 1.

relic of the early modern legal system; conditional bequests are still a feature in wills today. Yet the importance of conditional bequests as a means to enforce generational hierarchies within a family group has not been especially appreciated in the existing historiography. In Bernard Capp's article on grandparents, he briefly notes that some included 'safeguards' in their wills to 'protec[t] the grandchildren's interests from irresponsible parents or … to ensure their "decent bringing up."'[109] Froide similarly indirectly mentions a conditional bequest in her exploration of relationships between single women and their brothers-in-law, citing an example from the 1751 will of Ann Martin, who left the rental income of her three properties in a trust to benefit her married sister, but only if the money was for 'her own separate and distinct use' and could not be accessed by the husband.[110] Froide wonders 'did Ann Martin dislike men? Was she against non-relatives inheriting the property? Or was she merely in a spat with her brother-in-law?,' but by focusing on the personal circumstances that may have underpinned Martin's decision, she overlooks a more pertinent aspect of the bequest – that will-making afforded testators access to legal powers that outweighed other principles of common law, such as coverture. Although single men already possessed greater legal freedoms than almost all women in early modern England, the ability to make conditional bequests (and have those conditions be followed) is significant when considering that male old age and the perceptions of physical incapacity that came with it have been linked to a distinct erosion of perceptions of manhood and authority in a man's later years.[111] Conditional bequests, therefore, ultimately benefitted both parties. Beneficiaries stood to receive often substantial material gifts if they followed the rules set out by single male testators; the security of knowing that either the rules would be followed or the beneficiary would not receive their gift meant that many single male testators continued to affirm their paternal and patriarchal authority for many years after their death.

Both bachelor and widowed men employed conditional bequests in their wills, with their form falling into one of two distinct categories. Firstly, and less commonly, a single male testator might appoint residual heirs for the purpose of retaining control over the use of an estate. If the first-named beneficiary of the estate were to die without biological heirs, the estate would be passed on to a second- and in some cases third- or fourth-named beneficiary. This process is evident in the will of William Rolfe, who first left his property for the use of his

[109] Bernard Capp, 'The Missing Generation: Grandparents and Agency in Early Modern England,' *History* 108, 379-380 (2023): pp. 52-53.
[110] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 59.
[111] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in early modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 221.

mother for her lifetime, then appointed his nephew William Fazakerley to inherit after her death. If the nephew were to die before the age of 21, the property would instead be shared between two nieces, Albertina and Mary Fazakerley. When one of the nieces died, the remaining living niece would inherit the whole property, and subsequently so would any of her offspring, but if both died without heirs, the property would then be given over to whoever was determined to be Rolfe's closest living kin.[112] Even if dead for a generation or more, a single male testator could use residual heirship to retain the ability to choose his successor.

In practice, the appointment of residual heirs was relatively similar to the established process of strict settlement, which gave the inheritance of an estate to the beneficiary for their lifetime only. In both cases, beneficiaries were not allowed to sell the estate off, thus limiting their ability to determine the use of their inheritance. This certainly falls in line with Bonfield's argument that the intention of strict settlement was not to prevent the inheritance of undesirable persons, e.g. women, but rather to ensure that the estate remained as a whole piece of land under the control of a single family lineage, and not split up into pieces.[113] Unlike strict settlement, however, the process of residual heirship ended once a line of biological inheritance and therefore natural heirship had been secured. In this way, single men maintained an explicitly patriarchal form of authority over their property by ensuring that it would only benefit a family group, albeit a group where the parameters of the family were determined by the testator. These groups were often drawn from the extended family and were sometimes drawn from more than one family line; Robert Yate of Bristol left a house in Naggs Head Lane in All Saints parish to his nephew John Day, who would have the 'use and behoofe' of the house for the term of his natural life, then it would descend to 'the first son of the body lawfully to be begotten and to the heires male of the first son.' If/when that male line defaulted, Yate's other nephew, Peter Mugleworth, would inherit it to serve his uses and his male line.[114] Although this practice pitted two male lineages against each other, it did not threaten the primacy of the nuclear family ideal. It complimented the normative pattern of estate transmission from parents to offspring because ownership of the estate was secured once a beneficiary continued the family line by having children of their own.

The second type of conditional bequest was more concerned with protecting the interests of specific family members, currently living, who had little right or ability to manage

[112] LA: MS 9052/45/50, Will of William Rolfe of London (1734), frames 1-2.
[113] Lloyd Bonfield, 'Strict Settlement and the Family: A Differing View,' *The Economic History Review* 41, 3 (1988): p. 466. This sentiment is also expressed in Grazjl and Murrell, 'Of families and inheritance:' p. 393.
[114] NA: Will of Robert Yate (1738), pp. 3-5.

their own affairs. As in the example provided by Froide, both widowers and bachelors took steps to protect bequests for married female relations, giving gifts 'for their own sole and separate use … under their respective hands' and preventing their husbands from 'intermeddl[ing] with' the money they received.[115] More pressingly, however, some widowers wrote their wills under the tacit acknowledgement that their deaths would leave their young children orphaned. Conditional bequests allowed a father to ensure that his children would be provided for in the manner that he found most suitable, securing provision for the child as well as securing the widower's status as the provider for his children.

Ezekiell Longman was one of few widowed testators who had obviously remarried and been widowed again in the period between the Marriage Duty Assessment and his own death in 1708. His first marriage produced two sons and a daughter, who were captured as members of his household-family in the return from the Marriage Duty Assessment, but when writing his will he was particularly concerned for the fate of his two youngest sons by his second marriage as they were 'of tender years.'[116] Longman requested that £100 each be reserved for them to be put in apprenticeships, and that they 'be handsomely and well bred and educated according to his fortune' until the time came that they could be 'place[d] to some Trade Profession or Imployment as [Longman's executors] shall judge most proper.'[117] Longman was intimately concerned with the needs of his children and was aware of the vulnerable position that his death had put them in, perhaps more so than other testators. Longman was explicit in mentioning that his executors must not allow Longman's brother-in-law Abraham Gibbons any role in raising the two boys, as he was 'in severall respects … not as I conceive fitt to be instructed with the same.'[118] Less wealthy widowers were also worried about their ability to provide for their children, but were limited to addressing baser needs. George Alsop of Brassington, Derbyshire, instructed his elder son Robert to 'find and provide all Cloaths necessary for my Son Ralph Alsop and my daughter Sarah Alsop till they attain to the age of 21.'[119] By enshrining the duties expected of a father as conditional bequests in a will, a widowed testator continued to perform the role of father posthumously by ensuring that money or goods would benefit their children consistently and over time, rather than being given

[115] NA: Will of Ezekiell Longman (1708), p. 4; and BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1699/5, Will of Edmond Turner of Bristol (1699), frame 2.
[116] NA: Will of Ezekiell Longman (1708), p. 5.
[117] NA: Will of Ezekiell Longman (1708), p. 2.
[118] NA: Will of Ezekiell Longman (1708), p. 4.
[119] SRO: B/C/11, Will of George Alsop of Derbyshire (1731), frame 3.

through a lump-sum inheritance. This protected the interests of children over the long term, but also fostered his continual commemoration.

Family-protecting conditional bequests could also shape the behaviour of single men's adult (or almost-majority age) relations through the use of conditional bequests that were gated behind the accomplishment of life milestones, such as reaching the age of majority or getting married. There were benefits for the recipients, of course, but Richard Woodhouse's promise that his sister could have £50 'at her day of marryage' as long as her future husband 'be well liked and approved by my brother' minimised the importance of her individual choice to emphasise the familial benefit of a good match.[120] This is not to suggest that these bequests were solely insidious; Andrew Bagg decreed that it was for 'for the good and benefit of my said daughter' that she would not be receive the majority share of his estate until 'she marryes with the counsel and approbation of my good friend James Hallidges.'[121] But other wills make clear that the best interest of the family and its potential lineage were at the forefront of some single male testators' minds. William Jackson used his will to enforce 'an assignment I made soon after my marriage with Elizabeth Perry mother of my said son' that he could not inherit Jackson's property and land unless 'my said son shall marry with a woman that is really and bona fide wirth the summe of One Thousand pounds in money … and if he shall marry a woman with a less portion then it is my will that he shall not have the benefit.'[122] This allowed the relationships of single men to function in death as they would in life, providing single men with opportunities to govern and lead, a behaviour expected of the ideal brother or father. His status as married or unmarried, dead or alive, did not detract from the relevance of this advisory role.

This process was not restricted only to those single men who had present responsibility for their siblings or biological offspring at the time of their deaths. Bachelors also used conditional bequests in their wills to shape their relationships with members of their extended families, particularly their nephews. John Carter of Melbourne Kings Newton appointed his nephew as the residual heir to his three-acre property (inheriting once its present tenants had died), while Francis Groves of the same parish left £5 for the purpose of funding his nephew Theophilius Cartwright's apprenticeship.[123] The obvious similarities between the bachelor's use of conditional bequests to benefit their nephews and the widower's interest in protecting

[120] NA: PROB/11/435/235, Will of Richard Woodhouse of Bristol (1696), p. 2.
[121] BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1705/1, Will of Andrew Bagg of Bristol (1705), frame 19.
[122] NA: Will of William Jackson (1716), pp. 2-3.
[123] SRO: Will of John Carter (1698), frame 1; and SRO: B/C/11, Will of Francis Groves [Grooves] of Derbyshire (1728), frames 3-4.

their biological children highlights the importance of kinship between uncles and nephews in the early modern period. Krausman Ben-Amos has found that nephews often appeared as the primary beneficiary in London wills if the testator were to die without biological children, but the case study examples she uses focus on the potential financial and status increase associated with receiving a large windfall from an uncle, positioning the nephew only as a receiver and the uncle only as a giver.[124] Instead, historians should consider the potential gains for bachelor uncles who could use their wills to create notions of hierarchical difference and paternal obligation between themselves and members of the extended families, serving to grant him a position of patriarchal authority within that group.

Table 2.4 indicates that nephews and nieces were among the most frequently mentioned types of beneficiary in single men's wills, and in many cases it is clear that bachelors also appointed them as their primary beneficiaries too, leaving the largest portions of their estates to them. Amongst the sample of wills used in this chapter, four men in London and three in Bristol made a nephew their primary beneficiary, and additionally nieces were made primary beneficiaries twice in London and once in Bristol.[125] Coster found it to be 'relatively rare' that a nephew or niece would be nominated as the 'chief heir' amongst a sample of mostly married will-makers, but it is evident that circumstances were different when a man died without biological offspring.[126] In fact, it may have even been expected or encouraged for single or childless men to distribute their estates in this way, given how often bachelors gave the largest portion of their estate to the nephew that shared their name. Samuel Chapman only nominated five beneficiaries in his will, but he made sure his nephew Samuel received £100 of his total £110 estate.[127] Preferential treatment could also be shown even when a single male testator had multiple nephews that potentially stood to benefit. The scientist Edward Tyson named 52 beneficiaries, 10 of whom he described as nephews, but left £2,000 to his nephew Edward Tyson.[128] By contrast, Samuel, Richard, and John Tyson received the comparatively modest

[124] Krausman Ben-Amos, *Culture of Giving*, p. 49 and p. 48.
[125] Primary beneficiary is assumed on the basis of receiving the highest value of cash bequest or receiving the primary residence of the single person as a gift; for nephews see NA: PROB 11/489/316, Will of Theodore Jacobson of London (1706); BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1698/4, Will of Edward Taylor of Bristol (1698); NA: PROB 11/487/230, Will of Thomas Awson of London (1706); NA: PROB 11/582/295, Will of Samuel Chapman of London (1721); and BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1705/5, Will of Joseph Wood of Bristol (1705); BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1708/6, Will of Samuel Wood of Bristol (1708); and BA: EP/J/4/6 FCW/1715/5, Will of Henry Pope of Bristol (1715). For nieces see LA: MS 9172/99/186, Will of Daniel Rolfe of London (1706), NA: Will of Jacob Mazahod (1718); and NA: PROB 11/695/194, Will of John Elbridge of Bristol.
[126] Coster, *Kinship and Inheritance*, p. 16 and p. 15.
[127] NA: Will of Samuel Chapman (1721), p. 1.
[128] NA: PROB 11/502/399, Will of Edward Tyson of London (1708), p. 1.

sums of £100, £150, and £44 respectively, even though they were full siblings of the nephew that received the largest sum.[129]

In other work, Coster has highlighted the importance of naming children after their godparents as a measure to foster 'spiritual kinship' between families, as a precursor to the more tangible relationship of surrogate parenthood that would occur if the child were orphaned.[130] Yet there was also a decline in the importance of godparenthood across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with Coster finding that by 1639 only between 6 and 9.5 percent of men's wills included bequests to godchildren.[131] The sample of wills used in this chapter affirm the idea that godparenthood was not a major influence on single men's will-making behaviours in the late-seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but the presence of namesake nephews in wills suggests that the pattern had changed, rather than disappearing completely. Of course, the practice of honour-naming children after members of their natal or extended family was commonplace in the early modern period, but it seems logical to assume that if a man was facing the possibility of a default of heirs, it was permissible or indeed expected that he would develop the strongest ties with his namesake relation. In some cases, the data from wills can be compared with the Marriage Duty Assessment returns to prove that the relationships between uncles and their nephews were not only expressed through large bequests in wills. In 1695, Thomas Awson was captured as the head of a household in the return for the parish of St Helen, London, with his nephew, Thomas, as his lodger.[132] In Awson's will, published in 1706, he described himself as a barber-surgeon and left £100 and 'all my professional tools' to his nephew.[133] The will of the younger Thomas Awson does indeed indicate that he carried on in the trade; their period of co-residence in the 1690s presumably indicated an apprenticeship, successfully completed.[134] Nephews therefore provided single men with an opportunity to engage with the lauded process of fatherhood, one of the characteristics most strongly associated with the acquisition of manhood in the early modern period. Bachelors, in providing for their nephews with gifts of real estate or giving directions for their careers, engaged in the process of determining their own lineage. Such a relationship closely follows the way married fathers were expected to behave in their wills, ensuring that goods were securely transmitted from one generation of a family to the next.

[129] NA: Will of Edward Tyson (1708), London, p. 1.
[130] Will Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship in early modern England* (London, 2016), p. 7 and pp. 175-176.
[131] Coster, *Baptism and Spiritual Kinship*, p. 259, Table 9.4, and pp. 260-261.
[132] LA: COL/CHD/LA/04/01/032, St Faith Under St Paul (1695), f. 2r.
[133] NA: Will of Thomas Awson (1706), p. 1.
[134] NA: PROB 11/506/365, Will of Thomas Awson (1708), pp. 1-2.

When the transmission of goods was not secure, there were legal remedies that could be applied to ensure that single men's estates were distributed in accordance with the law. Six wills published in London carried additional depositions made by those who knew the testator, with them swearing that the will was genuine even though the document had not been properly notarised during the testator's lifetime.[135] This was usually done by asking deponents to verify that the will had been made by the deceased, as seen in the additional statements attached to the will of Dennis Wise, a bachelor and factor at Blackwell Hall. A fellow factor, John Fayting, and one of Fayting's servants, Ellis Price, both swore 'to speak the truth' and stated the document was 'wholly wrote and subscribed by … the said Dennis Wise.'[136] They were required to analyse the handwriting of the will and to state how long they had known the deceased and if they 'had often seen him write and [were] well acquanted [sic] with his writing.'[137] Their affirmation that the document was Wise's 'proper handwriting' allowed the will to be validated and proved by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.[138] More generally, the common law Statute of Distribution (1670-1), was specific in directing that the estates of intestate men without wives and children would descend solely onto the nearest living kin.[139] The available letters of administration for single men from Derbyshire indicate that, in many instances, local ecclesiastical courts were able to identify the next of kin and regulate the transfer of goods in cases where a single man had died intestate.[140]

### *The Robert Hooke case*

The situation following the death of Robert Hooke on 3 March 1702/3 began similarly to the intestate estate settlements in Derbyshire, but rapidly progressed into a far more complex case. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a draft of a will has been attributed to Hooke in which he left his estate to four unnamed friends, although the document was not signed, not witnessed, nor verifiably in Hooke's handwriting.[141] Even if this document had been known to

[135] See NA: PROB 11/440/440, Will of Gabriel Towerson of London (1697); NA: Will of Edward Tyson (1708) p. 4; NA: Will of Samuel Chapman (1721); NA: Will of William Wright (1725); NA: PROB 11/508/211, Will of Thomas Gurnett [Garnett] of London (1709); and NA: PROB 11/442/460, Will of Dennis Wise of London (1697). None of the wills used in this chapter appear to have been challenged on the grounds that they were nuncupative, only that they were hand-written by the testator.
[136] NA: Will of Dennis Wise (1697), p. 2.
[137] NA: Will of Dennis Wise (1697), p. 2.
[138] NA: Will of Dennis Wise (1697), p. 2.
[139] See an Act for the better setling of Intestates Estates (1670-1671), chapter number 22 & 23 Cha. 2. c. 10.
[140] See SRO: B/C/11, Will of Robert Barker of Derbyshire (1705); SRO: B/C/11, Will of Richard Gratton of Derbyshire (1705); SRO: B/C/11, Will of William Lane of Derbyshire (1721).
[141] See NA: Unsigned draft will attributed to Robert Hooke of London (1702/3). For a printed sample of Hooke's handwriting, a facsimile page of his diary is included in 1-2 January 1676/7, Robert Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke M.A., M.D., F.R.S., 1672-1680*, eds. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1968), pull out insert between pp. 206-207. Other samples of Hooke's handwriting and signature made later in life can also be seen in

exist at the time of his death, it could not have been accepted as a valid will. Instead, a letter of administration was issued by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to Hooke's first cousin on his father's side, Elizabeth Stephens (née Hooke). This legally declared Hooke to be intestate and confirmed Stephens was his next of kin, giving her the ability to take an inventory of Hooke's goods, prepare to pay off any outstanding debts and chase any creditors, and keep any remaining parts of his estate for her own use. However, in the summer of 1703, a bill of complaint was submitted to the Court of Chancery by other members of Hooke's extended family, challenging Stephens's status as the sole inheritor and precipitating a series of suits and counter-suits which would carry on until at least 1709.[142] The extensive documentation produced during the course of this litigation provides an opportunity to examine how single men's familial and social networks were challenged or validated by the early modern legal system.

The Chancery was a court of equity and as such was able to levy judgements outside the existing boundaries of the common law. Complainant and defendant parties would prepare written depositions in advance of their court date by answering a series of questions posed by a commissioner appointed by their opposition. These answers would then be transcribed into a narrative, sealed, and submitted to the court for judgment.[143] In order to provide an equitable settlement, Chancery judges evaluated these petitions through the application of 'conscience,' which required them to measure their 'knowledge of rules and facts' against a consideration of the 'spiritual and moral criterion' of what would make their judgements fair.[144] This meant that the rulings of the Court of Chancery were highly reflective of what the petitioners and judges expected as appropriate standards of conduct, and in this case serves to delineate the place of a single and childless man within the wider framework of his extended family. Crucially, the case against Stephens did not question whether or not she was related to Hooke – indeed, all parties acknowledged that her ability to gain a letter of administration for Hooke's estate confirmed that she was a near relation – but rather that other members of Hooke's extended

bills relating to Hooke's salary at Gresham College. See LA: COL/SVD/AD/09/001, Order of payment to Oliver Hill and Robert Hooke for surveying work (1678/9-1680), f. 1r, f. 3r, and f. 5r.

[142] The suit was eligible for consideration in the Court of Chancery because Hooke owned a small parcel of real estate on the Isle of Wight and as such his case could not be settled by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, which could only deal with wills of personalty. See Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 8 and p. 45.

[143] Aidan Collins, 'Narratives of Bankruptcy, Failure, and Decline in the Court of Chancery, 1678-1750,' *Cultural and Social History* 19, 1 (2022): pp. 3-5; and Sadie Jarrett, 'Credibility in the Court of Chancery: Salesbury v. Bagot, 1671-1677,' *The Seventeenth Century* 36, 1 (2021): pp. 57-58.

[144] Dennis Klinck, *Conscience, Equity and the Court of Chancery in Early Modern England* (Farnham, 2010), pp. 258-259 and p. 261.

family may have been as closely related and therefore the estate should be shared between them, which common law would not allow.[145]

Four complainants came forward. The initial bill of complaint was submitted by Anne Hollis (née Giles), a widow who claimed cousinage to Hooke through Hooke's mother's family. A second complaint was added shortly after the first, with sisters Mary Mathews (alias Burnham) and Sarah Davis alleging that they were related to Hooke via Hooke's father. The third and final claim on Hooke's estate was made in 1708 by Hollis's younger brother, Thomas Giles. Elizabeth Stephens herself died sometime in the autumn of 1703 and as such the primary defendants of Stephens's cause were her husband, Lewis Stephens, and her daughter and son-in-law, Mary and Joseph Dillon. While the Chancery operated on the basis of conscience, there was evidently a strong financial motive to the claims made by Hollis, Mathews, Davis, and Giles. It would probably have been assumed that Hooke, a professor at Gresham College and Curator and Secretary of the Royal Society, possessed a moderate if not substantial estate for a man of the middling sorts.[146] In fact, the inventories of his goods overseen by Stephens on 23 March 1702/3 and 9 April 1703 revealed that Hooke was extremely wealthy at the time of his death, owing in large part to the discovery of a chest in the room where he died containing precisely £8,245 11s. 3d. in ready money and gold.[147] Both complainant and defendant petitions make reference to Hooke's 'great personal Estate,' although the complainants were inaccurate when describing its precise value, variously stating to the court that Hooke's estate was worth 'Twenty Thousand pounds and upwards,' 'Twelve Thousand pounds or upward,' and 'Eight Thousand five hundred Eighty Six pounds four shill[ings] Eight pence or thereabout.'[148]

Whether or not the complainant parties were motivated by the possibilities of financial gain, it is evident that the Court of Chancery took family relations very seriously. The early petitions suggest that complainants and defendants were asked evidence-based questions about kinship that reflected the judge's desire to accurately determine the degrees of separation

[145] Two complainants, Mary Mathews and Sarah Davis, frame their petition with the statement 'the [Prerogative Court of Canterbury] court being Well Satisfyed as these Defts believe yt the said Elizabeth was soe related to ye sd intestate Robert.' See NA: C 5/372/57, Stephens v Burnham (1703), f. 1r.

[146] Hooke's combined salary for his professorship and secretarial position was £80, although his diaries suggest he was rarely paid accurately or on time, see 'Introduction to the Life of Robert Hooke,' in *The Diary of Robert Hooke*, eds. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams, pp. xxi-xxiii. However, he also supplemented his income by undertaking commissions and by-employments, for an example see Chapter 3, pp. 156-157, and p. 157, footnote 130.

[147] NA: PROB 5/1324, Inventory of Robert Hooke of London (1703), f. 1r.

[148] NA: C 5/322/55, Mathews v Stephen[s] (1703), f. 1r; NA: Stephens v Burnham (1703), f. 1r; NA: C 6/340/43, Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 1r; NA: C 6/418/42, Giles v Hollis (1708), f. 2r.

between Hooke and the involved parties. This process was not unique to the Chancery. Bonfield and John Addy both provide examples of other late seventeenth-century probate cases where petitioners were made to provide evidence of their relationship with the deceased.[149] It does suggest, however, that even in a legal setting which was able to surpass the restrictions of common law, the Chancery was not prepared to explore the potential claims of non-kin, as Hooke's draft will appears to have intended. All petitions began with an acknowledgement of Hooke's status within his extended family group: he was 'a Batchelor leaving behind neither father or Mother nor any other relations in the straite Line ascendent neither Brother or Sister neither Brother or Sisters Children nor Uncles or Aunts.'[150] This formulaic statement then supported each party's claim that they 'take themselves to be some of his nearest relations now living' which they demonstrated by describing their family tree and how that related them to Hooke.[151] Petitioners inserted Hooke into their family network in a straightforward manner, suggesting that early modern people were well able to visualise and articulate kinship even across an extended family. Anne Hollis, for example, described herself as 'the daughter of Thomas Gyles … [who was] brother of the said Cicely Gyles … [who was] mother of the said Intestate.'[152] Petitioners were not passive in allowing the court to evaluate their claims; Hollis directly compared her own situation to that of the defendant: if 'the said Elizabeth was Cozen German and next of Kin to the said Intestate … this deft was alsoe cozen German and next of Kin.'[153] This process was successful in refining the number of parties involved in the case, with Mathews and Davis withdrawing once it was proven that they were only first cousins once removed from Hooke and thus were 'one degree more remote in Relation then the said Elizabeth.'[154]

In the early stages of the trial, the judge was prepared to accept claims to Hooke's estate without considering physical proximity as a limiting factor. This inversion of the pattern of single male testators leaving bequests to geographically distant kin reinforces Tadmor's argument that 'relations living far away were not "effectively lost".'[155] Two groups of relations

[149] Bonfield finds six examples from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury where a spouse provided a parish marriage register to prove that they were the spouse of an intestate deceased person. See Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 186. John Addy provides the example of the case of Richard Adey of Gloucestershire (1668), where it was proved that the deceased Adey had a brother, based on witness remembrances of their conversations. See John Addy, *Death, Money and the Vultures: Inheritance and Avarice 1660-1750* (London, 2013), pp. 109-111.
[150] NA: Mathews v Stephen[s] (1703), f. 1r.
[151] NA: Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 1r.
[152] NA: Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 4r.
[153] NA: Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 4r.
[154] NA: Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 7r.
[155] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 114.

still felt they had a fair claim to Hooke's estate despite the miles that separated them. Mathews and Davis were not challenged by the judge when they blamed their delayed involvement in the proceedings on the fact that 'living in Warwickshire a place very far distant and remote … being seventy or eighty miles at least your Orators knew nothing of the said decease [of Hooke] … until a considerable time after he was dead.'[156] Thomas Giles was even further separated from the proceedings, having emigrated to Virginia in 1661. Hollis notified the court that her brother would be eligible to make a claim on the estate 'if Alive,' but thanks to the difficultly of contacting him it was impossible to determine whether he was 'living or dead' until she received a letter from him in 1706.[157]

At the time when Giles became involved in the proceedings, having established that he, Stephens, and Hollis were all first cousins to Hooke, it is clear that the court's method to evaluate the terms of their kinship changed. The petitions submitted to the Chancery in the 1708-9 period suggest that the complainants and defendants were being asked to explain if Hooke had actively acknowledged his kinship with the petitioners during his lifetime. This was gauged by assessing whether Hooke had engaged in four kinds of activity: had he ever 'sent for' the defendants? Was it known if he had 'conversed' or 'corresponded' with them? And most importantly, when doing so, had Hooke ever 'called them or either of them coz or cozens?'[158] As Tadmor has shown, the 'claiming of kinship' either verbally or in writing was a powerful 'speech act with which individuals proposed their relationships with one another and announced it by naming.'[159] Claiming kinship in front of others was acceptable legal proof of the biological reality of a relationship between two parties, but it also carried with it an expectation of behaviour, which would have been more important in cases brought to the Chancery than those heard in other courts. By defining kinship with a specific term – in this case cousinage – it provided early modern people with a 'structured framework' and 'expected bond' within which the relationship should be operated.[160] As such, the court was (or became) interested in determining which parties possessed a meaningful relationship with Hooke specifically as his cousin. Although the Chancery had entertained Giles's initial claims on the estate, he entered no more petitions after this point, stating that the other parties had 'tak[en]

[156] NA: Mathews v Hollis (1703-4), f. 1r.
[157] NA: C 10/543/38, Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 3r; and Giles v Hollis (1708), f. 2r.
[158] NA: C 5/270/23, Stephens v Giles (1708), f. 1r
[159] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 144.
[160] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 141.

advantage of this Defendts Ignorance.'[161] Evidently, Giles could not substantiate his kinship, even if his blood relationship to Hooke was clear.

While Hooke had been abstracted from the earlier case, acting as little more than a point of reference in defining kinship, he became central to the latter petitions as Hollis and Stephens's widower attempted to demonstrate how they performed the role of cousin with Hooke. Hollis was almost immediately routed, claiming that she knew of 'Letters Certificates and Writings' made by both Hooke and Hooke's mother and father 'whereby twas well made out … [that] Anne Hollis was next of kin.'[162] Unable to produce these to the court, she alleged that 'they must have been burnt Destroyed or otherwise made away.'[163] Lewis Stephens and his daughter were far more successful in presenting written proof in support of Elizabeth Stephens's suit. They presented a letter, taken from Hooke's library, which Stephens thought 'very materially evidences this Defendeants said late wife's Relacon to the said Intestate as aforesaid.'[53] In that short note, dated 21 September 1702 and addressed to Mary Dillon, Hooke wrote:

> I have great desire to speak with You & (if her health will permitt it) Your Mother Stephens. I am so weak I cannot come my Selfe & I have no body near me that I can send Therefore I desire You to let me see You as Soon as Possibly You can for I know not how near my last moment is … Yo[u]r Loving Cozn R. Hooke.[164]

This document thoroughly satisfied all four of the questions surrounding Stephens's claims of kinship with Hooke, and as the final document available in the series of suits and counter-suits, was evidently crucial in settling the case in Stephens's favour. Dillon testified that after receiving this letter, she and her mother 'Ther went & attended the sd Intestate … from there being about the time he found himselfe to be ill to the time of his decease.'[165] While Stephens had undertaken a caring role for Hooke in his final months, fulfilling the expectations of familial duty, Lewis Stephens damningly pointed out that Anne Hollis may have been a cousin of Hooke by blood, but she was also 'wholly a stranger to & unaquainted with the said Intestate.'[166]

[161] NA: C 5/270/23, Stephens v Giles (1708), f. 1r.
[162] NA: C 5/335/67, Stephens v Hollis, (1708), f. 1r.
[163] NA: C 10/543/38, Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 4r.
[164] NA: Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 9r.
[165] NA: Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 7r.
[166] NA: Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 9r.

This case makes clear that the English legal system placed no value on friendship in the early modern period. The intestacy law of the early modern period, as well as the current intestacy law in force today, prevent non-kin from inheriting from intestate estates.[167] Even though the Chancery could make judgements outside the restricted intestacy rules enforced under common law, it is evident that the judge of Hooke's case also considered ties of kinship to be overwhelmingly more important than those of friendship. Stephens's husband and daughter successfully demonstrated to the courts that she and Hooke had known each other to be cousins and had treated each other as such, reaffirming her position as his next of kin. Yet we only know about this relationship because of this intestacy case. In stark contrast to the evidence presented to the Chancery, Hooke did not mention Stephens in his diary and, most significantly, she was absent from his alleged draft will. As this case reveals that Hooke knew (or at least knew of) Stephens during his lifetime, his failure to appoint her or any other family member as an heir suggests that his intent was to deliberately exclude them from inheriting his estate.

Bonfield's work on probate cases brought to the Court of Chancery illuminates the kinds of 'family discord and disinheritance' that led to individuals being excluded from wills.[168] Although Bonfield has done much to demonstrate that early modern will-makers possessed freedom of testation, he describes probate cases arising in instances where 'other individuals [were] substituted' in the place of the would-heir, usually after interpersonal conflict.[169] Hooke's case presents a new lens with which to examine this narrative. Assuming that his alleged draft will was a genuine statement of intent, then Hooke prioritised non-kin at the expense of his kin. But this cannot be considered a substitution when there was no evidence of familial conflict. That Hooke chose to reward the relationships he found most personally meaningful, rather than following primogenital custom, suggests that historians must look beyond the law when considering cases of actual practice.

That Hooke might have preferred to reward friends rather than family can be seen in the glimpses of his non-kin relationships as presented by the two non-kin witnesses to the case, Reeve Williams and Thomas Bleckley. These men were Hooke's neighbours on Bishopsgate Street, brought in to clarify the narrative of events in the days before and after Hooke's death.

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[167] Citizens Advice is clear in listing 'carers' and 'close friends' as those 'who cannot inherit' from intestate estates, https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/death-and-wills/who-can-inherit-if-there-is-no-will-the-rules-of-intestacy/ Accessed 25 June 2024. This is derived from the Intestates' Estates Act (1952), chapter number 15 and 16 Geo 6 and 1 Eliz 2 c. 64.
[168] Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 204.
[169] Bonfield, *Devising, Dying, Dispute*, p. 177.

While mostly concerned with affirming that goods had not been removed from Hooke's home before the inventory had been made, their depositions reveal how Hooke's network of friends existed alongside Hooke's extended family network. Williams began his deposition by stating that he had known Hooke for 'Twenty Yeares & upwards' and that they would meet 'twice or thrice a Week at some Publick Coffee house ... or at his own lodgings in Gresham College' for the purpose of 'conversacon.'[170] Although only mentioned to explain why Hooke and Williams knew each other, these few lines suggest a far more involved and lasting relationship than the one Hooke shared with Stephens, whose performance of kinship could only be dated back to six months before his death. Williams's and Bleckley's ability to testify about the events occurring in the Hooke's home on the night and morning of his death also suggest that they regularly visited him at home as he lay dying, even though this was not in fulfilment of any familial duty. At one point in Hooke's final hours, Williams found that he was the only visitor in the home, '[not] any one to attend him but a Girle or Maidservant … [who] was but about Fourteen Yeares Old.'[171] This expression of concern for Hooke's treatment had no bearing on the case overall, but certainly raises questions about how diligently Stephens performed her duty. Williams was also not the only non-kin to make this kind of visit to Hooke. Bleckley attested that on the morning after Hooke's death, he arrived at Hooke's home to find 'Captain Knox [and] Mr Henry Hunt' present for the viewing of the body.[172] Hooke's sociable practices during his life will be examined in greater detail in Chapter 3, but it is worth adding here that his diaries include frequent references to both Knox and Hunt and as such it appears that these relationships lasted not only until his death, but past it. Hooke may not have fit into the normative framework of the nuclear-imitating lineage model of estate transmission as seen in the majority of other single men's wills, but the details surrounding his intestacy case illuminate the extent of the single man's familial and social networks. While it is evident that the law privileged one over the other, they could and did exist alongside each other.

### *Conclusion*

The wills used in this chapter have shown that single men participated in a wide range of social and familial networks during their lifetimes, and that they considered these relationships important enough to commemorate at death. These networks included both kin and non-kin components, and the types of bequest given to individuals within these groups

[170] NA: C 5/335/65, Stephens v Williams (1708), f. 1r.
[171] NA: Stephens v Williams (1708), f. 1r.
[172] NA: Hollis v Stephens (1708), f. 8r.

allowed single men to define themselves both within relation to a peer group as well as part of a familial hierarchy. This was done not for want of a nuclear family to inherit, but as part of a process in which single men determined their lineage by rewarding specific relationships and being commemorated by their beneficiaries in turn.

In most cases, this process relied on single men forming strong bonds with members of their extended families, a group which has been traditionally undervalued by historians. Researchers have often directly or indirectly followed Cicely Howell's reasoning that 'the wider kin circle [was] relatively unimportant' because it was only mentioned in the wills of grandparents, widows, widowers, and bachelors.[173] This chapter suggests that a deeper understanding of the extended family in the early modern period is needed. That conditional bequests were applied by widowers, to protect the interests of their children, and by bachelors, to secure the futures of their nephews, indicates that single men could use their relationships with members of the extended family to justify their claims to patriarchal and paternal authority even when they did not have biological offspring. That the pattern of bequests was in itself important is further reinforced through the documentation of the intestacy case following the death of Robert Hooke. Disregarding his intentions to reward his friends at death, the law favoured the claims of kin who appeared either geographically or emotionally distant from him. Hooke was stripped of the ability to choose who he would benefit, highlighting to historians the importance of will-making as purposefully rewarding good relationships.

Yet in reflecting the general importance and value that single men assigned to the individuals in their familial and social circles, it is clear that wills provide little information as to how these relationships operated in life. The next chapter of this thesis will therefore explore autobiographical texts and diaries produced by single men in order to better ascertain how they navigated the realms of family, domesticity, and sociability on an everyday basis.

[173] Cicely Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700,' in *Family and Inheritance: Rural Society in Western Europe, 1200–1800*, eds. Jack Goody, Joan Thirsk, and E. P. Thompson (Cambridge, 1976), p. 141.

***Chapter 3: Single men's lived experiences***

As historians have tended to position bachelor- and widowerhood as life-cycle stages that occurred temporarily either pre- or post- marriage, the early modern single man's lived experience has been deemed relatively unimportant when compared to the more meaningful and fulfilling experiences a man would find in marriage. Amanda Vickery's suggestion that 'bachelor dwellings were temporary encampments, more lair than headquarters, or dormant houses awaiting the female kiss of life, while widower households wobbled like the house of sticks' is evocative but suggests that such places were only incomplete versions of a normal (i.e. married) household.[1] This has not been helped by contemporary printed accounts of the lives of prominent single men, where removal from society was seen to explain and justify claims to intellectualism. For example, Thomas Wood attempted to defend his uncle, the bachelor antiquarian Anthony Wood, from allegations of crypto-Catholicism by claiming he was merely:

> an Admirer of a Solitary and Retired Life … [who] hath no Companion in Bed, or at Board, in his Studies, Walks, or Journeys … he is but a degree different from an Ascetick, as spending all or most of his time, whether by Day or Night, in Reading, Writing, or Divine Contemplation.[2]

Not only does this description inadvertently have the effect of highlighting Wood's rather monastic lifestyle, it also reinforces the general assumption that early modern male singleness was located firmly outside of the boundaries of familial and social normativity.

This chapter will examine bachelor and widower life-writing to demonstrate that single men were not removed from domestic or social norms, as the existing historiography currently assumes. It will argue that the home and the family was as important to single men as it was to their married peers, providing a crucial venue for them to establish and maintain their reputations as men. By examining accounts of their daily life within and around their homes, this chapter will demonstrate that single men could access the tenets of patriarchal authority within their household-family groups, amongst their social circles, and through their sexual and romantic pursuits, complementing John Tosh's construction of manhood as a 'social identity' which was affirmed at home, at work, and through homosocial association.[3] In acknowledging the single man's ability to align with the standards of behaviour expected of

[1] Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: at home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009), p. 77.
[2] Thomas Wood, *A vindication of the historiographer of the University of Oxford, and his works from the reproaches of the Lord Bishop of Salisbury* (London, 1693), p. 28.
[3] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-class Home in Victorian England* (New Haven, 2007), p. 2.

early modern men, it will also show how single men's claims to manhood could be challenged and where their actions deviated from acceptable norms.

This chapter draws from a total of 30 diaries and autobiographies written by bachelors and widowers in the period 1650 to 1750, with the bibliographic details of their writings given in Table 3.1. 24 of these diaries and autobiographies were used to construct a corpus of bachelor and widower experiences, illustrating the extent to which single men shared experiences and providing perspective to situations that were relatively unusual or unique amongst the sample. A close reading was performed of the diaries and autobiographies made by a further six single men, due to the level of detail recorded and the breadth of topics covered in these works. Three were bachelors: Robert Hooke (born 1635- died 1702/3), William Stout (1664/5-1752), and Dudley Ryder (1691-1756). The other three were widowers: Oliver Heywood (1629/30-1702), Edmund Harrold (1678-1721), and James Clegg (1679-1755). Their names are shown in bold in Table 3.1.

These six writers represented a broad spectrum of experiences beyond their differing marital statuses and their chronological periods of writing. Hooke and Ryder were both resident in the City of London during their diary-writing periods and were engaged in distinctly metropolitan pursuits. Hooke was the Professor of Geometry at Gresham College and the Curator of Experiments for the Royal Society, while Ryder was a law student living and working in the Middle Temple. The other authors were located in the north of England, broadly defined, but the geography of the areas in which they lived were notably different. Harrold, a wigmaker and bookseller, lived in Manchester, which was going through a process of urbanisation in the early eighteenth century and developing a reputation as a 'regional centre.'[4] By contrast, Stout, Heywood, and Clegg were rurally situated, although they were respectively proximate to the towns of Lancaster, Halifax, and Manchester. Stout worked first as a grocer and then an ironmonger in the parish of Bolton-le-Sands, while Heywood and Clegg were non-conformist ministers. Heywood was the minister of a church in Coley, although he became itinerant after the introduction of the Five Mile Act in 1665 and worked more generally across West Yorkshire during his widowerhood. Clegg did not become ordained until after the Toleration Act had passed and thus lived and worked freely as both a minister and a physician in the village of Chapel en le Frith, Derbyshire.

[4] Hannah Barker, 'Soul, purse and family: middling and lower-class masculinity in eighteenth-century Manchester,' *Social History* 33, 1 (2008): p. 15

**Table 3.1: Diaries and autobiographies consulted, arranged in chronological order from the beginning of writing period.**

| Name | Period(s) | Status | Text type | Location(s) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| William Kiffin | 1616-1688 | Widower | Autobiography | London |
| Joseph Lister | 1627-1709 | Both | Autobiography | Yorkshire |
| **Oliver Heywood** | **1629/30-1702** | **Widower** | **Diary + auto** | **Yorkshire** |
| Anthony Wood | 1632-1695 | Bachelor | Diary + auto | Oxfordshire |
| Elias Ashmole | 1633-1688 | Widower | Diary + auto | London |
| Isaac Archer | 1641-1700 | Both | Diary + auto | Cambridgeshire / Suffolk |
| Samuel Jeake | 1652-1694, 1699 | Bachelor | Diary + auto | Sussex |
| **William Stout** | **1655-1742/3** | **Bachelor** | **Autobiography** | **Lancashire** |
| Roger Lowe | 1663-1674 | Bachelor | Diary | Lancashire |
| Thomas Jolly | 1671-1693 | Widower | Diary | Yorkshire / Lancashire |
| **Robert Hooke** | **1672-80, 1681-3, 1688-93** | **Bachelor** | **Diary** | **London** |
| Joseph Bufton | 1677-1708 | Bachelor | Diary | Essex |
| Ralph Thoresby | 1677-1725 | Bachelor | Diary + auto | Yorkshire |
| John Cannon | 1684-1743 | Bachelor | Autobiography | Somersetshire |

**Table 3.1 continued.**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Claver Morris | 1695-6, 1709-10, 1719-26 | Widower | Diary | Somersetshire |
| Timothy Burrell | 1686-1717 | Widower | Diary | Sussex |
| John Hervey | 1688-1741 | Widower | Diary | Suffolk |
| Abraham de la Pryme | 1695-1703/4 | Bachelor | Diary | Yorkshire |
| James Fretwell | 1699-1760 | Bachelor | Diary + auto | Yorkshire |
| Nicholas Blundell | 1702-1728 | Bachelor | Diary | Lancashire |
| **James Clegg** | **1708-55** | **Widower** | **Diary + auto** | **Derbyshire** |
| William Byrd II | 1709-12, 1719-21 | Widower | Diary | America / London |
| **Edmund Harrold** | **1712-5** | **Widower** | **Diary** | **Lancashire** |
| **Dudley Ryder** | **1715-6** | **Bachelor** | **Diary** | **London** |
| John Byrom | 1715-1744 | Bachelor | Diary | Manchester |
| John Thomlinson | 1717-1722 | Bachelor | Diary | Yorkshire |
| John Hobson | 1725-1735 | Bachelor | Diary | Yorkshire |
| Arthur Jessop | 1729/30-1746 | Bachelor | Diary | Yorkshire |
| John Wesley | 1735-1790 | Bachelor | Diary | America / England |
| Walter Gale | 1749-52, 1758-59 | Bachelor | Diary | Sussex |

What makes this sample of diarists particularly useful is that they provide insight into single maleness at a variety of life-cycle stages. The youngest diarist, Ryder, was aged between 24 and 26 while writing his diary, and travelled regularly between his own residence at the Inns of Court and his parents' home in Hackney. Heywood and Harrold were widowers in their mid-thirties during their periods of diary-writing, and both had accomplished the traditional patriarchal status markers of marrying and setting up an independent household during their twenties. Their diaries provide an opportunity to examine the varying degrees of success with which they retained these identities in the wake of the death of a wife as a complication of childbirth, with Heywood remaining single for six years and Harrold eight months. Hooke and Stout's writings show the progression of the never-married bachelor's life from relative youth to old age, with Hooke's diary covering periods in his late thirties, early forties, and then his mid-to-late fifties, complimented by Stout's retrospective but life-long autobiography which was completed when he was 78 years old. The accounts of mid-life provided by Hooke and Stout reveal significant involvement in the preferment and raising of their relatives' children, allowing for further analysis of the paternal roles accessible to single men, as seen in the probate material used in Chapter 2. Clegg was the oldest and most well-established of all the single male writers, being widowed for the first time at the age of 61, then again at the age of 69, remaining single after that point. He was one of the few diarists who continued writing until the end of his life, providing insight into how older single men cultivated notions of their authority both within and beyond the boundaries of their households.

Despite these differing circumstances, all six men were chiefly responsible for the management of their own homes during their adult life, although this varied from headship of a large household-family containing both children and servants who worked both in and out of the house, as in Clegg's case, to a domain concerning a few rented rooms and a single servant, as in Ryder's case. While these diaries represent mostly socially independent men, they were not all economically independent. Ryder's lifestyle was clearly maintained at the expense of his parents, and while they often indulged him, he frequently found himself at odds with their dictates. For example, Ryder wrote how he 'displeased' his father by requesting a gift of a new 'nightgown' of 'silk satin;' his father would only 'have [Ryder] have a calimanco [nightgown]' made of patterned, woven wool.[5] Of course, this was a trifling problem experienced by a young bachelor who felt the benefits of generational wealth, and while most of these single male

[5] HMT: Third Series Volume 69a, '3 November 1715,' in Full transcript by Dr W. Matthews of Sir Dudley Ryder's diary in Shorthand-cypher, 1715-1716 (no date), f. 123.

writers could be described as middling in social status, this was not true in all cases. The editor of Harrold's diary identifies him as 'plebian,' and although Harrold kept his own shop, his dual roles as wigmaker and bookseller brought in an irregular income and he was frequently in debt.[6] His struggles to maintain himself and his family despite his constant work highlights how claims to patriarchal manhood could be weakened by singleness and its profound impact on a man's ability to manage his household.

Their reasons for creating their diaries and autobiographies were similarly varied. For devout Christians, the practice of diary writing and reading bonded communities through the dissemination of examples of a religious life well lived.[7] Harrold was a devout Anglican and used his diary to pose questions to God about his life, while Stout, a Quaker, included both a narrative of his conversion and of his miraculous survival of an accident, the providential nature of which prompted him to compile the autobiography. Heywood's diary began on 24 March 1664/5, marking his expulsion from his parish as part of the Five Mile Act, and was accompanied by the statement in his autobiography that he wished to write 'to examine my self, to prove my worke … to search & see what obedience & grounds of hope I have.'[8] Clegg, who had begun to take 'notes for my selfe' in 1708, expanded into a more detailed record in 1722 after 'I find on a review I have neglected to record severall remarkable dispensations of Divine providence … I therefore intend thro God's assistance to spend some time every Lords day at night in recording the more signall occurrances of the week past.'[9] For Harrold, Stout, Heywood, and Clegg, their daily lives were worth recording because they provided examples of (or a desire for) individual experiences of God's benevolence.

Hooke and Ryder did not appear to write for religious reasons. Ryder came from a prominent non-conformist family, but his diary formed a more intimate account which reflected on his own behaviours, thoughts, and observances of the conduct of those around him. Equally interested in his own actions and responses to events, Hooke was a baptised Anglican but his diary entries do not suggest that prayers or churchgoing was part of his regular routine. Both

[6] Craig Horner, 'Introduction' in *The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester 1712-15*, ed. Craig Horner (Aldershot, 2008), pp. xi-xii and p. xxii.
[7] Elspeth Findlay, 'Ralph Thoresby the Diarist: The Late Seventeenth-Century Pious Diary and Its Demise,' *The Seventeenth Century* 17, 1 (2002): pp. 111-112; and Michael Mascuch, *Origins of the Individualist Self: Autobiography and Self Identity in England, 1591-1791* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 67.
[8] 24 March 1664/6, Oliver Heywood, *The Reverend Oliver Heywood, 1630-1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books, Volume I*, ed. Joseph Horsfall Turner (Brighouse, 1882), p. 223; Heywood, 'Autobiography' in *Diary Volume I*, pp. 133-134.
[9] 19 December 1708, James Clegg, *The Diary of James Clegg of Chapel en le Frith, 1708-1755: Part I 1708-1736*, ed. Vanessa Doe (Chesterfield, 1978) p. 1; and 9 January 1722, Clegg, *Diary Part I*, p. 16.

men encoded their diaries, with Hooke devising a unique system of pictograms and abbreviations, while Ryder employed Jeremiah Rich's shorthand system. This gives the impression that their diaries (at least in their existing form) were intended for personal use, leading Elspeth Findlay to suggest that Ryder's diary was intended to be 'recreational' rather than 'functional.' [10] However, Lotte Mulligan's analysis of Hooke's diary provides a framework through which the purpose of these diaries can be understood. She describes Hooke's diary not as an '"after-hours" incidental activity' but instead as a way of providing 'self-knowledge' though self-scrutiny.[11] Mulligan suggests Hooke's intention was 'to improve his performance … [and] facilitate observation, collection of data, and to improve the memory.'[12] Mulligan constructs the diary as an 'experiment of living,' which would allow Hooke to review and analyse his life as if it were scientific data.[13] While Ryder's diary was far more emotional and far less scientific that Hooke's, his aims adhered to the same principles of 'self-knowledge,' demonstrated by his very first entry:

> Mr. Whatley [a friend] told me the other day of a method he had taken for some time of keeping a diary. And I now intend to begin the same method and mark down every day whatever occurs to me in the day worth observing. I intend particularly to observe my own temper and state of mind as to my fitness and disposition for study … I shall be able then to review any parts of my life, have the pleasure of it if it be well spent, if otherwise know how to mend it.[14]

The approach of this chapter has been shaped by Anne Kugler and Philip Carter's works on the diary and autobiography as sites of self-fashioning.[15] While Kugler and Carter both acknowledge that personal writing reflected actual lived experiences, their respective studies of Sarah Cowper and James Boswell indicate that authorship allowed individuals to craft textual 'personae' that aligned their real lives with gendered ideals.[16] Carter uses Boswell's autobiography to evidence the influence of contemporary discourses about manhood over Boswell's actions, such as in Boswell's notes about the good and bad conversationalists among

[10] Findlay, 'Thoresby the Diarist:' p. 126 and p. 125.
[11] Lotte Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny and the Study of Nature: Robert Hooke's Diary as Natural History,' *Journal of British Studies* 35, 3 (1996): p. 312.
[12] Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny:' p. 315.
[13] Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny:' pp. 332-333.
[14] HMT: '6 June 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 1.
[15] See Anne Kugler, 'Constructing Wifely Identity: Prescription and Practice in the Life of Lady Sarah Cowper,' *Journal of British Studies* 40, 3 (2001): pp. 291-323; and Philip Carter, 'James Boswell's Manliness,' in *English Masculinities 1660-1800*, eds. Tim Hitchcock and Michele Cohen (London, 1999), pp. 111-130.
[16] Kugler, 'Wifely Identity:' p. 296; Carter, 'Boswell's Manliness,' p. 130.

his social circle.[17] Furthermore, Kugler demonstrates that it can be possible to trace the divisions between the idealised and the actual self in the diary. Kugler cites Cowper's descriptions of her marriage as evidence that 'ideal family relationships [were] much easier to envision than enforce,' showing how Cowper formulated the role of a dutiful wife in her diary, but her records of arguments with her husband show that she had 'mixed results [in] her attempts to enact it.'[18] With this perspective, single men's diaries and autobiographies are reconfigured as sites for men to record normative discourses about manhood in relation to their own daily experiences and behaviours. This approach allows the objective lived experiences of bachelors and widowers to be examined alongside the subjective codes of behaviour that they abided by.

Diaries and autobiographies are used together in this chapter in the understanding that they shared more similarities than differences in the early modern period. Both forms emerged during the sixteenth century, partly in response to the Reformation as Protestantism encouraged vernacular literacy. As Lena Cowen Orlin argues, the new culture of scripture reading necessitated 'inwardness and self-evaluation' which was best expressed in personal writing that combined devotional meditations with actual practice.[19] Julie Sievers shows that recording personal experiences was integral to non-conformist practice well into the eighteenth century as it provided opportunities for individuals to reflect on faith-affirming moments regardless of whether they had converted or been born into their religious community.[20]

This shared origin means that diaries and autobiographies shared other traits. Modern interpretations lead to the assumption that diaries were always contemporary and spontaneous whereas autobiographies were exclusively retrospective, yet early modern diarists who are praised for their attention to detail, such as Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, produced multiple drafts of their diary entries.[21] Conversely, although autobiographies were written in review of a life, presenting events with emotional and chronological distance, they frequently drew from contemporaneous accounts. J. D. Marshall finds the evidence of this process in the

[17] Carter, 'Boswell's Manliness,' pp. 123-124.
[18] Kugler, 'Wifely Identity:' p. 323.
[19] Amanda Vickery, 'A Self off the Shelf: The Rise of the Pocket Diary in Eighteenth-Century England,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 54, 3 (2021): p. 668; and Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Chronicles of Private Life,' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Literature, 1500-1600*, ed. Arthur Kinney (Cambridge, 2007), p. 241 and p. 250.
[20] Julie Sievers, 'Awakening the Inner Light: Elizabeth Ashbridge and the Transformation of the Quaker Community,' *Early American Literature* 36, 2 (2001): *passim* with emphasis on p. 236 and p. 239.
[21] Stuart Sherman, 'Diary and Autobiography,' in *The Cambridge History of English Literature 1660-1780*, ed. John Richetti (Cambridge, 2005), p. 658; and Elaine McKay, 'English diarists: Gender, Geography, and Occupation, 1500-1700,' *History* 90, 298 (2005): p. 192.

autobiography of Stout, citing his entry for 1717.[22] While Stout's autobiography is almost wholly written in the past tense, the 1717 section is written in the present tense, suggesting that Stout produced his work by copying up notes that had been made at the time.[23] Richard Waller also made reference to the transitional diary-to-autobiography process in his posthumous biography of Hooke. He claimed to have a volume of Hooke's diary from 1697 (now lost) where Hooke had apparently written:

> I began this Day to write the History of my own Life, wherein I will comprize as many remarkable Passages, as I can now remember to collect out of such Memorials as I have kept in Writing, or are in the Registers of the Royal Society; together with all my Inventions, Experiments, Discoveries, Discourses, &c. where I have made, the time when, the manner how, and means by which, with the success and effect of them, together with the state of my Health, my Employments and Studies, my good or bad Fortune, my Friends and Enemies &c. all which shall be the truth of Matter of Fact, so far as I can be inform'd by my Memorials or my own Memory, which Rule I resolve not to transgress.[24]

Diaries and autobiographies also had similar afterlives in the early modern period. Diaries were often circulated amongst the families or wider social networks of the diarist; Ralph Thorseby wrote 'in the knowledge and expectation that [his diaries] would be circulated after death, and perhaps before,' because he in turn read the diaries of other people.[25] The potential audience of a diary explains why many works produced in the 1650 to 1750 period also included an autobiography; it provided the future reader with a more complete narrative of the life of the subject. Heywood wrote his autobiography in 1666 at the age of 37, just one year after beginning his diary.[26] Similarly, Clegg marked his fiftieth birthday with 'a short account of my life til the time when I begun to keep a Diary,' adding a description of his life from 1679 to 1714 to his account for the year 1730.[27] Both men's age and the shortness of the period of simultaneous diary/autobiography production suggest that their intention was that the autobiography act as a prologue, while the diary memorialised the ongoing remaining life span,

[22] J. D. Marshall, 'The Descent of the Autobiography,' in *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster*, ed. J. D. Marshall (Manchester, 1967), p. 17.
[23] 1717, William Stout, *The Autobiography of William Stout of Lancaster*, ed. J. D. Marshall (Manchester, 1967), pp. 177-178.
[24] Richard Waller, *The posthumous works of Robert Hooke* (London, 1705), p. i.
[25] Findlay, 'Thorseby the Diarist:' p. 109.
[26] Note that the end of Heywood's autobiography is dated 27 May 1666; see Heywood, 'Autobiography' in *Diary Volume I*, pp. 133-202.
[27] James Clegg, 'Autobiography' in *The Diary of James Clegg of Chapel en le Frith, 1708-1755, Part III 1748-1755*, ed. Vanessa Doe (Matlock, 1981), pp. 905-920.

allowing a reader to understand their whole life story regardless of how far in the future they began reading.

There are some biases implicit when using diaries and autobiographies as a source. Diaries and autobiographies privilege the accounts of the literate, and therefore this chapter tends towards favouring the experiences of middling sort and elite men, with some exceptions. Besides Harrold's diary, this chapter also consults the accounts made by Joseph Lister, who was employed as a servant, the apprentice Roger Lowe, and the excise officer and schoolmaster John Cannon, whose autobiography included stretches of life below the poverty line.[28] Additionally, the link between religious belief and the production and circulation of personal writing means that non-conformity and professional ministry are overrepresented in this source base. Findlay cites the diaries of Heywood and Clegg as prime examples of the 'spiritual' genre of personal writing.[29] This is not a problem unique to the single male sample, but rather a reflection of a wider pattern. In Elaine McKay's demographic analysis of English diarists from 1500 to 1700, ministry was the most frequently occurring profession, with 40 of 245 male diarists identified as clergymen.[30] As such, it would be wrong to attempt to compensate for this bias. Instead, close attention will be paid to the invocation of religious language in everyday practice as well as in reference to gendered ideals.

Awareness of these limitations is ultimately beneficial to this chapter because it demonstrates that the memorialisation of everyday life in the diary and autobiography was not strictly factual, but continually reinforced an image that the writer wished to convey to their (real or imagined) audience. As Vickery states, 'placid routine and complacency inspire few chroniclers.'[31] Autobiography required purpose; diary writing required habit. By analysing single men's records of their life experiences, in the understanding that this represented real action as well as a desire to be perceived in a certain way, the historian will gain unique insight into how bachelors and widowers were able to access and maintain their manhood. As such, the three sections of this chapter separately analyse the bachelor and widower domestic life, single men's roles in wider society, and their attitudes towards sex and marriage.

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[28] See Joseph Lister, *The Autobiography of Joseph Lister, of Bradford in Yorkshire*, ed. Thomas Wright (London, 1842); Roger Lowe, *The diary of Roger Lowe, of Ashton-in-Makerfield, Lancashire, 1663-1674*, ed. William Sachse (New Haven, 1938); John Cannon, *The Chronicles of John Cannon Excise Officer and Writing Master, Part I: 1684-1733*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010); and John Cannon, *The Chronicles of John Cannon Excise Officer and Writing Master, Part II: 1734-1743*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010).
[29] Findlay, 'Thoresby the Diarist:' p. 120.
[30] McKay, 'English Diarists:' pp. 200-201 and p. 201, Table 1.
[31] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 53.

These categories were selected to evaluate the single man's ability to align with the principles of patriarchal manhood as outlined by Alexandra Shepard, which she defines as 'house-holding status associated with marriage and middle age and more obliquely linked to the social status of middling groups.'[32] She contrasts this with subordinate manhood, which was accessible to 'unmarried male servants placed within other men's households for at least part of the life course, and in some cases for most of it, who conformed to the codes of deference expected of them.'[33] Although Shepard acknowledges that these categorisations were not rigid, the married/unmarried and master/servant dichotomies make it difficult to locate the accessibility of manhood to single men because marriage and household headship are so closely tied together.[34] As Chapter 1 shows, single men formed a significant minority of household heads in England at the end of the seventeenth century, indicating that there was less correlation between household headship and marriage than Shepard assumes.

This chapter therefore seeks to interrogate the extent to which single men were able to access the other elements of Shepard's patriarchal manhood model by performing a qualitative analysis of diaries and autobiographies written by single men, investigating their access to the resources of manhood over the course of their individual lives. The addition of an analysis of sexual activity to this model also serves to highlight the extent to which sex was considered a normative aspect of adult manhood in the early modern period. Alongside the double standard that dictated female chastity and male sexual dominance, Keith Thomas argues that a second double standard emerged in the later seventeenth century, in line with middling-sort values which increasingly venerated sex within marriage for the purpose of reproduction as the only valid form of male sexual relationship. Men's sexual activity in any other scenario was increasingly regarded as 'aristocratic or libertine conduct which would likely jeopardise domestic security … incompatible with the high emotional values expected from marriage.'[35] Examination of reports of the sexual activity of single men as well as their reports of other people's sexual activity therefore adds to the historian's understanding of how men held up (or were held to) this sexual double standard, providing a fuller account of how bachelors and widowers could attain manhood through their daily life activities in the period from 1650 to 1750.

[32] Alexandra Shepard, 'From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500–1700,' *The Journal of British Studies* 44, 2 (2005): p. 291.
[33] Shepard, 'Anxious Patriarchs?:' p. 291.
[34] Shepard, 'Anxious Patriarchs?:' p. 291; and Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in early modern England* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 2-3 and pp. 6-7.
[35] Keith Thomas, 'The Double Standard,' *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20, 2 (1959): p. 204.

### *Single men and the household*

All six of the main writers focused on in this chapter considered themselves the head of their own household for most, if not all, of their periods of life-writing. They were also not alone in their homes, so their life-writing provides an invaluable insight into how the relationships between single men and the other members of their household operated on a day-to-day basis. Affirming Tadmor's historicised conception of the 'household-family,' single men's diaries suggest that they saw themselves as heads of family groups, even if those groups were not nuclear in composition. When widowed Heywood described how he 'took a journey with my family' in May 1667, he clarified to add that his family meant 'i.e. my children and my servant maid.'[36] Although a modern reader might perceive this to be a relatively limited grouping, Heywood certainly interpreted his position as different from the 'sad condition' of one of his parishioners, who was 'living alone, without wife or child or any but himself.'[37]

The primary (and in the cases of Hooke and Ryder, only other) member of the single man's household-family was his housekeeper. Bridget Hill's work on women's labour lays out the range of duties expected of wives in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including 'active participation in the farm, trade, craft, or shop of their husbands, … [and] all that the term "housework" involved … as well as bearing and raising children.'[38] Within the household, a wife would be expected to undertake or monitor the 'cooking, drinking, washing, and cleaning,' as well as the 'shopping,' which became a crucial component of women's labour as urbanisation made subsistence farming unsustainable.[39] The extent of a wife's direct involvement in the maintenance of the household meant that bachelors and widowers alike required the assistance of a female housekeeper. Heywood, Hooke, Harrold, and Ryder paid a servant to maintain their households, while Stout and Clegg called on relatives. The wider sample of diaries and autobiographies also indicate that paying for a housekeeper was a slightly more common experience than receiving support from a relative.[40] Amy Froide and Amy Harris's work on single women's lived experiences highlights that their cohabitation with an unmarried brother 'enabled' him to establish a household of his own, but this statement should be expanded to encompass a wider range of women; bachelor and widower life-writing reveals

[36] 23 May 1667, Heywood, *Diary Vol I*, p. 241.
[37] 27 November 1683, Oliver Heywood, *The Reverend Oliver Heywood, 1630-1702: His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books, Volume III*, ed. Joseph Horsfall Turner (Brighouse, 1883), p. 341.
[38] Bridget Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics in eighteenth-century England* (London, 1994), p. 28.
[39] Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics*, p. 107 and p. 39.
[40] It was not clear in all texts but where mentioned, Claver Morris, Timothy Burrell, and William Byrd II relied on servants; Anthony Wood and John Hobson had relations as housekeepers; Thomas Jolly and James Fretwell used both.

sisters, mothers, daughters, nieces, granddaughters, grandnieces, and servants providing domestic support to single men.

If they remained single for long periods, bachelors and widowers would have to engage multiple women to keep house for them. Over a cumulative period of 10 years of widowerhood, Clegg relied on his daughter, stepdaughter, and two granddaughters to take care of him, while Stout called upon his sister, four nieces, and a great-niece in the 50 years of adult bachelorhood covered in his autobiography. Their turnover of housekeepers was not dissimilar to Hooke, who mentioned at least five servant-housekeepers across the 16-year period captured in the surviving volumes of his diaries. This suggests that if a man wished to remain single and had sufficient income to support his household without a wife's portion, long-term singleness was both economically and domestically viable. Housekeepers could be called upon from a number of sources, and the depth or breadth of a kin relationship did not seem to reduce the willingness of a female relative to take up the role of housekeeper to a single man. It also indicates that single men were interested in their domestic arrangements and sought to maintain a good standard of housekeeping regardless of how long they remained single. This level of discernment provides a counterpoint to Vickery's suggestion that domesticity was 'fragmented and effortful' for single men, and that 'female companionship and a centred domestic life' was only accessible through marriage.[41]

As a housekeeper undertook the feminine-coded labour in the single man's household, it also provided an opportunity for single men to demonstrate that they fulfilled the masculine position of household manager. Shepard's analysis of conduct books suggests that the gendered division of labour gave 'distinct roles to husband and wife through which the gender hierarchy and social harmony should be maintained,' and single men's life writing suggests that they sought to prove that they possessed these qualities.[42] Manhood was associated with 'acquisition, discretion, and negotiation' for the benefit of the household, and these attributes were praised even by those who had only been heads of their households for a short time.[43] Ryder recognised that a 'good husband' controlled his income and expenditure; an attribute which he found admirable in his father and attempted to emulate himself.[44] Economic self-control served to justify the single man's position as the superior of his housekeeper. No diary or autobiography used in this chapter provided a full account of a housekeeper's daily duties,

[41] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 77.
[42] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 75-76.
[43] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 77.
[44] HMT: '27 June 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, ff. 13-14.

but it is clear that while they carried out the daily shopping and spending, these activities were closely monitored by their single male household head. Although historians tend to associate the direction of servants with the mistress of the house and not the master, Hooke was not feminised by his careful recording of his servant-housekeeper's spending.[45] In the later period of his diaries, when his progressing illness made him less able to leave the house, Hooke supplemented his own records of expenditure in inns and coffeehouses with a list of what he paid his housekeeper, Martha, to buy on his behalf: 'p[ai]d M[a]r[tha] for br[ead] 16d, beer 9 1/2[d].'[46]

Hooke therefore removed himself from the performance of a domestic chore, but deliberately retained a role in the running of his household by constructing Martha's shopping as a task which required his approval. This monitoring reaffirmed the gendered notion that Hooke was the overseer of his domestic environment, even without partaking in the labour needed to sustain it. Helen Metcalfe argues that bachelors had most to gain by developing reputations for 'prudence, self-governance, and thrift,' but it is clear that widowers also benefitted from describing their efforts to govern the running of their households.[47] Clegg's descriptions of his daughter's trips to the market subtly reinforced his role as her superior in the household: he 'sent' or 'assisted her in buying provisions,' but it was he who 'settled accounts with Mr Walker and the Butcher and paid off their bills and the chandlers.'[48] By having a housekeeper to carry out the daily labour needed to maintain the household, single men created opportunities to organise and direct work, enforcing concepts of gendered difference by reiterating that all men were hierarchically superior to all women, and as a result minimising any perceived difference between the single and married man's conduct.

For widowers with children, the appointment of a housekeeper also served to provide continuity of childcare in the period immediately after the death of their wife. Early modern widowers are often stereotyped as 'remarry[ing] quickly' after the death of their spouse to

[45] See Tim Meldrum, *Domestic Service and Gender 1660-1750: Life and Work in the London Household* (Harlow, 2000), p. 42 and p. 66.
[46] 10 January 1689/90, Robert Hooke, 'Diary, 1688 to 1693,' in *Early Science in Oxford Volume X: The Life and Work of Robert Hooke Part IV*, ed. R. T. Gunther (Oxford, 1935), p. 178. Similar entries appear throughout the volume, usually multiple times in each week; see 7 November 1688, Hooke, *Early Science X*, p. 71; 13 March 1688/9, Hooke, *Early Science X*, p. 106; and 14 September 1689, Hooke, *Early Science X*, p. 148.
[47] Helen Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood in Late-Georgian England, c. 1760-1830,' Ph.D. Thesis (University of Manchester, 2016), p. 119.
[48] 25 November 1743, James Clegg, *The Diary of James Clegg of Chapel en le Frith 1708-1755: Part II 1737-1747*, ed. Vanessa Doe (Chesterfield, 1979), p. 473; and 8 December 1743, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 503.

supplement lost spousal labour.[49] Widowers' diaries do indeed indicate that the immediate concerns of widowerhood were pragmatic rather than emotional, but historians must not ignore that widowers often sought out a housekeeper first and pursued marriage later. When Heywood described his 'present state for domestical affairs' two months after the death of his wife and newborn son, he recorded that 'I keep house with only one maid and my too [sic] little sons.'[50] He thought about adding another person to his household-family, but this was distinctly not a wife; rather he 'had motions and tenders of another maid.'[51] Half a century later, Harrold was beset by the same problem. Even though he already had a female servant, Harrold sought out a professional 'house keeper' once it became apparent his wife would not recover from her child-bed illness.[52] He was 'much eased in mind' when Ann Moore agreed to join his household one week later.[53] While Harrold did not delineate her duties in his diary, she remained in his household for at least three months, suggesting that Ann's presence was specifically intended to compensate for the loss of domestic labour previously carried out by his wife, rather than to assist with the general labour carried out by his servant.[54]

The links between wifely duties and the housekeeper's role did not pass unnoticed in single men's life-writing. James Fretwell observed that 'it was the same day on which my father was married' when he first took on his sister as housekeeper.[55] Stout also saw his co-residence with his sister as a direct, even preferable, equivalent to marriage; in a retrospective description of 'how many good opertunyteys I had sleighted of marrying,' he added that he had 'contented my selfe with living with my sister Elin, who was … carfull and diligent to serve me … and I was tender to her.'[56] Not only does this confer the housekeeper with a more important status than those of other dependents, it also suggests that the active association of housekeepers with wives justified single men's claims to patriarchal authority by enforcing the principles of

[49] Hill, *Women, work, and sexual politics*, p. 192; see also David Hussey and Margaret Ponsonby, *The Single Homemaker and Material Culture in the Long Eighteenth Century* (Farnham, 2012), p. 11; and S. J. Wright, 'The Elderly and Bereaved in Eighteenth Century Ludlow,' in *Life, Death, and the Elderly: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Margaret Pelling and Richard Smith (London, 2003), p. 88.
[50] 18 July 1661, Heywood, *Diary Volume I*, p. 177.
[51] 18 July 1661, Heywood, *Diary Volume I*, p. 177.
[52] 17 and 18 December 1712, Edmund Harrold, *The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester 1712-15*, ed. Craig Horner (Manchester, 2010), p. 52.
[53] 25 December 1712, Harrold, *Diary*, pp. 52-53.
[54] Harrold pays Ann's wages on Lady Day 1713, and she is not mentioned again after this point; see 24 March 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 66.
[55] 11 May 1726, James Fretwell, 'A Family History Begun by James Fretwell,' in *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Surtees Society Volume LXV*, ed. Henry James Morehouse (Durham, 1877), p. 204.
[56] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 142.

masculine authority and female obedience even though their households were not nuclear in structure.

Single men were so reliant on their housekeepers that the loss of one, whether by choice or circumstance, could force a man to give up his role as the head of the household. The widower Timothy Burrell explicitly tied his only child's marriage to the end of his household headship in July 1715, writing that he 'gave over housekeeping and my son-in-law Trevor began to keep house' six months after his daughter's wedding.[57] Stout also reconsidered his household headship after Elin's death, recalling that 'my greatest inclination was to give over my trade, if not house keeping … now when my sister was dead.'[58] For a three-year period, he did so, allowing two women to rent his house while he paid to be their boarder.[59] Neither Burrell nor Stout removed from their property, but they nevertheless understood that their domestic manhood had been constructed through their management of their housekeeper, so her departure collapsed the hierarchy which had supported that authority.

Other household-family members did not receive as much attention as the housekeeper in the diaries and autobiographies of single men. Tadmor convincingly argues that by the middle of the eighteenth century, conduct treatises and instances of practice had led to a conception of the household-family where 'family relationships [were] both domestic and occupational, contractual and instructional,' with 'kin and non-kin: masters, mistresses, servants, lodgers, and boarders … conceivably shar[ing] familial quarters.'[60] However, in the 1650 to 1750 period examined in this chapter, lodgers, apprentices, and servants who were not housekeepers received relatively little attention from those single men who recorded the activities of their household-families. This is not to say such figures were absent from the single man's diary or autobiography, but rather that they were relegated to the background of single men's domestic descriptions: Stout recalled taking his first apprentice in 1690, and the graduation of another in 1714, but he mentioned them infrequently between those dates, making it unclear as to how many other apprentices he trained in that intermediate period.[61] Similarly, Clegg's brief note on 16 July 1743 that 'the servants were busy at the Hay and mowing but got not any dry' is suggestive of constant domestic labour carried out by servants

[57] Timothy Burrell, 'Extracts from the Journal and Account-Book of Timothy Burrell Esq, Barrister-at-Law, of Ockenden House Cuckfield, from the year 1683 to 1714,' in *Sussex Archaeological Collections: Volume III*, ed. R. W. Blencowe (Lewes, 1850), p. 171.
[58] 1724, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 192.
[59] 1730, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 205.
[60] Tadmor, *Family and* Friends, p. 63 and p. 62.
[61] 1690, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 99; and 1714, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 171.

within and around his household that was so mundane it was not usually worth commenting on.[62] It is therefore notable that Harrold, the poorest of the main six writers examined in this chapter, expressed a greater interest in his lodgers than his wealthier single male counterparts. After attending his Sunday sermon, Harrold wrote that 'every mans duty is first to serve God here,' which he actioned on the following Wednesday when he 'read this night ye Drunkards Prospective amongst my lodgers.'[63] The choice of text was probably shaped by Harrold's own proclivities, as he was prone to what he called drunken 'rambles,' but his willingness to read reformatory and prescriptive texts to his lodgers (and in turn, their willingness to listen) suggests that lodgers, apprentices, and servants were part of the single man's household-family and could be leveraged by single men as a means to emphasise their authority and expertise.[64]

In contrast to the somewhat neglectful recording of non-kin dependents within the household-family, children feature prominently in single men's accounts. Paternal and child-rearing roles appear to have been equally accessible to widowers, who were responsible for the care of their own biological offspring, as they were to bachelors, who infrequently took up informal caring roles for the children of their siblings. Harris calls this process 'fictive parenthood,' a duty carried out for the benefit of the child's parents in recognition of the 'familial obligations and expectations' shared between adult siblings.[65] Married men could also participate in this practice; Giles Moore, whose household-family already included two stepsons, used his diary to make a careful record of the time and money expended on raising his niece, Mat, between 1667 and 1672/3.[66] However, the framework that motivated Moore's actions appears different from those of Hooke and Stout; while Moore's care of Mat began as a form of pragmatic relief after his sister was widowed, the children in Hooke and Stout's care had two living parents. It also cannot be assumed that these fostering roles were shaped by deference due to older siblings, as while Hooke raised his older brother's children, Stout was responsible for the care of his younger brother's children.

As such, historians must consider that the removal of children from their natal families into the house of an unmarried extended family member indicates that Hooke and Stout as

[62] 16 July 1743, Clegg, *Diary Volume II*, p. 463.
[63] 1 March 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 63; and 4 March 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 63. N.B. Harrold was probably referring to Joseph Rigbie, *An ingenious poem, called The Drunkards Prospective, or Burning-glasse* (London, 1655).
[64] Harrold's 'rambles' appear throughout his diary, as early as 10 to 17 February 1712/3, see Harrold, *Diary*, pp. 60-61.
[65] Amy Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations in England: Share and share alike* (Manchester, 2012), p. 122.
[66] Giles Moore, *The Journal of Giles Moore of Horstead Keynes, 1655-1679*, ed. Ruth Bird (Lewes, 1971), pp. 70-80.

individuals were able to confer some sort of benefit or privilege to these children regardless of their marital status. Hooke's niece, Grace Hooke, and second cousin, Tom Gyles, were certainly given opportunities for personal advancement after joining his household. Grace attended a girl's school and briefly became engaged to an alderman's son, while Hooke noted that Tom was 'a pretty boy, good at Reading, Arithmetic &c. his mind for sea,' which could be developed through Hooke's wide professional network at Gresham College and the Royal Society.[67] Stout's assistance was directed towards the younger members of his extended family, taking in his brother Leonard's sons and daughters at the age of two and preparing them to enter school at age six, then later taking the eldest, William, as his apprentice.[68] Although wary of the child's willingness and competency, Stout described how his 'natural affection, an my desir to promote [my brother's] children' led him to agree to educate William in ironmongery.[69] This affirms Harris's statement that the provision of education or training for family members was 'a method of expressing love and affection' within an extended family group, rather than being 'regarded as exchanges of special gifts; they were manifestations of the easy, natural affection expected of sisters and brothers.'[70]

However, this is not to say that bachelors invited young relatives into their households for purely charitable reasons. It is clear that the inclusion of children as dependents in a bachelor's household was crucial in affirming a paternal and therefore authoritative form of manhood. Stout particularly emphasised that his household-family was functionally indistinguishable from the nuclear ideal pursued by his married peers, as with his sister Elin 'we had always two of our brother Leonard's children with us … and my sister was as carfull to nurs and correct them as if they had been her own children.'[71] Research by Elizabeth Foyster and Helen Berry has shown that when a man was married but did not have children, his 'honour, reputation, and credit were open to question,' as seventeenth-century popular culture often played on links between sexual and economic impotency.[72] It was imperative that such men found ways to become 'father-figures … [to] assume paternal roles and exercise patriarchal

[67] 2 September 1672, Robert Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke M.A, M.D., F.R.S, 1672-1680*, eds. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1968), p. 6; 13 September 1672, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 7; and 12 July 1675, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 169.
[68] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 142; 1719, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 178; and 1722, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 185.
[69] 1722, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 185.
[70] Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations*, p. 128 and p. 134.
[71] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 142.
[72] Elizabeth Foyster and Helen Berry, 'Childless Men in Early Modern England,' in *The Family in Early Modern England*, eds. Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 178-179.

authority,' in order to counteract their biological childlessness.[73] A self-conscious self-fashioning along these lines is seen in Hooke's diary as well as Stout's autobiography. Hooke took an active interest in Grace and Tom's education, purchasing a copy of the children's book *Orbis Pictus* for Tom and instructing him in Euclidean geometry, while he 'lent' Grace his copy of Peter Heylyn's *Cosmographie*.[74] Evidently, Hooke considered that this role gave him the ability to speak with authority on the topic of children's education, as he recorded that 'I Discoursed about teaching children grammar by tables' with his Royal Society colleague Oliver Hill, whose wife often paid visits to Grace.[75] Stout also maintained an interest in his nephews and nieces after they left his care, claiming that 'the principle motive to keep on trade was for the preferment of my brother Leonard's children … I had hopes that as they grew up they would be advised by me in duty or interest.'[76] Stout's case also closely mirrored the conduct of many of the bachelor will-makers seen in Chapter 2, as once he sought to retire he gave up control of his shop to his nephew, William. Although Stout was never a biological father, the care he provided for his nephew as a child and his subsequent apprenticeship allowed Stout to create a legacy for himself in his autobiography which was both economic and familial, keeping his business in the hands of a household-family member who he had chosen and personally prepared for the task.

In contrast to the bachelor's interest in assuming conspicuous 'fictive' parental roles, widowers rarely mentioned the day-to-day activities of their children. Some children only appeared when their conduct departed from their norm, as seen in Harrold's diary entries relating to his middle daughter, Esther. During his eight-month widowerhood, she was only mentioned by name once, as she had fallen ill.[77] This is not to imply that widowers did not care for or about their children while bachelors did, but rather to demonstrate that bachelors stood to benefit more from using their life-writing to emphasise a fatherly role which would justify their claims of domestic manhood and patriarchal authority. As Patricia Crawford has shown, the act of biological generation not only ensured a father's hierarchical authority within the home; it was also recognised as an achievement that 'enhanced a man's status with his kin and neighbours.'[78] The greater contemporary recognition of actual rather than fictive parenthood

[73] Foyster and Berry, 'Childless Men,' p. 183.
[74] 17 June 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 237; 6 July 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 240; and 9 January 1676/7, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 267.
[75] 17 November 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 257; and see 23 October 1676, Hooke, *Diary* of, p. 254.
[76] 1719, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 178.
[77] 7 February 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 60.
[78] Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (Harlow, 2004), p. 113.

explains the relative disengagement with children in writing by widowers when compared to that of bachelors.

When widowers did discuss their children in their life-writing, there was a greater focus on their immediate needs, especially in the period immediately after the death of their spouse. The need to provide maternal care for his three children led Harrold to hire his aforementioned housekeeper, Ann, but he took the additional step of sending his newborn daughter out to a wet nurse.[79] Even wealthy men removed children from their households if it offered them a higher standard of care; William Byrd II boarded out both his daughters while he lived at the Middle Temple, but when he found out that the younger had become ill, he had her sent out 'into the country' to ensure her recovery.[80] While this tacitly acknowledges that rich and poor widowers thought their households were not fully suitable for the raising of children, Harrold and Byrd were still exercising patriarchal authority by making definitive choices about how and where their children should be raised. Their knowledge of their children's needs served to reinforce the paternal notion that while it was a woman's duty to nurture children, fathers were responsible for 'overseeing' that their children arrived at adulthood successfully.[81]

Widowers also showed interest in their children's futures, via advancement through education. Like the provision of their everyday care, this was also a task that was overseen, with the educational training most often carried out by other people. This process is evident in Heywood's diary, as he often travelled for weeks at a time to minister across Yorkshire, leaving his young sons at home. After one mission trip, lasting two weeks, Heywood wrote 'as the lord has blessed me abroad so [too] my poor family at home … my sons have been very towardly, plyed their book, read chapters, learned catechisms, got some chapters and psalmes without book.'[82] Heywood's pride as his children's improvement underscores that he was not the one tutoring them, creating contrast between his account and Hooke's investment in Tom and Grace's education. It seems likely that Heywood's servant-housekeeper Martha, 'in whom my children take great delight,' acted as his children's teacher in his absence.[83] Desire for improvement of children was not limited to sons, or only the children of middling-sort men. The death of Harrold's second wife precipitated his investment in his nine-year-old daughter's

[79] 4 December 1712, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 50.
[80] 13 September 1719, William Byrd II, 'The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover from December 13, 1717 to May 19, 1721,' in *The London Diary (1717-1721) and other writings*, eds. Louis Wright and Marion Tinling (New York, 1958), p. 316; for his visit to his daughter Wilhelmina, see 17 October 1719, Byrd, *London Diary*, p. 329.
[81] Patricia Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 13-14.
[82] 19 December 1666, Heywood, *Diary Vol I*, p. 234.
[83] 1661, Heywood, 'Autobiography' in *Diary Volume I*, p. 177.

'education and bringing up and portion.'[84] Only two weeks after his wife's burial, he began consultations with his daughter's maternal grandparents (the parents of Harrold's first wife) to take her in to their household-family.[85] The grandparents agreed to raise Harrold's daughter if Harrold 'give her 20 pounds for her portion … to be improv'd till she come [of] age.'[86]

Despite the comparative lack of involvement in the raising of children, it was evident that widowers cared about their children as much as bachelors did. Authority over dependents was central to the construction of patriarchy, but the decision to send children away resulted in emotional discomfort for both widowed fathers and their children. Byrd described having prophetic dreams after his separation from his daughters, which convinced him that the elder had died of smallpox.[87] Clegg was similarly concerned for his son Benjamin who 'appeared extremely uneasy to return [to boarding school]' after the break for Christmas, feigning illness and 'us[ing] language that filld me with great uneasiness all the night.'[88] Although Clegg used his diary to record his prayers, asking God to 'make [his son] more humble, meek, and dutiful,' he nevertheless allowed Benjamin to remain at home for 10 days.[89] While the decisive choices made by single men in the raising of their children affirmed normative patriarchal models that saw the husband and the father as the household's most authoritative figure, these incidents begin to indicate that upholding these ideals required great effort, and sometimes went against the preferences of individual men.

As it becomes apparent that single men could reproduce the strictures of patriarchy within their own homes, it also becomes necessary to acknowledge the ways in which it varied, diverted, and failed in comparison to the domestic and paternal manhood that they sought to emulate. Throughout *Family and Friends*, Tadmor emphasises that 'co-residence and submission to the head of the household' was central to family formation, regardless of kin relationship.[90] Similarly, Metcalfe finds that eighteenth-century bachelors placed a high value on 'relationships with members of the household … often underpinned by bonds of love and affection.'[91] In a more recent article, she emphasises that the alternative conjugal couple in particular allowed a bachelor brother and his unmarried sister to 'access to a household

[84] 31 December 1712, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 55.
[85] 31 December 1712, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 55.
[86] 19 June 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 77.
[87] 19 December 1719, Byrd, *London Diary*, p. 357; and 7 January 1719/20, Byrd, *London Diary*, p. 360. N.B. These were only dreams – Byrd found out later that she had not been ill.
[88] 30 January 1742/3, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, pp. 447-448.
[89] 30 January 1742/3, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 448; and 10 February 1742/3, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 448.
[90] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 27.
[91] Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' p. 120.

organised around principles of unity, affection and friendship, based on bonds of common heritage.'[92] Although Metcalfe has explored the emotional and domestic toll on a bachelor who was unwillingly separated from the sister who kept house for him, neither she nor Tadmor have raised the point that households bound only by respect and affection were far more vulnerable to breakdown if relationships between members of the household-family soured.[93]

Slight insecurities of authority are noticeable throughout all single men's diaries, most often manifested in reports of the bad behaviour of dependent household-family members. Although Hooke had initially been very keen to care for Tom, his attitude changed when Tom began to fall behind in his studies. Hooke described him as 'a slug' and 'lazy, to be returned' to his parents on the Isle of Wight.[94] Hooke took steps to remove the boy from his household, although Hooke relented when the chaperone arrived and Tom 'cryd [he] would not [go].'[95] Stout also took steps to penalise what he saw as undesirable behaviour amongst members of his household-family. In the penultimate entry of his autobiography, he disclosed his plan to dismiss his present housekeeper, his 20-year-old great niece Mary Hall, as she was 'not in health to provide in the house, espetilay in the morning, I rising usualy at sun rising and she not to eight a clock in the summer.'[96] Although neither man ultimately followed through with his plan, Stout and Hooke's willingness to remedy the perceived disobedience of their household-family members by removing them from their household suggests that both men had a strong sense of their own domestic authority and how others should respond to it. As a counterpoint to Tadmor's suggestion that the concept of the household-family was inclusive of many types of people, these examples demonstrate that exclusion was also an important component of family composition. By acting to, or at least threatening to, sever ties between themselves and others, single men reinforced the notion that household-families were composed of people who exhibited 'submission to the authority of the head of the household.'[97] While single men's household families were drawn together by an element of necessity, these examples also demonstrate cultivation, where the behaviours of household-family members were shaped by and intended to reflect the values of the single male heads of households.

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[92] Helen Metcalfe, 'Moving House: Comfort disrupted in the domestic and emotional life of an eighteenth-century bachelor,' in *The Comforts of Home in Western Europe: 1700-1900*, ed. Jon Stobart (London, 2020), p. 181.
[93] See Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' pp. 75-78 and pp. 121-126; and Metcalfe, 'Moving House,' *passim*.
[94] 25 December 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 264; and 4 February 1676/7, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 272.
[95] 2 March 1676/7, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 276.
[96] See 23 to 29 July 1755, Clegg, *Diary Part III*, pp. 893-894; and 1743, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 236.
[97] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 27.

The limits of single male authority are more clearly shown when dependents sought to separate from the single man's household-family, rather than *vice versa*. Female submission was foundational to patriarchy, but while a wife was legally obliged to be obedient to her husband, servants and relations were not bound under any such contract and thus retained a far greater degree of autonomy. Hooke and Stout both recorded the elopement of a housekeeper in their life-writing, and while Hooke's unemotional writing style obscures the extent of his feelings, Stout was open in his expression of betrayal 'considering the care and pains that I and my dear sister Elin had taken for her bringing up and preferment.'[98] The offense given was two-fold; his niece, Margaret, had defied the obedience and respect that Stout thought he was due as her uncle and as the head of her household. Additionally, her desire to benefit herself destabilised Stout's domestic arrangements, with her younger sister Mary having to take up her role as Stout's housekeeper. Even when a housekeeper was given permission to marry it could threaten a single man's authority. Clegg understood that it would be for the 'benefit' of his stepdaughter if he agreed to her match, yet he described 'uneasiness' in his knowledge that she 'intends to marry … and leave me solitary,' later writing that he was 'much disturbed in mind on account of Ms Eyres intending to leave me.'[99] The nature of the source material does not allow insight into a housekeeper's thoughts, but her ability to take unilateral action and defy single male authority in order to become married highlights the weakness of a relationship that was not supported by legal precedent. If a wife were to leave her husband so publicly, a married man would have been made a cuckold; losing his social status and any claim he had to uphold the principles of patriarchal manhood.[100] However, Hooke and Stout were not cuckolded by their housekeeper's decisions to marry, because in these situations, their status was inferior to that of a married man. There was an element of humiliation, but the greater danger was that a key component of their household-family had been removed, leaving them to struggle to replace their housekeepers as quickly as possible.

Moreover, even if a single man was able to successfully establish and maintain a household-family, it did not mean that those outside of his household would respect his status as a patriarch. The majority of works consulted suggest that single men could co-exist alongside their extended families and communities, but the appearance of inheritance disputes in Stout's and Anthony Wood's accounts, suggests that blood relations had limits on the extent to which

[98] Hooke's entry read 'Nell … stayd abroad all this Day. I suppose today marryed,' see 13 August 1673, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 55; and 1734, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 216.
[99] 24 August 1752, Clegg, *Diary Part III*, p. 807; and 8 July 1752, Clegg, *Diary Part III*, p. 803.
[100] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 80.

they could accept and support their bachelor relatives. In her own study of familial probate disputes, Harris shows that inheritances were frequently challenged on the grounds that bequests did not reflect existing hierarchies of age, gender, and marital status which structured families.[101] The disputes around Stout and Wood's inheritances makes clear that single men's siblings certainly considered life-long singleness as a factor which made a man less worthy of an inheritance. In Stout's case, his married but childless older brother Josias asked him to resign his position in the line of entail on the grounds that:

> I was of good abilety and had noe wife or issue; so he thought to dispose of what substance he had to our [younger] brother Leonard and his children, who then had a wife, three sones and five daughters, and some grandchildren. I tould him that as to his personall estate, he might devise it to whom as he pleased, but as for the antient freehold estate, I would not have him devise it to any; ... and if I should survive him it would decend to me ... as I might have a naturall right, which I am always of a mind should be preserved to an heir at law.[102]

Josias's direct comparison of Stout's childlessness with Leonard's fecundity adds another element to Harris's conception of the sibling 'power nexus' of age, gender, and marital status by suggesting that the estate should descend to the younger brother not because he was married, but rather because he had successfully secured the family's lineage.[103] The same situation was evident in Wood's autobiography, although he, unlike Stout, agreed to resign his inheritance so that his two brothers might be able to offer larger jointures to prospective wives. Acutely aware that his singleness was not respected by his family members, he retrospectively recounted that 'no body else' in his family would have been as generous as him but that there was no 'consideration given' of his status.[104] He came to identify this situation as his 'ruin,' as in his later life he became totally dependent on his nephews for domestic and financial support.[105] Although Chapter 2 demonstrates that single men without children of their own were often willing to leave substantial portions of their estates to their nephews and nieces, Stout and Wood's life-writing suggests that siblings may well have taken that possibility for granted. Not only was Stout's fictive parenthood disregarded by his brother in favour of Leonard's biological fatherhood, but the apparent expectation that either Stout or Wood would

[101] Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations*, p. 151.
[102] 1738, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 225.
[103] Harris, *Siblinghood and social relations*, p. 144.
[104] 29 September 1659, Anthony Wood, *The life and times of Anthony Wood, antiquary of Oxford, 1632-1695: Volume I*, ed. Andrew Clark (Oxford, 1891), p. 284.
[105] 29 September 1659, Wood, *The life and times: Volume I*, p. 284.

willingly reject their legally prescribed inheritance because they were childless single men indicates that their married relatives did not necessarily view them as socially equivalent.

Within the home, single men could enact patriarchal authority over individual residents, but that members of single men's household-families and relations outside of their households were willing to challenge the domestic authority of bachelors and widowers raises questions about the place of bachelors and widowers within their wider social and communal spheres. Shepard shows that patriarchal authority was not only upheld by stressing gender differences between men and women, but it also had to be worked out 'between men.'[106] It therefore becomes necessary to understand how the single man accessed manhood within the wider society in which they lived.

### *Single men and sociability*

Historians of masculinity have written extensively about a variety of social networks which shaped individual values and behaviours in the early modern period, but work which has touched on the sociability of single men has tended to focus only on sub-cultures which subverted normative adult male behaviour, as in Shepard's description of 'youthful rituals of misrule' and in Anna Bryson's concept of 'anti-civility.'[107] Shepard suggests that young single men often pursued fraternal forms of manhood by participating in 'violent disruption, excessive drinking, illicit sex … subvert[ing] patriarchal imperatives of order, thrift, and self-control.'[108] Shepard and Bryson do provide evidence of these practices amongst university students and metropolitan elites in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the diaries used in this chapter do not indicate that bachelors and widowers outside the capital or the university towns engaged in such behaviour. Furthermore, the two metropolitan bachelors who existed on the peripheries of the sub-cultural groups seen in Shepard and Bryson's work summarily rejected these fraternal forms of anti-patriarchal manhood. Despite his own illicit sexual activity, which will be examined in the following section, Hooke opposed the veneration of heterosexual impropriety in popular culture, describing Shadwell's *The Libertine* as an 'atheistical wicked play.' [109] Additionally, Ryder condemned violent homosocial cultures; although a self-proclaimed Whig, when a political debate devolved into a fist fight at a 'mug house' he was

[106] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 6 and p. 96.
[107] The variety of research and the types of social network that have been examined are demonstrated in Kate Davison, 'Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges,' *The American Historical Review* 124, 2 (2019): pp. 456-482; Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 94; and Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1998) p. 252-253.
[108] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 94.
[109] 25 June 1675, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 166.

patronising he was critical of both parties, complaining that 'some of the members of these societies are apt to be too flushed with their strength and attack persons.'[110]

A fuller analysis of single male sociability must begin in the home. Previous studies of single men have underestimated their ability to employ their home as a sociable space, with Vickery suggesting that 'domestic happiness for bachelors turned on easy access to regular meals and the warmth of familial hospitality.'[111] Details from biographies of specific single men also suggest that they found domestic sociability unimportant, with Mulligan describing how Hooke 'needed company and a social set in order to fulfil his own view of himself' but states that 'his domestic environment gave him little opportunity of satisfying self-identification.'[112] Yet Hooke's diaries suggest that he regularly acted as a host, often eight or nine times in a month.[113] In the last two decades of his life, his most regular guest was his former apprentice and friend, Henry (alias Harry) Hunt. In November 1688, Hunt visited Hooke at his home 20 times to drink tea or dine with him.[114] While the rate at which Hooke hosted guests was notable, the practice of hosting was generally common among the single male diarists. Clegg also held 'supper' and prayer meetings at his home to mark important events, such as Twelfth Night: 'I had my Relations and Friends at my house … and the neighbouring ministers, some time was spent in praise and prayer. Several lodg with me.'[115] Even the least independent bachelor, Ryder, took care to prepare his home for his guests, noting that he 'had a fire made in expectation of [visitors],' and on another occasion felt 'some little concern about the providing for the breakfast … and being at my own chambers was concerned how I should entertain them and treat becomingly and suitably.'[116]

That single men were interested in the propriety of their living arrangements and acting as host to guests confirms Amanda Flather's assertion that the home was a stage, where men 'performed acts of hospitality that demonstrated and reinforced their "public" status and self worth.'[117] Domestic sociability was integral to enforcing claims to patriarchal manhood, as

[110] HMT: '20 July 1716,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 311.
[111] Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 56.
[112] Mulligan, 'Self-Scrutiny:' p. 327.
[113] Based on comparison of Hooke's diaries for the month of April, see 1-30 April 1673, Hooke, *Diary of*, pp. 36-41; 1-30 April 1679, Hooke, *Diary of*, pp. 405-409; 1-30 April 1689, Hooke, *Early Science X*, pp. 110-117; and 1-30 April 1693, Hooke, *Early Science X*, pp. 227-235.
[114] 1-30 November 1688, Hooke, *Early Science X*, pp. 69-78.
[115] 5 January 1742/3, Clegg, *Part II*, p. 476; Clegg holds a supper on 11 January 1742/3, Clegg, *Part II*, p. 476; and he marked his son's move to boarding school with a similar celebratory dinner, see 12 March 1741/2, Clegg, *Part II*, p. 453.
[116] HMT: '23 September 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 88; and HMT: '29 October 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 119.
[117] Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 96.

hosting gave single men opportunities to be seen as 'providers,' an attribute which Shepard argues 'was as important a tenet of patriarchal ideology as the expectation of chastity in women.' [118] The provision of food and drink within the boundaries of a well-outfitted home required not only generosity but also economic security to ensure that there would be enough meals, chairs, and beds to suit the needs of the party. Hooke frequently plied his guests with luxury commodities, most often tea, and less often wine or drinking chocolate.[119] The ritual of tea-drinking has been associated with feminine domesticity, but as Metcalfe and Kate Loveman point out, serving tea or chocolate required specialised equipment to 'make a respectable show of preparing and serving the beverage,' and therefore could act as a site for men to make a display of their 'manners and taste' for the benefit of other men.[120] However, material provision was not the only component required to enable proper domestic sociability. Phil Withington has done extensive work on the meanings of the synonyms 'society' and 'company' in early modern England and argues that in company 'social habits were shared, learned, and performed.' [121] Therefore the type of guest was as important in validating the single man's access to manhood as the provisions or entertainments he offered to them.

Single men's diaries do not give the impression that they saw singleness as indicative of any characteristics beyond that of marital status. There is no evidence to suggest that singleness itself provided a shared group identity, and importantly it is clear that single men did not exclusively associate with other single men. Entertaining at home instead provided the invaluable opportunity for single men to strengthen ties with colleagues, co-religionists, and members of their extended families, both married and single. It was a 'sweet day' for Heywood when he was able to 'k[eep] a solemn fast at my house with some friends,' but his friendships had an obligatory component as well as an affectionate one.[122] Tadmor has shown that early modern friendships relied on 'sentimentality and instrumentality,' necessitating a commitment to acts of service between the involved parties.[123] Heywood was a dissenting minister before Toleration, and therefore being visited by other non-conformists carried the risk of arrest and

[118] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 198.
[119] Hooke drank tea with guests very often, especially in the later part of his diaries, see Hooke, *Early Science X*, *passim*; for claret drinking see 24 August 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 247; and for chocolate drinking see 5 November 1688, Hooke, *Early Science X*, p. 69.
[120] Kate Loveman, 'The Introduction of Chocolate into England: Retailers, Researchers, and Consumers, 1640-1730,' *The Journal of Social History* 47, 1 (2013): p. 31; and Metcalfe, 'The Social Experience of Bachelorhood,' pp. 96-98.
[121] Phil Withington, *Society in Early Modern England: the vernacular origins of some powerful ideas* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 109 and p. 175; and Phil Withington, 'Company and Sociability in early modern England,' *Social History* 32, 3 (2017): pp. 298-299 and pp. 301-303.
[122] 27 November 1666, Heywood, *Diary Volume I*, p. 233.
[123] Tadmor, *Family and Friends*, p. 213.

imprisonment. For Heywood, allowing friends into his home was a powerful way to demonstrate his trust in his peers and therefore in return consolidated his standing within his network of co-religionists. For those not at risk of arrest, there was still a gravity associated with being invited to a person's home because it acted as a precursor to a more meaningful relationship. Before even having visited his fellow student Mr Skinner, Ryder was impressed and flattered by the 'very pressing and I judge sincere terms' with which he was invited. Ryder agreed to call on Skinner as a commendation of attributes Skinner possessed that Ryder wished to emulate in himself: 'he seems to be a man of good sense and admirable good temper and not in the least inclinable to vice.'[124]

Of course, single men certainly enjoyed the presence of company in their homes and they often stated its beneficial emotional effects; as Heywood was 'refreshed with [the] company' of three friends in May 1666, more than seventy years later Clegg described how he felt 'great satisfaction' after his 'good old Friend Dr Lee Vicar of Halifax calld on me and sat with me an hour or 2.'[125] However, the pleasure gained from hosting was not necessarily an indicator of what Elizabeth Foyster calls the 'carefree lifestyle of bachelor sociability.'[126] The benefits of friendships had to be maintained and tempered, often at the cost of separating or excluding certain individuals from gaining access to the home. Friends had to be selected on the basis of suitability, not only in temperament, but also on the basis of education, religion, and social status. Ryder, the only diarist who actively sought to engage with the eighteenth-century principles of polite sociability, was concerned that his reputation at the Middle Temple would be affected if he were seen to be associating with the wrong kinds of people: 'Mr Samson came about 10 oclock and soon after Mr Fernly … I was very much concerned lest Mr Samson should discover him to be a dancing master but I believe he did not.'[127] Choosing who could be a guest, and therefore who could be a friend, allowed single men to exercise discernment and create boundaries which upheld the privilege associated with an invitation to share a domestic space.

As hosting allowed single men to build up horizontal networks with their peers, visiting others provided single men with the opportunity to strengthen vertical ties between themselves and their social superiors. Historians of manhood have acknowledged the existence of such relationships, and their difference from mutual friendships, but neither Shepard nor Foyster's

[124] HMT: '22 March 1715/6,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 213.
[125] 1 May 1666, Heywood, *Diary Vol I*, p. 225; and 11 February 1741/2, Clegg, *Vol II*, p. 451.
[126] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 129.
[127] HMT: '1 March 1715/6,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 195.

studies of manhood have examined the benefits that could be gained by deliberately assuming a position of social inferiority to an elite benefactor.[128] Hooke's scientific work was formally patronised by Robert Boyle, and so Hooke was often a dinner guest of Boyle or his sister, Lady Katherine Ranelagh.[129] There was an obvious financial component to this relationship, and through their patronage Hooke was also introduced to members of other elite families which gave him further opportunities to supplement his income. For example, after Boyle introduced Hooke to Lord and Lady Burlington in 1676, he was commissioned to make architectural drawings of their garden and two years later he was hired to manage the construction of Burlington House.[130] However, this relationship was not only maintained for its monetary value. Boyle and Ranelagh were titled aristocrats, a status which was constructed entirely separately from Hooke's education and wealth and would not have been accessible to Hooke through other means. He was expected to be strictly deferent to them, but in return Hooke was able to cultivate an image of himself as a person who was intelligent, trustworthy, and useful to an elite family. Even the performance of menial tasks on their behalf, such as recommending a master carpenter for household renovations or acting witness to their contract signings, meant that Hooke became indispensable within their social set.[131] This was not an easily maintained relationship, with Hooke recording one incident where Ranelagh 'scolded' him and he swore 'I will never goe neer her againe nor Boyle,' but he did reconcile and continued to associate with them until their deaths.[132]

Clegg was also active in maintaining his relationship with his local gentry family, the Bagshaws of Ford Hall. Clegg's ministerial and medical roles often led him to visit his parishioners, but he used the specific phrase 'spent some time' to indicate that his visits to William Bagshaw, either alone or with his daughter or granddaughters, were for pleasure rather than business.[133] Despite the difference in status between Clegg and the Bagshaws, he too appeared as their regular dinner guest. W. M. Jacob suggests that clergymen in rural areas were often culturally distinct from their neighbours, as they were 'probably better-read than most

[128] Shepard does discuss expectations of behaviour between superiors and inferiors, see Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 35-36.
[129] Hooke visited them *passim*, for examples see 8 May 1673, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 42; 2 October 1675, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 184; and 24 August 1677, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 308.
[130] 28 August 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 247; and 23 and 25 March 1677/8, Hooke, *Diary of* pp. 349-350. It appears that Lady Burlington paid him 2 guineas a day – a significant addition to his income.
[131] 28 August 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 247; and 20 April 1677, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 286.
[132] 20 June 1678, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 364. Lady Ranelagh and Robert Boyle both died in December 1691, during a short break in Hooke's diary writing. See editor's notes by R. T. Gunther in *Early Science X*, pp. 192-193.
[133] 5 April 1742, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 455; 9 February 1742/3, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 478; and 30 January 1743/4, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 507.

people and may have had more interesting conversation … [they] acquired a veneer of culture' which made them attractive to their social betters.[134] As there was likely an affectionate element to this relationship, there was also an instrumental element which granted Clegg a prestigious place in a gentry family's social circle. When William Bagshaw's nephew Samuel sought to improve his position in the Army, he approached Clegg first 'to endeavour to prevail upon his uncle to advance moneys to buy him a commission … [so I] spent some time in labouring to persuade Mr Bagshaw.'[135] Clegg was unsuccessful, but his attempt suggests that he was seen by others as an important confidant to Bagshaw even in his position of inferiority based on service.

However, not all single male sociability was conducted in or around the home. A variety of sociable activities were recorded across the spectrum of single men's diaries, including walking, playing boules, running a book club, and attending the theatre.[136] The location mentioned most often and across the greatest number of diaries were public houses, including both alehouses and coffeehouses for the metropolitan diarists. While public houses provided food and drink to customers, thus having a functional purpose for single men, they were also regular sites of sociability. Activities such as reading, often interpreted by historians as a private or singular activity, were reported by single men as aspects of their public conversation.[137] Ryder studied his law books every morning, but he found it 'very serviceable to talk over what [I] read' with his fellow students later in the day, as 'it will fix it in our memory and give a greater light into it.'[138] The company single men met in the alehouse or coffeehouse tended to reflect the company they entertained in their own homes, affirming Mark Hailwood's suggestion that alehouse companionship was 'generally founded upon pre-existing ties.'[139] This explains why Stout was so critical of the regulars at his local alehouse, who made 'impertinant reflections on the privet affairs of their neighbours, or on publick affairs of the

[134] W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), p. 166 and p. 170.
[135] 24 March 1741/2, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 454.
[136] 1701, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 140; 27 April 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 69; 7 January 1741, Arthur Jessop, 'The Diary of Arthur Jessop,' in *Two Yorkshire Diaries: Yorkshire Archaeological Society Volume CXVII*, ed. C. E. Whiting (Gateshead, 1952), p. 57; 2 April 1741, Jessop, *Two Yorkshire Diaries*, p. 59; and HMT: '15 November 1716,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 435.
[137] Vickery and James Rosenheim both identify reading as a popular activity for single men to undertake alone at home without following it up into their public behaviour, see Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors*, p. 56; and James Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life: Envisioning Bachelorhood in Early Eighteenth-Century England,' *Gender & History* 27, 2 (2015): p. 315.
[138] HMT: '19 August 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 57.
[139] Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in early modern England* (Woodbridge, 2014), p. 216 and p. 221.

state' but when staying at an inn in London to attend a quarterly Quaker meeting, he recalled enjoying 'soe good entertainment' in the 'agreeable company … of sevrall [Quaker] Friends, men and women.'[140] Occupational ties also informed the alehouse company, with Hooke often visiting coffeehouses with colleagues to discuss their lectures and experiments. A typical entry from Hooke would include the people, place, and occasionally topic of conversation: 'with Pappin and Slayer at green dragon [tavern], 6d. [spent] Discoursd with him about Zulichem and about watch and circular pendullum.' [141] For Harrold, socialising in Manchester's alehouses provided him with an opportunity to meet with clients, settle debts, and exchange goods.[142]

The importance of public houses space in which men were expected to socialise is further reinforced by Harrold's failure to correctly participate in alehouse sociability. To a modern reader, Harrold appears to have suffered from alcohol use disorder, but in his own words he was prone to 'rambles' - periods of uncontrolled drinking which could last for days at a time and which he attempted to compensate for through abstinence from drink. While Shepard finds that 'many adult men recognized and even endorsed the potent meanings of manhood' associated with excessive drinking at the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century University of Cambridge, Harrold received no approbation from his contemporaries, with his cousin lecturing him for his 'debauches ye month past … instead of [giving] caunsel.'[143] Sociable drinking was a feature of Harrold's trade, but his diaries indicate that his behaviour was seen as unsociable because he drank more and for longer than his colleagues or customers. This was usually accomplished by visiting multiple drinking places in a single binge; on one occasion, he visited a customer and drank so much at their home that he 'had like to have been drown'd.'[144] On his return journey he continued drinking, stopping at a further four alehouses, and did not arrive home until the following day, when he 'went to bed stark naked.'[145] At its most extreme, Harrold's behaviour not only subverted the expectations of his peers, but his drinking caused him to be explicitly anti-social. In his diary he recorded being called before Salford Court to face a jury and later made payments for 'damages yt I had done in rambles,'

[140] 1699, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 131; and 1698, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 122.
[141] 15 August 1675, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 307.
[142] For examples of trades and sales carried out in alehouses, see 23 February 1712/3, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 62; 26 February 1712/3, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 62; and 17 June 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 77.
[143] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 94; and 19 January 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 57.
[144] 7 May 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 70.
[145] 7-8 May 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 70.

suggesting that his behaviour often posed a threat to the harmony of the wider community in which he lived.[146]

Yet the way Harrold saw his own actions and the way his peers responded to his behaviour does not suggest that the alehouse was seen as a problematic or dangerous space; rather, the blame was laid squarely against Harrold, the individual, for failing to possess self-control. Harrold used his diary to criticise himself for his drinking, describing it as the 'ruine [of] body, soul and purse and family.'[147] The criticism Harrold received from his peers was also constructed along the same lines, reflecting his failure to engage with early modern standards of patriarchal authority; displays of self-mastery demonstrated that men were suited to govern their families, their businesses, and ultimately the commonwealth. Yet Harrold's drinking led him to lose control over his own body to the point where he became physically dependent on others for support. In one diary entry he recalled becoming so drunk that two neighbours 'got me to bed.'[148] Excessive drinking also facilitated excessive spending, with money spent on drink doubly impacting his income because he would miss days of work while recovering. At his worst, Harrold owed £3 10s. to a single alehouse landlord.[149] Debt had critical implications for early modern men, and not just because of its financial burden. Shepard has shown that self-control and creditworthiness were intimately linked in the early modern period, so that financially 'dissolute husbands provoked disapproval on the grounds that they abnegated their responsibilities to provide for their families.'[150] Even though Harrold was not married, it is quite clear that he was being held to this standard by others in his community. When he sought to arrange his marriage to his third wife, his minister refused to issue a license or read the banns on the grounds that 'I was a madman in drink, and yt ye woman run her ruin in marriing me.'[151] That Harrold could be refused a right extended to all adult men is indicative of the extent to which Harrold's failure to adhere to social norms isolated him from his contemporaries. Furthermore, it suggests that there was no contemporary expectation that a man of Harrold's age, professional standing, or marital status would drink so much or so regularly, even if he was a widower. Instead, what was expected was an adherence to good fellowship, where drinking behaviour followed an established and acceptable standard. This

[146] The offence Harrold committed is unclear, see 15 January 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 57 and p. 57, footnote 3; and 11 May 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 71.
[147] 17 June 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 77.
[148] 16 January 1712/3, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 57
[149] 30 April 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 69.
[150] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 189.
[151] 16 August 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 85.

standard was set by the present company but was also expected to align with the wider social and communal status of the individuals involved. Thus when Harrold sought to improve himself, he did not cease drinking completely but rather vowed that he would no longer take 'above a pint at the siting of business.'[152] Only after this decision was Harrold allowed to be married, albeit by a different minister than the one he had originally intended.

Whether in networks of peers or in relationships with their social superiors, single men were able to access a full spectrum of sociability. Social relationships were enabled by access to and deprivation from domestic spaces, and thus the single man's ability to curate and make demonstration of his home for the benefit of guests helped him establish his position in wider society. Harrold's case makes clear that single men were held to the same standards of appropriate social behaviour as other men, and there were consequences for those who failed to comply. But it is not clear how women factored into this picture. While this thesis attempts to decentre singleness, it is clear that it also becomes necessary to examine the sexual and romantic pursuits of bachelors and widowers to more fully understand the scope of early modern manhood.

### *Single men, sex, and marriage*

Single men's social lives and sexual and romantic pursuits were clearly linked by the fact that men often talked about sex in male company. Foyster suggests that bawdy talk and boasting about sexual conquests provided an opportunity for men to 'win approval and admiration' from other men.[153] This process must have informed Ryder's recording of a conversation where a fellow student claimed '[he] might do it eight times to a woman in a night, which Mr Heacote thought impossible … [however] Mr Demoioze had told him he had done it eight times in three or four hours.'[154] There was also an element of gossip in some diaries which suggests that single men participated in talk about sex as a means to reinforce their own moral values, differentiating appropriate and inappropriate sexual conduct. The most extreme example was recounted by John Hobson, a bachelor yeoman, who recorded in his diary that 'three week last past, Mr. Hopkins, minister of Kirk-heaton (formerly of Wolley), aged 56, emasculated himself with a razour.'[155] Hobson's interest in the case was apparent, as he

[152] 16 August 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 85.
[153] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 43.
[154] HMT: '31 August 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 68.
[155] 23 December 1726, John Hobson, 'The Journal of Mr John Hobson.' In *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Surtees Society Volume LXV*, ed. Henry James Morehouse (Durham, 1877), p. 262.

recorded the circumstances of the event in intimate detail; he wrote that ligatures had been used and specified where they had been located on Hopkins's body, he knew that a surgeon had been invited to the house under false pretences to ensure the act was not fatal, and Hobson also recorded why the event had occurred: 'The reason was not melancholy, he being in his perfect senses, but he did it by way of punishment upon himself for being so foolish as to have had criminall conversation with his housekeeper.'[156]

Passing judgement on other men's sexual activity also provided the basis for the only reported instance of homosexual activity in any of the life-writing assessed in this chapter. On 1 December 1715, Ryder was told of 'the vices that are most prevalent at [the University of] Oxford,' by a young man called Powell, a friend of Ryder's cousin who had recently enrolled as a student there. Powell disclosed:

> [he] has been told that among the chief men in some of the colleges sodomy is very usual and the master of one college has ruined several young handsome men that way, that it is dangerous sending a young man that is beautiful to Oxford.[157]

While a salacious insight to a modern reader, this information was important for Ryder to record as it reflected his own political biases; as a non-conformist, Ryder opposed the Tory institution of the university, as well as the Church of England. Ryder therefore positioned this description of homosexuality as example of Tory hypocrisy; they decried his own religious practice, yet allowed themselves to be 'scandalised and vilified by the vicious lives of those that pretend most to defend and magnify [them].'[158] The telling of this story also reflected badly on Powell, with Ryder claiming that he was 'a very loose young man;' marking out Powell as different from the friends with which Ryder shared in bawdy talk.[159]

The thin line between pleasant and unpleasant talk about sex perhaps explains why single men were not so forthcoming in sharing details about their own sexual activity. Only four of the 30 diarists disclosed details about their sexual encounters outside marriage: Ryder; Cannon; Byrd; and Hooke. Historians are increasingly willing to accept that a certain amount of sexual contact between unmarried people was permissible in early modern England, with Faramez Dabhoiwala pointing to the increasing rates of illegitimate births and bridal pregnancy

[156] 23 December 1726, Hobson, *Yorkshire Diaries and Autobiographies*, p. 262.
[157] HMT: '1 December 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 137.
[158] HMT: '1 December 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 137.
[159] HMT: '1 December 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 137.

in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as evidence.[160] Yet as Eli Løfaldi highlights, the early modern period was also bound by a 'religious and social doctrine' that dictated that sex outside of marriage was not permissible and therefore its representation in life-writing would have been affected by 'strategies of self-representation, obfuscation, or even deception.'[161] This highlights a division in styles of reporting between the four men. Ryder and Cannon's accounts indicate an awareness of the illicit nature of their sexual activity. Ryder, whose diary presented a stream of constant thought, appeared immediately contrite after almost every sexual encounter even though he had been willing beforehand. For example, after a discussion of polygamy at his club, Ryder found 'I was so raised with our discourse about women that I was extremely inclined that way and I looked for a whore.' After being unsuccessful in his attempt, however, he decided that he was 'very glad' he had not followed through.[162] Shame also followed his accounts of successfully concluded encounters; after meeting with a sex worker who 'frig[ged] me and I felt of her cunt' he described feeling 'remorse having done it. It was no pleasure to me … I dont know but it may give me a disgust for women a good while.'[163]

Cannon took more pride in his sexual persona in his autobiography, beginning his work with a justification of his disclosure of his sexual encounters under the premise that his work provided 'a caution … and a lesson to be learned to avoid the wiley baits of Satan, the world, and flesh.'[164] His descriptions of 'kissing & toying,' 'lovetoyes & amorous expressions,' and 'being fired with lust' are more indicative of erotic enjoyment at his recollections, but he too described shame after giving in to his 'gross folly … unlawful & inordinate lust' which resulted in one of his relative's servants becoming pregnant.[165] Cannon's guilt was literally expressed in his diary through self-censorship – he cut out multiple folio pages from his manuscript following this incident, which the editor of the volume suggests corresponded with the events of the pregnancy and a paternity suit brought against Cannon, which he lost.[166] In these cases, the remorse felt by Ryder and Cannon appears was not inherent in the act itself, but rather was grounded in the fear or the realisation that their sexual activity was linked to their public

[160] Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: honour, sex, and marriage* (London, 2014), pp. 41-42; and Faramez Dabhoiwala, *The origins of sex: a history of the first sexual revolution* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 204-205.
[161] Eli Løfaldi, 'Eighteenth-Century Private Life Writing as Evidence of Men's Sexual Practices: Case Reopened,' *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 55, 3 (2022): p. 317 and p. 318.
[162] HMT: '24 August 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 64
[163] HMT: '16 November 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 131.
[164] John Cannon, 'Title Page,' in *The Chronicles of John Cannon Excise Officer and Writing Master, Part I: 1684-1733*, ed. John Money (Oxford, 2010), p. 3.
[165] 1705, Cannon, *Chronicles Part I*, p. 55; and 1709, Cannon, *Chronicles Part I*, pp. 88-89, p. 94, and pp. 92-93.
[166] 1710, Cannon, *Chronicles Part I*, p. 98. N.B. Cannon made a folio page count while writing his chronicle, so it can be seen that folio pages 95-98 are missing, as are the top thirds of folio pages 99-100, see Cannon, *Chronicles Part I*, p. 104, footnote 327.

persona, and would therefore affect how they would be perceived by others. Expressing regret about sexual intemperance in life writing provided these men with a way to retain control over these narratives.

By contrast, Byrd and Hooke's descriptions of their sexual encounters do not appear to have disclosed beyond the confines of their diaries, and as such their activity is presented without further comment or concern. Like Ryder, Byrd's sexual encounters were transactional, although his contact with sex workers was more refined, as a reflection of his elite status. Bryd maintained a sex worker as his mistress and appeared to pay for her rooms and keep during his stay in London.[167] Hooke's sexual activity, on the other hand, was focused on the women who made up his household-family, as his diaries indicate that he engaged in sexual encounters with at least three of his servants as well as with his niece, Grace, when she was aged between 15 and 18.[168] Historians have not fully dealt with the ramifications of these abuses in their biographies of Hooke; it is instead acknowledged that Grace 'kept house' for Hooke, or provided a 'pseudo-marital hearth … sleeping with him regularly.'[169] While deeply troubling to a modern reader, Grace's age and the narrow definition of rape in the early modern period meant that a criminal conviction for rape or incest was unlikely even if Hooke's actions had been widely known.[170] More generally, Tim Meldrum suggests that sexual relationships between masters and their servants had the potential to bring mutual pleasure, and Hooke did continue a friendly and non-sexual relationship with one of his servants, Nell Young, for many years after their sexual and professional acquaintanceship had ended.[171] Yet Hooke's limited

[167] Byrd's mistress is referred to by the coded name Mrs. A-l-n, see 4 October 1718, Byrd, *London Diary*, pp. 180-181 and *passim*.
[168] Sexual contact with Grace was first recorded 16 October 1676, last recorded 30 March 1679, p. 256, p. 405 and *passim*. Lisa Jardine estimates that Grace was 11 or 12 years old when she came into Hooke's care in 1672; see Lisa Jardine, *The Curious Life of Robert Hooke: the man who measured London* (London, 2003), p. 352. Hooke's abuses may have taken place over a longer period, but this cannot be discerned due to the gap in the diaries. Grace died in 1687, aged 27 or 28, so Hooke's response to her death (if any) is lost.
[169] Jardine, *The Curious Life*, p. 255-256.
[170] Generally, only those under the age of 15 were considered victims of child sexual abuse in early modern courts, see Martin Ingram, 'Child Sexual Abuse in Early Modern England,' in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, eds. Michael Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge, 2001), p. 64; and incest was rarely prosecuted in early modern England, with cases of incestuous rape being even less frequently brought to court, see Ingram, 'Child Sexual Abuse,' p. 75; and Sarah Toulalan, '"Is He a Licentious Lewd Sort of a Person?:" Constructing the Child Rapist in Early Modern England,' *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23, 1 (2014): p. 26 and p. 30.
Incest was, however, a crime under canon law and could be punished in the church courts. See Canon XCIX in *Constitutions and canons eclesiasticall treated upon by the Bishop of London, president of the convocation for the province of Canterbury* (London, 1604), pp. 122-123; and Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 248-249.
[171] Nell left Hooke's service on 13 August 1673, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 55; she is last mentioned as his lunchtime guest on 2 July 1693, Hooke, *Early Science X*, p. 255.

perspective and the lack of voice given to the women in his household-family cannot support any notion that these relationships were fully consensual.

Hooke's sexual activity therefore affirms Thomas's argument that the sexual double standard was only applied to men's 'outward respectability;' there is no suggestion in Hooke's diaries or from other contemporary records to suggest that Hooke's sexual relationship with Grace was known to his neighbours or colleagues.[172] However, further scrutiny of Hooke's treatment of his servants and niece also is revealing of his construction of domestic manhood. Firstly, Hooke's abuses were serial, but he only targeted one woman at a time, essentially forcing a series of monogamous relationships. Secondly, he appears to have expected that the women that kept house for him would submit to these relationships. Although he does not directly link the two events, Hooke fired his housekeeper, Doll, for 'being intollerable [sic]' only six weeks after he 'felt' her for the first time.[173] If Hooke expected that he would be able to carry out sexual relationships with the women who kept house for him, then it might be argued that a single man's housekeeper was a proxy wife to the ultimate degree. The limited information about sexual relationships in the diaries selected for this chapter makes it impossible to further verify this theory, but Hooke's example is suggestive that the idea that a husband was entitled to sexual access of his wife's body may have been more widely enacted by bachelors and widowers.

It is of note that neither Ryder, Cannon, Byrd, nor Hooke went on to marry any of the women with whom they pursued sexual relationships. Even Ryder, who felt that 'a wife enters into all my prospects and schemes of happiness' did not construe his sexual encounters as practice for marriage.[174] Instead, he hoped his encounters with sex workers would generally inculcate 'boldness and confidence in addressing myself to persons … [I] cannot tell how to talk to them freely.'[175] As such, single men's sexual activity cannot be construed as pre-marital, but rather "amarital," with sex and courting represented as distinct processes. Amongst the full sample of 30 diarists, 16 expressed some interest in the process of becoming married, although not all engaged with the idea fully. Walter Gale, for example, recorded in 1749/50 that one night he 'dreamt … that I should be advantageously married' but did not use his diary to preserve more embodied attempts at courtship.[176] John Thomlinson's diary represented the

[172] Thomas, 'The Double Standard:' p. 205.
[173] 7 January 1673/4, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 79; and 20 February 1673/4, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 87
[174] HMT: '19 July 1716,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, ff. 309-310.
[175] HMT: '13 July 1716,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 303.
[176] 14 March 1749/50, Walter Gale, 'Extracts from the Journal of Walter Gale, Schoolmaster at Mayfield, 1750,' in *Sussex Archaeological Collections: Volume IX*, ed. R. W. Blencowe (London, 1857), pp. 186-187.

opposite extreme, and was full of attempts at courtship, ending abruptly a month after his marriage to a woman that he did not even name in the text.[177] Still, a stated inclination towards marriage did not guarantee that such a state would be achieved. While bachelors and widowers rarely addressed their singleness in direct terms, usually referring to it only as their 'situation' or 'condition,' their accounts of their attempts to marry highlight how men interacted with the social and cultural norms associated with marriage.

The accounts of bachelors and younger widowers do give the impression that economic and familial pressures could cause men to remain single when they would not have otherwise chosen to do so. Harrold may have been an independent tradesman, but his drinking and his professional debts meant that his 'fortun's but low, 20 or 30li [at] most,' which led to his rejection by at least one woman.[178] Bachelors who still lived with, or expected to receive an inheritance from, more senior relatives were also frustrated in their courtships as they had to defer to their authority; Thomlinson had to stop seeking a wife while his brother pursued a significant land purchase – he feared that they would 'look mercenary' to the women in their social set if both processes continued simultaneously.[179] Ryder's father similarly prevented Ryder from pursuing a match until he had completed his legal studies, so that he might secure 'nothing less than a very considerable fortune.'[180] He more specifically instructed Ryder to stay away from the daughter of their neighbour, Sally Marshall, as 'her fortune could not be anything considerable … besides, her family was nothing, could bring me no acquaintance nor friends that could serve me in my business.'[181] These examples highlight the 'long process of getting married' as outlined by Steven King, during which men had to work out 'the ceiling and floor to their marriage expectations.'[182] Unsuccessful courtships were not desirable, but they provided opportunities for men to gauge who would make an appropriate partner and what they needed to do in order to achieve a successful match.

However, not all external impediments to marriage could be so easily overcome. Older bachelors and widowers tended to be free of the financial and familial constraints that inconvenienced younger men, but they were also subject to scrutiny from the women that they

[177] Thomlinson's last entry was made on 24 July 1722, he married at some point in June 1722. See John Thomlinson, 'The Diary of the Rev. John Thomlinson,' in *Six North Country Diaries: Surtees Society Volume CXVIII*, ed. John Crawford Hodgson (Durham, 1910), p. 167 and p. 167, footnote 341.
[178] 22 May 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 74.
[179] 4 November 1718, Thomlinson, *Six North Country Diaries*, p. 145.
[180] HMT: '13 September 1715,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, f. 81.
[181] HMT: '12 September 1716,' Ryder, Transcript Diary, ff. 369-370.
[182] Steven King, 'Chance Encounters? Paths to Household Formation in Early Modern England,' *International review of social history* 44, 1 (1999): p. 26.

courted. Failed proposals made by Stout and Byrd indicate that cultural attitudes towards widowers and older bachelors (at least those no longer regarded as youthful adults) may have had an impact on their marriage prospects. Stout had pursued a marriage to Bethia Greene, the sister of his close friend, Richard. Yet Stout, aged 38, began to think the match 'unequall; she being twelve years younger than me' and described how Bethia was 'aprehensive' of Stout's 'rusticall habit and deportment … [and] she was very averse to it in respect to my age and plaine appearance and retired way of living.'[183] While Stout stated that it was his decision not to go ahead with the marriage, it is clear that the match was a one-sided one, and that while Stout claimed to have felt 'affection and passion' for Bethia, she did not return those feelings.[184] Byrd was also rejected as a consequence of his widowerhood. After having courted a widow, Mrs Pierson, for about a year, Byrd ceased to make declarations of love to her and withdrew his offer of marriage because 'she persisted in her objection against being a mother-in-law [stepmother]' to his two daughters from his first marriage.[185] The socio-economic narrative that a man could not marry until he had accrued a sufficient amount of resources, making him 'economically and socially mature,' does not explain these rejections.[186] These women were responding to, and rejecting, Byrd and Stout based on a combination of factors that were not preserved in their life-writing. Their performance of manhood may have contributed, but habitat, persona, or even innate emotional response (on the part of either the male or female participants) may also have been influential. Regardless, these examples demonstrate that social status and financial security was not enough to settle a match; Byrd and Stout lacked desirability.

That single men would record these factors as either causing or necessitating their continued singleness highlights the lack of effectiveness of a supposed force that was intended to direct bachelors and widowers towards marriage. The Marriage Duty Assessment had little to no impact in any of the life-writing examined in this chapter. As discussed in Chapter 1, a central element of this extraordinary tax was a yearly fee to be paid by all bachelors over the age of 25 and all childless widowers. Of the eight single men writing during the 1695-1706 period when the Assessments were active, only three men recorded making payments: Wood,

[183] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 141.
[184] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 141.
[185] He met Mrs. Pierson for the first time on 22 June 1718, Byrd, *London Diary*, pp. 138-139; and 15 April 1719, Byrd, *London Diary*, pp. 256-257.
[186] Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: economic lives in early modern Britain* (London, 2002), p. 28.

Burrell, and Claver Morris.[187] Morris, a widowed physician, was the only man of the three to (re)marry, three months after recording his first half-yearly payment.[188] Hugh Gareth Davies has used this information to argue that 'he only married his second wife to avoid paying the new Marriage Duty tax' but this ignores that the Assessment also required Morris to pay to register his marriage, a sum which was equivalent to remaining single for a further three years.[189] While Gareth Davies may be correct in stating that Morris did not marry 'for affection,' so few men reported payments towards the Marriage Duty Assessment that it makes it impossible to conclusively state that it affected single men's perception of marriage and married manhood in any meaningful way.[190]

Indeed, focus on the factors which prevented a match from occurring has served to obscure that some single men were, in fact, reluctant to marry even if they conceived of marriage in positive terms. The conduct books used in Shepard's work underscore that marriage was depicted as a 'serious undertaking' in the early modern period, but the uncertainty expressed by some single men challenges the cultural supremacy of the idea that 'marriage made a man complete.'[191] Uncertainty about the prospect of (re)marriage is most obvious in the life-writing made by men with the most strongly held religious beliefs, as their faith encouraged them to mediate on both positive and negative events in their lives. Froide has pointed out that many non-conformist single women would 'put religion before marriage' and so if they could not marry a co-religionist they preferred not to marry at all.[192] Stout attributed his original interest in Bethia to their shared Quaker beliefs, but his experience indicates that theology had greater importance than simply determining which type of person made an appropriate partner.[193] Stout stated that 'it was impressed upon my mind, as if it had been audibly tould to me, that if ever I marryed, it must be to her.'[194] To a modern reader, this appears to be little more than a retrospective, if dramatic, justification as to why he never married, but to Stout and his Quaker peers this statement would have had a deep religious resonance. Quakers believed in immanence: that God could manifest within an individual and

[187] The eligible men who did not record making payments under the Marriage Duty Assessment included the bachelors William Stout, Nicholas Blundell, and Abraham de la Pryme and the widowers John Hervey and Isaac Archer.
[188] 19 October 1696, Claver Morris, *The Diary of a West Country Physician A.D. 1684-1726*, ed. Edmund Hobhouse (London, 1934), p. 126.
[189] Hugh Gareth Davies, 'Marriage Strategies of Midlands "Lesser Gentry," c. 1660-1820,' Ph.D. Thesis (University of Warwick, 2018), p. 60 and p. 218.
[190] Gareth Davies, 'Marriage Strategies,' p. 60.
[191] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 73-74.
[192] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 190.
[193] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 142.
[194] 1702, Stout, *Autobiography*, p. 141.

deliver a message directly to them.[195] As such, Stout's life-long singleness was not incidentally caused by his religious belief but should be understood as the result of an embodied religious experience.

Even when a single male diarist went on to (re)marry, recourse to faith and prayer in life-writing suggests that men were often apprehensive about their decision and therefore were subject to internal turmoil. Harrold frequently used his diary as a space to ask for God's intervention or guidance, such as when business was poor, or when he was struggling to control his drinking. When he had begun the process of undertaking his third marriage, he also recorded the following prayer: 'God, direct me to ye best, for I'm in a great strait betwixt two, whether to marry or not.'[196] This sentiment was also present in Clegg's diary after he had set the date for his second wedding. The 'anxiety and concern of the weighty matter' manifested in Clegg physically, causing him to be afflicted by diarrhoea, 'a weakness in my breast,' and a 'Hypochondriac passion' for at least 10 days, during which time he considered writing to his fiancée to break off their engagement. Only on the night before the wedding, after making an 'earnest and fervent prayer' was Clegg able to find 'reliefe … in that way alone.'[197] While the other aspects of Clegg's diaries successfully make claim to and demonstrate the performance of authoritative forms of manhood within his family and social circles, his and Harrold's doubts about remarriage present a rather raw insight into how difficult it was for men to hold themselves to those standards.

While David Cressy is right to suggest that widows and widowers were typically free of the socio-economic burdens and familial influences that directed the courting practices of those making a first marriage, his statement that those who were 'contemplating remarriage could do pretty much as they pleased' minimises the importance of accounts like these, where emotional difficulties were forefront.[198] Heywood's diary makes clear that his emotional discomfort at marriage was a continued grief for his first wife, to whom he maintained a powerful attachment. He continued to celebrate and commemorate her until the end of his own life in 1702, recording how he was 'something affected in the morning' on the fortieth anniversary of her death.[199] When he had made plans for his second marriage after six years of

[195] Rachel Kirkwood, '"Stand Still in the Light:" What Conceptual Metaphor Research Can Tell Us About Quaker Theology,' *Religions* 10, 1 (2019): p. 41 and p. 46.
[196] 24 May 1713, Harrold, *Diary*, p. 74.
[197] 21 August 1744, Clegg, *Diary Part II*, p. 522.
[198] David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religions, and Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 2010), pp. 256-257.
[199] 26 April 1701, Oliver Heywood, *The Rev. Oliver Heywood, B.A., His Autobiography, Diaries, Anecdote and Event Books: Volume IV*, ed. J Horsfall Turner (Bingley, 1885), p. 258.

widowerhood, he recorded that it was 'abundantly to my satisfaction yet I had then strange and strong motions rather to be dissolved and goe to [Christ] … [to] see that place again where my dearest friend lives,' making reference to Paul the Apostle's reflection on Christ's crucifixion.[200] That death might have been preferable to remarriage suggests that a widower could continue to feel deep attachment to their deceased spouse and thus remarriage was a complex process.

Singleness may therefore have been preferable for men who could maintain their domestic and social reputations without being married. Indeed, a single man who took the steps to seek out domestic and sociable manhood while single may no longer have regarded marriage as central to his life. The frustration was evident in Thomas Jolly's account of his housekeeping servant's engagement, 'which probably would bee the breaking of my family and soe putt mee to the changing of my habitation or my condition.'[201] Jolly was the only diarist to actively express outright opposition to the prospect of marriage, but his account might prompt historians to realise that for a long-term bachelor or widower, it was marriage, not singleness, that constituted an alternative lifestyle choice.

### *Conclusion*

The diaries and autobiographies of single men show that, despite differences in geography, occupation, and age, many experiences were shared by bachelors and widowers in the 1650 to 1750 period. An objective reading of their self-reporting suggests that single men took an active interest in the management of their households and were able to integrate into normative social networks, which included both married and single participants. Single men's life writing also allows for an acknowledgement of the subjective importance of accounts of household organisation and sociability as methods by which single men could emphasise and reinforce their possession of an authoritative form of manhood which historians usually only associate with married men. That single men were able to access and make displays of the patriarchal tenets of manhood, such as child raising, must prompt historians to re-evaluate the application of marriage as an indicator of the accomplishment of ideal types of manhood in their studies of early modern England.

[200] 12 April 1667, Heywood, *Diary Volume I*, p. 239; and Philippians 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, hauing a desire to dissolve, & to bee with Christ, which is farre better."
[201] August 1690, Thomas Jolly, *The Note Book of the Rev. Thomas Jolly, A.D. 1671-1693: Chetham Society Volume XXXIII*, ed. Henry Fishwick (Manchester, 1894), pp. 99-100.

Single men's descriptions of amarital sexual activity in their life-writing and its separation from descriptions of the process of becoming married adds further complications to the historian's understanding of marriage as a normative part of life in early modern England. While a focus on the experiences of individual men returns highly individualised results, the accounts of bachelors and widowers both supports and complicates the existing historiography which covers sex and marriage in the early modern period. As Løfaldi summarises, historians are increasingly willing to accept that 'eighteenth-century men slept around,' but the life-writing makes clear that there was not one homogenous motivator to this action.[202] Hooke's sexual relationships with his maids and niece, though illicit in one case and illegal in the other, closely followed the prescriptions of normative patriarchal authority which required female submission to male dominance in all aspects of everyday life. By contrast, Heywood's uncertainty at the prospect of remarriage in the face of continuing grief after his first wife's death suggests that marriage, while central in early modern society and culture, was not equally important to all men. Chapter 4 must therefore interrogate the extent to depictions of singleness were associated with either normative and traditional markers of status or libertine anti-patriarchal identities in the 1650 to 1750 period.

[202] Løfaldi, 'Private Life Writing:' p. 317.

***Chapter 4: Single men in printed texts***

The first three chapters of this thesis have examined tax records, wills, and life writing relating to single men in order to ascertain the social experiences of bachelors and widowers between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This chapter provides a counterpoint to this research by examining the depiction of bachelors and widowers in printed texts across the same period, aligning the respective practices of social and cultural historians. To establish how the early modern bachelor and widower were represented to the reading public, this chapter examines the presence of single men in three types of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century discourse; the demographic and economic, the humorous, and the moralistic and theological. Few works dealt solely with the topic of male singleness, but by evaluating a large variety of texts it becomes possible to discern the tropes and behaviours most commonly associated with bachelor- or widowerhood by authors and their audiences. Printed texts must be seen as integral in shaping the perception of early modern male singleness, especially because these texts would not have been restricted to single male authors or readers. Yet as will be shown, the representation of single men in printed texts does not sit easily against the evidence gathered from earlier chapters.

While historians of Victorian-era masculinity suggest that the lifestyles of bachelors in England and abroad were supported by a vibrant and varied print culture, this chapter will demonstrate that the cultural understanding of male singleness in early modern print was primarily negative and that single men were defined by their otherness from normative forms of manhood.[1] Expanding on Alexandra Shepard's concept of 'anti-patriarchal manhood,' this chapter will establish that serious and satirical texts presented the character of the single man as the diametric opposite of the idealised, patriarchal, married head of a family.[2] This chapter will subsequently add to Shepard's work by demonstrating that, despite differences in tone and intention, the discourses analysed in this chapter drew from the same tropes in their representation of single men. Not bound to society by the ties of a wife and children, single men were seen as self-interested and dissolute. All three types of discourse presumed that bachelors and widowers were sexually intemperate, with their willingness to seduce virgins and other men's wives posing a significant threat to the patriarchal ordering of society. This

[1] See "Chapter Six: The Popular Culture of Bachelorhood" in Howard Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor: Creating an American Subculture* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 185-216. John Tosh also suggests that the advent of 'men-only adventure fiction' in the 1880s and 1890s helped to stoke popular support for unmarried 'paragons of imperial manliness, such as Gordon, Kitchener, and Baden-Powell,' see John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays on gender, family, and empire* (Abingdon, 2016), p. 107.
[2] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 12 and p. 126.

characterisation meant that the bachelor and widower could be evoked to personify intangible aspects of concern in wider English society and culture, with each form of discourse separately tying the negative traits of singleness to England's low population, encouragement of the unchastity of women, and the looming threat of Catholicism. However, historians must not assume that this was a holistic view. Examination of Thomas Shadwell's 1676 play *The Virtuoso*, and its apparent satirising of the scientist Robert Hooke, a life-long bachelor, underscores that the stereotypes that defined single men did not fully align with the actual experience of bachelors and widowers during that same period.

This chapter offers a qualitative analysis of the language used to describe bachelors and widowers in texts published between 1650 and 1750. To produce a cache of relevant texts, key word searches for the terms bachelor, widower, and single life were made on the databases of Early English Books Online, Eighteenth Century Collections Online, and the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Burney Newspapers Collection.[3] Key word searches were also performed to recover texts written by or about the single male diarists and autobiographers whose daily lives were examined in Chapter 3.[4] Homonymic meanings of bachelor – those which denoted students of the universities of Oxford or Cambridge, guild members, and knights – were excluded from further analysis unless contextually related to singleness, as were appearances of the phrase single life where it pertained to women. Texts were selected for further reading if they attempted to define what it meant to be a single man by linking bachelor- or widowerhood to the possession of certain traits or performance of specific behaviours, rather than applying singleness only as a descriptor of marital status. This process resulted in the identification of 438 relevant texts, with the sections of this chapter representing the three major styles of discourse that encompassed these works. The extended conclusion discusses the alleged characterisation of Hooke in Shadwell's *Virtuoso* and compares it to the findings of the previous chapters (including Hooke's account of his own life), to delineate the extent to which cultural representations aligned with, and differentiated from, the social practices of single men.

A close reading methodology is used in this chapter, as a focus on textual descriptions of male singleness within and between works makes it possible to determine the dominant narratives and stereotypes associated with male singleness. Attention is paid to authors who made explicit comparisons between single and married men, as these texts made clear to

[3] Variant spellings were also searched, notably 'bacheler,' 'batchelor,' 'bachelour,' 'widdower,' and 'widovver.'
[4] For a full list of these names, see Chapter 3, pp. 131-132, Table 3.1.

readers how and why single men fell short of the patriarchal norm. Jeremy Taylor, for example, described the married man as a 'usefull Bee' in a 1673 sermon, whereas the bachelor was 'like the flie in the heart of an apple, dwel[ling] in a perpetuall sweetnesse, but sits alone, and is confin'd and dies in singularity.'[5] Consideration is also extended to texts which made incidental references to the behaviours of single men, under the assumption that these represented recurrent themes that were well understood by readers, as in Thomas Brown's account of the life of tavern landlady where he jokingly concluded that '[her] Widower takes up with his next tolerable cook-maid.'[6] Taking these direct and indirect commentaries together, it becomes possible to determine how early modern authors and readers perceived the single man and how his presence, actions, and behaviours correlated with their preconceived expectations of the performance of patriarchal manhood.

The approach to the material used in this chapter is shaped by Shepard's emphasis on the importance of printed texts as a means to construct and define what it meant to be a man in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as explored throughout *Meanings of Manhood*. Focusing on conduct books, Shepard demonstrates how writers constructed an idealised image of patriarchal manhood where 'the attributes expected of men' were defined by comparison with 'other identities.'[7] While Shepard explores the application of age and behaviour in these works to mark out certain men as other, her analysis of good versus bad husbandry means that the cultural depiction of the early modern single man remains unexplored. Yet Amy Froide's work on single women has highlighted that within 'popular imagination' of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the virgin, the spinster, and the old maid were distinct concepts, each enabling discussion of different concerns about women's roles in contemporary society.[8] This chapter's analysis of the depiction of single men in printed texts aims to address the disparity between these two branches of gender history by arguing that bachelors and widowers were regarded as other in popular culture, and their appearance in print was used by early modern authors to reinforce the righteousness of patriarchal manhood which could only be accessed through marriage and fatherhood. Even humorous depictions of single life, which suggested that their days were filled with 'old baudy Solitude, and single Fornication,' served to reinforce the notion that bachelors and widowers were not interested in the socially acceptable

[5] Jeremy Taylor, *XXV sermons preached at golden-grove being for the vvinter half-year* (London, 1653), p. 223.
[6] Thomas Brown, *The Works of Mr. Thomas Brown, serious and comical, in prose and vers, Volume III* (London, 1720), p. 282.
[7] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 11 and p. 8.
[8] Amy Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), p. 13.

homosocial or heterosexual pursuits that served to uphold hierarchies of patriarchal authority.[9] Instead, the single man was positioned as the antithesis of the married man, with his prioritisation of his own immoral desires and irregular sexual practices seen as coming at the expense of his moral duty to produce and govern a family.

In this way, this chapter does corroborate Shepard's argument that conduct books and advice literature crafted a cultural narrative where marriage became 'synonymous' with the acquisition of patriarchal manhood.[10] Furthermore, this chapter's analysis will support Shepard's claim that patriarchal authority was constructed in printed texts by suggesting that those who 'were excluded from or deviated from the ideal' (including, but not limited to, bachelors and widowers) 'failed to be men.'[11] Expanding Shepard's focus on conduct literature to explore other types of text, this chapter finds that this 'rhetorical device' was present in a variety of genres, and was just as relevant to authors in the mid-eighteenth century as it had been for writers one hundred years earlier.[12]

But this chapter also proposes new findings which distinguishes its conclusions from the research of Froide and Shepard. Firstly, the negative stereotyping of bachelors and widowers exposes the concerns felt by some authors about the presence of single men in early modern England. Many of the attacks on singleness by early modern authors seem to be intended to actively combat the actions of 'empty fops and profane debauchees' who made marriage a 'common subject of railery and ridicule … depretiatied and vilify'd.'[13] This should indicate to historians of masculinity that at least some authors sincerely believed that single men threatened the integrity of early modern society through deliberate opposition to the social order. Secondly, this chapter's focus on the single man provides a new perspective on the interrelation between patriarchy, family life, and nationhood. Many authors criticised single men on the grounds that they did not contribute to the state either bodily or financially, making out the bachelor and widower as 'best Friends … but not always best Subjects, for they are light to run away, and almost all Fugitives are of that Condition.'[14] Their lack of involvement in family life was indicative of a lack of investment in the commonwealth, with these criticisms

[9] William Mountfort, *Greenwich-park a comedy acted at the Theatre-Royal* (London, 1691), Act 1, Scene III, p. 7.
[10] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 100.
[11] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 88.
[12] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 88.
[13] Thomas Humphreys, *Marriage an honourable estate: A sermon preached at Driffield in Gloucestershire* (London, 1742), p. 3.
[14] Abel Boyer, *Characters of the virtues & vices of the age, or, moral reflections, maxims, and thoughts upon men and manners* (London, 1695), p. 154.

intensifying during periods of national crises: 'for if a Man wont [sic] fight for his Wife and Children for what will he do it?'[15] This sheds light on why patriarchal narratives prioritising marriage and childrearing remained central in criticisms of singleness well into the eighteenth century, even though other studies see this period as dominated by narratives of polite manhood, a feature of which allowed men to pursue non-sexual relationships with women.[16]

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, the findings of this chapter suggest that that representations of bachelors and widowers in printed texts were significantly different from the lived experiences of single men as evidenced in the first three chapters of this thesis. In Howard Chudacoff's study of nineteenth-century America, he argues that readers learnt 'what it meant to be a bachelor' by consuming media that depicted single men.[17] While it is true that many readers would have been exposed to singleness through depiction in these texts, rather than via their own lived experience, there are limits to the extent which representation could (or even attempted to) reflect actual practice. The styles of discourse used in this chapter tended towards opposite extremes in their representation of single men's behaviour – works intending to entertain frequently presented heightened versions of societally-undesirable behaviour to titillate or provoke outcry. Demographic and prescriptive texts measured individuals against ideals of conduct but did not have to delineate the extent to which those ideals were attainable. These exaggerated accounts may have been informed by (and in turn informed) practice, but a historiography conducted around interpretations of representation would miss much of the mundane reality which is not preserved in these accounts. As such, this chapter suggests that a cultural or social emphasis alone must not be considered representative of the relationship between single men and manhood.

The combination of key word searching and close reading methodologies has allowed for many genres of printed material to be analysed in this chapter, including poems, pamphlets, jest-books, sermons, plays, and newspapers. The intention of this approach is to gauge how narratives were presented across a spectrum of works rather than focusing only on key authors or texts, to best understand how the image of the single man was presented to both middling- and lower sort audiences. Additional consideration is extended to printed texts that were

[15] Anonymous, *The Athenian Oracle: being an entire collection of all the valuable questions and answers in the old Athenian mercuries, Volume II, second edition* (London, 1704), p. 343.
[16] The tenets of "politeness" are summarised by Karen Harvey as refinement and restraint, expressed both inwardly and outwardly. Politeness provided a 'social lubricant,' enabling men to participate in mixed-sex company and public interactions with their betters and those of lower status. See Karen Harvey, 'The history of Masculinity, circa 1650-1800,' *Journal of British Studies* 44, 2 (2005): pp. 301-305 and p. 302.
[17] Chudacoff, *The Age of the Bachelor*, p. 185.

reproduced from orated works, as a means of indicating how non-literate or semi-literate audiences engaged with depictions of singleness. This approach is taken from Elizabeth Foyster's work on the ballad, and her argument that they were central in teaching young men about sexual honour thanks to their availability to 'socially and geographically diverse audiences.'[18] Of course, these works were circulated in print, but repetition of texts in speech or song would make them available to a much wider audience than their publication histories alone might indicate.[19]

Each type of discourse examined in this chapter provides an opportunity to interrogate the characteristics that were attached to the terminology of bachelor- and widowerhood, therefore indicating how singleness was related to the grander scheme of early modern manhood. Demographic and economic discussions of singleness are addressed first because they provide the opportunity to build links between qualitative assessment and the quantitative analysis already carried out in this thesis. Chapter 1 of this thesis examined the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment, a tax active between 1695 and 1706, to calculate the number of single men within the English population at the end of the seventeenth century. This is expanded on here by investigating how authors ideated the place of single men within the English population before, during, and after the tax was in place.

Humorous discourses subsequently emerge as a necessary counterpoint to the intellectual rigour of associated with those authors who analysed this population data. As Tim Reinke-Williams points out, cheaply printed works such as jest-books were 'crude and jocular rather than attempting to offer a measured message,' but their relatively low cost to buyers and ease of distribution by sellers meant that they were circulated widely.[20] The centrality of dramatic works as a means to humorously depict singleness by literally performing bachelor- and widowerhood to an audience suggests that representations of this type were perhaps the most accessible to early modern audiences.

Moral and theological discourses also drew on figural depictions in their work, although their examples were intended to have an improving effect on single men and bring them in line with idealised standards. Unlike the other discourses explored in this chapter, however, theological and moralistic works were the most resonant with experiences of singleness

[18] Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex, and Marriage* (London, 2014), pp. 20-22.
[19] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*, p. 21.
[20] Tim Reinke-Williams, 'Misogyny, Jest-Books and Male Youth culture in Seventeenth-Century England,' *Gender & History* 21, 2 (2009): p. 325 and p. 328.

recorded in life-writing and probate records. A small minority of these works advocated for the right of a man to live single based on the Biblical teachings of Paul the Apostle, expressed in 1 Corinthians 7. The only full-length text in the 1650 to 1750 period which unironically positioned singleness as superior to marriage was expressly theological: John Wesley's *Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life* (1743). While this text had little impact in its immediate contemporary context, its analysis in this chapter serves to provide insight into how authors could repurpose common traits associated with the otherness of single men, such as a desire for solitariness and sexual intemperance, and apply them to support rather than criticise the behaviour of bachelors and widowers.

This is not to suggest that printed texts are an entirely unproblematic source base, accurately representative of all contemporary thought about bachelors and widowers. There are two interrelated limitations in the application of printed texts as a means to gauge cultural understanding, which historians must be aware of throughout the research process. Firstly, it is often not possible to gauge the circulation of individual works. The survival of a text to the present day does not necessarily mean that it was popular or insightful in its time. Similarly, texts which are now lost may have been integral in shaping the popular perception of single men. There is a cache of lost plays whose titles have been archived by Roslyn Knutson and David McInnis, and Alexandra Hill has used the works listed in the Stationer's Company Register to estimate that as many as 5,000 printed works produced between 1557 and 1640 are no longer extant.[21] The majority of these works were broadsheets, ephemeral and cheaply printed but highly accessible to readers, therefore likely to have had contemporary cultural relevance.[22] Secondly, the difference in cultural context between the early modern period and present day means that it can be difficult to ascertain how literally readers would have interpreted certain texts. This problem is particularly apparent in satires, where frivolity often disguises intention and necessitates double-reading, and so Froide cautions readers against the imposition of any 'line between imagined and real' in her analysis of the depiction of the early modern single woman.[23]

The solution to this problem is the same in both cases. Concerns about the reception of texts can be addressed by emphasising the repetition in descriptions of single maleness. In some

[21] Rosyln Knutson and David McInnis have logged more than 550 titles of plays with their project *Lost Plays Database*, see Rosyln Knutson and David McInnis, 'The Lost Plays Database: A Wiki for Lost Plays,' *Medieval & Renaissance Drama in England* 24, 1 (2011): p. 47; and Alexandra Hill, *Lost Books and Printing in London, 1557-1640* (Leiden, 2018), p. 2 and p. 3, Figure 0.1.
[22] Hill suggests one third of all lost works were broadsheets, see Hill, *Lost Books and Printing*, p. 25.
[23] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 155.

cases, repetition was extremely literal; new editions of old works were printed, pirated versions of texts were released, or title pages indicated that one work was intended as a direct response to another. Equally as indicative was the repetition of certain tropes across discourses and genres, suggesting that particular ways of thinking about single men were not restricted to one group. In this way it is possible to discern how the attitudes towards single men were first created and then maintained in print. By surveying the literature which touched on singleness, regardless of whether its intention was to inform or to entertain its readers, it becomes possible to draw out similarities in views across time, across genres, and by different authors. These views may or may not have been held strongly by individual authors, but as Tim Harris points out, the employment of stereotypes indicated 'what [authors] hoped [they] could persuade others to believe,' or at the very least, what they thought they could sell.[24]

What becomes apparent through this comparison is the consistency with which certain tropes and imagery was presented to readers. It is through the analysis of these instances that the historian can recover the stereotypes associated with the early modern bachelor and widower, and to understand how the single life was depicted and regarded by those who were not single themselves.

### *Demographic and economic discourses*

The imposition of a tax on childless single men from 1695 to 1706 as part of the Marriage Duty Assessment makes clear that there was some contemporary concern about the position of bachelors and widowers as demographic and economic actors in early modern English society. What becomes evident in this survey of printed texts, however, is that this concern was not restricted to the short period during which the Assessment was active. From the sixteenth century, political arithmeticians had attempted to gauge the comparative strength of the English nation by assessing its rates of manufacturing, scale of trade, and population size against that of the country's neighbours and rivals.[25] David Glimp suggests that this approach led to an increased focus on how 'the activities of individuals' contributed to the 'needs and demands of a higher order' and what practices would 'invest people in the present health and

[24] Tim Harris, 'Religious and national stereotyping and prejudice in seventeenth-century England,' in *Stereotypes and stereotyping in early modern England: Puritans, papists and projectors*, ed. Koji Yamamoto (Manchester, 2022), p. 54.
[25] Craig Muldrew, 'From Commonwealth to Public Opulence: The Redefinition of Wealth and Government in Early Modern Britain,' in *Remaking English Society: Social Relations and Social Change in early Modern England*, eds. Steve Hindle, Alexandra Shepard, and John Walter (Woodbridge, 2013), p. 324; and David Glimp, *Increase and Multiply: Governing Cultural Reproduction in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis, 2003), p. 149.

future viability of the population.'[26] The result of this process was the emergent belief that the interests of the nation would be best protected if apparent problem groups be identified, and their impact on society minimised. It is therefore not surprising that there was cultural acknowledgment of single men as a demographic problem group in the mid- to late-seventeenth century – before the Marriage Duty Assessment was implemented – in reaction to years of population decline caused by war and plague.[27]

This messaging was shaped by classical references: pamphlets which glorified the states of ancient Sparta and the Roman republic included descriptions of how bachelors and widowers had been prevented from holding political positions, banned from attending the theatre, and made to pay mulcts until their marriage on the grounds that they were 'ignominious … neither capable of Honour or Office.'[28] Emphasising the differences between the success of classical and contemporary regimes, these were not seen as authoritarian decisions but rather regarded as necessary measures which ensured that 'the Cit[ies] might be replenished with Legitimate Issue.'[29] The implicit message of these texts was that the imposition of *de facto* and *de jure* restrictions on the single life enforced population growth but also served more generally as confirmation that only one kind of manhood had been idealised since ancient times. This most glorified form of manhood was patriarchal, restricted to married men who fathered children. The potential benefits gained by the reintroduction of a similar system were first outlined by Thomas Sheridan, who proposed a tax on singleness in *A discourse of the rise & power of parliaments* (1677).[30] Sheridan anticipated war in England's near future, at a time when England was already 'very much under-peopled,' and therefore believed that a tax on single men and women would strengthen the nation.[31] Either the tax would raise funds for the 'provision' of the crown, or, if marriage rates increased as a response to the imposition of taxation, England would be equally improved by the increase in its population. Sheridan also

[26] Glimp, *Increase and Multiply*, p. xvi.
[27] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871: A Reconstruction* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 161-162 and Table 6.5, p. 168.
[28] Anonymous, *The Ladies Directory, being a great entertainment of the fair-sex* (London, 1694), pp. 44-45. For the early modern perception of the legal and historical context of these laws, see Pierre Danet, *A complete dictionary of Greek and Roman antiquities explaining the obscure places in classic authors* (London, 1700), unpaginated pp. 49-50 and p. 424.
[29] Francesco Barbero, *Directions for love and marriage in two books* (London, 1677), p. 2; and see Anonymous, *The Ladies Directory*, pp. 238-239.
[30] As in the finalised Marriage Duty Assessment, Sheridan additionally thought it appropriate to tax the nobility at a higher rate than tradespeople or servants, see Thomas Sheridan, *A discourse of the rise & power of parliaments, of laws, of courts of judicature, of liberty, property, and religion, of the interest of England* (London, 1677), pp. 180-181.
[31] Sheridan, *The rise & power of parliaments*, p. 180.

alluded to an element of sexual reform in this plan, alleging that a tax on singleness would also serve to 'obviat in som measure the Looseness and Debauchery of the present Age.'[32] In this way, Sheridan outlined the most important characteristic of singleness in all economic and demographic discussions going forward: single people did not contribute to the maintenance of the state through legitimate reproduction in marriage, so an equivalent contribution must be extracted from them by other means.

The works published in the wake of the Marriage Duty Assessment must therefore be seen as building on these existing discourses about singleness, rather than positing original arguments. They should, however, be considered distinct from the theoretical proposals made by Sheridan thanks to their ability to draw on population data derived from the Marriage Duty Assessment's tax returns as proof of their claims about single men. As discussed in detail in Chapter 1, the Marriage Duty Assessment was intended to support the English campaign against France during the Nine Years' War. It required a duty to be paid to register every birth, marriage, and burial. It also imposed a yearly fee on all bachelors over the age of 25 and all childless widowers, with an exemption given to widowers with children and men who received alms. The census-like level of detail required to compile the returns of the tax allowed for an accurate estimate of the English population to be made, which included analysis of population composition across axes of gender, class, and marital status. This data was first published by Charles Davenant in his 1699 essay *Making a People Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*.[33] Ted McCormick has stressed that 'printed political arithmetic was … widely read as a source of numbers that functioned as evidence' by the end of the seventeenth century, and Davenant exemplified this approach by including the tabulated data alongside a commentary on 'who, by their Arts, Labour, or Industry are increasing, and who by their Expence, Poverty, or Sloth, are decreasing the Kingdom's Wealth.'[34] This assertion brought a problematic visibility to single men, who were now thought to represent 3.5 percent of the total English population; amongst

[32] Sheridan, *The rise & power of parliaments*, pp. 180-181.
[33] The data was published and commented on by Charles Davenant, but he was open in stating that the figures he used had been compiled by Gregory King, see Charles Davenant, *An Essay upon the Probable Methods of making a People Gainers in the Ballance of Trade* (London, 1699), pp. 15-56. King's work had been circulated in manuscript, but his original comments were not published until 1802, see *An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain: and of the Losses of her Trade, from every War since the Revolution. A New Edition, corrected and continued to 1801, to which is now annexed Gregory King's celebrated State of England*, ed. George Chalmers (London, 1802).
[34] Ted McCormick, *William Petty and the Ambitions of Political Arithmetic* (Oxford, 2009), p. 291; and Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, Schemes A, B, C, and D inserted between pp. 22-23, and p. 13.

5,500,000 people, 90,000 were calculated to be widowers, and a further 100,000 were male 'sojourners and single persons.'[35]

Davenant's criticism of single men was shaped by an urgent pronatalist sentiment that 'People [were] the first Matter of Power and Wealth' in the nation, and 'their Increase must be promoted.'[36] Davenant did not conceal the militaristic intentions of this project: 'by such an improvement of our Native Strength … England without a doubt may be brought to so good a Posture and Condition of defending it self [sic].'[37] Nor was this perspective unique to Davenant's work. The anonymously-authored 1703 pamphlet *The Levellers* was styled as a dialogue between two young women, Politica and Sophia, who wanted to "level" the marriage market after being rejected by partners they had considered suitable. Although not an original work of political arithmetic, the speakers state that their conversation was inspired by the Marriage Duty Assessment and (mis)quotes the figures published by Davenant.[38] The speakers' conversation begins with the warning that 'you can have no Navies, nor Armies, without Men … Our Men are the Walls, Bulwarks, and Fortresses of our Country.'[39] More pressingly, in the specific context of the early eighteenth century, 'Men … are daily consumed and wasted away by the Wars' which limited England's ability to effectively engage in militaristic and economic competition with neighbouring countries.[40] The single man's underutilised reproductive capacity was not therefore a neutral act but construed as an active non-contribution to society. The nationalist construction of this sentiment informed readers that to be single was distinctly un-English, with *The Levellers* twice repeating that bachelors were 'useless' to the 'State,' positioning them as 'reaping the Advantage of other People's Labours; they have their Liberties and Freedoms secured by the Loss of other Men's Lives, and do not, from their own Loins, repair the native Strength of the Kingdom.'[41]

This also opened avenues for Davenant and the author of *The Levellers* to question the extent to which a single man might have access to manhood. Historians of masculinity have

[35] The percentage proportion of single men appears to be accurate, based on comparisons to the findings of Chapter 1, where the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment for Derbyshire, Bristol, and London parishes were analysed. Davenant and King may have underestimated the ratio of bachelors to widowers, see Chapter 1, p. 54, Table 1.3; and Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, Scheme B, inserted between pp. 22-23.
[36] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, pp. 24-25.
[37] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 40.
[38] The Marriage Duty Assessment is referred to as "The Act for Births and Burials," see Anonymous, 'The Levellers: A Dialogue between two young Ladies, concerning matrimony (London: J. How, 1703),' in *The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scare, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts, Volume V*, eds. Samuel Johnson and William Oldys (London, 1745), p. 420 and p. 421.
[39] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 416.
[40] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 419.
[41] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 421

long understood the importance of the household as a 'microcosm of the polity' in early modern England, where a man's position as the head of the household validated his status as a political actor.[42] In a society which was carefully ordered through the imposition of hierarchies which defined the relationships between men and women as well as men and other men, these texts indicate that single men's failure to exercise good government over dependent wives and children denied him not only a political role in the state, but also invalidated the possibility of possessing a patriarchal role in the home. *The Levellers* maintained that a bachelor might be an adult on the basis of age, but 'according to the laws of Nature and Reason, a bachelor is a Minor … for though he may be a Housekeeper and for himself … yet, having no Family, he cannot be reckoned a good Commonwealth's-Man.'[43] Davenant also positioned the single life as the diametric opposite to 'a regular way of Living, where the Father of the Family desires to rear up and provide for the Off-spring he shall beget.'[44] To Davenant, bachelors and widowers were interested in nothing more than 'intemperate Pleasures taken loosly and at random,' emphasising impropriety, as Sheridan had, whilst also adding a component of sexual selfishness.[45] While Chapters 2 and 3 demonstrate that single men were not denied access to the practices of household management and the privileges of paternal and patriarchal authority, Davenant's messaging suggests that the cultural depiction of the bachelor and widower was constructed through a framework of isolation. There was no room for these authors to consider that single men could be participants in familial networks, and the denial of this practice made it all the easier to deny their ability to productively participate in wider society. Furthermore, Davenant's imagining of single men's sexual practices as a counterpoint to the regular heterosexual encounters of a married man places the bachelor and widower in an antagonistic, anti-national, and anti-natal position, where their sexual desires frustrated the regular practice of producing and raising children which so benefitted the nation.

For these reasons, these works contextualised singleness as a specifically masculine fault, rather than a wrong equally manifested amongst men and women. While Sheridan had believed that both single women and single men should be taxed for their singleness, Davenant used statistical evidence to demonstrate that male singleness was more damaging. The singleness of women was not desirable, with every unmarried woman past childbearing years

[42] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 75 and p. 71; and Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester, 2005), p. 13, pp. 19-20, and p. 27.
[43] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 422.
[44] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 32.
[45] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 32.

constituting a 'dead Loss to the Nation,' but the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment indicated that there were 2,800,000 women in the English population and only 2,700,000 men.[46] As such, Davenant was able to argue that while some women would never find a marriage partner, men who remained bachelors or widowers must have been driven by choice rather than circumstance. This aligns with Froide's characterisation of the early eighteenth century as a period where single women were seen as 'society's victims' who had been 'forced to remain single because men did not wish to marry,' but it must also be stressed that this finding was significant in shaping the claims about the relationship between male singleness and society made by Davenant and the author of *The Levellers*.[47] Davenant assumed that the lack of patriarchal manhood possessed by single men and their marginalised social status meant that single men had the potential to undermine the integrity of the social order. While social historians have a tendency to categorise the unmarried as either fully 'celibate' or 'pre-maritally' sexually active, it is clear that this mindset was not shared by early modern authors.[48] Both Davenant and *The Levellers* acknowledged that male sexuality was inherent as 'Every Creature desires to propagate its Species' and that 'Increase and Multiply is the Command of Nature, and God.'[49] The pro-natalist stance taken by Davenant and the author of *The Levellers* did not mean that they considered all heterosexual encounters as beneficial to the nation; single men's sexual desire was interpreted as a threat to the normative ordering of society.

Davenant saw single men's access to sexual activity without needing to marry as one of the main factors that presently 'hinder[ed] Marriage' and made it out of 'Fashion' amongst men.[50] *The Levellers* acknowledged that there were single men who did 'answer the end of their creation … [and] multiply their species on Misses and Concubines,' and called for these men to be imprisoned in 'a convenient Bedlam … like Madmen' to protect women from their sexual immoralities.[51] Davenant, more practically, bemoaned the charge brought to parishes in

[46] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 34-35.
[47] Froide, *Never Married*, p. 164 and p. 162.
[48] See David Weir, 'Rather Never than Late: Celibacy and Age at Marriage in English Cohort Fertility, 1541-1871,' *Journal of Family History* 9, 4 (1984): pp. 340-354; Faramez Dabhoiwala suggests that the decrease in pregnant brides and bastardy cases at the beginning of the seventeenth century means historians can 'infer [reduction] in the actual practice of pre-marital sex' but does not consider the possibility of a rise in other sexual practices, such as the formalisation of sex work, see Faramez Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: a history of the first sexual revolution* (Oxford, 2012), p. 41; and Eli Løfaldi may provide a new pathway to explore men's sexual activity, describing some relationships as "nonmarital," see Eli Løfaldi, 'Eighteenth-Century Private Life Writing as Evidence of Men's Sexual Practices: Case Reopened,' *Eighteenth Century Studies* 55, 3 (2022): pp. 317-338 with emphasis on p. 317.
[49] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 417 and p. 423.
[50] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 35 and p. 34.
[51] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' pp. 423-424.

caring for bastard children, and proposed the imposition of a system of compulsory marriage as a means to disincentivise those single men who sought out sexual encounters without intending to marry their partners.[52] These imagined punishments show the extent to which the single man was seen as an anti-patriarch. By lacking the necessary attributes of respectability and self-control that should have made him sexually temperate, his behaviours indicated a rejection of the nuclear family as a social and political unit, threatened women's sexual reputations, and harmed, rather than enriched, his local community. Both works firmly categorised sexual intemperance as a vice that was only indulged in by single men, with Davenant's proposal of forced marriage completely inapplicable in a situation where one or both participants were already married. Yet the ability to scapegoat bachelors and widowers in this way makes it possible to discern why these authors believed 'a Batchelor can, in no sense, be esteemed a good English-man.'[53] The imagined actions of individual single men could be scaled up to indicate their consequences for the nation.

Although the Marriage Duty Assessment was repealed in 1706, it is evident that the assumption that single men did not contribute to the strength of the nation continued to have a place in the cultural imagination. In 1710, *The Tatler* dedicated column space to critiquing the 'extravagant Priviledges my Brother Batchelors enjoy,' with its bachelor figurehead Isaac Bickerstaff used as a mouthpiece to advocate for the introduction of measures to increase the birth-rate, such as a theoretical fine for men who 'liv[e] in Contempt of Matrimony.'[54] However, as the English population began to increase during the eighteenth century, concerns about the productivity of single men were increasingly reworked along economic lines.[55] Seventeenth-century authors had established, if only infrequently mentioned, that single men's lives were easier than those of married men because of the assumption that their lives could be maintained at lesser expense. This sentiment was usually expressed indirectly, often with reference to nautical imagery: a single man 'having no charge but its ballast, sailes swiftly, and securely, in those Seas, where stronger Vessels, that are full fraught, hazard to founder and overset.'[56] By the middle of the eighteenth century, the pretence had fallen away, and authors

[52] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 35.
[53] Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 423.
[54] 'Issue 261, 7-9 December 1710,' in *The lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; revised and corrected by the author, Volume IV*, eds. Richard Steele and Joseph Addison (London, 1712), p. 320.
[55] Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England*, p. 162 and p. 168, Table 6.5; and Emma Griffin suggests that a decrease in age at first marriage was a significant contributor to this population increase, see Emma Griffin, 'A Conundrum Resolved? Rethinking Courtship, Marriage, and Population Growth in Eighteenth-Century England,' *Past & Present* 215, 1 (2012): pp. 125-164.
[56] Thomas Culpeper, *Morall discourses and essayes, upon severall select subjects* (London, 1655), p. 89.

were forthright in expressing their concerns about the comparative expenses of the married and single life. Although Davenant and *The Levellers* had been concerned about the demographic impact of 'all unmarried persons,' including widowers, these economic discourses only examined the place of the bachelor against that of the married man.[57] Henry Carey, for example, was critical of 'the Batchelor, having none but himself to provide for, and having the Methods and Talents of becoming rich … without a Quarter of the Expence, soon gains that end' while the married man 'with his greatest Industry, supports his Family.'[58]

This pivot away from demography and towards economy occurred during a period of the eighteenth century when gender and national identities were increasingly tied to consumer practices, with David Kuchta's work on sartorial consumption highlighting how discretionary spending was increasingly used as a venue for gendered virtue-signalling. Domestically-produced products were described as having 'manly' qualities, so men's choice to buy these products became an effective way to reinforce 'men's condition and manners … creating an image of masculinity compatible with English commodities and English values.'[59] Even spending on luxury goods could be economically and culturally permissible, as controversially suggested by Bernard Mandeville in *The Fable of the Bees* (1714), as the production and sale of high-quality or expensive commodities benefitted the English economy through the employment of artisan labour.[60] The economic problem posed by single men was the presumption that they resisted these narratives and accumulated wealth without having any need or desire to spend it, hampering the growth of the English economy. As explained by Matthew Decker:

> A working bachelor pays … [for] his own Shoes only. A working Married-Man does the same for himself, the same for his Wife, the same for his five Sons, the same for his five Daughters; twelve in a family … is not the Oppression increased twelve Articles to one?[61]

While thrift was one of the tenets of patriarchal manhood, Shepard shows that this was partly derived from displays of 'male provision' within the household.[62] As the single man was

[57] Davenant, *Gainers in the Ballance of Trade*, p. 34; and Anonymous, 'The Levellers,' p. 421.
[58] Henry Carey, *Cupid and Hymen: or, a voyage to the isles of love and matrimony* (London, 1742), p. 80.
[59] David Kuchta, *The Three Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley, 2002), pp. 12-13.
[60] Bernard Mandeville, *The fable of the bees: or, private vices publick benefits* (London, 1714), pp. 81-85 and pp. 99-101; and Maxine Berg, *Luxury and pleasure in eighteenth-century Britain* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 22-23 and pp. 31-32.
[61] Matthew Decker, An Essay on *The Causes of the Decline of the Foreign Trade* (London, 1744), p. 8
[62] Alexandra Shepard, 'Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c.1580-1640,' *Past & Present* 167, 1 (2000): p. 83.

culturally typified by his lack of dependents, the bachelor and widower's (lack of) consumptive practices could not be justified as sensible frugality. Decker also invalidated the possibility that single men were attempting to accrue resources to secure a marriage in the future; he believed that bachelors simply did not feel 'that anxious necessary Care of saving, to provide for the present as well as future well-being of their Families.'[63]

The national implications of an economic system that put 'Industry and Idleness … on the same Footing' was clear to Decker, who feared that the cost of married versus single living was causing single men to 'disrelish the Married State … which unless remedied will render us a poor despicable depopulated Nation.'[64] John Newball, who published a commentary on Decker's essay in 1745, also believed that the economic inactivity of single men was stymying economic and population growth, so that 'His Majesty will soon want legitimate Subjects … [to] pay Taxes … land will soon become untenanted, and Houses uninhabited;' to him, the single man represented the 'Melancholy Symptoms of a consumptive Nation!'[65] The solution posed by Decker and Newball was not a novel one; both suggested the implementation of additional excise taxes on bachelors over the age of 21. Widowers were not mentioned in these proposals, allowing both men to sidestep more complicated discussions as to whether widowers had or had not paid their societal dues. Similarly, both authors avoided making any reference to the Marriage Duty Assessment; instead, their proposal was reconfigured as a tax on practices which were regarded as 'great Encouragers of Idlenes [sic],' positioned alongside other imagined duties on wine-drinking at home, jewellery wearing, hunting dog ownership, and billiard playing.[66] Thus as the trend in discourses had shifted from concerns about the English population to concerns about the English economy, so too had the depiction of the single man changed. Decker and Newball's imagined bachelor was young, middle class, and completely profligate. Yet the continued narrative throughout this 100-year period suggested that the single man was the antithesis to acceptable domestic and communal productivity – with the normative type of manhood attained through marriage and fatherhood remaining as an ideal. This continuity necessitates comparison with male singleness in other genres of work. As Margaret Pelling convincingly argues, demographic and economic works existed at a point of 'overlap'

[63] Decker, *The Decline of the Foreign Trade*, p. 51.
[64] Decker, *The Decline of the Foreign Trade*, pp. 51-52.
[65] John Newball, *A Scheme to prevent the Running of Wool Abroad, second edition* (London, 1745), pp. 56-57.
[66] Newball, *To prevent the Running of Wool*, pp. 54-55; and Decker, *Causes of the Decline of the Foreign Trade*, p. 45 and p. 51.

between 'the quantitative and the qualitative.'[67] These authors applied more statistical analysis than authors in other genres, but the groups they chose to examine were informed by pre-existing assumptions about certain types of people.

### *Humorous discourses*

Decker and Newball may have intellectualised the association of singleness and idleness, but they were not the only authors to define singleness by relating it to lifestyle traits. Humorous discourses frequently defined bachelor- and widowerhood as free and easy, without obligations. The single life's enjoyments were often described as marital status specific, thus being lost or no longer possible once a man had married. *A wife not ready made* (1653), for example, began with the bachelor-shepherd Dicus exclaiming that 'Such freedom is in single life, / I dread the yoaking with a Wife; / For now I revell, sing and play, / Go where I list each Holiday, / Laugh, caroll, pipe: thus blithe and merry.'[68] It was not only that the bachelor lifestyle was agreeable, but that married life could be disagreeable, particularly if a man had a bad tempered wife. An untitled song included in a compiled work by music publisher Henry Playford and playwright Thomas d'Urfey found 'the Batchelor liveth best, / Tho' Drunk or Sober he takes his rest; / He never is troubl'd with Scolding or Strife, / Tis the best can be said of a very good Wife: / But merrily Day and Night does spend, / Enjoying his Mistress, Bottle, and Friend.'[69]

Dramatic works also championed the single life, particularly as the genre of Restoration comedy developed and critiques of manners and middling society emerged as central themes. These works were more willing to revel in the illicit and immoral activities that a single man could engage in without guilt. In *The English Rogue* (1668), when the main male character, Plot-thrift, expressed an interest in marriage, his companion remarked: 'What loose all the pleasures of a single life, to be constraned to the humour of one foolish Woman? no visiting of the Taverns without a peal from home; no courting of a handsome Lady without a score of scratches and the like.'[70] In William Moutfort's *Greenwich-Park* (1691), the 'old wicked lewd Knight' Sir Thomas Reveller (himself a widower), expressed that single men got up to 'nothing but Whoring … Gaming and Perjury, Murder and Blasphemy, Divinity and Hipocrisie, running

[67] Margaret Pelling, 'Far Too Many Women? John Graunt, the Sex Ratio, and the Cultural Determination of Number in seventeenth-century England,' *The Historical Journal* 59, 3 (2016): p. 712.
[68] Robert Aylett, *A wife, not ready made, but bespoken* (London, 1653), p. 1.
[69] Henry Playford and Thomas d'Urfey, *Wit and mirth: or pills to purge melancholy, Volume V* (London, 1719), p. 273.
[70] T. T., *The English rogue: a new comedy* (London, 1668), Act 3, Scene 2, pp. 29-30.

in Peoples Debts, and borrowing of Money.'[71] The very clear relationship with singleness, rakish dissipation, and romantic or sexual pursuits in these accounts suggests that audiences also accepted the idea that male singleness was not equivalent to male chastity. These comments were more explicit than those made in poetry and song, but as Pat Gill argues, this was because dramatic works could employ singleness as a character flaw that could be redeemed over the course of the play. The licentious nature of the statements made by characters in *The English Rogue* and *Greenwich-Park* were softened by the fact that both men took back their statements, with the former speaker married and the latter engaged by the end of their respective plays. Single men's lewdness may have titillated in these contexts, but it did not devolve into full libertinism. Instead, single male characters could be put on display, be ridiculed, repent, and then married off, providing an 'implied reformation in the last act.'[72]

Yet not all accounts of bachelor- and widowerhood in humorous discourses were tempered by the hopeful possibility of settling down with a chosen partner. In the poem *The Pleasures of a Single Life* (1701), the narrator reminisced about the activities that he had enjoyed as a bachelor. Moving chronologically through the day, the narrator of *The Pleasures* described a life shaped by educational reading, walking in nature, drinking and talking with a friend, then retiring alone to bed.[73] While masturbation is alluded to by the line 'Alone my self, my self I did enjoy,' most of the pleasures of the narrator's single life appeared chaste and restrained: 'For in excess good Heav'ns design is Crost / In all extreams the true enjoyments lost.'[74] As such, James Rosenheim argues that while perhaps not didactic, the poem provided an opportunity to visualise 'a personally fulfilling (and socially acceptable) mode of living for a middling-sort man.'[75] However, and perhaps surprisingly based on the poem's title, *The Pleasures* does not only ruminate on the single life. The second half of the poem delineates the narrator's 'mistake,' whereby he 'rashly plung'd my life, Into that Bag of Miseries a Wife,' a decision which permanently deprived him of the comforts of his bachelor lifestyle.[76] *The*

[71] Mountfort, *Greenwich-Park*, p. iv and Act 1, Scene III, p. 9.
[72] See T. T., *The English rogue*, Act 5, Scene II, p. 55; Mountfort, *Greenwich Park*, Act 5, Scene II, p. 56 and p. 59; and Pat Gill, 'Gender, sexuality, and marriage' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Restoration Theatre*, ed. Deborah Payne Fisk (Cambridge, 2006), p. 196.
N.B. Themes of redemption of libertinism through marriage were not limited to drama, for example being central to the plots of Samuel Richardson's Pamela (1741) and Clarrisa (1748), see Dabhoiwala, *The origins of sex*, p. 185.
[73] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life, or, the Miseries of Matrimony* (London, 1701), p. 1, p. 3, p. 5 and p. 6.
[74] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, p. 5 and p. 4.
[75] James Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life: Envisioning Bachelorhood in Early Eighteenth-Century England,' *Gender & History* 27, 2 (2015): p. 312.
[76] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, p. 9

*Pleasures* was therefore constructed by starkly contrasting a happy single life against an unhappy married one, where the narrator's wife had made him 'A Husband, Lover, Cuckold and a Slave.'[77] While Rosenheim acknowledges the 'general misogyny' present in the poem, he argues that the poem should not be defined as misogynistic as this 'would be to dismiss the significance of its depiction of a single man's life.'[78]

Rosenheim's stance underestimates the extent to which male singleness was intertwined with misogyny in print. As Faramez Dabhoiwala explains, 'female infirmity and lust was a commonplace of biblical, classical, medieval, and Renaissance thought,' and as a result women's capacity for adultery was a common trope in both satirical and serious early modern discourses.[79] Humorous works could commend singleness by condemning marriage on misogynistic grounds; a point made clearly in *The Pleasures*, with the narrator describing marriage as 'a Paradice for Fools, a Sport for Boys, / Tiresome its Chains, and brutal are its Joys.'[80] In this context, being single was the only way that a man could avoid the danger to his reputation that would be posed if he chose an unfaithful wife. The poem ultimately resolves with the narrator gaining a divorce to free him from a wife whose cuckoldry 'Fill[ed] my Mansion with a spurious Brood,' although in his presumed return to the pleasures of a single life, it is not stated whether the narrator considered himself a bachelor again.[81] Reprinted versions of *The Pleasures* heightened its misogynistic elements by associating it with other works that used the derision of women to justify life-long singleness among adult men. *The Pleasures* formed the conclusion to Ralph Nab's 1737 pamphlet *Address to the … Batchelors of Great-Britain* wherein young men were instructed to avoid marriage not for any inherent benefit but because any woman perceived to be a 'good-natur'd Household-dove, forsooth, may not here only debase our Family, but obtrude a spurious Issue upon us for legitimate Heirs.'[82] Other works used the premise of the married man as narrator to persuade single men not to marry; the evocatively-titled broadside ballad *Advice to batchelors* (1685) exhorted 'take warning now by me: For 'tis a curse to be a Slave, and yet a Cuckold be.'[83] While it would be impossible to verify the extent to which late seventeenth-century audiences interpreted this

[77] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, p. 8.
[78] Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life:' p. 307 and p. 311; and Rosenheim states that he 'find[s] different elements in the poem' than previous scholars, see Rosenheim, 'The Pleasures of a Single Life:' p. 322, footnote 2.
[79] Dabhoiwala, *The origins of sex*, p. 142.
[80] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, p. 10.
[81] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of a Single Life*, p. 12.
[82] Ralph Nab, *An Address to the Right Worshipful the Batchelors of Great-Britain* (London, 1737), p. 47.
[83] Anonymous, *Advice to batchelors or, The married mans lamentation* (London, 1685), p. 1.

message as a genuine disincentive to marriage, rather than a bawdy joke, the ability to publish and circulate messages of this kind provides an important cultural context to Davenant's later statement that marriage had gone out of fashion.

Accounts of widowerhood also provided an opportunity for authors to make jokes at the expense of women through the implication that any man would be relieved to find out that his wife had died. Despite his own unhappy widowerhood, a posthumous compilation of John Donne's poetry included two rhyming couplets titled 'A Widowers Resolve' and 'Against Men Twice Married' which provided a general summary of the assumed attitudes of widowers: 'I once on seas, now safely got to shore, / Nev'r mean to venture shipwrack any more … Who having buried one Wife, weds again, / He swims twice shipwrackt in the Ocean main.'[84] Widowers in humorous texts provided a mouth-piece by which the negative attributes of womanhood could be lambasted, with *The Honest London Spy* (1706) and *Democritus* (1723) both including passages where widowers recounted the poor behaviour of their spouses. In the former, the widower had 'never a good one among [three],' his first wife had been 'a notorious Strumpet,' the second a 'damn'd Scold,' and the third 'confoundedly lazy.'[85] In the latter his wife had been so chaste ('tho her Face was Protection enough against … her Laurels of Modesty') that the widower did not even hold her a funeral.[86] Widowers, like the narrator of *The Pleasures*, could be used to demonstrate to readers why the single life, rather than the married one, was superior.

This juxtaposition of the happy single man who escaped the miseries of marriage to an ugly, bad-tempered wife who was either frigid or adulterous, and the unhappy married man who might have such a spouse created an uneasy tension where the illicit sexuality of bachelors and widowers may have been construed as superior to the supposed pleasures accessible to men through marriage. In a world of humorous discourses where all women were potentially open to amarital sexual experiences, there was little benefit to marriage and absolutely no downside to singleness. This formed a new social and gender order in which patriarchal authority had little place. Reinke-Williams highlights that jokes about adulterous women helped with this sense of inversion, because it provided single male readers with 'a rare sense of superiority … [by] mock[ing] married men as fools.'[87] In jest-books, bachelors appeared as

[84] John Donne, *Donne's satyrs* (London, 1662), pp. 42-43.
[85] Anonymous, *The Honest London Spy Discovering the Base and Subtle Intregues of the Town, Part I* (London, 1706), p. 94, p. 110 and p. 111.
[86] Anonymous, *Democritus, the laughing philosopher's trip into England, third edition* (London, 1723), p. 40.
[87] Reinke-Williams, 'Misogyny, Jest-Books and Male Youth Culture:' p. 331.

savvy observers of society who carefully learned from the follies of their married peers and would not make those same mistakes, as demonstrated by the play on a classical Latin dictum in *Wit Revived* (1655): 'Q. Why are batchelours more happy then married men? A. Because, *faelix quem faciunt aliorum Cornua, cautum* [Happy is he whom the horns of others make wary].'[88] The ultimate extension of this question and answer was, of course, if married men were being cuckolded by adulterous wives, then who was seducing these women? Mountfort was willing to be literal, with the character of Sir Reveller jestingly asking his friends 'Who are the greatest Seducers of Wives?,' to which a companion responded 'Batchelors, Sir Thomas, illustrious and free Batchelors.'[89]

By underscoring that bachelors and widowers could freely engage in sexual activity, making other men cuckolds without the possibility of being cuckolded themselves, humorous discourses presented a serious challenge to the appeal of patriarchal manhood. Marriage was supposed to reward a man with unrestricted sexual access, but this privilege was lessened when the pleasure was restricted to only one partner whose obedience and respect could not be guaranteed. Furthermore, single men were positioned as having bested married men through their sexual prowess. Critics of singleness did not attempt to outright challenge this idea, but instead sought to highlight how a life without responsibilities, without the manhood achieved in marriage, was also a life without respectability. Amanda Vickery characterises the metropolitan bachelor's accommodations as having a 'makeshift quality,' and while the findings of earlier chapters do not support this suggestion, contemporary commentators were quick to attack the perceived unsuitability of the bachelor's domestic scene.[90] Presenting household arrangements as a gauge by which authority should be judged, *The Pleasures of Matrimony* (1688) argued that bachelors were 'the greatest Slovens in the World,' and without the influence of housewifery 'their Chambers lie like Hogsties; their Kitchins like Deserts, their Diet nothing but Cooks Meat, and a greasie Napkin to eat it upon, in a Room that stinks of Grease and Tabaco, and a Nasty Whore to attend him.'[91] Responses to the poem *The Pleasures* also attacked its picture of a happy single domesticity on the grounds that that 'minds not curious do prefer / Course [sic] Huts to Mansions which more stately are,' with a second

[88] Edmund Gayton, *Wit Revived: Or, a New and Excellent Way of Divertisement, Digested into most Ingenious Questions and Answers* (London, 1655), p. 22.
With thanks to Martin Ingram for helping with this translation.
[89] Mountfort, *Greenwich-Park*, Act 3, Scene III, p. 30.
[90] Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (New Haven, 2009), pp. 54-55.
[91] Anonymous, *The Pleasures of matrimony intermix'd with variety of merry and delightful stories* (London, 1688), pp. 173-174 and p. 70.

pamphlet suggesting that the only "pleasures" that bachelors might experience were gained from reading 'Bawdy Books' in their 'dark lonesome Cave.'[92]

Widowers were also open to critiques of their manhood in humorous discourses if they were seen to excessively grieve the death of their wife. The widower's tears drew particular attention, and that they were connotated as entertaining rather than strictly pitiful was made clear in the English-language translations of *Don Quixote* (editions after 1687). When Sancho received his master's forgiveness in the second book, he was described as 'blubbering, like a widower of three hours standing.'[93] Bernard Capp has written extensively on the different kinds of tears shed by men in early modern England, and finds that 'tears of grief, over the loss of a wife, child, or intimate friend … [had] almost universal acceptance.'[94] Yet even within this context, Capp finds that early modern moralists felt the need to separate 'appropriate grief' from 'vulgar excess.'[95] It is apparent that humourists felt the same way, with the widower's tears often being evoked to deride their conduct. Loud crying, or 'roaring' as it was described in the periodical *The Universal Spectator*, was taken as a sure sign that a widower's grief was insincere; it was '*vox est, praetereaq; nihil* [voice and nothing more].'[96] Rather than demonstrating love for a deceased wife, the plentiful tears of widowers were facetiously attributed to other causes, such as being provoked when recollecting the 'damn'd Expense in Blacks and Scutcheons, Tapers and Mourners' that had been spent on the funeral.[97]

Readers were informed that passionate displays of grief were not appropriate for men, even in extreme circumstances, and should be interpreted as false. The lack of emotional connection between a widower and his deceased spouse was further explored through the suggestion that the widower had already selected a new bride or had at least moved on to a new sexual partner.[98] *The London jilt* (1683) made a joke out of the suggestion that a woman, newly married to a widower, might find that 'he has lived a little more familiarly with [his Maids]

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[92] Anonymous, *Wedlock a Paradice: or, a defence of woman's liberty against man's tyranny* (London, 1702), p. 5; and Anonymous, *An answer to the pleasures of a single life: or, the comforts of marriage confirm'd and vindicated* (London, 1701), p. 4 and p. 8.
[93] Miguel de Cervantes, trans. J.P., *The history of the most renowned Don Quixote of Mancha* (London, 1687), p. 324.
[94] Bernard Capp, 'Jesus Wept, But Did the Englishman? Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern England,' *Past & Present* 224, 1 (2014): p. 88
[95] Capp, 'Jesus Wept?:' p. 88.
[96] 'Issue 658, 16 May 1741,' *The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal*, ed. Henry Baker (London, 1741), p. 1.
[97] Anonymous, *'Tis all a cheat; or the way of the world* (London, 1720), p. 7.
[98] See Anonymous, *The Challenge sent by a Loung Lady to Sir Thomas* (London, 1697), pp. 6-7; Anonymous, *'Tis all a cheat*, pp. 7-8; and Anonymous, *Democritus*, pp. 40-41.

than Decency did allow of.'[99] Despite the humour evident in the image of the crocodile-teared, rapidly-remarried widower, the application of this trope is suggestive of a cultural anxiety about the unpreventable nature of spousal death and its repercussions for men. Unlike the bachelor, the widower had attained patriarchal authority through marriage, but did that mean he lost it if his wife were to die? The failure to exhibit manly self-control through a restrained display of grief after a wife's death suggests that perhaps these widowers had not been true patriarchs at any point. The humourists' ability to satirise tears further suggests that genuine expressions of grief were discomforting to other men, with readers being implicitly instructed that there was no manhood gained by making grand displays of emotion. It was more palatable, or at least more entertaining, to assume that widowers hated women but still wanted to retain access to domestic comforts and sexual gratification without having regard for how that affected the perception of their status by other men.

The most substantial criticisms of singleness were those that highlighted the folly of prolonged periods of bachelor- or widowerhood over the course of a lifetime. Shepard's work makes clear that the accomplishment of ideal-type manhood was strongly correlated with adulthood. Younger and older men were frequently depicted in conduct books as examples of 'unworthy claimants of the patriarchal dividend.'[100] But while young men could conform to the expectations of the culture and achieve patriarchal authority if they went on to marry and have children, old men had allowed these opportunities to pass them by. The old bachelor and the old widower were therefore evoked in satirical texts to represent a particularly deplorable version of the single man, one who had rejected marriage in his youth and would subsequently suffer the consequences in his old age. While Shepard finds examples of old men being praised in conduct books in instances where their 'appropriate behaviour' allowed them to demonstrate 'wisdom and authority,' the old single man was neither wise nor well-behaved.[101] Comparing the status of the old bachelor to the spinster, the periodical *The Lover* concluded that the old single man was far worse than his female equivalent as he was 'conversant in larger Scenes of Life, and ha[d] more Opportunities to dissuade his Folly,' yet his continuing rejection of the companionship found in marriage led him to become 'ten times more of the splenatick and ridiculous.'[102]

[99] Alexander Oldys, *The London jilt, or the Politick whore* (London, 1683), p. 10.
[100] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 23
[101] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 42.
[102] 'Issue 1, 25 February 1714,' in *The Lover: to which is added, The Reader, by the same author*, ed. Richard Steele (London, 1715), p. 8.

Researchers such as Andrew Bricker suggest that satirical and humorous works could have provided a 'deeply affective experience for readers' whereby the ridiculing and shaming of behaviours construed as undesirable by authors served to 'correct vice' while also making audiences laugh.[103] This is clear in the depiction of the old single man, where an emphasis on their age was often contrasted with their inappropriate expression of sexual desire towards young women. William Elder first made this comparison in *Pearls of Eloquence* (1656), which included a short poem about 'an old stale widower loving a young wench,' and her refusal of him: 'Good Sir, quoth she, your lustfull suit withdraw, / You shall not thatch my New-house with old straw.'[104] This idea was subsequently developed in the eighteenth century with a greater emphasis on the disgusting appearance of the older man, as in James Heywood's poem 'To a very old Batchelor.'[105] The poem was emphatic in its mockery from its opening couplet: 'Thou aged Lump of lifeless Clay / Whose face is furrow'd with Decay,' and continual in underscoring the inappropriateness of such a match: 'All thy active Days are past / Thy Hour-glass is running to its Last … / Thy feint Addresses will but prove / Mere Dotage, not Excess of Love.'[106]

This messaging was also present in other sorts of print, such as in *The Universal Spectator*, where a write-in correspondent referenced Heywood's poem by asking if the affection expressed by the widowed friend of her guardian 'may be call'd Love or Dotage?'[107] Although this was probably an invented scenario, the description of this widowed man as an 'old enamour'd Spark,' criticism of his 'full light Tye Wig, much powder'd,' and the correspondent's statement that she had been 'so unfortunate as to pierce the Old Gentleman's Heart,' served to reinforce the idea that old single men violated the normative conduct expected from both the aged and the unmarried man.[108] These accounts are so descriptive in their imagery as to be completely farcical, but they also delivered a strongly negative message about the old bachelor and widower and what constituted his acceptable conduct. Their urges could have been expressed healthily and in a controlled way if they had made appropriate matches in

[103] Andrew Benjamin Bricker, '"Laughing a Folly out of Countenance:" Laughter and the Limits of Reform in eighteenth-Century Satire,' in *The Power of Laughter and Satire in Early Modern Britain*, eds. Mark Knights and Adam Morton (Woodbridge, 2017), p. 152.
[104] William Elder, *Pearls of eloquence, or, The school of complements* (London, 1656), p. 43.
[105] James Heywood, *Poems and letters on several subjects* (London, 1722), pp. 29-30.
[106] Heywood, *Poems and letters*, p. 29.
[107] 'Issue 189, 20 May 1732,' in *The Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal* (London, 1732), p. 1.
[108] '20 May 1732,' in *Universal Spectator*, p. 1; Jennie Batchelor addresses the fact that it is in many cases impossible to determine whether correspondents genuinely contributed to periodicals or whether the periodicals' editors produced these sections themselves, see Jennie Batchelor, '"Connections which are of service … in a more advanced age:" The Lady's Magazine, Community, and Women's Literary Histories,' *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 30, 2 (2011): pp. 247-248.

their youth; their neglect in doing so meant that they deserved to be reviled in old age for their lechery.

Bricker suggests that the instructive nature of early modern satire was limited by 'the subject's capacity for reform,' as emphasis on characteristics which could not be altered might lead readers to assume that 'some men were simply beyond correction.'[109] The trope of the old bachelor shows that this was not always a problem; the permanency of old-age singleness provided an opportunity to caution readers away from the same fate. The old bachelor allowed the excesses of youth to be taken to their chronological limits in an exploration of how indulgence in anti-patriarchal activities would be manifested in old age. For example, a message of sexual temperance was clear in Charles Gildon's character of the 'Antiquated Batchelor' who claimed to 'abominate Matrimony' but had secretly been 'disabled from Matrimonial Performances … [by the] Sins of Youth.'[110] Declan Kavanagh argues that descriptions of sexually-transmitted disease in the poetry of John Wilmot, the Earl of Rochester, were 'undoubtedly satirical' but served an erotic purpose for readers by depicting infection as mark of participation in 'imaginatively pleasurable … libertine experiences.'[111] Gildon's work, however, did not engage with this elite perspective and instead avoided titillation by not expanding on old bachelor's past sexual encounters. Instead, it underscored the permanent consequences of his actions; an incurable 'bodily defect' caused by venereal disease.[112]

Verbal self-effacement also allowed authors to explore the idea that old single men had harboured secret desires towards marriage, but had been prevented from making a match by their own vanity, for which they now suffered. This trope was (literally) performed in William Congreve's 1693 play, *The Old Batchelour*, where the titular character, Heartwell, criticised his younger friends for being 'Womens Assess … forced to undergo Dressing, Dancing, Singing, Sighing, Whining, Rhiming, Flattering, Lying, Grinning, Cringing, and the drudgery of Loving.'[113] His belief that men should not submit to women's desires was immediately subverted by the revelation that Heartwell was secretly in love with a woman called Silvia, whom he found himself unable to resist. Heartwell monologues: 'Oh Manhood, where art thou! What am I come to? A Womans Toy; at these years! Death, a bearded Baby for a Girl to dandle.

[109] Bricker, 'Laughter and the Limits of Reform,' pp. 155-156.
[110] Charles Gildon, *The post-Boy robb'd of his mail: or, The Pacquet Broke Open* (London, 1705), p. 51.
[111] Declan Kavanagh, 'Rochester's Libertinism and the Pleasure of Debility,' *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 50, 1 (2021): p. 321.
[112] Gildon, *The post-Boy robb'd*, p. 51.
[113] William Congreve, *The Old Batchelour* (London, 1693), Act 1, Scene I, pp. 6-7.

O dotage, dotage!'[114] Shepard finds that the attainment of patriarchal manhood in old age was 'at best, extremely qualified,' with conduct books frequently depicting old men as 'covetous, jealous, suspicious, … fearful, gloomy, and over-talkative,' and Congreve uses Heartwell's misogynistic arrogance as a facade for these attributes. In truth, Heartwell rejected women specifically because he recognised that his own feelings would appear ridiculous on the basis of his age, acknowledging the mimetic potential of his situation by imagining that his friends would publish a pamphlet about him titled 'The Bachelors Fall.'[115] A review of the play in *The Tatler* praised Congreve's ability to demonstrate the consequences for those men who 'fre[t] for Love … [but fail] to come into the Trammels of Order and Decency.'[116] It was not only that the audience ridiculed Heartwell, but that he openly admitted that he deserved to be treated that way for his foolishness.

The consequences of failing to marry when appropriate were further expanded upon in the periodical press, where an account purportedly written by a 65-year-old bachelor appeared in the write-in contributions to *The Spectator*. This unnamed man recalled his past status as 'a Man of Pleasure' in his youth, although again his sexual experiences were only alluded to by the suggestion he had indulged in 'Luxury and Wantonness.'[117] Rather than one specific ailment, this old bachelor's account served to highlight the social isolation that would be faced by those men who failed to participate in the socially normative process of marriage. Thus 'instead of a numerous Offspring, with which … I might possibly have delighted my self, I have only to amuse my self with the Repetition of old Stories and Intrigues which no one will believe.'[118] In *The Tatler*, Bickerstaff expressed similar unease about his own continuing bachelorhood, in one issue disclosing his 'secret concern, to reflect, that whenever I go off, I shall leave no Traces behind me.'[119] That these texts were still intended to be humorous despite their solemnity is seen in the way that these voices were self-critical, with *The Spectator*'s old bachelor describing himself as 'vain … flippant' and engaged in 'Folly … so extravagant …

[114] Congreve, *The Old Batchelour*, Act 3, Scene II, p. 31.
[115] Congreve, *The Old Batchelour*, Act 3, Scene I, p. 23.
[116] 'Issue 9, 28 to 30 April 1709,' in *The lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; revised and corrected by the author, Volume I*, ed. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (London, 1712), p. 63
[117] 'Issue 260, 28 December 1711/2,' in *The Spectator, Volume IV*, eds. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (London, 1712), p. 47.
[118] '28 December 1711/2,' in *The Spectator, Volume IV*, p. 48.
[119] 'Issue 95, 15 to 17 November 1709,' in *The lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff Esq; revised and corrected by the author, Volume II*, eds. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele (London, 1712), p. 284.

[I] sit with my Spectacles on writing Love-Letters,' trying to find a wife even though he knew he was past hope.[120]

Authors stressed that homosocial interactions would be cold comforts for the old bachelor or widower. Shepard sees fraternal bonding as central to 'young men's assertions of manhood,' but the ideal kind of friendship was 'transient' and would eventually be replaced with more meaningful relationships forged through marriage.[121] Satirical works allowed authors to probe the consequences for those men who continued to rely on friends in old age. In the *Nine satyrs* (1703), Sestius was a man who had been happy to live single, as 'No adverse chance, no Rub in Life he knew, / Till be Long Course of Luxury and Ease / Sickness contracted doth his Body sieze.'[122] When he lay on his death-bed, his friends 'in fulsome visits crowd and press / As Vermin flock at the Smell of Carcases,' as they waited to hear who Sestius would benefit with his will.[123] His miraculous recovery served to upset, rather than delight his friends, giving readers a 'Raree-show [sic], [of] Friendship in Masquerade.'[124] A more extreme version of this narrative is also found in *The Old Batchelor Outwitted* (1740), where miserly Mr Savecharge was tricked by his friends into marrying a man in drag, because they knew him to be so cheap that he would not buy them a drink under normal circumstances. Modern readers are not likely to laugh at the conclusion of the tale, where Savecharge 'got a good Drubbing from his supposed Wife … with a Lusty Oaken Towel' (a reference to being beaten with a cudgel, although the sexual connotations are obvious), but it was framed by the author as a fitting 'jest' to punish a man who had 'liv'd single and refused to marry for fear of charges.'[125] Savecharge's friends may have been 'treacherous' but readers were supposed to understand that this was the fate Savecharge deserved because of his failure to follow a regular way of life.[126] Such extreme conclusions to the life stories of old single men served to demonstrate how a purely homosocial existence could not be considered beneficial or sustainable in the long term.

[120] '28 December 1711/2,' in *The Spectator, Volume IV*, p. 47.
[121] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 96.
[122] Anonymous, *Nine satyrs, or moral poems* (London, 1703), p. 48.
[123] Anonymous, *Nine satyrs*, p. 48.
[124] Anonymous, *Nine satyrs*, p. 49.
[125] Anonymous, *The Old Batchelor Outwitted: or, the disappointment in the Wedding Sheets* (London, 1740), p. 7 and p. 8.
[126] Anonymous, *The Old Batchelor Outwitted*, p. 1.

### *Moralistic and theological discourses*

As in other texts, moralistic and theological texts generally condemned singleness. The commentary they provided condensed and reinforced the criticisms present in the other discourses examined in this chapter, portraying single men as inherently inferior to the married kind. Acknowledgement of the lack of expenses and the lack of responsibilities associated with single living led moralists to delineate the spiritual difficulties that bachelors and widowers would face. John Rodgers, for example, cautioned his readers that those who sought to avoid the 'troubles, cares, and charges of marriage' were equally vulnerable to falling into a 'filthy sole life,' where a man 'may live easily, proudly, and gather riches … singly, though impurely.'[127] Other writers embraced the nationalistic and pronatalist sentiment that the 'destitute, joyless, and forlorn Condition' of single men was 'useless to Society.'[128] The assumption that single men tended towards misanthropy and their homes were isolated and lonely spaces led to cautions against how the mental unfulfillment of 'privacy and simplicity of affaires, such solitariness and sorrow, such leasure and unactive circumstances' would lead bachelors and widowers to develop 'desires which are more troublesome and more dangerous, and often end in sin.'[129]

In analysing these works in which morality was central, the importance of the full-time occupations of these authors is apparent. Many, though not all, authors of moralistic and theological discourses were Anglican clergymen or ministers of other non-conformist protestant sects. Their configuration of singleness as encouraging sin was clearly shaped by anti-Catholicism and a desire to enforce separation between Catholic and protestant practice. In post-reformation England, the ability for the Anglican clergymen to marry was an important point of difference from their Catholic predecessors. As Helen Parish explains in her work on the English clerical profession, clerical marriage was an observable example of the 'stark imagery of opposition' present in the new ministry, and therefore it became 'an effective rhetorical device in a polemic which permitted no shades of grey.'[130] By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, when Anglicanism and protestant non-conformity dominated the English church system, clerical marriage had become 'normal and ordinary,' but as W. M. Jacob points out, it continued to support the hierarchies of power in the church and confirmed

[127] John Rodgers, *A godly & fruitful exposition upon all the first epistle of Peter* (London, 1650), pp. 103-104.
[128] John Marchant, *An exposition on the books of the Old Testament* (London, 1745), p. 1094.
[129] Taylor, *XXV sermons preached at golden-grove*, pp. 222-223.
[130] Helen Parish, '"It Was Never Good World Sence Minister Must Have Wyves:" Clerical Celibacy, Clerical Marriage, and Anticlericalism in Reformation England,' *Journal of Religious History* 36, 1 (2012): p. 53.

the protestant clergyman's status as a '"real" man.'[131] Some of the active clergymen-authors would also have been performing marriages in their parishes while critiquing singleness in print. Authors of moralistic and theological works were writing about singleness in an environment where they saw their Catholic opposition as enemies of their faith *and* as single men.

The closely intertwined nature of singleness and Catholicism was used by theologians to epitomise both the wrongs of the Catholic church as an authority and the failures of character evident in those individuals who sought to become Catholic priests. In the former instance, protestant writers considered it an abuse of church authority to command that individuals could not be ordained until they had taken a vow of celibacy.[132] In the latter, it was seen as a moral wrong for a man to promise something before God when it could not be guaranteed. Modern readers may be surprised by the frankness with which theological authors adopted the biologically essentialist narratives also present in demographic and satirical texts, with William Sclater making clear that male sexual desire was part of manhood and therefore chastity was something 'we have not power to perform … Thus sin Papists, at this day, in vowing continency in single life; A thing out of compass of mans power.'[133] The combination of both points allowed Anglican and other non-conformist protestant authors to employ the single male Catholic cleric as an example of the hypocrisy of organised Catholicism, as in Thomas Hodges's 1673 pamphlet *A Treatise on Marriage*. He alleged that sodomites and sex workers were found residing in English monastic houses at the time of the Dissolution of the Monasteries, quipping that 'Tis much easier to make an Eloquent Speech, or write a Learned Book in Commendation of the Single Life, than to live so.'[134] If enforced singleness led to perversion, then moralistic and theological writers of all protestant denominations supported the institution of marriage as an important part of a man's socio-religious duty.

That male singleness was not acceptable within the protestant religious system is made most obvious in contemporary discussion of the life of Christ. Writers were clear in stating that although Christ may have remained single during his lifetime, this by no means indicated that Christians should take his example as a replicable model of conduct. In the published version of a sermon originally delivered during a marriage service, Thomas Humphreys emphasised

[131] W. M. Jacob, *The Clerical Profession in the Long Eighteenth Century, 1680-1840* (Oxford, 2007), p. 159.
[132] James Pierce, *Mr. James Pierce's remarks on Dr. Wells's letters to Mr. Peter Dowley* (London, 1711), p. 64.
[133] William Sclater, *A brief and plain commentary with notes, not more useful than seasonable, upon the whole prophecie of malachy* (London, 1650), p. 53.
[134] Thomas Hodges, *A treatise of marriage with a defence of the 32th article of religion of the Church of England* (London, 1673), p. 72.

that Christ's singleness was due to 'the sublime circumstances of his nature being incompatible with his making another one flesh with himself.'[135] Religious and moral commentaries used the account of Christ's first miracle at the wedding feast at Cana to indicate that he supported the institution of marriage.[136] Readers were additionally informed that it was 'observable that [Christ] had nothing peculiar in his way of living, his Diet, his Habit … he did not retire from the World, nor leave the Society of Mankind under the Pretence of Devotion.'[137] This had the intention of depicting Christ's conduct as falling well within the boundaries of acceptable conduct, unlike the isolated and solitary lives associated with single men in the early modern period. This process mirrors Naomi Tadmor's finding that English language translations of the Bible attempted to place all categories of womanhood 'within a social framework of marriage' by designating any woman in a heterosexual union as a 'wife,' even when this was not apparent in the original Hebrew text.[138] Tadmor sees this process as integral in reinforcing the early modern socio-cultural notion that 'emphasised the woman's status in relation to man,' but it might also be argued that centring marriage in this way also disincentivised men from pursuing other kinds relationships which might otherwise be seen as pathways to manhood.[139]

Biblical commentary uneasily justified the singleness of Christ and the leaders of his early church as an attribute of persecution that Christians faced at that time, and that 'to be clogged with the care of wife and children' was not viable when a minister had to 'fly from one countrey to another,' minimising the possibility of reading any homosocial importance into these lifestyles.[140] Singleness and protestant values were dichotomous in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when wars of religion were being waged across Britain and mainland Europe and the Exclusion Crisis had not prevented a Catholic monarch from taking the English crown. As James Norris wrote in 1685, a bachelor was 'an Enemy to the Kingdom of Heaven … an Apostate to Nature … [as] where there is no Generation, there can be no Regeneration; the Church would not be expatiated without Marriage.'[141] Religious advice to widowers, though less common than that intended for bachelors, also focused on the necessity of marriage

[135] Humphreys, *Marriage an honourable estate*, p. 13.
[136] Humphreys, *Marriage an honourable estate*, p. 13; Samuel Bradford, *The credibility of the christian revelation, from it's intrinsick evidence in eight sermons* (London, 1700), p. 18; and Robert Codrington, *The second part of youths behaviour, or, decency in conversation against women* (London, 1664), p. 68.
[137] Samuel Bradford, *The credibility of the christian revelation, from it's intrinsick evidence in eight sermons* (London, 1700), p. 18.
[138] Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 58, and pp. 54-55.
[139] Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible*, pp. 58-59.
[140] Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan, or, the matter, forme, and power of a common wealth* (London, 1651), p. 377.
[141] James Norris, *The accomplish'd lady, or, Deserving gentlewoman* (London, 1685), p. 75.

as a duty, without consideration of individual feelings or circumstance. Thomas Allestree's direction to his widowed 'kinsman' William in *A funerall handkerchief* (1671) was to 'let [your wife's] Memory be still pretious with you, not for adoration (leave that foppery, to the Papists) but for imitation.'[142] The re-publication of this pamphlet in 1692 suggests that its message was palatable, at least within its religious niche. Taken as a whole, these discourses present readers with one acceptable ideal of manhood which had no alternatives.

The write-in periodical press also sought to promote the institution of marriage to its readers, although without the same explicitly religious messaging seen in the advice given by theologians. Papers such as *The Athenian Mercury* and *The British Appollo* allowed readers to submit questions and receive answers derived from an apparently 'illustrious society' of contributors, with relationship advice being a frequently occurring topic.[143] Lisa Shawn Maurer demonstrates that these editorials filled a 'paternal role' in popular culture, applying 'masculine cultural authority' by instructing readers how to assume 'positions of domestic authority.'[144] While *The Athenian Mercury* assumed a philosophical stance, answering the question if it were better to be married or single with the measured response that 'tis a vertue to live well in either state,' *The British Apollo* addressed what constituted appropriate conduct in various but specific scenarios.[145] Its discussion of widowers served to reinforce the notion that (re)marriage was desirable, if not inevitable. Fielding a question from the friend of a widower who was in the habit of mentioning his deceased wife in mixed company, 'for which he is laugh'd at,' the friend asked 'how far [the widower] is faulty in doing so?'[146] The response by *The British Apollo* explained that while the widower might have intended for his behaviour to show his first wife respect, and to 'afford the second a reasonable Expectation,' women would interpret his actions as 'unseasonable Commendations of his former Wife at so Critical a Juncture as that of his Applications and addresses to another.'[147] The immediate assumption made by *The British Apollo* was that the widower's repeated mentions of his deceased wife constituted a (wrongheaded) plan to secure another partner, with no consideration of the possibility that it was intended as an expression of grief or fond recollection of a person who was not present in

[142] Thomas Allestree, *A funeral handkerchief in two parts* (London, 1671), pp. 201-202.
[143] Shawn Lisa Maurer, *Proposing Men: Dialectics of Gender and Class in the Eighteenth-Century English Periodical* (Stanford, 1998), p. 37. N.B. Maurer highlights that the panels of experts in these periodicals tended to only include the contributions of a few people, see Maurer, *Proposing Men*, p. 37.
[144] Maurer, *Proposing Men*, p. 37 and p. 50.
[145] Anonymous, *The athenian oracle: being an entire collection of all the valuable questions and answers in the old Athenian mercuries, Volume II, second edition*, ed. John Dunton (London, 1704), p. 343.
[146] 'Issue 117, 22 to 24 March 1710/11,' in *The British Apollo*, eds. Aaron Hill and Marshall Smith (London, 1710/11), p. 11.
[147] 'Issue 117, 22 to 24 March 1710/11,' in *The British Apollo*, p. 11.

the company. The periodical's conclusion that the widower was 'guilty of Indiscretion' and that he should consider 'good manners' in his conduct with others may be taken as indicative of the emergence of polite conduct, but *The British Apollo* drew its advice from established patriarchal tradition. The widower's example was used to remind readers that 'the best Husbands, make the least Noise, make the least Pretence.'[148]

That the situation was addressed in terms of mediating the widower's wrongdoing, rather than the company's lack of empathy for his situation, follows on from the satirical commentary on widowers' tears by highlighting the awkwardness felt in perceiving the performances of manhood made by widowed men when the culture dictated that they lacked self-control. Marriage provided a solution to rectify this issue of poor conduct and would therefore restore the widower's place in his social circle, ostensibly also gratifying his emotional and domestic needs in the home. It is therefore notable that these advice columns did sometimes instruct write-in correspondents to consider singleness, but only if the scenario was written from the perspective of a younger woman making a match with a (presumably much) older man. In a supernumerary issue of *The British Apollo*, 'a prudent Young Lady, courted by a Widower that hath Children' asked whether or not she should accept his offer.[149] Even though the widower was described as 'sober … untainted with the vices of the age' and willing to allow the Lady to retain her entire dowry, she was advised to consider whether she could 'conform' with 'the states and conditions' of marriage to a widower who may still love his deceased wife, as well as asking if she could 'bear the trouble of others [sic] children.'[150] This again illuminates the difficulty of placing the widower into the framework of manhood; marriage was the prerogative of all men, but their situations raised doubts as to whether they could adequately support a partner.

Despite this general trend, a small minority of moralists believed that there could be benefits to male singleness. There was a persistent, albeit never mainstream, narrative throughout the 1650 to 1750 period which was forthright in stating that single men were uniquely placed to carry out devoted service of various kinds. Central to this argument was the inversion of the established narrative that single men rejected the social and domestic obligations of married men. Rather than rejecting this notion, authors highlighted how the comparative lack of responsibilities associated with bachelor- and widowerhood meant that

[148] 'Issue 117, 22-24 March 1710/11' in *The British Apollo,* p. 11.
[149] 'Supernumerary Issue 3, June,' in *The British Apollo,* eds. Aaron Hill and Marshall Smith (London, no date), p. 1.
[150] 'Supernumerary Issue 3, June,' in *The British Apollo,* p. 1.

they could be charitable with their time and money, more so than a married man in the same circumstances. At two points in *The Gentleman's Companion* (1672), William Ramesey favourably compared the single life to marriage on the grounds that a good marriage was 'commodious,' but made a man 'Hostage to Fortune … a Prisoner to the world.'[151] By contrast, the bachelor had 'none to please, nor none to displease … he is his own master,' giving him the liberty to undertake 'the most glorious, noblest Acts, and more laudable, and meritorious.'[152] An anonymous author added specificity to these claims by suggesting that those who joined 'the Colleges, Inns-of-Court and the like, make choice of a Single Life … [and] (when truly Vertuous) [it] hath the Preheminence of the Married State (ordinarily speaking).'[153] Some non-conformist theologians also rarified male singleness by linking it to distinctly protestant ideals and religious duties during the last two decades of the seventeenth century. Richard Baxter considered that 'marriage was more distracting and hindering' than singleness for clergymen, because while marriage was a personal duty, single ministers could 'addict themselves' to church life.[154] He asked his readers to interrogate 'in which state they may do God the greatest service;' distinguishing his intentions from Catholicism by emphasising choice and the ability to transition from one state to the other (though not *vice versa*) if a man's intentions and goals were to change.[155]

Unsurprisingly, Baxter held this more sympathetic view of singleness because he only married for the first time at the age of 46. He attributed his early success in the ministry to his prolonged bachelorhood, as he could 'easilier take my People for Children ... in that I had no Children of my own.'[156] He justified keeping a small household and only one servant as it gave him 'the greater vacancy and liberty for the Labours of my Calling,' so that he had the freedom to travel and preach without having to worry about 'Family cares.'[157] Oliver Heywood, whose diary and autobiography are examined in Chapter 3, also addressed the potential of the single life in *The Best Entail* (1693). Like Baxter, Heywood's personal life informed this message, although he did not state this in his work.[158] For unmarried readers who wished to 'do good

[151] William Ramesey, *The gentlemans companion, or, A character of true nobility and gentility in the way of essay* (London, 1672), pp. 93-94.
[152] Ramesey, *The gentlemans companion*, pp. 199-200 and pp. 93-94.
[153] Anonymous, *A Check to debauchery, and other crying sins of these times with sevral useful rules for the attaining of contrary virtue* (London, 1692), p. 28
[154] Richard Baxter, *A treatise of self-denial* (London, 1675), p. 334.
[155] Baxter, *A treatise of self-denial*, p. 335.
[156] Richard Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae, or, Mr Richard Baxters narrative of the most memorable passages of his life and times* (London, 1696), p. 89.
[157] Baxter, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, p. 89.
[158] Heywood had been a widowed in his early thirties after his wife's death from a child-bed illness. He remarried six years later; see Chapter 3, p. 133, pp. 169-170, and p. 170, footnote 200.

with your Estate, and be serviceable in Church and Commonwealth,' he advised that comfort and purpose may be found in adoption: 'it would be acceptable both to God, [the child], and your self, ... to train him up for God; bequeath your estates [to the child] ... so you may have comfort of him, and he may bear up your name.'[159] This would give individual single men the chance to establish familial legacies for themselves, as well as to serve their communities by alleviating the difficult circumstances of 'near kinsmen, or poor neighbours, to whom God has granted a lovely off-spring.'[160] For those not inclined to child-rearing, Heywood provided simple directions to 'lay out more for God … Honour the Lord with your substance. Buy Bibles and Catechisms for poor Children. Maintain them at School. Relieve the poor.'[161]

Historians of manhood are, of course, aware of the impact of religion on society and culture. Shepard, for example, is careful in her consideration of the differing status and denominations of writers who produced conduct books in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and indicates instances where authors included Biblical parables and precepts in their writing.[162] However, the approach of Shepard and other historians of gender neglects the accessibility of the Bible itself as a source through which concepts of gender and manhood were disseminated to readers. While the most culturally-dominant Biblical narrative in the early modern period was certainly 'be fruitfull and multiply,' historians have underestimated the significance of a chapter-and-verse approach to Bible reading and thus have overlooked that early modern theologians often drew guidance directly from short passages of text.[163] Most importantly to this work on single men, Paul the Apostle wrote several epistles to the congregation at Corinth which included directions for the conduct of the married and single. In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul advised 'to the unmarried and widowes, It is good for them if they abide even as I,' simultaneously confirming his own status as a single man whilst also advocating for the congregants at Corinth to remain single.[164] This does not mean, however, that early Christians were generally single. Biblical scholar Brian Robinson argues that Paul's admission of singleness would have been considered as 'shameful and deviant … legally and socially transgressive' in the early church as it would be today, and as it would also have been regarded

[159] Oliver Heywood, *The best entail, or, Dying parents living hopes for their surviving children* (London, 1693), p. 66 and pp. 66-67.
[160] Heywood, *The best entail*, p. 66.
[161] Heywood, *The best entail*, p. 68.
[162] Shepard, *Meanings of manhood*, pp. 70-72 and p. 25.
[163] Genesis 1:28.
[164] 1 Corinthians 7:1-40. Neither Koine Greek nor Hebrew differentiated between bachelor and widowed men so it remains unclear as to whether Paul was describing himself as a bachelor or widower. Early surviving Koine excerpts use term ἄγαμος (agamos), which was non-gendered and indicated that a person was presently single but not necessarily celibate, see Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* (Grand Rapids, 1987), pp. 286-287.

in the early modern period.[165] A deliberate choice to avoid (re)marriage prevented a man from attaining 'the broader Greek and Roman ideals of masculinity' that existed in the first century, but it also allowed Paul – and early modern theologians reflecting on 1 Corinthians 7 – to deliberately position themselves as subordinates of Christ.[166] The practical support that single men could offer the church through donations of money or time, as described by Baxter and Heywood, was therefore rewarded by the suggestion that single men could remain lifelong students in theology. *A Check to debauchery* (1692) emphasised that it was the single men, not the married ones, who were 'always sitting at the feet of Jesus and incessantly attending on the service of God.'[167] Singleness was therefore not Christ-like, but allowed proximity to Christ. This was not only a reminder for male readers to be humble, whether single or not, but also an implicit warning about the corrupting force of popery and the false authority that directed the worship of Catholics away from the authority of scripture.[168]

The emergence of Methodism in the eighteenth century and its positioning of scripture as the primary authority in Christianity provided further opportunities to explore the relationship between singleness, the Bible, and manhood. While the poem *The Pleasures of a Single Life* provided a semi-ironic praise of singleness as an escape from the terrors of cuckoldry, John Wesley's *Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life* (1743) provides perhaps the only example of a text which was wholly dedicated to examining and uplifting the lives of single men. Whereas earlier texts referenced parts of 1 Corinthians 7, Wesley performed a line-by-line breakdown of the chapter, accompanied by translations into contemporary English with the intention of producing a text 'short and so plain that every reader of a Common Capacity might understand it.'[169]

Wesley began the text by stating that marriage was an honourable estate, but that Paul's teachings on singleness were 'peremptory' directions from God.[170] Those who remained single in adulthood were recipients of an invaluable 'gift' in Wesley's eyes.[171] Paul's suggestion that 'if they cannot conteine, let them marry: for it is better to marrie then [sic] to burne' was

[165] Brian Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men: Paul's rhetoric of gender and power in 1 Corinthians* (Lanham, 2019), p. 143
[166] Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, p. 189.
[167] Anonymous, *A Check to debauchery*, pp. 32-33.
[168] A reference is made to those who 'pretend to others, that they have … new instructions, new lights from Heaven … This Character is so plain that I need not point out the Persons concerned,' see Anonymous, *A Check to debauchery*, pp. 39-40.
[169] John Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage and a Single Life, second edition* (Bristol, 1743), p. 1.
[170] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 7.
[171] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 8.

interpreted by Wesley to mean that those who did not burn with lust, and could therefore remain chaste in a single life, were destined for special roles in the Methodist church.[172] The bodies of single men were described by Wesley as 'possessed in Sanctification and Honour, ... undefiled in both body and spirit.'[173] This esteemed status led Wesley to make the definitive statement that 'he that marrieth do well, ... but he that, having no necessity, marrieth not, does better.'[174] Single men, Wesley believed, were intended to act like the Paul the Apostle himself, to travel from place to place and spread the message of Methodism. Like Baxter and Heywood, Wesley remained single for much of his adult life, and did not marry until 1751, when he was 48. His diaries show he continued to advocate for singleness amongst his followers after his marriage, and after his informal separation from his wife he published a slightly revised version of his earlier text, re-titled as *Thoughts on a Single Life* (1765), suggesting he continued to actively consider and revisit his own position on singleness beyond the period surveyed in this thesis.[175]

Despite the likely restriction in its appeal to only those following Wesleyan Methodist teachings, Wesley's rarified approach to the single life provides deeper insight into the relationship between gender and singleness than the texts with had come before, both within and beyond the moralistic and theological spheres of discourse. Although he did not outline any specific practices that single men should adhere to or emulate, Wesley recognised the social and emotional difficulties of the single life, and believed that to endure them was to face 'Hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.'[176] In doing so, Wesley acknowledged the well-established presumption that single men were sexually intemperate, and advised that service to Christ allowed bachelors and widowers to 'avoid fornication.'[177] Wesley framed this argument by suggesting that those men who 'find redemption' in God would feel their 'lust vanish away,' while those who did not 'look unto Jesus Day and Night, will soon be weak again, like another Man.'[178] Robinson suggests that the framing of the unmarried life as a kind of 'self-control' in 1 Corinthians 7 means that Paul's words 'normalise and exalt an otherwise marginal and subversive activity,' and this reading of the text is clear in Wesley's early modern interpretation

[172] 1 Corinthians 7:9; and Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 9.
[173] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 9
[174] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 10; and paraphrasing 1 Corinthians 7:37-38.
[175] Four days after his wedding, Wesley wrote in his diary 'I met the single men and showed them on how many accounts it was good for those who had received that gift from God, to remain "single for the kingdom of heaven's sake"; unless where a particular case might be an exception to the general rule,' see 6 February 1752, John Wesley, *The Journal of John Wesley*, ed. Percy Parker (Chicago, 1951), p. 196; and see John Wesley, *Thoughts on a Single Life* (London, 1765).
[176] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 11.
[177] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 8.
[178] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, pp. 8-10.

of scripture.[179] By making explicit reference to sexual temptation, and by presuming that is was equally experienced by all men, Wesley nullified the power of sexual intemperance as a criticism of singleness by emphasising that sexual self-mastery was difficult, but possible, to attain. In doing so, Wesley carved out a new identity for single, religious men by suggesting that single living required effort, control, and self-management and thus constituted a positive identity. Wesley still envisioned singleness as a submissive role, but one which served, honoured, and most importantly, protected Christ and his church; this gave bachelors and widowers opportunities to 'rejoice' and 'be exceeding glad' about their marital status.[180] By arguing that spiritual strength originated from constant sexual self-governing, singleness was, for the first time in protestant discourse, realistically presented as an alternative lifestyle through which men could attain some semblance of respectable (though not patriarchal) manhood.

### *Conclusion: (cultural) expectations versus (social) reality*

What emerges from this analysis of texts is a remarkable consistency in depiction of the bachelor and widower from 1650 to 1750, a period which is often credited with the significant changes in the way that people thought about gender, society, and culture. Even the new forms of print which emerged during this period, such as the periodical, shared the opinions of single maleness established in older formats. Although bachelor- and widowerhood carried some traits which made them distinct from each other, the single life in general was defined by solitariness, idleness, and sexual desire both across time as well as across genres. Male singleness was deemed to be antagonistic to the ideals of the married father who acted as head of the household, and thus was fixed to its status as anti-patriarchal.

As such, the single man's place in the culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was defined by an inversion of normative masculine behaviours, providing a stock character through which authors could explore more intangible contemporary concepts. The stereotypes single maleness were used to invoke anxieties about England's low population, the inevitability of female adultery, and the necessary phobia of Catholics in the face of the Exclusion Crisis and ongoing religious war in Europe. Across the different forms of discourse, particular emphasis was placed on the single man's unchecked reproductive capacity in contrast to the ordered and useful biological offspring resulting from a marriage. The single man represented in early modern print culture was therefore denied any access to the tenets of

[179] Robinson, *Being Subordinate Men*, p. 189.
[180] Wesley, *Thoughts on Marriage*, p. 12.

patriarchal manhood, nor did he submit to the hierarchy of such a system. Even the small number of works which depicted the single life as enjoyable or rewarding, such as *The Pleasures* or Wesley's *Thoughts on Marriage*, served to reinforce the notion of inherent difference between single and married men by suggesting that there was no elision of experiences or behavioural traits between marital statuses. As a result, the bachelor and widower were culturally classed as a social other.

While this serves to confirm Shepard's findings that some forms of early modern manhood existed in 'tension' with patriarchal ideals, it also raises questions about the extent to which the cultural image of male singleness accurately reflected social reality.[181] Shadwell's 1676 play *The Virtuoso* provides an opportunity to examine potential interactions between printed works and practice. The play combines typical elements of Restoration comedy with a more unusual contemporary satire of the Royal Society. Its plot focuses on two young men whose love for the two nieces of the titular scientific virtuoso, Nicholas Gimcrack, leads them to pose as followers of his absurd experimental science in the hope that they will be invited into his home. When Robert Hooke attended the third night of the play at the Dorset Garden Theatre he was apparently horrified by what he felt to be a satire of himself in the play, writing in his diary 'Damned Doggs. *Vindica me Deus* [may God avenge me]. People almost pointed.'[182] Although Hooke's writing style is more elusive than descriptive, he gives the impression in his diary that his associates also believed that Hooke was being satirised in the play. He described how a colleague 'Flountingly smiled' when they discussed the play together, and he felt himself to be the victim of a 'dog trick' when a companion brought up the play at a dinner party, leading the host's wife to ask him about it.[183]

Historians and literary scholars have been willing to accept Hooke's claim that he was the target of a character assassination in the play.[184] It is known that Shadwell dedicated his early plays to the Duke of Newcastle, whose wife, Margaret Cavendish, was a vocal critic of Hooke.[185] Two of the experiments performed by Gimcrack in the play, a study of insects under microscopes and an attempt to map the moon, were described by Hooke in his 1665 book

[181] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, p. 249.
[182] 2 June 1676, Robert Hooke, *The Diary of Robert Hooke M.A, M.D., F.R.S, 1672-1680*, eds. Henry Robinson and Walter Adams (London, 1968), p. 235.
[183] 3 June 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 235; and 25 June 1676, Hooke, *Diary of*, pp. 238-239.
[184] Ian Lawson, 'Bears in Eden, or, this is not the garden you're looking for: Margaret Cavendish, Robert Hooke and the limits of natural philosophy,' *The British Journal for the History of Science* 48, 4 (2015): pp. 596-597; and Tita Chico, 'Gimcrack's Legacy: Sex, Wealth, and the Theatre of Experimental Philosophy,' *Comparative Drama* 42, 1 (2008): p. 31
[185] Lawson, 'Bears in Eden:' p. 597.

*Micrographia*.[186] It is therefore usually assumed that Gimcrack was the character who had caused all the offence. But Shadwell wrote in the prologue of the play that no one character was drawn from one real figure, instead he had 'scatter'd follies' throughout.[187] Hooke also did not confirm which figure gave him the greatest offence upon his viewing of the work. Thus while Gimcrack may have represented Hooke intellectually, historians have perhaps underestimated that the character of Sir Formal Trifle, an orator and Gimcrack's most loyal follower, also provided opportunities for Shadwell to assassinate Hooke's character.

Trifle was made out to be a fool, intellectually, socially, and sexually, with another character in the play describing him as 'the greatest Master of Tropes and Figures: The most Ciceronian Coxcomb … very much abounding in words, and very much defective in sense.'[188] Throughout the play Trifle gives long and barely discernible speeches in praise of a variety of topics, including Gimcrack's ridiculous work, for which the other characters mock him. Gimcrack also does not appreciate Trifle's presence, and so although Trifle introduces himself to others as Gimcrack's friend, he is clearly his subordinate. He has no identity for himself beyond giving 'toadying consent … [to Gimcracks's] pursuit of worthless knowledge,' as Andrew Black summarises.[189] This social and occupational position mirrored Hooke's status as a recipient of patronage by a more established scientist, Robert Boyle, whose experiments were also mocked in the play.[190] Trifle's constant and unappreciated oratory appears to reference Hooke's position as a professor at Gresham College and the host of the Cutlerian lectures, which were intended to provide a free scientific and mathematical education to the public; despite the charitable nature of these lectures, Hooke noted in his diary that they were often poorly attended.[191]

Most importantly for the context of this chapter, the character of Trifle was a bachelor, and his blindness to his own inferior socio-intellectual position was also reflected in his

[186] Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso* (London, 1676), Act 3, Scene I, p. 42; and Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 5, Scene I, p. 71.
[187] Shadwell, 'Prologue' in *The Virtuoso*, p. iii.
[188] Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 1, Scene I, p. 4
[189] Andrew Black, 'The Orator in the Laboratory: Rhetoric and Experimentation in Thomas Shadwell's The Virtuoso,' *Restoration* 37, 1 (2013): p. 4
[190] Blood transfusion is referenced in Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 2, Scene II, pp. 31-34; and bottled air is referenced in Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 4, Scene III, pp. 72-73. Robert Boyle began his experiments on blood during the 1650s, and his experiments on air in 1667, see Harriet Knight and Michael Hunter, 'Robert Boyle's *Memoirs for the Natural History of Human Blood* (1684): Print, Manuscript and the Impact of Baconianism in Seventeenth-Century Medical Science,' *Medical History* 51, 2 (2007): pp. 147-148.
[191] Hooke noted that three members of the public and two of his scientific colleagues attended his lecture on 28 November 1672, see 28 November 1672, Hooke, *Diary of*, pp. 14-15; and he describes waiting in the lecture-hall of Gresham College on 22 May 1679 to begin his lecture only for no-one to attend, see 22 May 1679, Hooke, *Diary of*, p. 413.

inability to discern an appropriate romantic partner, despite his lustful nature. When locked in a room with a man disguised as a ladies' maid, he attempts a sodomitical rape: 'This Lady, joyn'd with darkness and opportunity, … has so inflam'd me, that I must farther attempt her chastity: … You have provok'd me contrary to my gentle temper even to a Rape.'[192] By the end of the play, Trifle meets a fitting end, tricked into marrying a real ladies' maid who is dressed in the clothes of her aristocratic mistress. Once this is revealed, the other male characters of the play laugh at Trifle, and the mistress of the maid remarks 'she's as good a Gentlewomen as you a Gentleman.'[193] This characterisation and comeuppance obviously carried the possibility to deeply offend by suggesting that the Hooke-like character's aggressive sexuality deserved to be ridiculed and punished. Yet it was unlike the jokes made at the expense of Hooke's public-facing character, which focused on his strange experiments, his poor oratory skills, and his dependence on another man for employment. The sexual satire presented on stage appears significantly different from the lived experiences recorded by Hooke in his diary.

While both Trifle and Hooke certainly exhibited sexually predatory behaviours, they were distinct in a crucial way: Trifle's brutish threats of sodomitical rape and sexually-motivated marriage to a woman of lower status were shocking (and entertaining) but conform to the general cultural stereotypes of the sexually intemperate bachelor rather than criticisms of Hooke's actual behaviour. Hooke's diaries reveal that he expected sex from his servants and subsequently groomed his niece, Grace, once she came to live with him (although the diaries suggest the abuses of his niece did not begin until after the play had debuted).[194] These illicit, veering on illegal, sexual practices were conducted exclusively within the private boundaries of Hooke's household-family, and therefore while actively pursued by Hooke, they appear to have remained secret and generally unknown to Hooke's contemporaries. Trifle's marriage to a ladies' maid was also prurient, but unlike Hooke, he was unaware of his partner's economic status. Trifle meets with the maid at a masquerade ball, and comments specifically on her 'Bracelet and Pendants' as identifiers of her elite status.[195] His desire for sex leads him not to question her 'odd fancy' of marrying in their masquerade costumes, and describes himself 'struck dumb' by the revelation of her true standing.[196] Furthermore, it is difficult to interpret Trifle's marriage at the end of the play as an attack on Hooke's lifelong singleness because

[192] Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 4, Scene I, p. 56 and p. 58.
[193] Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 5, Scene IV, p. 98.
[194] See Chapter 3, pp. 164-165.
[195] Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 5, Scene III, p. 89.
[196] Shadwell, *The Virtuoso*, Act 5, Scene IV, p. 97.

marriages were such a central element to the resolutions of plots in the Restoration theatre.[197] Having Trifle be married off to an unsuitable woman indicated to the audience the potential consequences of unrestrained sexual desire, a trope understandable to a far broader audience than that of Hooke and his immediate circle, and again a narrative which had already been used in other contemporary works to advise men against making hasty matches.[198]

As such, *The Virtuoso* highlights the limits of a solely social or cultural approach to the history of singleness and manhood. Shadwell intended to (and appeared to have successfully carried out) an attack on the character of a rival intellectual. He made a mockery of elements of Hooke's public persona that were important to his masculine identity; his occupation, his status within his social and intellectual circles, and his singleness. This was acutely obvious to Hooke and others in his social circle. But Shadwell also produced a work of general appeal; Trifle was a fool character intended to incite laughter from an audience who likely had no familiarity with Hooke or his work. Trifle's foolishness and sexually predatory actions existed within the wider context of the Restoration theatre and humorous discourses about singleness and was intended to be representative of those tropes and stereotypes, rather than the actions of an individual single man.

This contrast helps historians to understand the differences between the lived experiences of single men more generally. The sting of Trifle's characterisation would have little to no relevance to single men who were not Hooke; Oliver Heywood, for example, was only half a decade older than Hooke but as a widower with children and religious leader resident in Yorkshire, his lived experiences were obviously very different from Hooke's. The criticism of bachelorhood made by Shadwell would be irrelevant to his practice and indeed to his own compassionate approach to male singleness as expressed in *The Best Entail*. The same could be said of any number of bachelors and widowers captured in the returns of the Marriage Duty Assessment, probate, or life-writing as seen in previous chapters. These sources show single men engaging with the ideals of patriarchal manhood and enforcing patriarchal authority through their status as heads of households, creation of familial lineages through testamentary bequests, and their integration into their local communities harmoniously alongside married men. The experiences of single men, therefore, were not bound to or had their actions directed

[197] Gill, 'Gender, sexuality, and marriage,' p. 191.
[198] A pamphlet from the previous year began by framing the sexual debauchery of young men as a major factor which prevented them from finding genuine love, see Susanna Jesserson, *A bargain for bachelors* (London, 1675), pp. 3-4 and p. 7. N.B. Prudent choice of spouse was also a popular theme in ballads, and false claims to financial status by potential wives was sometimes cited as a something for men to be cautious of, see Anonymous, *Advice to batchelors, or, A caution to be careful in their choice* (London, 1685), p. 1.

by their representation in print. In reality, single men willingly upheld the tenets of patriarchal manhood where they could, blending them into the patriarchal system of early modern England.

## *Conclusion*

This study of the experiences and depictions of single men in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England adds depth and nuance to the existing study of the history of masculinity. The application of quantitative and qualitative methodologies across the chapters of this thesis has aimed to recover both the practice and representation of single men in the early modern period. The approach used is significant in overcoming the barriers to the identification of single men in early modern archival records found in other studies; the analysis of the Marriage Duty Assessment in this work has, for the first time, provided a method that can be used to systematically identify bachelors and widowers in late seventeenth-century England and trace their presence across other types of record. Indeed, the ability to reconstruct single male populations and their living arrangements through the Marriage Duty Assessment may prove useful in addressing the questions arising from this thesis. Infrequent references to the practice of sodomy amongst single men in the latter half of this thesis suggests that male singleness may have intersected with queerness during the early modern period, which could be expanded on by comparison of data from the Marriage Duty Assessment to individuals named in sodomy trials. Furthermore, the chronological scope of this thesis poses a challenge to the accepted narrative that during the eighteenth century, politeness replaced patriarchy as the dominant and most lauded form of manhood. The single men captured in this thesis displayed a concerted effort to achieve manhood on patriarchal terms, such as through headship of household-family groups, well into the eighteenth century. The finding that single male practice continually followed an established form of manhood, which required displays of self-control and authority over others, rather than embracing a new form of manhood in which sociability and agreeableness were central suggests that single men were interested in seeking out and maintaining reputations as individuals with power, even when their social standing was relatively marginal. More generally, this should indicate to historians that a re-evaluation of the transition from patriarchal to polite manhood is needed, with greater emphasis placed on aspects of continuity, rather than change.

Single men have been excluded from conventional studies of early modern manhood, and previous research which has attempted to examine single men's experiences more closely have not considered family life to be a central part of the bachelor or widower's gendered identity. Each chapter of this thesis has provided a new perspective to examine the practice and representation of single men. The use of tax records from the Marriage Duty Assessment in the first chapter demonstrates that singleness was experienced by a wide range of men across

economic and geographic spectrums. The data indicates that there were some similarities between single men and single women in terms of demographic presence, but importantly it also underscores clear differences. The presence of bachelors in far greater numbers in London than in urban or rural areas highlights the existence of a metropolitan culture and economy which was willing and able to accommodate large numbers of unmarried men of various levels of wealth. Further, the household composition data provided by the returns highlights the frequency with which single men appeared as lodgers in the capital compared to the high rates of household headship in Bristol and Derbyshire, demonstrating that there was not one homogenous experience of bachelor- or widowerhood in early modern England.

The variety of household systems headed by and containing single men was further developed in Chapter 2, where use of probate records provided invaluable insight into the kin and non-kin relationships possessed by single men. Beneficiaries named in wills allowed for an analysis of the extent of their social networks, and further analysis of the language used to describe these relationships revealed that single men's links to kin and non-kin were not marginal or fleeting but rather affective and valuable. Use of phrases which expressed love for beneficiaries, and carefully structured bequests which ensured gifts and property would stay in the control of a nominated group indicated that single men's testamentary bequests purposefully rewarded those that they shared meaningful relationships with. These choices were not made simply because they did not have wives or children to leave their goods to; instead, bachelors and widowers adapted the conventional patterns of estate transmission to create familial legacies of their own choosing.

Life-writing from diaries and autobiographies was then used in Chapter 3 to establish how single men negotiated their familial and social networks in daily life. As with their probate, this chapter made clear that although they had no wife to provide for, single men did not exist in isolation from others. Although their household-families were not nuclear in structure, the life-writing consulted underscored that single men organised their households, families, and wider social networks within the framework of patriarchal authority, suggesting that their lived experiences were shaped by and served to uphold normative forms of manhood usually associated with married life. Single men therefore pursued and achieved the same standards of living as married men. Even their sexual relationships, while illicit, followed monogamous patterns. Crucially, while single men's authority was sometimes challenged or even rejected by those in their households or communities, many others were willing to accept them, with both relatives and employees obeying the authority of single male household heads. Thus

diaries and autobiographies reveal that the bonds with kin and non-kin were not simply maintained as a means to avoid being married, but that ties of family and friendship could sustain a single man's lifestyle in the short or long term.

However, taking practice and representation together has complicated what may otherwise have been a simple narrative of historiographical revision; the final chapter of this thesis makes clear that the perception of bachelor- and widowerhood in popular culture revolved around their apparent rejection of family and society in general. Particular emphasis on narratives of sexual intemperance served to position the bachelor and widower as the diametric opposite of the ideal married patriarch, with the single man's selfish interest in his own needs forcing married men into cuckoldry. While this aligns with the expectations of historians, it also indicates that a cultural approach alone cannot provide a complete view of the past. Distrust or even outright attacks on single men in print were informed by contemporary anxieties about England's decreasing population, the ever-present threat of Catholicism, and the possibility that any woman might commit adultery – they were not actually concerned with representing singleness in an accurate way. Even in cases where a living single man was purported to be satirised in print, his depiction was based on what audiences expected to see, rather than making criticisms of his real lived experiences. The image of the single man as isolated from and actively rejecting the idea of a settled family life must therefore be seen as a cultural construct and not representative of the actual experiences of early modern single men. By understanding that representation was a part, but not the entirety, of single men's presence in the early modern period, this thesis encourages historians to look beyond the marginal position given to bachelors and widowers in studies of masculinity.

This work has demonstrated that while single men were not married, they were active participants in a variety of affective kin and non-kin networks. Details from contemporary tax records, probate, and life-writing indicate that these relationships were deliberately sought out, providing men with rich familial and social networks through which bachelors and widowers alike cultivated reputations as authority figures along patriarchal lines. Although printed works suggested that single men were sexually dangerous, in reality early modern bachelors and widowers lived alongside, rather than outside, the nuclear and conjugal ideals of marriage. They often thought about marriage; they sometimes even got married. But their singleness was not defined by marriage. Bachelors and widowers had their own domestic, familial, and social networks and that allowed them to establish and maintain their reputations as men.

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