Narratives of Exchange in Early Modern London, 1580-1600

Thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Rebecca Catherine Tomlin

Birkbeck, University of London

2016

Declaration

I declare that the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Rebecca Catherine Tomlin

Abstract

This study examines some of the stories through which the inhabitants of early modern London comprehended and negotiated their rapidly changing city. The method that it follows is the investigation of the memoranda of alms collection petitions made at St Botolph's without Aldgate between 1583 and 1600, and drama that was contemporary to those collections. Special attention is paid to *Edward the Fourth* (Heywood, 1599), *A Warning for Fair Women* (anon., c.1597), *An Humorous Day's Mirth* (Chapman, 1599) and *The Fair Maid of the West* (Heywood, c.1603). The methodology adopted reads the alms petitions and plays alongside each other to show how they worked together in a common cultural discourse to shape ideas of neighbourhood in early modern London, and also to consider how the drama of the period emerges from and shapes that discourse. Both petitions and plays are found to be performative texts, expressing spatial practices that articulate early modern Londoners' experiences of their city, especially in terms of charity, commerce and neighbourhood. The complexity and reciprocity of exchange is enacted in the process of narration, revealing some of the many ways in which early modern Londoners comprehended and shaped their city. The people of early modern London, as playgoers and charitable donors are shown to be constituted by playing and petitioning. Stories of charitable and commercial exchange are shown to shape the social relationships that constitute London's spaces.

Contents

Acknowledgements

My thanks are due first to the two supervisors with whom I have been extremely fortunate to work. Without Adam Smyth's help and encouragement I would not have embarked on this project; he has been generous in his support and guidance throughout. Sue Wiseman sparked my interest in Renaissance drama as a BA student, and her experience and insightful criticism has enabled me to complete this project. I am grateful to both of them and wish only that I had talked less and listened more when we met. Gillian Woods offered invaluable feedback on early draft chapters and other good advice along the way, and I am also grateful to Anthony Bale and Isabel Davies for their encouragement. I consider myself fortunate to have been taught by many wonderful academics over the years at Birkbeck and to each one I offer my gratitude.

Much of my research has been carried out at Senate House Library and I thank the librarians there for their assistance, especially Charles Harrowell and Bianca Bristow. I am also grateful for help received from Sarah Wheale at the Bodleian Library, Vanessa Wilkie at the Huntington, librarians at Birkbeck library and the British Library and the archivists at the London Metropolitan Archives. Dr Mark Merry of the Institute of Historical Research was especially generous in sharing the Institute's transcriptions of the St Botolph's Memoranda after the webpage that they supported was closed in December 2014.

I am grateful for the financial support that I have received which enabled me to carry out this project. An Arts Research Studentship Bursary from Birkbeck enabled me to embark on the first year of the project and The Arts and Humanities Research Council's Doctoral Award allowed me to continue and complete it. I also received funding from Birkbeck to attend the 2014 meeting of The Shakespeare Association of America in St Louis, USA. I am grateful to Chris Highley, organiser of the 'Theatre and Neighbourhood' seminar at that conference, and my fellow participants, who offered extremely valuable feedback on the paper that I contributed, which became part of Chapter Two of this thesis.

I have been a student at Birkbeck for many years now and am profoundly grateful to have found an institution that accommodates those of us who only find out what we really wanted to do rather late in life. I have learnt much from my fellow students, especially Anita Butler, Katherine Hunt, Mike Leahy, Simon Smith and Jackie Watson, who have demonstrated that finishing is possible and that there is life after the doctorate. Among my peer group, Beatrice Bazell and Emma Curry have provided tea

and sympathy when the going got tough, while Sue Jones and Cat Griffiths were reliable providers of 'a pint of wine' and some light relief. One of the most rewarding elements of my time at Birkbeck has been my involvement in the Birkbeck Early Modern Society, and I would like to thank my colleagues there for their continued spirit of intellectual enquiry and their friendship. The many speakers who we have been fortunate to welcome to the Society have provided an inspiring model of academic generosity.

Finally, but not least, I would like to thank my mother, Elizabeth Williams, who instilled in me the belief (not always justified) that I could do anything to which I set my mind. Lizzie and Jim have put up with much distraction and absence on my part throughout this process but I hope that I have shown them that learning is a rewarding and life-time process. Finally, Julian, while at times mystified by the way that what started as a hobby has got so out of hand, has nevertheless been unfailing supportive all along the way and I could not have done this without him.

List of Illustrations

Abbreviations

Catalogues and Databases

The following abbreviations are used throughout, in place of full bibliographic citation:

CCed: *Clergy of the Church of England Database,* directed by Arthur Burns, Kenneth Fincham and Stephen Taylor < http://theclergydatabase.org.uk> [accessed 29 May 2015]

DEEP: *Database of Early English Playbooks*, ed. by Alan B. Farmer and Zachary Lesser <http://deep.sas.upenn.edu> [accessed 10 May 2015]

EBBA: *English Broadside Ballad Archive*, University of California at Santa Barbara <http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu >[accessed 10 May 2015]

ESTC: *English Short Title Catalogue* <http://estc.bl.uk> [accessed 10 May 2015]

LEME: *Lexicons of Early Modern English* ed. by Ian Lancashire <www.leme.library.utoronto.ca> [accessed 10 May 2015]

OED: *Oxford English Dictionary* <www.oed.com> [accessed 10 May 2015]

ODNB: *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* <www.oxforddnb.com> [accessed 10 May 2015]

ReScript: Website of the IHR's project of collaborative editing of historical texts online <www.rescript.org> [decommissioned December 2014]

STC: *A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of English books printed abroad 1475-1640,* ed. by A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, 2nd edn, ed. by W. A. Jackson, F.S.Ferguson and K.F. Pantzer, as cited in *ESTC.*

Wiggins & Richardson Catalogue: Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson eds., *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) vol.III (2013); vol.IV (2014); vol.V (2015).

Wing: *Short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America, and of English books printed in other countries, 1641-1700*, ed. by Donald Goddard Wing, as cited in *ESTC.*

Institutions

LMA: London Metropolitan Archives

SHL: Senate House Library, University of London

IHR: Institute of Historical Research, University of London

Notes on the Text

[1] All quotations of primary texts, including names, retain original spelling and punctuation. For example 'John Smith' may be shown as 'Jhon Smithe' following the manuscript spelling. In order to avoid confusion, where there are a number of different spellings of the same name, for example, 'Heaze', 'Heasse', 'Hayes' and 'Hayze' a single spelling is adopted throughout, usually following the first use cited (in this case 'Heasse'). For clarity, speech headings have been expanded, regularized and re-set in small capitals throughout. The long 's' is regularized.

[2] Dates are usually given in modern form, but extracts from manuscripts give the old form year as shown in the source, together with the modern form. For example, dates given between January and March 1594 are shown as 1594/5.

[3] Full footnote references to material printed before 1640 include details of author, title, year of publication and bibliographic number, for example. 'George Chapman, *A pleasant comedy entituled: An humerous dayes myrth* (1599), *STC* 4987'. Unless explicitly noted otherwise the place of publication is London. Titles follow *ESTC,* and bibliographic numbers following *STC* are given as the most reliable way of identifying early printed material.

[4] Material printed after 1640 is referenced as in [3] above, but with *Wing* reference rather than *STC*.

[5] The seven volumes of the Memoranda of the Churchwardens of St Botolph's, Aldgate (bound non-sequentially) are kept at the *LMA* (P69/BOT2/A/019/MS 09234/001-007). References give the *LMA* reference and the original folio numbers. Where two books are bound in one volume (volumes 1, 2 and 5), references to the component books are given in the order of the binding as '/1', '/2' or '/3', followed by the original folio number. The date of the entry is also given to facilitate use of the Rescript database. For example, 9234/1/1 fol.35^r (16 February 1586/87).

[6] All play quotations are from early printed editions with the exception of quotations from works by Shakespeare. Full bibliographic reference as in [3] to the edition used is given in a footnote when each play first appears.

[7] Plays are referred to using titles taken from the cited modern edition.

[8] Play quotations are accompanied by a citation in body text parentheses, including a page signature for the early printed edition quoted, and a line reference to an authoritative modern edition where one exists, e.g. (sig. K3^v; 2729-32). For details of the modern editions followed, see: Bibliography, '[no.5] Modern Play Editions'. Shakespearean quotations are supported by modern act, scene and line numbers taken from *The Complete Works*, ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 2nd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

[9] Details of earliest performance date are given in body text parentheses according to *DEEP*. Farmer and Lesser generally give a single, 'best guess' year, as well as a more cautious date span. The former are cited as probable performance dates but where the precise date of first performance is of particular significance to my argument, I discuss the relevant evidence in the body text.

[10] Where available, birth and death dates are included for individuals at their first mention following the *ODNB*.

Introduction

Narratives of Exchange in Early Modern London

> For one william Stone a Shoomaker of Highe Holborne whose Howse fell
> Downe upon Him wherby He was greatly Bruysed and also Hindred in
> consideration wheareof He was Lycensed by dyveres noble men to gather the
> goodwilles of the well disposed people Inhabitinge wthin the cowntie
> of Midlesex and the towne of westminster.
> (Churchwardens' Memoranda, St Botolph's Aldgate, 1589) [1]

This thesis examines some of the stories through which early modern Londoners
negotiated and comprehended their rapidly changing city. The method that it follows is
to investigate two forms of narrative, the first being charitable petitions heard in a
London church in the late sixteenth-century, and the second, the drama of the 1590s in
which London was first presented on stage to its inhabitants. It starts from the
assumption that bringing together these two kinds of evidence, one historical, one
fictional, reshapes our understanding of how the stories that they tell worked for the
people of early modern London. In reading these two forms of story together, it aims to
show how they worked alongside each other in a common cultural discourse to shape
ideas of neighbourhood in late sixteenth-century London, and also to consider how the
drama of the period emerges from, and shapes that discourse. The study uses the
detailed examination of the collections taken at a London church to show that they are a
medium through which the identities of supplicant and donor are mutually formed, and
that they reveal how social relationships of neighbourhood and community are
expressed in narrative as spatial practices. Located just outside the city wall, but within
the city's jurisdiction, the church of St Botolph's, Aldgate occupied a space which is
read as both liminal and a place of transition, and the study uses the parish to examine
both the lived experience of London in the late sixteenth century, and attempts to
comprehend and shape that experience on stage. [2]

1. **Plays and Petitions**

This study aims to comprehend how the people of early modern London understood and
experienced their city as a neighbourhood, and how they used stories to work through
and express that experience. Neighbourhood, as will be discussed later, is both a
geographical and historical concept, and a practised and affective one. Bringing two

---

[1] 9234/2/1 fol.43ᵛ (1 April 1589). For full information on referencing entries in the St Botolph's
Memoranda see 'Notes on the Text' [5].

[2] There were four churches dedicated to St Botolph, all situated outside the city gates, at Aldgate,
Billingsgate, Aldersgate and Bishopsgate. References to 'St Botolph's' in this study are to the church
without Aldgate.

types of evidence together allows for a brighter illumination of concepts encompassed in neighbourliness, such as trust, credit and obligation, by shining light on them from both fictional and historical expressions of the lived experience of being an early modern Londoner. Conversely, and using a different metaphor of light and sight, neighbourhood is a lens through which both petitions and drama can be read. Each type of evidence has its own limitations; drama may be, and often is, elliptical or inconsistent in its ideology and as an imaginative work is under no obligation to form a coherent or authoritative statement about anything other than its own imagined universe, and may choose not to do even that. Characters may speak with irony, deceit, delusion or misapprehension, and commercial drama is almost certainly both made up and spiced up. As evidence, drama is partial and selective but, this study argues, it allows us access to practised and affective aspects of lived experience that may be missing from historical sources.

In contrast to the fictive nature of drama, the historical archives of church Memoranda, and especially the petitions, may give the alluring impression that they can situate us in a real place at a particular time, thereby providing a site in which the fictional experiences of the plays can be grounded in some form of historical reality. However, as evidence this source also has many limitations; like drama, it is selective and partial and reflects the conditions of its preparation and survival. This study looks to the archive for evidence about ways about thinking about and responding to the petitioners who were allowed to appeal to the parishioners of St Botolph's- to whom did neighbourly duty extend, who elicited charity, what form of words was used to invoke these obligations and emotions? While it looks to drama for fictionalised reflections on emotion and experience, this study also finds qualitative as well as quantative evidence in close readings of the Memoranda. Since no single type of evidence can tell us all of the things that we want to know, this study puts together two disparate sources that share a common mode, that of story-telling, and uses them to explore different aspects of the idea of neighbourhood. Reflexively, neighbourhood becomes a way to understand the work that both the petitions and the plays are doing for the city that produced them.

The study begins with a discussion of the memoranda of more than three hundred alms collections gathered at St Botolph's between 1583 and 1600.[3] Each

---

[3] The Churchwardens' Memorandum books cover the period from December 1583 to June 1600 continuously, except for the periods between 22 January1585 and November 1586; and from 14 December 1592 to 8 September 1593. Further memorandum books kept between 1616 and 1625 do not form part of this study. The Memoranda have never been edited or published and in total amount to 2,584 folios, 73,706 lines of text, and 1,326,571 words (source: www.rescript.org). Digitised images are

presents a narrative that is rhetorically structured to elicit alms from the parishioners of St Botolph's and this study explores the generic characteristics and language that are employed by petitioners to do this work. Alms petitions are examined as a medium which both expresses the social relationships produced by, and producing space, and shapes people's experience of that space. In the case of the petitions the space is that of the church and the parish of St Botolph's and the social relationships are those that are formed between petitioners and parish, between parishioners and church, and between parishioners and each other. The study goes on to develop ways of reading drama of the period as engaging with the same notions of community, neighbourhood and the identity of individuals found in the petitions as part of the complex network of relationships created by urban life. By tracing some of the ways in which the stories told on stage articulate and organise the spaces in which its inhabitants experience the city, this study explores ways in which the stage is a place where the social relations of Londoners are enacted. Together with the St Botolph's petitions, this study focuses on drama of the 1590's, selecting some of the earliest work to present contemporary London on stage as media through which we can attempt to unravel the webs of meaning within which the people who produced the plays, and for whom they were produced, lived their lives. The drama of this period has been under-examined and under-used as an expression of the lived experience of the city from which it emerged, in part because of a critical neglect of plays that fall outside the 'city comedy' genre (which is discussed in more detail below). Julie Sanders has argued that 'drama was one of the key means by which early modern English society strove to make sense of space' and this study of some of the earliest plays to depict the spaces of early modern London offers insight into the ways in which the cultural outputs of the city made sense of those spaces and the relationships which arose in them.[4]

As a practice which was inextricably tied to place, this study begins with close attention to the collection of alms in church, a practice which aimed to convert the church into a space of neighbourly compassion. Alms petitioning, as will be shown, is an affective genre of story-telling which seeks to move emotions, and more tangibly,

---

available on www.ancestry.co.uk. Transcriptions were available on www.rescript.org, a collaborative editing platform established by the Institute of Historical Research but the ReScript website was decommissioned in December 2014. The data was deposited with the UK Data Archive under the following reference: Davies, M., Harding, V. and Smith, R., *Life in the Suburbs: Health, Domesticity and Status in Early Modern London, 1523-1720* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], April 2013. SN: 7244, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-7244-1>. I am very grateful to Dr Mark Merry of the Institute of Historical Research for making their files available to me after the Rescript website was decommissioned.
[4] Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.9.

cash, by evoking a sense of communal responsibility in the potential donor. The plays considered in this study offer another kind of affective medium, through which the emotional qualities of neighbourliness, including obligation, solidarity, mutual interest and charity, might be imaginatively experienced and evaluated. While both alms-seeking and playing are forms of performance in which rhetorical persuasion is employed they differ, of course, in important ways. While the poor reception of a play might be disappointing, it was unlikely to result in the immediate and life-threatening lack of food or shelter for its actors, in the way that the failure to raise 6d might do for a begging maimed soldier. On the other hand, the fortunes of players and writers were precarious, as Thomas Dekker might have testified, and roaming players were classified, as is discussed in Chapter 1, as types of rogues and vagabonds in Elizabethan anti-begging legislation.[5] Writers and players would have been acutely aware of the sudden decline in fortune, often recounted in both plays and petitions, that could rapidly reduce a person's status from prosperity to beggar. The shared performative nature of playing and alms-petitioning also points to their essential difference; while both actor and beggar must tell a convincing story, the player attempts to move his audience as a gratuitous experience of entertainment and delight, even through the catharsis of tragedy, and the fictive nature of the story he enacts is apparent to all. The alms petitioner must be entirely convincing; as this study shows, the beggar fashioned both himself as worthy recipient of alms, and the donor as judicious giver, a relationship that breaks down entirely if the petitioner is not credible. Their shared interest in affect and performance, expressed in the practices of the church and theatre, means that thinking about petitions and plays as outputs of a shared cultural moment can illuminate the ways in which each forms, and is formed by, notions of neighbourhood in early modern London.

Staged dramas and alms petitioning are both forms of story told in performance and, as this study will show, the identities of neighbour and stranger, and petitioner and donor, which are created in the performance of these purposeful narratives, are key to comprehending the experience of neighbourhood in early modern London. Using drama in both tragic and comic modes, this study considers ways in which plays can show us that the experience of urban spaces, and especially the neighbourhood, both produced, and were the product of, complex relationships and performed identities. This study attends to what characters on stage say about their experience of space in the city in

---

[5] Dekker was imprisoned in the King's Bench gaol for debt from 1513-1520. 'Dekker, Thomas (c.1572–1632)', *ODNB*.

order to understand some of the ways in which early modern notions of neighbourhood, community and credit are shaped by cultural productions including drama. The fictional narratives of the stage are considered in this study alongside the narratives of the alms petitioners in order to draw out different aspects of the ways in which stories do the work (as Michel de Certeau proposes) of transforming places into spaces, in this case, that of early modern neighbourhood. It explores the ways in which such stories 'organize the play of the changing relationships between places and spaces' in response to the rapidly transforming urban landscape of early modern London, and in the form of both plays and petitions.[6] More broadly, consideration of the ways in which the petitions participate in a contemporary discourse of begging and alms-giving, and the judgement required from participants in a culture of charity, reveals mutually constitutive relationships between the petitions, and structures of neighbourhood and community. The use of space, radiating from the church outward to the parish, the city and the realm (as in the case of the unfortunate William Stone quoted above), and the ways in which it defines neighbourhood, while also forming that neighbourhood, emerges as a fundamental concern of the Memoranda. The study goes on to show that this is also an emerging concern of the contemporary drama. Petitions are highly mediated narratives and the nature and effect of the interventions that impose themselves between the petitioners and the present day reader is also considered in detail in order to draw out the effect of such mediation on the rhetorical work that the petitions do.

As this study shows, the alms petitions overtly attempted to shape a particular set of responses from their audience. As performances they created multiple and potentially contradictory identities for petitioner and donor, giver and receiver, identities which drew on notions of good judgement in order to fashion a prudent donor. In the theatre, stories were, of course, directed at a different purpose, that is entertainment, but this study finds that drama also models its audience as discerning and judicious play-goers. The plays selected for study are roughly contemporaneous with the alms petitions and were therefore first performed for people who were possibly auditors of both the petitions in their church and the performances at their local playhouse. While not suggesting that a line can be drawn directly between the two types of performance, the petition and the play, this study does assume that in their reception some links may have been made, both between the performative and narrative nature of

---

[6] Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Living,* trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)*,* p.118.

each form, and the judgement required of both theatre-goer and charitable donor. The plays considered in detail in this study, Thomas Heywood's *Edward IV* and the anonymous *A Warning for Fair Women,* both tragedies, and the comedies, *The Fair Maid of the West* and *An Humorous Day's Mirth,* are selected because they engage with urban neighbourhood and the spaces in which it was experienced- taverns, ordinaries, a goldsmith's shop, the street.[7] By examining the petitions and the plays for both their own engagement with questions of space, place, performance, and for their resonances with each other, the complex relationships between fact and fiction, narrative and discourse, the city and its people are revisited and reworked throughout this study. It uses evidence of two types of performed writing, the petitions and the plays, to trace the relationships and behaviours that formed neighbourhood in early modern London.

2. Storytelling and the Spaces of Early Modern London

This study's primary source materials are the petitions heard at St Botolph's church and plays contemporary with them (the selection of which is discussed in more detail below), both forms of performance, of which traces are preserved in the play-texts and Memoranda. Although distinct and different, these spaces of church and playhouse are connected by the stories of social relations, including those of neighbourhood, that were played out in them. Thus when William Stone's story was told in church, it was intended to move 'the well disposed people' of the parish into donating money to his cause, and the coin in which their 'good will' was expressed was most often a penny.[8] A penny also paid for entry to the playhouse and the opportunity to experience another set of stories, perhaps to weep at the tragic death of Jane Shore, or laugh at George Chapman's humorous comedy. For many people in London, the penny in the alms

---

[7] Thomas Heywood, *The first and second partes of King Edward the Fourth* (1599), STC 13341. The unique copy of this edition is held at the Newberry Library, Chicago. Quotes from the text throughout are taken from the 1600 edition, STC 13342; Thomas Heywood, *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, ed. by Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005). Referred to as '*Edward IV*' in the text.
Anon., *A vvarning for faire vvomen* (1599), STC 25089; Anonymous, *A Warning for Fair Women*, ed. by Charles Dale Cannon (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975). Referred to as '*A Warning*' in the text.
Thomas Heywood, *The fair maid of the west Or*, *A girle worth gold*, first and second parts (1631), STC 13320; *The Fair Maid of the West, parts I and II,* ed. by Robert K. Turner, Jr (London: Edward Arnold,1968). Referred to as *Fair Maid* in the text.
George Chapman, *A pleasant comedy entituled: An humerous dayes myrth* (1599), STC 4987; George Chapman, *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, ed. by Charles Edelman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010). Referred to as *An Humorous Day's Mirth* in the text.
[8] Amounts collected and the number of people in attendance at a service are rarely both recorded in the Memoranda but in 1599 5 people attended a communion at which was gathered 6d for the poor box and in 1598, at a communion for 287 people, only 10 shillings and 5d was collected (125 pence). Either many communicants did not contribute or each donated less than a penny, the Memorandaum does not comment. 9234/5/2 fol.129ʳ (21 June 1599); 9234/7 fol.104ᵛ (4 June 1598).

collection was a religious obligation, while the penny for the theatre was an 'affordable luxury', a treat in which many could participate.[9] The transfer of a penny from purse to collection bowl or money pot thus connected these different modes of story-telling in very different spaces at the most material and economic level. This study proposes that, at a deeper level, petitioning and playing are story-telling forms that participate in a common conversation about urban experience which recognises the relationships that constitute neighbourhood in the changing economic, demographic and social contexts of early modern London. While other forms of evidence, say that of witness testimonies or polemical writing also seek to persuade, and share an interest in social relations, this study proposes that the petitions and dramas are distinctive in seeking to move the auditor of play or petition to participate in those relations that create the spaces of urban neighbourhood. The self-reflexive interest of early modern theatre in genre and form, which is exemplified by the Prologue to *A Warning,* with its contest between Tragedie, Hystorie and Comedie, is also found in the petitions. Thus, throughout this study attention is drawn to the ways in which drama and petitions are media of story-telling which are self-conscious about form and genre, and the ways in which they function to shape both the material and its reception. It brings together disparate genres which share a common interest in London as a space of neighbourhood and by examining them in comparison to each other, it unpicks how they operate to reflect and construct those spaces through narrative.

Crucial to understanding both the alms petitions and the plays produced in 1580s and 1590s London is a sense of the city from which they emerged. The dominant story that we have of London in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries is that the extraordinary process of change that the city was undergoing was the defining experience of its people. Paul S. Seaver for example, contextualising the work of Thomas Middleton, writes that 'London itself was changing at an unprecedented rate, providing a setting and a stage evidently at once frightening and exciting, framed by much that was old and familiar, but constantly threatening to outgrow that frame as the medieval city was transformed into England and Europe's greatest metropolis.' [10] Exponential growth in the population; a constant influx of new people, from within England and outside; outbreaks of war, famine and plague in the late sixteenth- century; and the growing importance of international trade passing through the city are all

---

[9] S.P.Cerasano, 'Theater Entrepreneurs and Economics', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama,* ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.380-395.
[10] Paul S. Seaver, 'Middleton's London' in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.59-73 (p.59).

important factors in the development of early modern London.[11] The city's population grew rapidly, from some 55,000 in 1550 to approximately 200,000 people in 1660, when the population of the next 19 biggest towns in England put together amounted to only some 136,000.[12] With high rates of death from sickness and famine, population growth was fuelled by inward migration to London; most immigrants to London arrived as young adults in their teens or early twenties and during the period 1570-1640, most adults in London had been born elsewhere, either in England, Scotland or overseas.[13] Many of the inhabitants of the city had therefore experienced life elsewhere before heading to London, and further, had exercised some kind of agency to get there. For young Londoners who were newly arrived in the city, their perspective was one of personal change and new experiences. Those who were older, or native to London, would have witnessed the growth of the city and experienced the constant influx of newcomers to their neighbourhoods and communal institutions.

While one account of the experience of being a Londoner in the late sixteenth century is that of profound change, London was perhaps surprisingly socially stable, even through the food shortages and the plague epidemics of the 1590s, the period on which this study focuses. The many and overlapping social institutions which formed the institutional superstructure of London were resilient and adaptable to change and ensured that urban life was rarely interrupted by rioting or other forms of social unrest.[14] People who moved to London often already had a network of friends, family and business contacts in the capital who helped to absorb newcomers rapidly into communal structures, including households, parishes, companies and wards. Many young women who came to London, for example, lodged with friends or relations already known to them, and with the intention that they would find a suitable husband among their

---

[11]Key historical accounts that consider the effects of London's demographic changes in this period include Roger Finlay, *Population and Metropolis: The demography of London 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis,* ed. by A. L. Beier and Roger Finlay (London: Longman, 1986); Jeremy Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: a London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Vanessa Harding, 'The Population of London 1550-1770: A Review of the Published Evidence', *The London Journal,* 15.2 (1990), 111-128; *Londinopolis: Essays in the Social and Cultural History of Early Modern London*, ed. by P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000) and Paul Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime and Control in the Capital City 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[12] Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p.1.

[13] Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[14] Steve Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Ian W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

kinship network in the city.[15] For some, the reaction to their changing city might have been nostalgic conservatism, while others would embrace the opportunities that such change presents; most people probably oscillated between these two responses depending on their personal circumstances of age, status and wealth, and how they perceived themselves to be affected by events.

Against this backdrop of accommodation to profound change to their city, this study focuses on churches and theatres, two locations in which early modern Londoners told themselves stories about change and constancy. One of the functions of the story telling experienced in both church and theatre was the negotiation of rapid and extensive change, both on a personal and cultural level. Further, this study argues, these stories helped to shape early modern Londoners' perceptions of themselves and how they related to the spaces of their city. This thesis considers how the stories that they told to, and about each other, enabled them to negotiate and to shape the changing world around them. The place of narrative in the life of the London dweller was complex, and, as the many studies of the stories told by theatre suggest, involved the need to be a careful listener. However, the alms petitions and drama worked, this thesis argues, as media of storytelling in which the negotiation of change was expressed in the lives of Londoners.

In seeking to understand how stories told on stage and in church helped early modern Londoners to comprehend their city, by paying attention to the ways in which place and space are conceived, both in the church and in the theatre, we again allow them to be seen side by side, in the same frame. The ways in which urban space is used and discussed in drama and in the Memoranda, give us insight into the production of the social identities and relationships which this study investigates. Henri Lefebvre proposes that 'space is permeated with social relations; it is not only supported by social relations, but it also is producing and produced by social relations.'[16] Lefebvre is writing of the twentieth-century city, the space of which, he argues, is shaped by capitalism: 'capitalist and neo-capitalist space is a space of quantification and growing homogeneity, a commodified space where all the elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable.'[17] While adopting Lefebvre's understanding of space as being

---

[15] Vivian Brodsky Elliott, 'Single Women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598-1619', in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* ed. by R. B. Outhwaite (Europa: London, 1981); Hubbard, *City Women*, p.5.

[16] Henri Lefebvre, 'Space: Social Product and Use Value' in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays* trans. by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner & Stuart Elden, ed. by Neil Brenner & Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp.185-222 (p.186).

[17] Lefebvre, 'Space: Social Product and Use Value', p.192.

permeated by social relations, this study discusses some of the ways in which early modern, pre-capitalist London was not a fully commodified space, where 'all elements are exchangeable and thus interchangeable' but rather one where intensely personalised relationships could be, and were, established.[18] Social relations of credit, commerce and charity which are created in the spaces of London are shown in this study to be produced, and personalised, by those spaces.

The relationship between narrative and space is articulated by Michel de Certeau, who writes of the work done by stories in recognising, creating and recording the social relations that transform place into space.[19] He registers the ability of those stories to negotiate, and to organise, changing relationships between places and spaces, an aspect of story telling which makes it particularly helpful when thinking about the way in which rapidly changing urban space, like that of early modern London, was experienced by the people who lived in it. One of the aspects of that experience explored in this study is walking in the city which is a process of appropriation for de Certeau, a spatial acting out of place in which the walker actualises just a few of the possibilities open to him by selecting a certain route , and rejecting other possibilities. De Certeau's distinction between the 'strategic' level of the city's organisation, the official or ideological direction in which people are intended to use its spaces, and the 'tactics' of the individual walker, who may defy directions, for example, not to walk on the grass, is used in this study to help to distinguish between the ideological depiction of daily life on stage and its reality.

The focus of this study is neighbourhood and the ways in which stories were used to articulate some of the early modern experience of it. Developing the ideas of de Certeau about narrative and space, the work of Pierre Mayol provides perhaps the most helpful insights into the relationship between the city and its inhabitants and the ways in which neighbourhood develops as a set of practices that we might look to see enacted in drama, and in the petitions. Mayol's study is based on his home neighbourhood of Croix-Rousse, Lyons and although it was written in the 1970s, it records an urban space that is home to small manufacturers (weavers), small shops and a market, and crowded residential spaces, which is navigated on foot; in many ways Mayol's Croix-Rousse

---

[18] Lefebvre's proposed relationship between the city and capitalism can be traced in some critical responses to the depiction of early modern London on stage, for example, see Crystal Bartolovich, 'London's the Thing: Alienation, the Market, and "Englishmen for My Money"', The Huntington Library Quarterly, 71,1 (2008), 137-158. But see also Craig Muldrew's description of the personalised social relations created in early modern credit networks in *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998).
[19] De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Living,* pp.91-130.

resembles early modern London. Like sixteenth century London, Croix-Rousse as Mayol describes it is in a process of transformation; the looms have been sold off and newcomers have arrived. As Luce Giard, the editor of *The Practice of Everyday Life* wrote when the volume was compiled in the 1980s, Mayol was describing 'fragments of life whose secrets and poetic ruses wove the fabric of a soon-to-be-lost time'.[20] 'New houses have brought in people who have never stepped foot in the Croix-Rousse and they cannot assimilate the mentality of the natives' says Madame Marguerite, one of his interviewees, her complaint about her changing neighbourhood unconsciously echoing those of John Stow some four hundred years earlier.[21] Although the places and spaces that Mayol analyses are separated from early modern London by wide expanses of chronology and geography, his work can help us to think about our period and place.

The volumes produced by the *Everyday Life* project have much to say about urban life but for this study their reflections on methodology are also helpful. Mayol describes the twin traps of seeing the city only as the materials, both administrative and physical, from which it is constructed or conversely, as a series of stories ('murmerings') that records the stories of the urban dweller without attending to the structures that organise them. The methodology of thick description (although he doesn't use this term) has, Mayol proposes, moved his investigation on from 'working on objects carved out of the social field […] (*the* neighbourhood, *the* everyday life)' to attending to relationships among objects. This distinction between objects and relationships in the urban landscape is also found in this study, which is less a study of the petitions and the plays as objects than a consideration of the relationships between them. Mayol describes how the relationships of urban life are organised by behaviours and the 'expected symbolic benefits' gained by those behaviours; these are precisely the aspects of urban life that this study traces in the petitions and the plays of sixteenth century London.

Mayol conceives of neighbourhood as not only a place, but a set of practices that convert that place into a space that links the public and the private spheres:

> The neighbourhood can thus be grasped as this area of public space in general (anonymous, for everyone) in which little by little, a *private, particularized space* insinuates itself as a result of the practical everyday use of space.[22]

---

[20] Luce Giard, 'Times and Places' in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Living, Volume 2: Living and Cooking* trans. by Timothy J. Tomasik, ed. by Luce Giard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. xxxv-xlv.
[21] Pierre Mayol 'The Neighbourhood' in de Certeau et al *the Practice of Everyday Living Vol.2.,* p.125
[22] Pierre Mayol 'The Neighbourhood'; all references below taken from pages 8-13.

'Recognition' is, for Mayol, the urban dweller's acceptance of a certain coercion to behave with propriety, according to an unspoken social contract that allows him or her to participate in 'an advantageous relationship of forces' within the neighbourhood. Such 'recognition' is encompassed in this study as 'credit', an aspect of early modern urban life which is discussed in detail in relation to gender and to commerce in Chapter 3.[23] Walking within the neighbourhood is thus a crucial practice which enacts 'a progressive privatisation of public space' and neighbourhood is thus 'the possibility offered everyone to inscribe in the city a multitude of trajectories whose hard core permanently remains the private sphere.' As the walker moves between his or her home and its urban surroundings, he mentally organises the city and develops a reciprocal relationship of recognition with the neighbours. Such practices, Mayol argues, form identities, which allow individuals 'to take up a position in the network of social relations inscribed in the environment' and this relationship between urban walking, identity and the public and private realms, as depicted on the early modern stage, is explored in more detail in Chapter 2. Mastering the tactics required to separate public from private space is, according to Mayol 'one of the conditions of possibility of everyday life in urban space', and chapter 3 of this study examines the ways in which early modern drama uses the liminal spaces that mediate between the public domain of the street and the private sphere of the home to show how the difficulties that women in particular experience when their working and domestic spaces overlap. Like de Certeau and Lefebvre, Mayol is writing of the twentieth-century city, but his emphasis on neighbourhood and identity, and in particular the means by which they are created through the act of walking, make his work an appropriate tool to unpack what is going on when early modern plays explore the ways that urban identities and relationships are created on stage.

This study pays attention to the ways in which a woman's experience of the city was different to a man's. It explores the relationship between gendered practices and the spaces in which female characters are found, especially London's streets, shops, and inns which are the particular focus of Chapter 3. Karen Newman has shown us ways in which the gendered identity of women was constructed as commodified and consuming in early modern drama and Natasha Korda has argued that this gender characterisation is part of a persistent and systemic attempt to denigrate the status of women, by men

---

[23] 'Recognition' is the translator's term; the early modern sense of 'credit' with its multiple and complex meanings encompasses Mayol's sense of the embodiment and identification of practices within the individual.

who felt challenged by women's presence in the theatre business.[24] This study finds that in the early London plays on which it focuses, space is highly gendered, and the discourses through which gender identity is constructed are revealed to be complex. Women in the city, and especially those who work in its commercial spaces, are not shown as commoditised consumers but as participants in a series of exchanges which in some cases conform to, and in other cases deny, expectations of what a woman should be and how she should behave. While the surveillance of women is shown to be a pervasive condition of urban life, the meaning of such watchfulness is shown to be contested and unresolved. Chapters 2 and 3 show how plays offer the play-goer the opportunity to test their pre-conceptions about women, and in doing so raise questions about what it means to be a woman, or a man, in the city. In its interest in 'the ways in which the meaning of performances for audiences are bound up with the meaning already associated with the places of their production', this study sits alongside work on theatre and early modern space produced by Mark Bayer, Janette Dillon, Jean Howard, Julie Sanders and Adam Zucker.[25]

3. **Plays selected**

This study utilises two bodies of evidence, the first being the petitions heard at St Botolph's church and the other a corpus of plays first performed contemporaneously with those petitions. This study utilises stories told in chronological and locational proximity, believing that two forms of story-telling that emerge from the same cultural moment can illuminate each other and, in combination, help to tell us something about that moment. Since its focus is ideas of neighbourhood, stories that pay particular attention to notions of what neighbourhood might mean in early modern London, both in the petitions and on stage, are at the centre of the evidence examined here. In this

---

[24] Karen Newman, 'City Talk: Women and Commodification, *Epicoene* (1609)' from *Staging the Renaissance* ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.181-195 and *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Natasha Korda, *Labors' Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). See also Korda, 'Women in Theater', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama,* pp.456-473.

[25] Susan Bennett and Mary Polito, 'Introduction', *Performing Environments: Site Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), p.11. Other works that take an interest in 'the spatial turn' in early modern theatre studies include Mark Bayer, *Theatre, Community and Civic Engagement in Jacobean London* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012); Janette Dillon, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) and *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City;* Julie Sanders, *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama* and Adam Zucker, *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

section I will say more about the plays that have been selected for use in this study and the ways in which they are related to the petitions.

This study focuses on plays that are contemporary with the Memoranda because it is highly like that a number of people (although how many is undeterminable) could have both seen the plays and heard the petitions, thereby bringing the two forms of story-telling together in the experience of many early modern Londoners. As is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1, many of the alms petitioners appear to have travelled from church to church, or to have been part of nationwide appeals, and therefore the intersecting group who heard both types of story is likely to have included individuals from parishes other than St Botolph's.[26] The selection of plays for close attention in this study began by considering what the parishioners, who heard the alms petitions on a Sunday during the 1590s, might have seen at a play-house in the following week. This was a time in which theatrical culture which was in a state of continuous change as companies, as people and as theatres shifted and changed allegiance, and as generic boundaries were being tested and re-worked. Emerging from this creative chaos, *The Fair Maid of the West, An Humorous Day's Mirth*, *Edward IV* and *A Warning* all form part of a developing strand of late sixteenth-century drama newly interested in staging the city, both historical and contemporary, to London audiences. Temporally and spatially, these are plays that engage with the city and people whose charitable behaviour is recorded in the St Botolph's petitions. Although studies of the city in early modern drama have often focused on the seventeenth-century genre of 'city comedies', this study attends to plays from the last decade of the sixteenth century, which are among the first to depict the spaces of London on stage.[27] In the practices that construct those spaces for the theatre-goer we may see reflected some of the concerns of the parishioners who heard the St Botolph's petitions.

It is not possible to be precise about which play set explicitly and entirely in London was the first to appear on stage, because of the loss of many works and the limited evidence about the early performances of many late-sixteenth century survivors. Nor is it clear why in the 1590s plays began to appear which depicted a recognisable cityscape of London, as opposed to the allegorical vagueness of 'London' in earlier

---

[26] The unique survival of records of this type at St Botolph's parish is discussed in n.95 below.

[27] The characteristics of 'City Comedy' as a genre, especially its satiric nature, was first identified by Brian Gibbons in *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton* (London: Harper Collins, 1968).

plays, such as, for example, *The Three Ladies of London*.[28] Richard Rowland has argued that the suppression of *Sir Thomas More* may have led to some reluctance among companies to produce potentially inflammatory plays that mapped the past too directly onto London's present.[29] This argument is, however, based on Rowland's dating of *Sir Thomas More* to the early 1590's, and its most recent editor, John Jowett, who dates it to around 1600, argues that its London scenes were a response to the emerging genre of city comedy and the chorography of John Stow.[30] Rowland makes a similar argument about the influence of Stow on *Edward IV*.[31] Like *Sir Thomas More,* the earliest plays set in a recognisable and specific London appear to be those based on historic events, so that both *Edward IV* and *A Warning* adapt stories from London's history, and as Chapter 2 explores, shape them into dramas which observe and commentate on the contemporary city. George Chapman's comedy *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, with its vivid scenes of young city gentlemen who regularly meet in an ordinary, certainly seems to depict a new kind of urban experience. Containing nothing recognisably French other than the names of some of its characters, even though purports to be set in Paris, it is clearly intended to be understood as a representation of London.[32] *The Fair Maid of the West*, a play set, as its name indicates, in the West Country ports of Plymouth and Fowey, nevertheless reflects on the nature of neighbourhood and especially women's experience of labour in the tavern, an urban workspace that was neither entirely domestic nor entirely commercial. Although these comedies are not set explicitly in London's streets as *Edward IV* and *A Warning* are, nevertheless they present important reflections on the spatial practices that we see at work in the other explicitly London-set plays. Chapter 3 of this study will show how both of these comedies present places which are said to be 'not' London, but which comment on the practised spaces of the city.

Although the dates of the first performances of several of the plays discussed in this study are uncertain, the earliest seems most likely to be *A Warning*, which is an anonymous re-telling of the murder of a London merchant which had taken place in 1573. The text of *A Warning*, printed in 1599, describes it as acted 'lately' by the

---

[28] Robert Wilson, *A right excellent and famous comedy called the three Ladies of London* (1584), STC 25784; Robert Wilson, *The Three Ladies of London*, in Lloyd Edward Kermode, *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, ed. by Lloyd Edward Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).
[29] Anthony Munday and Henry Chettle, *Sir Thomas More,* ed. by John Jowett (London: Arden, 2011); Rowland, 'Introduction', *Edward IV,* p.19.
[30] Jowett,'Introduction', *Sir Thomas More*, pp.38-9.
[31] Rowland, 'Introduction', *Edward IV* p.14.
[32] Since the play features a king and members of the aristocracy in various farcical situations, it may have been considered wiser to ridicule the French rather than the English court.

Chamberlain's Men, probably at the Curtain in Shoreditch, or possibly at the Globe (to which the company moved in late summer 1599) and recent scholarship has variously dated it between 1595 and 1600.[33] Henslowe's notes allow us to be more certain that *An Humorous Day's Mirth* was first performed by the Admiral's Men at the Rose in the summer of 1597.[34] Referred to as the 'the comodey of vmers' by Henslowe, the play was innovative in at least two respects; as the first of the 'humour' based plays, it pre-dates Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour* (1598) for the Chamberlain's Men, and it is also probably the first of the London-set comedies performed at the Rose.[35] Shakespeare's *1 Henry IV,* which features scenes set in the taverns of Eastcheap was probably also first performed in around 1597, also by the Chamberlain's Men.[36] The earliest comedy with a setting entirely and explicitly described as 'London' is William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money,* performed by the Admiral's Men, probably in spring 1598.[37] With its satire of London 'types'- the foreign merchant, his lively daughters, young gentleman looking for wealthy young wives, all set in recognisable and contemporary London locations, this drama established many of the generic characteristics of 'City Comedy'.[38] Also included in this group of pre-1600 plays with London settings is another Admiral's Men play, Thomas Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* which, like *Edward IV, A Warning* and *Henry IV,* is a dramatic re-telling of events in London's history, this time in comic mode.[39] Valentine Simms printed *An Humorous Day's Mirth, A Warning* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday* in 1599 and 1600,

---

[33] There is no direct evidence for performance beyond the attribution to the Chamberlain's men on the title page of the first edition. On the dating of *A Warning,* Cannon, its most recent editor refuses to commit to more specificity than the middle of the 1580s, when tobacco smoking was introduced, and 1599 when the play was printed; Canon, *A warning,* p.48. Andrew Gurr dates the play as 'a couple of years before'1597 in *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.38. Wiggins and Richardson give a range of 1595-99, with a 'best guess' of 1597, *A Catalogue,* III, pp.401-405. *DEEP* gives a range of 1596-1600, with a 'best guess' of 1599.

[34] *Henslowe's Diary,* 2nd edition, ed. by R.A.Foakes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) pp.58-60.

[35] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642,* 4th edn.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.113. *Euery man in his humor* (1601) STC 14766 is set in Florence in the earliest printed version, but its location is moved to London in the version included in Jonson's *Works*; Ben Jonson, *Euery man in his humor*; *The Works* (1616), STC 14751; 'Everyman In His Humour: Quarto Version', ed. by David Bevington in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol.1 ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.111-227.

[36] William Shakespeare, *The History of Henry the Fourth, The Oxford Shakespeare*, pp.483-509.

[37] William Haughton, *English-men for my money: or, A pleasant comedy, called, A woman will haue her will* (1616), STC 12931; William Haughton, *Englishmen for my Money* in *Three Renaissance Usury Plays*, pp.164-274.

[38] Gibbons, *Jacobean City Comedy.*

[39] Thomas Dekker, *The shomakers holiday. Or The gentle craft* (1599), STC 6523. Thomas Dekker, *The Shoemaker's Holiday* ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).

along with several of Shakespeare's plays and Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of his Humor*.[40]

Edward IV, widely assumed to be by Thomas Heywood, has a complicated and uncertain early performance and printing history.[41] Rowland, who is the most recent editor of the play, offers the following summary of the complex history of site, company and play: 'in its first five or six years of existence the play was performed by three linked but separate companies on the stages of at least three different playhouses.'[42] The first edition of the playbook (1599) states that by the time of printing, it had 'divers times beene publiquely played' by the Earl of Derby's (Strange's) Men.[43] At that time, after the Admiral's Men at the Rose and the Chamberlain's Men at the Curtain, Derby's Men were the third company in London. In 1599 they had recently established themselves in a newly re-built playhouse, The Boar's Head in Whitechapel, and Rowland suggests that it is likely that *Edward IV* was one of the first plays offered by the company in its new home.[44] Wiggins and Richardson suggest that it may have been printed unusually quickly after its first run 'as an advertisement of the new company's presence and wares.'[45]

The lack of evidence about which company, or companies, Heywood was working for around this time that obscures the early performance history of *Edward IV* also means that the date of the first performance of Part I of his *The Fair Maid of the West,* and the company which performed it, are unknown. It is widely accepted that the second part was written shortly before both parts were printed in 1631 and probable dates for Part I are taken from textual references to Elizabeth as the reigning queen, and

---

[40] Ben Jonson, *The comicall satyre of euery man out of his humor* (1600), STC 14769. 'Everyman Out of His Humour', ed. by Randall Martin in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol.1 ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.233-428.

[41] On performance and textual history, see Rowland, *Edward IV,* pp.1-6. On the history of Derby's/Strange's Men, see Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014). None of the early quartos of *Edward IV* bear Thomas Heywood's name, but the play has been designated as one of Heywood's since the Restoration. Rowland states that his review of the available evidence is 'only a partial and qualified confirmation of Heywood's involvement in the play' but he concludes that 'although final proof is lacking, there is a strong possibility that Heywood was at least a principal author of the play, and this edition will assume hereafter that he was.' ('Introduction', *Edward IV*, pp.9,11). Wiggins and Richardson's *Catalogue* ascribes it 'tentatively' to Heywood, while suggesting Dekker or Drayton as other possible authors (IV, pp.124-134). The identity of the dramatist not being essential to my argument, I shall follow Rowland's judgement on the matter and also assume the play's author to be Thomas Heywood.

[42] Rowland, 'Introduction', *Edward IV,* p.6.

[43] Heywood, *King Edward the Fourth* (1599), Title page.

[44] Herbert Berry, *The Boar's Head Playhouse* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986); Julian Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland: Archaeology, History and Drama* (London: London Museum of Archaeology, 2012).

[45] *Wiggins & Richardson Catalogue,*Vol IV, pp.124-34.

to the 'Islands' Voyage' (Essex's raid on the Azores) in 1597.[46] These suggest that Part I of the play was first performed between 1597 and 1604, the range given by Farmer and Lesser, whose 'best guess' date is 1604.[47] Robert K. Turner, editor of the only modern scholarly edition, suggests that the first part was written before Elizabeth's death and so not later than 1603.[48] In the period when *The Fair Maid,* Part I was written, at about the same time as *Edward IV,* Heywood was writing for the Admiral's Men, Derby's Men and the Earl of Worcester's Men; in 1604 Worcester's company became the Queen's Men and moved to the Red Bull.[49]

Although it is not possible to be certain, *Edward IV* is likely to have been first staged at the theatre closest to St Botolph's, that is, the Boar's Head at Aldgate, where *The Fair Maid* may also have been performed. *A Warning* was probably first performed at another local theatre, the Curtain at Shoreditch, while *An Humorous Day's Mirth* was certainly first performed across the river at the Rose. So, although the plays selected for this study do not constitute a survey of all the city plays in this period, they represent work performed by each of the three main companies performing in London in the late 1590's and a range of the outdoor playhouses used by those companies during the same period. That these plays are some of the first to develop drama about London itself, makes them an important, and surprisingly under-considered, source of stories about the city, which placed in conjunction with the other narratives of London's spaces told in the alms petitions, can tell us more about how Londoners explained their city to themselves.

4. **Playhouses, neighbourhood and repertoire**

This study is about story-telling and the neighbourhood. As neighbourhood institutions, church and theatre were places of performance in which ideas of neighbourhood could be explored. In their proximity to people's homes and with the possibility of repeated

---

[46] Part I of the play survives only in an edition that was printed in 1631, following a revival of the play, at which time Heywood probably also wrote Part II. The title page of the printed edition says that it was 'lately acted before the King and Queene with approved liking'. In the absence of any surviving copies from before 1631, it is impossible to know to what extent Heywood modified his popular Elizabethan play for the court of Charles I. On stylistic and characterization differences between Parts I and II, see Claire Jowitt, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics, 1589–1642: Real and Imagined Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), pp. 39-54.

[47] *DEEP* 768; *The Fair Maid of the West* is not included in the Wiggins and Richardson, *Catalogue,* volumes I-V issued to date (2015), which cover the period up to 1608.

[48] Turner, *The Fair Maid*, p.xiii. Th e text of Trevor Nunn's 1986 production for the Royal Shakespeare Company which abridged the two parts into one production, was published as *An adaptation of the two parts of Thomas Heywood*'s '*The Fair Maid of the West':a Programme/Text with Commentary* (London: Methuen, 1986).

[49] Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp.1-2.

visits, both the parish church and the local theatre were among the places where the relationships which constitute early modern neighbourhood were formed. Regular attendance at the parish church was accepted, even by the godly who may not have been inspired by dull services or the use of the Book of Common Prayer, because the gathering of the community in collective prayer was seen to have a distinct value beyond that of private or household worship.[50] Early modern London's playhouses were also important local institutions, as Mark Bayer has argued, which helped to define and articulate the shared values of audiences drawn from their surrounding communities.[51] Although both kinds of institution were important in creating neighbourhood, the fixed commercial theatre was a cultural upstart, only recently established in 1590s London, while the parish church had the weight of centuries of established religious and social practice behind it, even as the effects of the Reformation were being worked through. The relationship between playhouse and locality, including the parish church is therefore both complex and important, and since it central to this study, requires renewed examination of some long-established assumptions about playhouses, companies, locations and repertoire.

Key to this study of the relationship between theatre, church and the experience of London, is the concept of 'neighbourhood', which comprises a complex network of relationships which amount to more than just a spatial proximity to other people. It also involves other bonds of community, including religious practice, economic inter-dependency, educational or professional ties, and a myriad of other quotidian practices that create relationships between people sharing the same space. More than 'residential propinquity' Keith Wrightson observes, was required to make early modern neighbourhood; 'it involved a mutual recognition of reciprocal obligations of a practical kind and a normative consensus as to the proper behaviour of neighbours.'[52] In his appeal for communal help from 'well disposed people', William Stone's petition quoted at the start of this chapter stretches this sense of neighbourhood obligation to its outer limit, from his house, to High Holborn, Westminster, Middlesex and beyond. These relationships are mutual and reciprocal; de Certeau also defines the 20th century neighbourhood in relational terms, as 'the place where one manifests a social "commitment"; in other words, an art of co-existing with the partners (neighbours,

---

[50] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp.317-329.

[51] Bayer focuses on the Red Bull and the Fortune in the early seventeenth century but his argument could reasonably be applied to other theatres in a slightly earlier period; Bayer, *Theatre, Community, and Civic Engagement.*

[52] Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p.51.

shopkeepers) who are linked to you by the concrete, but essential, fact of proximity and repetition.'[53] The ways in which behaviour (in de Certeau's term 'practice') in the urban space defines community, even as it is shaped by the spaces in which it occurs, emerge in this study as a recurring pre-occupation for early modern Londoners both on stage and in the Memoranda.

If neighbourhood is the product of a series of complex relationships, each of the people within the network of those relationships will experience it differently. Neighbourhood is not the product of a consistent practice or ideology, but is responsive to a multitude of personalities and external forces. On a given day any individual might feel more or less neighbourly towards his or her fellow Londoners, and experience the same variability in response. As appeals to a particular kind of neighbourly feeling, the petitions show that sudden disaster might strike at any time, and that the charitable donor one day might be in desperate need of communal support the next. While the petitions directly invite churchgoers to exercise their 'charitable benevolence' by evoking compassion and sympathy, drama allowed playgoers to imaginatively expand and contextualise their experiences of different forms of neighbourhood might be like. Theatregoing, as Robert Henke suggests, might be 'a particularly propitious way to both conceive and feel' complex issues like early modern poverty and charity because drama presents for consideration subtly gradated attitudes towards actor and audience, the genuine and the fraudulent, credulity and doubt.[54] From the treacherous Mistress Drury, who conspires in the seduction and murder of her neighbours in *A Warning,* to the neighbourly surveillance of Bess Bridges in *The Fair Maid of the West,* the plays selected for this study allow play-goers to imagine how different kinds of neighbourly experience might feel. As this study will show, early modern charity and neighbourhood were interconnected, complex and variable. Careful readings of both the petitions and the plays are able to reveal something of this complexity, not as a simple reflection of either each other, or of social reality, but 'through the imaginative and transformative lens of theatrical fiction and theatricality'.[55] This study investigates the ways that the texts and performances of petitions and plays are used to evoke the experience of neighbourhood in early modern London.

This study is about playing and neighbourhood, and so requires consideration of where parishioners of St Botolph's could have seen professional drama performed in

---

[53] de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Living*, p.8.
[54] Robert Henke, *Poverty and Charity in Early Modern Theatre and Performance* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015), p.4.
[55] Henke, *Poverty and Charity*, pp.2-4.

their neighbourhood. [56] In 1583, when the surviving Memoranda begin, professional playing was still available within the City itself at the four playing inns: The Bell Savage on Ludgate Hill, The Bull at Bishopsgate, and The Bell and the Cross Keys, both of which were on Gracechurch Street, between Cornhill and Lombard Street.[57] These inns appear to have had licences for occasional playing and other entertainments from the 1570s until some point in the 1590s, at which time the Lord Mayor seems to have banished playing from within the city itself.[58] Except for the Bell Savage, which was on the opposite side of the City, all were only a short walk from St Botolph's, through Aldgate, along Cornhill or Fenchurch Street and up or down Gracechurch Street as required. A parishioner of St Botolph's who wanted to see a play between 1583 and 1600 could also have visited a boys' company at the first Blackfriars (until 1584) or St Paul's (until 1590) or adult players at one of a number of playhouses located outside the City. Closest to the parish were the two unsuccessful operations which had been set up in Whitechapel by an investor called Richard Brayne, brother-in-law of James Burbage.[59] The Red Lion, which is first recorded as a playhouse in 1567, had been located about a mile further up the Mile End Road from the church, but probably closed down shortly after opening, and was apparently long gone by 1583. The conversion of 'the Inn without Aldgate called the George', close to St Botolph's, was commissioned in 1580, but it appears never to have got off the ground and details of it are sparse.[60] The more successful Newington Butts, which seems to have operated as a playhouse between 1576 and 1594, was located across the river, and upstream from London Bridge and it was probably quite a journey to visit from St Botolph's, even from the lower end of the parish.[61] In Shoreditch, The Theatre (from 1576), and The Curtain (from 1577), were a reasonable walking distance from St Botolph's, and operated until 1598 and well into the seventeenth century respectively.[62] Across the river on Bankside were The Rose and The Swan, which opened in 1587 and 1595. The theatre closest to the church was The Boar's Head, opened in 1598, just within the parish, but beyond the

---

[56] Many forms of performance were of course available to early modern Londoners, including, importantly the Lord Mayor's Show and other civic pageants, but they are outside the focus of this study.
[57] Evidence is scarce for much of the history of the early playing venues. Julian Bowsher evaluates the most recent evidence for each venue (at the time of writing) in *Theatreland*. Operating dates are taken from Bowsher.
[58] Only indirect references to such a ban have been found from the 1590s although a 1600 order of the Privy Council is explicit that plays may not be played in the city's inns. Bowsher, *Theatreland*, p.47.
[59] Bowsher, *Theatreland*, p.50.
[60] Anthony Noble, quoted by Bowsher, *Theatreland*, p.67.
[61] Bowsher, *Theatreland*, p.54.
[62] Bowsher, *Theatreland*, p.61, 63. *Google Maps* gives the distance from the sites of the Theatre and the Curtain to St Botolph's church as 0.9 and 1 mile respectively.

city bars, on the Mile End Road. Towards the very end of the period covered by the Memoranda, from 1599 playgoers also had the option of going to The Globe (also on Bankside), and The Fortune, at Cripplegate after 1600. Apart from the period when the playhouses were closed because of plague in 1592 and 1593, parishioners who chose to attend plays had a variety of venues to choose from, but the closest to the parish between 1583 and 1600 were the Theatre, The Curtain and, towards the end of that period, the Boar's Head.

The Curtain, located in Shoreditch, was the playhouse operating nearest to St. Botolph's parish in the period following the re-opening of the playhouses after the plague in 1594, until the Boar's Head opened for dramatic performance in 1598, and so if *A Warning* was performed by the Chamberlain's Men there, it was likely that parishioners of St Botolph's would have been among the audience. Connections between the playhouses and the parish beyond simple geographical proximity are evidenced by the Memoranda, where a number of players, including Thomas Goodnell/Goodael, Richard Darlo, John Hill, Robert Lee, Augustine Phillips and James Tunstall, who were all apparently resident in or near the parish, appear in entries made between late 1593 and 1600.[63] All of these players, except Hill, also appear in Henslowe's *Diary*, apparently as members of Strange's and then the Admiral's Men.[64] Henslowe was himself involved in the communal structures of his own parish, serving as a vestryman, churchwarden and overseer of the poor in St Saviour's ward in Southwark.[65] We may tentatively conclude therefore that in the late 1590s the playhouses closest to St Botolph's, The Curtain and The Boar's Head, were staging a developing strand of London drama and that some of the players themselves were neighbours as well as colleagues, who lived and attended church in the parish.

The references in *Edward IV* to St Botolph's and Aldgate, where significant scenes of the play are set, may therefore have been intended to have particular local resonance.[66] When the actor playing Smoke was sent to threaten London from St

---

[63] Thomas Goodnell/Goodael: 9234/4 fol.92^r(15 December 1593), 9234/4 fol.164^v(12 May 1594), 9234/5/1 fol61^r(30 April 1595), 9234/5/2 fol.132^r(19 August 1599), 9234/5/2 fol. 182^r(23 November 1599); Richard Darlo: 9234/5 fol.118^r(19 September 1595), 9234/5/1 fol. 288^v(21May1596), 9234/7 fol.98^v(29 May 1598), 9234/5/2 fol.34^r(25 January 1598/99), 9234/5/2 fol.218^r(25 January 1599/00); John Hill: 9234/5/1 fol.144^r (16 November 1595); Robert Lee: 9234/6 fol.66^r (21 November 1596), 9234/7 fol.162^v (22 October 1598); Augustine Phillips: 9234/6 fol.302^r (7 September 1597); James Tunstall 9234/5/2 fol.190^r(10 December 1599).

[64] *Henslowe's Diary*, Appendix 3, pp.326-333. William Ingram discusses James Tunstall's biography in *The Business of Playing: The Beginnings of the Adult Professional Theater in Elizabethan London* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), pp.25-30.

[65] S. P. Cerasano, 'Henslowe, Philip (*c.*1555–1616)', *ODNB*.

[66] George Chapman's lost play for Paul's Boys, 'The Old Joiner of Aldgate' (1603) may have shared this strong sense of place, although its 'reconstruction' by Sisson suggests that the main action was situated at

Botolph's spire, he enacted the invasion of a space which many of the players and playgoers regarded as their own. Similarly, if some of the friends, neighbours or acquaintances of the actors in Henslowe's company, came to see *An Humorous Day's Mirth* at the Rose*,* then knowing or recognising the actors involved may have re-enforced the effect that these scenes represented contemporary London life. Looking beyond these resonances with the geographical spaces around them, this study argues that depictions of London's neighbourhoods in London's theatres helped to construct Wrightson's 'normative consensus as to the proper behaviour of neighbours' and participated in de Certeau's 'social commitment'. In presenting for the judgement of play-goers, ways in which neighbourhood might operate, or indeed fail, the plays with which this study is concerned operate both to reflect and to shape, the city from which they emerge.

The question of how many of the parishioners who heard the petitions also attended the playhouses is, of course, impossible to determine with any accuracy. Insufficient evidence survives to be definitive about who was in attendance at a late sixteenth century theatrical performance, although it is likely that playgoers at the commercial playhouses at this time were drawn from a broad range of society. After the performance of plays at the city's inns was banned in 1594 and before the boys' companies were re-established to perform at more socially exclusive hall theatres such as the Blackfriars (in 1599), the only authorised playhouses that were available to commercial audiences were those with outdoor stages and adult playing companies. The short period between 1594 to 1600, during which *Edward IV*, *A Warning, An Humorous Day's Mirth* and probably *The Fair Maid of the West* were first produced, thus 'marked an almost unique concordance from all social levels' of theatrical attendance at the same venues.[67] Given that perhaps 20% of all Londoners within walking distance of the theatres attended them at some time, playgoers were probably drawn from a wide section of the population of London, and we might also expect that many of the parishioners of St Botolph's would also have attended to one or more of these theatres from time to time.[68]

It is difficult to say anything conclusive about audiences or their responses in this period because the evidence is scarce, and what is available if usually either written

---

Christchurch, Newgate and offers no explanation for the reference to Aldgate in the title. C. J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936).
[67] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642*, 4th edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.267.
[68] Gurr, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996),p.65.

as the personal experience of an individual, such as the letters of traveller Thomas Platter, or part of the anti-theatrical polemic of writers such as Stephen Gosson.[69] The scarcity of evidence means that it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions about who went to the playhouse in the 1590s, let alone who attended particular plays and the diversity or otherwise of audiences in terms of age, gender, social class, income, education and occupation are all disputed. It can be concluded however that plays that were written for performance in the commercial theatre of this period had to appeal to an audience with a wide range of knowledge, experience and interests, who may have been resident in London or in some cases, may have been visitors.[70] Based on what we do know, therefore, we can suppose that the first audiences for plays produced between 1594 and 1599 included a socially mixed group of people, comprised mainly of citizens and artisans of London, with their servants, apprentices, wives, sisters and daughters and also law students from the Inns of Court, visitors to London, gallants and aristocrats. An audience is a collective venture, a group of people gathered together in what may be a powerful shared experience. Balanced against this is the diversity of playgoers, which means that we cannot conclude that all of the people watching a play held the same values or reacted in the same way to the performances, any more than we would assume this of a contemporary audience. Citizens may have reacted very differently than their wives or than gallants as they watched the story of Jane and Matthew Shore unfold; merchants and their servants may have had a different response to the murder of George Sanders and the hanging of his wife, especially depending on whether they were old enough to remember the historic events behind the play. While playgoers may have enjoyed participating in a collective response to plays, each also experienced the drama as an individual and 'companies could not depend on their audiences having a shared viewpoint and uniform reaction' to action on stage.[71] In the absence of any evidence regarding the reception of these particular plays, I do not

---

[69] Appendix 2 of Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* includes a comprehensive collection of references to play-going in London in the early modern period.

[70] In addition to works already cited*,* studies of audiences and their responses include Ann Jennalie Cook, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,1981); Anthony B. Dawson and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Jeremy Lopez, *Theatrical Convention and Audience Response in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Charles Whitney, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Matthew Steggle, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007); *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642*, ed. by Jennifer A. Low and Nova Myhill (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011).

[71] Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.95. Munro refers here to audience reception of comedy but the point may be extended to plays in other modes.

propose to speculate on either the collective or individual responses of playgoers to them, but rather to hold in mind that commercial plays in this period were produced for a wide and diverse range of people from whom a variety of responses might be anticipated, and to examine the plays themselves for the effects that they might have produced.

The plays that are the subject of this study are selected because they represent those that may have been seen by parishioners who also heard petitions at St Botolph's, and so they provide some concrete, but also complex evidence of the place of neighbourhood in the cultural discourse of early modern London. They also demonstrate a particular interest in the commercial places and spaces of early modern London. They were written for performance at outdoor playhouses, most probably at the Boar's Head, The Curtain and the Rose, which, as we have seen, were some of the playhouses that parishioners of St Botolph's were most likely to have visited in the 1590s. One of the reasons that these plays have not received much critical attention to date is that for much of the twentieth century, literary scholarship held the view that the plays performed at the outdoor playhouses like these, and the Fortune, the Swan, and later the Red Bull in Clerkenwell (opened in 1606) were inferior in quality and ambition to those performed indoors in the theatres at Blackfriars, St Paul's and Whitefriars, and at private venues such as the Inns of Court and the Court itself. Shakespeare's later plays, performed both inside at the Blackfriars, and outside at the Globe, were treated as an anomalous exception. Assuming that the audiences of the indoor theatres were wealthier and therefore more highly educated and sophisticated than audiences for the outside playhouses, these were understood to be, using Alfred Harbage's term, 'rival traditions.'[72]

Plays produced for the indoor theatres have been for a long time seen as more artistically innovative and intelligent productions for a better-educated audience of the higher social classes and this assumption has led to a surprisingly persistent scholarly denigration of works performed in the outdoor playhouses, exemplified by this (surprisingly) recent comment from a collection of essays on Jacobean city comedies:

> It is a justified simplification to say that while spectacles like the Lord Mayor's Show, romantic London histories like *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), *Edward IV* (1592-9) or *If You Know Nobody* (1604-5) and romantic comedies like *The Fair Maid of the Exchange* (1601-2) perpetuated the myths of mercantile nobility and artisan loyalty, satiric comedies exposed these myths as sentimental

---

[72] Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1970).

and falsely nostalgic claptrap.[73]

The binary division of plays, which resulted in this kind of dismissal of those presented at outdoor theatres against indoor theatre plays, has subsequently been eroded. [74] Andrew Gurr, contesting Harbage's notion of 'rival traditions' writes that dividing repertoire before 1608 into two divisions, 'one working class and the other aristocratic, is misleading and even later would be an over-simplification, though differences there certainly were.'[75] As Roslyn Knutson has commented, 'the old scholarship tends to segregate audiences according to class as well as venue' but this binary division of plays into higher and lower 'quality', according to the venue in which they were performed, is being broken down as assumptions about the education, sophistication and tastes of audiences are challenged.[76] Richard Rowland, in his work on Thomas Heywood, gives a tart warning against making adverse judgements about the quality of the work based on the theatre at which it was performed:

> Students of the early modern playing companies for whom Heywood produced his work are still regaled repeatedly with terms like 'low comedy' and 'citizen fare', terms which were coined in the first half of the twentieth century, and which had no more historical validity or meaning then than they do now.[77]

Mark Bayer writes of the problems presented by the limited and partial evidence about who attended the theatre, and what they thought of it, in his study of the Fortune and the Red Bull. He argues that insufficient attention is paid to the northern theatre district as most of the commentators whose writing survives went to the Globe or the indoor theatres; 'because of their unmistakable class bias, this group does not represent anything close to a cross section of London's playgoers, the thousands of daily spectators who kept the theatres afloat.'[78] These thousands of daily spectators included

---

[73] Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein, 'Introduction' to *Plotting Early Modern London: New essays on Jacobean City Comedy* ed. by Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), p.18.

[74] A sample of recent works focused on writers other than Shakespeare might include the major edition of *Thomas Middleton, The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Rowland's *Thomas Heywood's Theatre*; works focused on company repertoire rather than playwright include Scott McMillin and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*; Gurr, *Shakespeare's Opposites*; Manley and MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men;* Eva Griffith, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants and the Red Bull* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013) and Bayer, *Theatre, Community and Civic Engagement.*

[75] Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage*, p.283.

[76]Roslyn L Knutson, 'Adult Playing Companies, 1593-1603' in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Theatre* ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.56- 71 (p.71).

[77] Rowland, *Heywood's Theatre,* p.4.

[78] Bayer, *Theatre, Community and Civic Engagement,* p.73.

the play-goers and parishioners with whose experience of performance and neighbourhood this study is concerned.

The long-standing critical assessment of the playhouse material as inferior in quality is derived, at least in part, from the acceptance of the publicity material and satire of the indoor playing companies themselves. However, the distinct disdain which these sources exhibit for the intellectual capacity of the apprentices and artisans who attended the outdoor playhouses is evidently intended, at least in part, to bolster the sense of their own social exclusivity in order to appeal to wealthy patrons who could afford the high entry price of a theatre like the Blackfriars. Considering the effect that audience would have on the repertory of a theatre company, Lucy Munro points out that the sharers in the Blackfriars company were themselves citizens of London and embedded in its commercial structures and were therefore unlikely to have wanted to exclude traders from their theatre on ideological grounds. [79] While Munro identifies a preoccupation with status in the Blackfriars repertoire, she does not see it as consistently alienating or valorising one social group over another. We have seen that the players who performed at the Boar's Head or the Rose may have been playing to their neighbours from St Botolph's parish, and it seems unlikely that they would have considered their entire audience to be less sophisticated, or able to appreciate subtle theatrical craft, than themselves. Rather than dismissing London histories and comedies as 'sentimental and falsely nostalgic claptrap', this study seeks to identify the ways in which they spoke to Londoners, and what they can tell us about the people of early modern London and how they expressed and responded to their rapidly changing city.

The development of early forms of capitalism which drove the rapid development of early modern London has often been used as a contextualising frame for writing about its theatre. When Jean Christophe Agnew's foundational study investigated the relationship between the market and the theatre, in *Worlds Apart*, it became clear that the two were aligned in the creation of new ideas of identity and worth in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, the underlying notion of the market that Agnew had in mind was characterised as one of 'bewilderment', 'tense and hostile relationships', 'shared distress' and a 'shared sense of the shifting ground of mutuality, dependence and exploitation.'[80] 'The formless, quality-less, characterless

---

[79]Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels,* pp.62-3.
[80] Jean-Christophe Agnew, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) pp. 8-9. Agnew's study arises from a rejection of classical and neoclassical economic theory of the market which separates 'cultural exchange' from 'market exchange' and which seeks to naturalise market relationships. ('Prologue', pp.1-7). See also

nature of the money form became a recurring motif' and theatre, Agnew argued, operated as 'a proxy form of the new and but partly fathomable relations of a nascent market society.'[81] This characterisation of the relationship between the rapidly changing economy of early modern London and its theatre, as anxious and commodifying, inflected subsequent studies such as Douglas Bruster's *Drama and the Market* and Theodore Leinwand's *Theatre, Finance and Society*.[82] Leinwand, for example, identifies the emotions associated with the economic as including embarrassment, sadness, degradation, bitterness, betrayal, anger and exhaustion. For each of these critics, in their discussion of the relationship between theatre and the market, commerce is connected to a set of emotional responses, identified by Harris with sickness, which are reflected in the commercial drama produced for that market. These important studies of the relationship between the theatre, the market and early modern London have often been focused on Shakespeare's works, especially *The Merchant of Venice,* and the genre of City Comedies. In a counter to their prevailing critical association between the economic changes experienced by early modern Londoners, and the staged experience of London as a place of emotions such as bewilderment and hostility, this study shows that, when a different set of plays are selected for study then commerce can be seen as a mechanism by which stability, community and neighbourhood are constructed in the early modern city.

This study is interested in the ways that the stage presents forms of community created by commercial transactions such as buying, selling, working in a shop or tavern. The dominant assumption among critics exploring the relationship between economics and literature in early modern London is that it was a place of disorientating commodification and strangeness for its inhabitants, who lived lives of increasing alienation under the influence of nascent capitalism and that 'the theatre provided them with the ideal vehicle through which to convey the duplicity, deception, and social destructiveness they associated with the culture of the marketplace.'[83] Jean Howard, for example, sees a causal relationship between the ways that the city was developing and

---

Marc Shell, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978) and *Money, Language and Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

[81] Agnew,*Worlds Apart,* p.11.

[82] Douglas Bruster, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Theodore B. Leinwand*, Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jonathan Gil Harris, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

[83] Paul Whitfeld White, 'Interludes, Economics, and the Elizabethan Stage' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603* ed. by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.555-570 (p.569).

its theatre: 'these economic and social developments had a direct impact on the cultural life of London, specifically on the public theatre that was one of the chief entertainment institutions to emerge from this period of spectacular demographic, economic and social change.'[84] Howard sees London as a place that its inhabitants had to be trained to negotiate, and the theatre as instrumental in 'unconsciously but robustly and imaginatively [...] accommodating Londoners of all stripes to the somewhat bewildering world in which they were living.'[85] This thesis does not find evidence for this kind of specific causality, but it agrees with Linda Woodbridge's statement that 'money, commerce and economics make a good deal of difference to English Renaissance literature.'[86] It is consequently interested in the way that people who are engaged in commerce are shown on stage. Moreover, it is concerned with reciprocal financial bonds that are not dictated by the market, but which encompass some of the mutual obligations and normative consensus, that constituted neighbourhood in early modern London, and which are explored in more detail in relation to alms-giving in Chapter 1. It is interested in the ways that concepts of duty, credit and community are reflected in the alms narratives and in contemporary plays, and also the ways in which these forms reciprocally shape ideas about these aspects of life in early modern London.

Returning to the question of audiences, there are now a number of studies which add up to a field of scholarship which is reassessing critical attitudes towards those people engaged in commerce who made up a large proportion of the city's inhabitants, and also the play-goers of the late sixteenth-century. Much of this scholarship engages with many other forms of cultural production that are outside of the scope of this study, such as ballads, civic pageants and prose writing, but this study draws on its underlying approach. Ceri Sullivan, for example, has pointed out the scholarly snobbery with which 'coarseness' has become the qualifying characteristic of 'businessmen' and she refutes vigorously the assumption that people involved in commerce in early modern London were unsophisticated patrons of the arts. 'They do not', she firmly tells us, 'sit at home roaring at coarse jest books, polishing up their trade pitch, or earnestly reading sermons', nor were they naive, repentant or 'gawping' recipients of drama.[87] Tracey Hill argues that that the Lord Mayor's Show, a celebration of the values of the City of London, has been repeatedly side-lined by scholars following in the wake of E.K.

---

[84] Howard, Theater of a City, p.2.
[85] Howard, *Theater of a City*, p.14.
[86] Linda Woodbridge, 'Introduction', *Money and the Age of Shakespeare*, p.9.
[87] Ceri Sullivan, 'London's Early Modern Creative Industrialists', *Studies in Philology*, 103.3 (2006), 313-328.

Chambers' 'nose held high' view that the Shows were extremely tedious.[88] She notes that the shows are often dismissed as 'one-dimensional and relentlessly lowbrow', and complains that the dramatists who wrote them (Heywood, Dekker, Taylor and Munday) 'have too often been treated as a plebeian bunch of hacks.'[89] Works which recognise the theatre as a business have shown that the writers of early modern plays were not detached from what Ingram calls 'the business of playing' and that to assume distaste among them for money and business is to misunderstand their relationship to commerce.[90] Increasingly, the concerns of the people who lived in early modern London, and who patronised, produced, and watched the dramatic performances there, are coming into focus and this study aims to participate in this developing re-assessment of relationships between playgoers and plays of the late sixteenth-century. Alongside stories of alienation and fragmentation, this study argues that we can identify in the often over-looked dramas produced in late sixteenth-century London, and the alms narratives that are contemporary with them, a different set of stories and modes of story-telling, those which present London as a place of community, tied together by the relationships of neighbourhood and charity.

This study discusses plays that present stories of London that appealed to a wide cross-section of its inhabitants, and the stories that those inhabitants also heard when the alms petitions were presented in church. The period of play- writing selected coincides with the end of the run of Memoranda for St Botolph's, and pre-dates the introduction of the new Poor Law in 1601, which fundamentally changed the nature of charitable collections in England's churches.

5. St Botolph's Parish

The church of St Botolph's is central to this study, which uses the evidence presented by the Memoranda of the churchwardens of the parish in order to discuss how ideas of neighbourhood were constructed in the late sixteenth-century. In order to contextualise that discussion, some understanding of the nature of the neighbourhood from which that evidence was produced is helpful. The church, named for the East Anglian patron saint of travellers, was located east of the City, on the main route between London and East

---

[88] Tracey Hill, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.4.
[89] Hill, *Pageantry and Power,* p.4, p.5.
[90] Roslyn Knutson, *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Ingram, *The Business of Playing*; Natasha Korda, *Labors' Lost.*

Anglia.[91] Located just outside Aldgate, which both permitted and denied access to the city, the church marked the start and end of journeys into and out of London. When *Edward IV* staged an assault on the city gates at Aldgate, it presented the place outside the church as a site of controlled access and dramatized the ability of the city to control its spaces. Outside of the theatre and the church, the parish was itself a space of story-telling. Beggars used the transitory spaces of city gates and church porches to display themselves prominently in order to solicit effectively, narrating their cause to whoever passed by. Control of space, story-telling and the authorised and unauthorised use of space are therefore, as Chapter 1 shows, central concerns of the Memoranda, as they are of the drama that fictionalised the city's places.

The Memoranda in which the alms petitions are recorded take the form of a day book, and contain notes of events within the church that were either required to be entered into the parish registers (baptisms, burials, marriages) or for which the churchwardens were otherwise responsible, including for example, who preached in the church, the proceedings of vestry meetings, and charitable collections taken.[92] This thesis focuses on the late sixteenth-century, a period in which churchwardens were increasingly responsible for both relieving the poor and monitoring the behaviour of their fellow parishioners by ensuring that they contributed to such relief.[93] The Memoranda, which were written for the most part by the parish clerk, Thomas Harridance, form an extensive, if not exhaustive, record of many events, significant and trivial, that happened in St Botolph's during the period that they cover.[94] Among the thousands of entries, made almost daily for seventeen years, there are around three hundred collections for the poor recorded in the period between December 1583 and April 1600.[95] The Memoranda note the key details for which the churchwardens might be afterwards answerable: who they had collected for, on whose authority, why the

---

[91] David Hugh Farmer, 'Botulf', *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[92] For details of the Memoranda see n.3. For referencing see n.1.

[93] N.J.G. Pounds, *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); *Archer, The Pursuit of Stability*

[94] The first entry by Thomas Harridance/Harrydance is 25 March 1583/4 (9234/1/2 fol. 34[r]). The last is 24 November 1599 (9234/5/2/182[r]).

[95] Mark Harris's article contains details of brief records and briefs from London and the rest of England, almost all of which commence after 1600, and the majority of which are post Restoration. Besides St Botolph's, Aldgate, the only surviving brief records in London that commence before 1600 are St George, Botolph Lane (1575-1596) and Allhallows Staining (1585-1664). Mark Harris, "'Inky Blots and Rotten Parchment Bonds': London, Charity Briefs and the Guildhall Library", *Historical Research,* 66 (1993), 98-110.

petitioner required alms and how much was given to him or her. [96] The entire text of a petition was rarely copied into the book, but rather a condensed version of the key details was made; William Stone's petition cited at the start of this Introduction is an extract from a typical example of this abbreviated form. The Memoranda are evidence that the churchwardens have ensured that 'all suche thinges as is done in the churche' have been both noticed and recorded. [97]

Previous studies of the Memoranda books have explored the insights that they give into the social and religious life of the parish rather than their literary qualities. [98] One exception is Roslyn L. Knutson's article on the relationship between sixteenth and seventeenth-century drama and a subset of 'captivity narratives', collections for mariners and travellers who had been taken prisoner overseas, usually by 'the Turke'. [99] Although the twenty seven 'captivity narratives' about which Knutson writes are some of the most interesting of the collections recorded at St Botolph's, they form only a small proportion of the many and diverse stories told by the alms petitioners. This study reads the alms narratives for their literary qualities and argues that they are an important narrative form through which early modern Londoners understood and responded to the changes taking place in their city.

As a parish, St Botolph's exemplified the rapidly changing London from which the plays discussed in this study emerge, and to which they respond. The parish was extra-mural, to the east of London, with a growing and often transient population. The church was located just outside the city gate where Fenchurch and Leadenhall Streets, two of the main roads crossing the City west to east, exited London onto the Mile End or Whitechapel Road. John Stow describes the highway as 'sometime replenished with few but fair and comely buildings: on the north side whereof, the first was the parish

---

[96] 301 records headed 'Collexion' or 'Collection' are included in the books between 22 December 1583 and 20 April 1600, most of which are made under the alms petitions which are the focus of this study, with some exceptions, such as the four collections 'made in the name of the poore, but being towards the building of the newe gallerie' made in September and October 1598 9234/7 fols.148^r, 153^v, 157^v and 161^v.
[97] 9234/1/2 fol.1^r (15 December 1583).
[98] See for example, Dorothy Anne Williams, 'London Puritanism: The Parish of St Botolph without Aldgate', *Guildhall Miscellany,* 2(1960), 24-38; J.P.Boulton, 'The Limits of Formal Religion: The Administration of Holy Communion in late Elizabethan and early Stuart London', *London Journal*, 10 (1984), 135-54; Lena Cowen Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71, 1 (2008) 219-242; Philip Baker and Mark Merry, 'The poore lost a good Frend and the parish a good Neighbor' in *London and beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene* ed.by Matthew Davies and James Galloway (London: University of London, 2012)*;* James J. Park, 'Practical Protestantism: Popular Belief in the Parish of St Botolph's Aldgate, London, 1558-1603' (unpublished master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, Canada, 2011).
[99] Roslyn L. Knutson, 'Elizabethan Documents, Captivity Narratives and the Market for Foreign History Plays', *English Literary Renaissance,* 26.1(1996) 75-110

church of St Botolph, in a large cemetery or churchyard.'[100] The church building which is documented in the Memoranda and mentioned by Stow, no longer exists, having been demolished and replaced by the present church in 1739.[101] The western boundary of the parish was defined by the city walls, and the east bordered the parish of Whitechapel in Middlesex. Although it was extramural, part of the parish was administratively within the City of London; the city bars just past the church on the Mile End Road marked the limits of the City's authority. What was known as the 'Upper' end of the parish was part of the Portsoken Ward of the City, and included the area known as Houndsditch north of the High Street and the area south of the High Street as far as the Tower. The 'Lower' or 'Nether' end of the parish was in the liberty of East Smithfield, Middlesex and ran from the area around the Tower down to the river. The parish boundary deviated around the extra-parochial areas that had been St Claire's Abbey ('The Minories') and St Mary Grace Abbey, and the Liberties of the Tower and St Katherine's, to produce a long and irregular strip-shaped parish which covered some 92 acres [**Figure 1**].[102]

---

[100] John Stow, *A Survey of London written in the year 1598* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2005), p.123.
[101] Histories of the parish include A. G. B. Atkinson, *St Botolph, Aldgate: The Story of a City Parish* (London: 1898); Thomas Rogers Forbes, *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); Malcolm Johnson, *Outside the Gate: St Botolph's and Aldgate 950-1994* (London: Stepney Books, 1994); Martha Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London before the Great Fire. St. Botolph Aldgate: Minories, east side; the Abbey of St. Clare; Holy Trinity Minories', ed. by Derek Keene (Unpublished) IHR BL.533/Sbo.
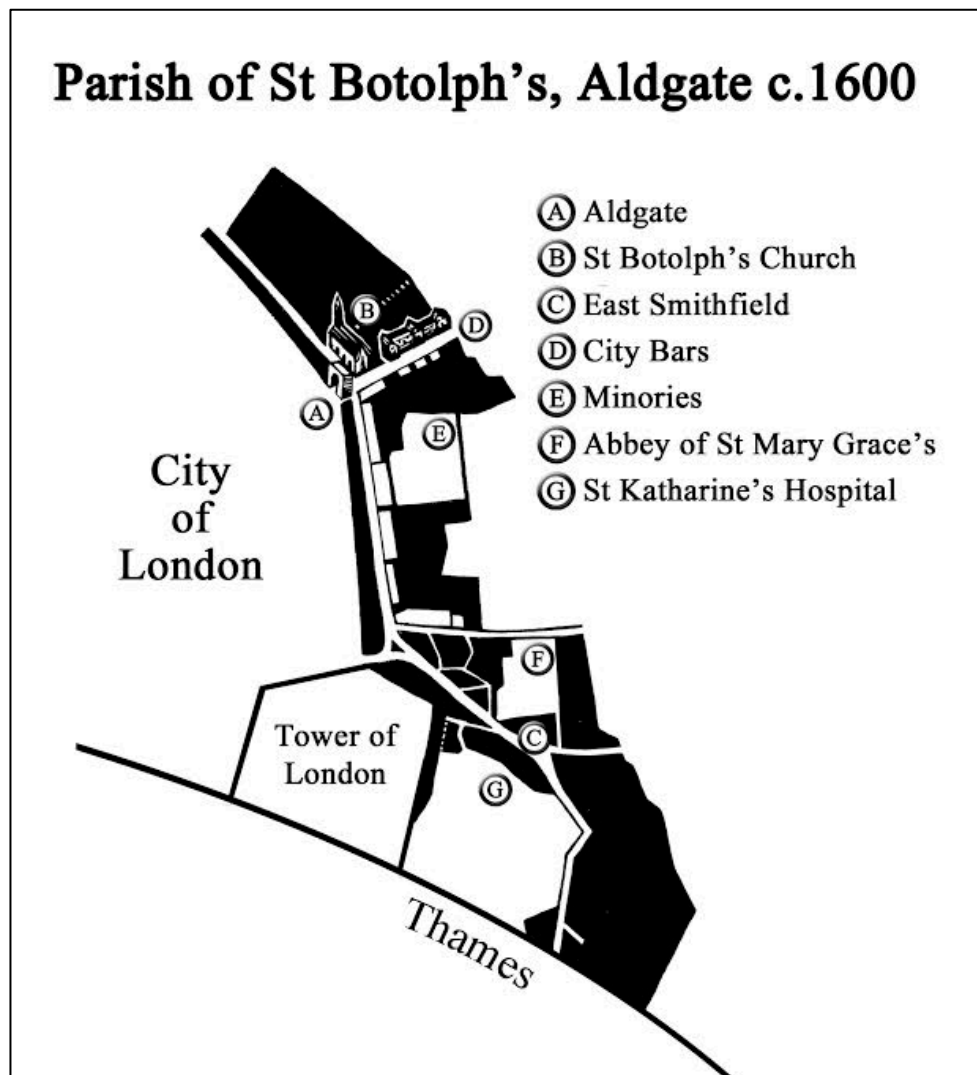[102] Carlin, *'Historical gazetteer'*, p.2.

Figure 1: The parish of St Botolph's, Aldgate, c.1600.

Preserving the irregular boundaries of the parish became increasingly difficult towards the end of the sixteenth century. The Memoranda record annual perambulations of the parish boundaries by the Minister, the Alderman's Deputy and some of the 'ancient' parishioners, which frequently led to confrontation with the Lieutenant of the Tower of London. [103] Stow describes how the area south of the highway was being built up during the 1590s: 'now that street is not only fully replenished with buildings outward, but also pestered with divers alleys on either side to the bars' and this development resulted in

---

[103] On rogation day perambulations of parish boundaries, see Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*: *The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1994); Pounds, *A History of the English Parish*. For a discussion of rural bound-beating, custom and memory see Andy Wood, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country, 1520–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp.134-135. Michael Berlin discusses the St Botolph's perambulations, seeing in them an attempt to define the parish's responsibilities for poor relief in 'Reordering rituals: ceremony and the parish 1520-1640' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Social and Cultural History of Early Modern London*, ed. by P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.47-66. (p.59). Confrontations with the officials at the Tower are recorded on 9234/1/2 fol.54r (28 May 1584); 9234/1/1 fol.77r-78ᵛ (25 May 1587); 9234/2/2 fol.74ᵛ (4 May 1592).

aggressive disputes with the occupiers of buildings that had been built over the parish boundaries.[104] Every year between 1595 and 1600, the Memoranda record that the parishioners pulled down the fence in a garden belonging to a Mr Dobbs, and a bricked up doorway which blocked their way. In 1599 they came to blows with a man called Edward Beck who said to his wife 'Let us rather dye to gither this day Rather then the parishioners Shall Have a way thorowgh any part of our grownd to go the circuit or bowndes of the parish (or the lyke wordes in effect).'[105] When the procession tried to make its way through his garden, Mr Beck refused to keep the peace, and 'wold not obey the Constables but did Stryke both the Curat, Constables, Aldermans deputie & others.'[106] Preserving the parish boundary by perambulation was a process which physically enacted the memories of the 'ancient' parishioners and passed those memories on to younger ones. In 1600, two of the children who accompanied the procession were given gifts of points 'signefieng to them that there was the Right way for the p[ar]ishioners alwayes to go Circuit or bowndes of the p[ar]ish and thorowgh the said garden', a material object, in this case, points, serving to prompt memories of an intangible boundary.[107] Increasingly however, in an indication of the ways in which London's memorial culture was being replaced by textual records, the parishioners started to mark buildings at the parish boundaries with the initials 'S.B.A.' and the Memoranda record the route taken and obstacles encountered each year.[108] In a process that is discussed in more detail in Chapter 1 of this study, this example illustrates some of the ways in which textual authority like that of the Memoranda was increasingly used in early modern London to affirm custom and precedent, but also to shape communal memory, in a period when the use of space both within and outside the church was undergoing rapid change.

The parish, including the areas that fell outside the City's jurisdiction, was under the ecclesiastical supervision of the Diocese of London. Robert Heasse was curate from July 1564 until his death in April 1594.[109] Heasse's father, Peter, was from Roanne, near Lyon, and was a member of the French Church and so Heasse was probably of

---

[104] Stow, *A Survey*, p.124.
[105] 9234/5/3 fol.86[v] (17 May 1599).
[106] 9234/5/3 fol.87[r] (17 May 1599).
[107] 9234/5/3 fol.260[r] (1 May 1600).
[108] On the shift towards the authority of written documentation over communal memory see Andrew Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London: Memory, Text and Community* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013) and Martin Ingram, 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing' in Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle eds. *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996).
[109] The memoranda use the term 'curate' and 'minister' interchangeably to refer to the incumbent. LMA P69/BOT2/A/002/MS09221 fol.255[v]; LMA P69/BOT2/A/003/MS09223 fol.117[r].

Huguenot origin.[110] He could apparently speak French as he published a translation of a French Calvinist tract in English, and in 1592 the French Church sent a delegation to ask him to stop marrying the church's members, who presumably came to him because he could speak to them in their own language.[111] The Memoranda record the burials of a number of French people living in the parish, and also several babies who were buried at St Botolph's but had been christened at the French Church, suggesting that the parish may have included a number of Huguenot families besides that of the curate. Heasse also ministered at times to the neighbouring church at Holy Trinity Minories, which had been converted from the chapel of St Claire's Abbey, and which had a reputation as a 'a nursery of Elizabethan non-conformity' during the mid-sixteenth century. [112]John Field (1544/5-1588), Miles Coverdale (1488-1569) and Stephen Bateman (c.1542-1584) are all recorded as preaching there between 1566 and 1568, and Heasse himself was placed under interdict in 1578 for not complying with the correct order of the sacraments and for not wearing the required vestments. After his death Heasse was followed as incumbent at St Botolph's by Christopher Threlkeld, who also preached at Holy Trinity Minories when its own Minister was suspended in 1596.[113] In 1598 the appointment of the lecturer at St Botolph's was challenged by Bishop Bancroft.[114]

Notwithstanding these pieces of evidence that indicate that St Botolph's was a parish led by a reformist minister, the Memoranda suggest that practice at St Botolph's might be less radical than has previously been suggested. Alex Ryrie has argued that the division between puritan and conformist Protestants was less defined in practice than has often been supposed: 'when we look at the lived experience of religion in this period, the supposed distinction between puritan and conformist dissolves into a blurred spectrum in which even the extremes do not differ starkly from one another.'[115] As

---

[110] From the 1568 return of strangers: 'Peter Haies, borne in Rone, goethe to the French churche, and dwellith within his sonne, the minister at Saint Buttoplfes'. *Return of Aliens dwelling in the City and Suburbs of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James 1*, ed.by R.E.G.Kirk and Ernest F.Kirk, Vol. v.10.3 (Aberdeen: Huguenot Society of London, 1908), p.377.

[111] Robert Heasse, *A chrystian exhortation* (1566) STC 13017; Charles Littleton, 'Social Interactions of aliens in late Elizabethan London: Evidence from the 1593 return and the French Church Consistory 'actes'", *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland,* 26.2 (1995) 147-159 (p.152). Littleton argues that the French Church was very strict in its Calvinism and that couples may have married elsewhere to escape its strict supervision.

[112] On preachers at Minories see Carlin, 'Historical Gazetteer' (Appendix Two); Huw Gareth Owen, 'The Liberty of the Minories: A Study in Elizabethan Religious Radicalism', *East London Papers*, 8 (1965), 81-97; and 'A Nursery of Elizabethan Nonconformity', *Journal Of Ecclesiastical History*, 17 (1966), 65-76. John Field was the radical reformist father of Nathan Field, the dramatist.

[113] Edward Murray Tomlinson, *A History of the Minories, London* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1907), p.215.

[114] J.P.Boulton,'The Limits of Formal Religion',p.137.

[115] Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p.6. On the everyday practice of reformed religion see also Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625* (Oxford: Oxford

records of the lived experience of religious practice in St Botolph's, the Memoranda seem to reflect this middle way that Ryrie identifies. Although the limited information that we have about the curates who ministered to St Botolph's would suggest that they were reformists, the practices of reformation which were recorded seem to have been relatively uncontroversial. For example, no evidence is offered of extended disputes with the church authorities over matters of devotional practice or conformity, whereas the records make note of compliance with requirements to prepare registers. In their anxiety to demonstrate their careful control of the church's spaces, the Memoranda reflect conformity and compliance with Church of England practice.

The character of St Botolph's was determined, less by its religious conformity, or otherwise, than by its rapid growth and the poverty of its parishioners. In 1548 it had 1130 communicants, which Martha Carlin estimates to represent some 3,500 residents and by 1630 the population was around 10,000: 'the outstanding characteristic of the parish after 1550 was […] the rapid rate of growth and large size of its population.'[116] The Braun & Hogenberg map of London (1572), while idealised, shows large areas of the parish as green fields and the houses as well spaced out, with a number of market gardens which had been created from the open fields.[117] The Norden map (1593) shows more development and many cannon or 'pieces' lying on the grass in the area of East Smithfield, just north of the Tower, the open space apparently being used by the ordinance office, which was based in the Minories.[118] Notwithstanding the occasional wealthy inhabitant of the neighbourhood, especially among those who had acquired former church properties in the Minories and St Mary Graces following the Dissolution, St Botolph's congregation was largely poor. It grew rapidly through the late sixteenth century as the open ground in the parish was covered in houses, gardens were built on and properties were subdivided. Given the relative size of the parish and its church, it is likely that many of the parishioners never or rarely attended services; even in 1548 it could not have accommodated in one service the more than a thousand communicants

---

University Press, 1982); David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, And Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 1997); Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993) and *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2007).

[116] Carlin, *Gazetteer*, p.6.

[117] Braun & Hogenberg, *Civita Orbis Terrarum* (Cologne, 1572). Available on The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library Historic Cities website < http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il> [accessed 6 May 2015].

[118] Norden, John, *London, a guide for cuntrey men in the famous city of London, by the help of which plot they shall be able to know how far it is to any street* (1593), on-line at the British Library Online Gallery <www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/a/007000000000001u00033000.html> [accessed 1 October 2012].Tomlinson, *History of the Minories.*

that Carlin estimates lived in the parish.[119] The Memoranda record that several communions a day, each for several hundred communicants, were held throughout the Easter period each year in order to accommodate everyone.[120] Stow commented in 1598 that the church had to be altered to accommodate the increasing population: 'the parishioners of this parish being of late years mightily increased, the church is pestered with lofts and seats for them.'[121] He also complained about the uncontrolled and makeshift development of what had been fields in his youth:

> Also without the bars, both the sides of the street be pestered with cottages, and alleys, even up to Whitechapel Church, and almost half a mile beyond it, into the common field all which ought to be open and free for all men.[122]

The parish was home to many poor and, to use Patricia Fumerton's term, 'unsettled' people, but wealthier travellers also passed through: 'east from this parish church, there were certain fair inns for receipt of travellers repairing to the city'.[123] From Stow's descriptions and given its location, we can understand that the road that passed in front of St Botolph's was full of travellers, and that besides the parish's own poor, there would have been alms seekers on their way between London and the eastern counties of England.

The development that Stow describes contributed to the difficulty that the parish had in managing its boundaries and also added to the overcrowding and poverty in the area. Forbes' analysis of the 242 christenings recorded in 1600 found that only two of the babies had fathers described as 'gentlemen', two who were merchants and two who were lawyers.[124] Two schoolmasters and two goldsmiths would probably also have been included in the 'middling' strata of society, but otherwise the fathers were almost all labourers, sailors, tradesmen, or providers of services: seventeen sailors, twelve coopers, ten tailors, eight butchers, draymen, carmen, horn-breakers, gunsmiths, textile workers of various sorts and two minstrels are included on the list. The majority of occupations relate to transport, maritime industries, brewing and textiles, including the

---

[119] Carlin, *Gazetteer,* p.6.

[120] The Memoranda repeatedly refer to 'communion' rather than, for example, 'The Lord's Supper', which might indicate a more strongly Protestant tendency. On the practice of communion, see Arnold Hunt, 'The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* (1998) 161 (1), 39-83.

[121] Stow, *A Survey,* p.123. These alterations were presumably funded by the collections mentioned in note 96 above.

[122] Stow, *A Survey*, p.354.

[123] Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture Of Mobility And The Working Poor In Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006); Stow, *A Survey*, p.123.

[124] Forbes, *Chronicles*, pp.9-10.

second hand clothes dealers in Shoreditch.[125] The Lower End of the parish, close to the river, was unsurprisingly inhabited by mariners and the trades associated with docks and shipping.

Stow's descriptions of the area point to the very real experience of change in the parish. Those who had lived there for a long time would have seen rapid development of the previously semi-rural area and there were many new inhabitants, both permanent and transitory. The size of the parish physically and in terms of population would have made it impossible for a resident to know all of his or her fellow parishioners, even by sight. St Botolph's parish then, was a liminal place: within London, but outside the walls; it was both a destination and a starting point, but also a place of transition and passing through. Its boundaries were shaped by ancient religious institutions which themselves had witnessed transformative change after the Reformation; defined by memory but also by the annual physical perambulation of its limits. It operated as both a channel for people to flow into London, and also as a drain whereby they left the city. This study considers the ways in which community is created and maintained in this kind of urban space, and how they are reflected in the alms petitions and among the plays selected.

6. **Neighbourhood and narrative in early modern London**

Each chapter of this study focuses on a different form or genre in which stories of early modern London were told, looking at both text and context to try to understand how their complex mediations of narrative form made meaning for early modern Londoners. Chapter 1 utilises the alms petitions of St Botolph's to investigate some of the ways in which narratives of charity and neighbourhood were formulated in early modern London. The alms petitioners sought to establish a form of credit that distinguished them from the unlicensed street beggar, in order to establish their credibility despite a narrative of failure and disaster. This chapter considers the use of economic language in their explicitly instrumental narratives, designed to elicit cash from strangers. Closely related to the credibility of the alms narratives are questions about the reliability of text, explored in connection with the figure of the 'Jarkeman' or counterfeiter of petitions. Collections for fires and maimed soldiers are used to investigate questions of genre and the discourse of begging. The proper use of space, especially in the Church, is a preoccupation that permeates the Memoranda and in this chapter the performance of

---

[125] Carlin, 'Historical Gazetteer', Appendix 1.

alms seeking as a practice that shapes the space of the church will be explored. Each element of this complex series of relationships is shown to be performative and mutually constitutive, from the beggar, to the text, to the space of the church itself. Overarching all of this are the ways in which London is created as a place of community, neighbourhood and stability in by the petitions of the unsettled alms petitioners.

The second chapter turns to plays featuring representations of London that are contemporary with the St Botolph's alms narratives and which retell events from London's history as tragedy. It considers the ways in which these plays respond to, and shape, ideas of neighbourhood in early modern London in a period of rapid population growth and economic change. Negotiation of the spaces of the city is an important feature of the ways in which London is created as both place and space on stage and this chapter discusses the ways that characters describe walking through the streets of London as they enact what a process of converting space to place, that is, making neighbourhood from the urban spaces. This chapter argues that these connected notions of storytelling and negotiated, appropriated spaces are found both in the plays and the alms narratives, with a particular focus on the spaces around Aldgate. As the plays transform the places of London into comprehensible spaces of belonging and neighbourhood, the alms petitions tell stories of un-belonging and alienation which the petitioners and the church authorities seek to harness and control. The gendered nature of London's places and the ways that the plays problematize early modern women's use of its spaces in tragic mode forms the closing part of this chapter.

Chapter 3 focuses on the ways in which women, commerce and the stage converge in the space and place of early modern London. Living in London, a woman's life was not confined to the house, nor was there an expectation of privacy and recent re-assessments of the role of women in both the workplace and the theatre allow consideration of the ways in which the women of the city engaged in commercial activity − running an inn, serving in a shop − that are shown on stage. Shops, inns, and ordinaries were extensions of women's domestic spaces and were open to family, neighbours and strangers, creating a tension between a woman's confinement to the domestic sphere and the access to them that working required. The plays which this thesis investigates show the domestic spaces of women as liminal and permeable and the privacy of gardens and parlours are shown paradoxically to offer undesirable solitude and to be impossible to control. This chapter shows how they engage with the problems set up by the negotiation of these spaces under the ideological insistence that

an ordered society required the restriction of women to the domestic sphere. A woman's credit, challenged by conflicting spatial practices, is shown to be redeemable by both careful accounting and charitable generosity.

Throughout this study, two types of source, plays and alms petitions are read alongside each other, reflecting the way in which both were available to the parishioners of St Botolph's, who stand in for early modern Londoners more generally. That these sources are both distinct, but connected by their mutual grounding in location, makes them valuable and specific evidence of a larger discourse about neighbourhood, charity and commerce in early modern London. Using a methodology that ranges from close reading to historical contextualisation allows these sources to illuminate each other by highlighting the common concerns which arise in the stories told by each. The complexity and reciprocity of credit is enacted in this process of narration, which unfolds some of the many ways in which the experience of early modern London was comprehended and shaped by the stories told there.

Chapter 1

Text, Community and the Space of St Botolph's

Text, Community and the Space of St Botolph's

> I have gotten nothing by my long service but stripes and woundes, and nowe I must needes leave of this trade, because I want my legges, and ashamed I am to begge.
> (*A pleasaunt dialogue, betweene a souldior of Barwick, and an English chaplaine*, 1581)[1]

> A meere whip-Iacke, and that is in the Common-wealth of rogues, a slaue that can talk of sea-fight, name all your chiefe Pirats, discouer more countries to you, than either the Dutch, Spanish, French or English euer found out, yet indeed all his seruice is by land, and that is to rob a Faire, or some such venturous exploit.
> (*The Roaring Girl* (1611), sig.K3ʳ; 10.134-139)[2]

This chapter uses alms petitions as a medium to investigate some of the ways in which stories creating space and identity were experienced in an early modern London parish. It explores some of the processes of recording and shaping communal responses to the narratives of economic hardship and disaster that the petitioners told. It shows that the generic qualities of a petition, including the rhetorical strategies that it adopts, construct a persuasive narrative which is a response to, and formation of, the relationship between donor, petitioner and the wider community.[3] Once we explore this evidence in the context of its place alongside neighbourhood dramas, it becomes clear how valuable it is, when read with the evidence provided by plays and theatre, in disclosing Londoners' understandings of themselves.

Of the (approximately) three hundred petitions recorded in the Memoranda of St Botolph's, some forty-two relate to fires and around seventy to maimed soldiers and mariners and these two categories constitute the largest causal grouping by type.[4] Although curious stories about individuals are appealing, this study turns to these recurring narratives in order to draw more generalised conclusions in relation to genre, form and language. This close reading of the wording of the petitions themselves is set within a contextual framework that pays particular attention to the wider discourse around begging within which they are situated is discussed, and also to the ways in

---

[1] Anthony Gilby, *A pleasaunt dialogue, betweene a souldior of Barwick, and an English chaplaine* (1581), STC 11888, sig. B2ᵛ.

[2] Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl. Or Moll Cut-Purse* (1611), STC 17908 sig. K3ᵛ; Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl; or Moll Cutpurse*, ed. by Coppélia Kahn, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.721-778.

[3] I adopt here Genette's terminology of 'story' and 'narrative' to distinguish between the signified content and the signifying statement.

[4] The number of collections for maimed soldiers and mariners is not precise because in some cases the cause of an individual's disability is unclear or there are a number of contributing factors besides military service.

which the forms of record keeping reflect the anxious process of conformity within the post-Reformation church. The producer of counterfeit petitions embodies the ways in which fear of the unreliability of a beggar's testimony interacts with the instability of the written word, to create a tension between print and manuscript which resonates with the wider experience of the complex relationship between manuscript and print in other forms of early modern literature.[5]

Multiple, and potentially contradictory, imperatives to be charitable, and to be prudent, fashioned conflicting identities for the givers and receivers of alms, identities which are also shown to be mutually formed. Paying particular attention to the liturgical context in which the alms petitions would have been heard in St Botolph's, allows the complex forces which formed these identities to be examined. Located as the church was, at the busy threshold of the City, the Memoranda address questions of licensed and unlicensed movement in the church, street and city, recording social relationships as expressed through the use of space. What kinds of identity, what kinds of spatial practices, what kinds of community can we find in the reciprocal relationships between text and context? I will begin with a description of the alms petitions, and the complex set of relationships involved in their creation and especially some of the ways in which they can be understood as performative texts.

1. **Text as Performance: the Alms Petitions of St Botolph's**

'Is it not great pity' Phillip Stubbes complained in 1583, 'when a man can passe no waie almost neither citie nor country, but shall have both halt, blind, lame, old aged, sicke, sore & diseased hanging upon his sleve, and craving of reléefe?'[6] Stubbes' complaint about the beggars who accost him, connects them with questions about the legitimate use of space and authorised movement; his traveller, trying to pass on his way, is impeded by the indigent poor, 'hanging upon his sleve.' He suggests that encountering beggars is a quotidian experience, even allowing for polemical exaggeration which was aimed at shaming the authorities into making proper provision for the poor. The man on whose arm the beggar hung was presented with a test, both of his charity and of his capacity to assess the veracity of the beggar's story and the merit of his cause. Unlike the common beggar in the street, about whom Stubbes complains,

---

[5] For a more general discussion of this subject, see for example David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order, 1450–1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and other authors cited in n.137 to this chapter.
[6] Phillip Stubbes, *The second part of the anatomie of abuses* (1583), STC 23380, sig. G1ᵛ.

the petitioner who collected at St Botolph's was authorized to solicit alms, and usually carried a Letter Patent or 'bill', which was his or her license to do so. Issued to people incapacitated in the many ways that Stubbes lists, and more, the bills were an attempt to control begging and by providing relief for those considered to be deserving, to mitigate the nuisance of the indigent poor. In the presentation of alms petitions, the congregation regularly experienced authorised forms of narrative which mediated stories of disaster and which were performed in the space of their church. When hearing them, the congregation was invited to make judgements about the petitioner, his or her story, and whether it merited a charitable response. There was also an opportunity to assess the charity of their neighbours and the extent to which the congregation as a community responded to the needs of the petitioner. The Memoranda are the material traces of the ephemeral actions that they record, and the very particular ways in which they are shaped by their status as records is brought to the fore throughout the following discussion.

The Memoranda contain records of collections authorised by powerful people and bodies from the Queen downwards, including the Privy Council, the Lord High Admiral, the Lord Mayor of London and the Bishop of London.[7] The social status of petitioners varied widely, from the humblest injured soldiers and mariners to collectors on behalf of Lawrence Palliologo, the former Archbishop of Cyprus, who tried to raise the ransom for Cypriots 'taken captyves by the turke.'[8] In some cases the recipients of alms collected on their own behalf, but in others, collectors appeared on behalf of relatives or institutions. Occasionally, collections were made without a bill for local people who had fallen on particularly hard times or for impoverished preachers or scholars at the personal recommendation of the parish officials. Many of the collectors were passing through the parish, on their way to or from towns in East Anglia and the north of England. Transient figures, they had only a passing opportunity to impress the church authorities and the parishioners of their honesty and their worthiness to collect alms at St Botolph's.

Giving to the poor was a regular activity for many people in early modern London and consequently little attention is paid by the Memoranda to the physical process of collecting, or to the responses of either giver or receiver towards the act of

---

[7] Mark Harris, whose article discusses the archive material available on petitions, distinguishes between begging licences issued by JPs and 'briefs', a term used to mean collections for public works or urgent necessity, especially fires, authorised under Edwardian legislation (I Edward VI c.3). The Memoranda of St Botolph's however make no such distinction and I have not attempted to impose it retrospectively upon them. Harris, 'Inky Blots and Rotten Parchment Bonds'.

[8] 9234/5/1 fol. 245^v (3 November 1594).

giving.[9] The evidence that we do have for what happened when a collection was made is therefore scant and limited, and although later registers of the parish sometimes include revealing, and entertaining, asides about parishioners, the Memoranda were created as communal records of things done, rather than personal responses to them, and the attitudes that they reveal are implicit and readable only between the lines.[10] Qualifying remarks about activities in the church are made only to the extent that the churchwardens or the minister might be asked to justify some irregular practise, as for example, when in 1584 the Memoranda record why a child of a different parish was christened by the curate of St Botolph's:

> mr Hayse ower curatt Ded cristenn Alice Woottunn the dawghter mr Edward Woottunn at his Dwellinge Howse beinge in Pickeringe Howse […] this was He reqwested to Do becawse that the chyld was weke and the parsonn mr Jhonson was not to be fownde this chyld was cristned the Daye and yeare above written in the prsentes of me Thomas Harridance clarke and Dyveres others.[11]

The record marks, not only the event of a christening, but also the communal witnessing by 'Dyveres others' of the justification for the irregularity should anyone later raise a query. Several of the books open with a claim to omniscience: 'Heare after is Speacefyed and Then regestered all Suche thinges as is done in the churche' and 'Heare in is conteyned & Regestred all Christninges churchinges Wedinges & burialles and other thinges whatsoever, done in the pishe Church' [Figure 2].[12] Despite the ambition of these claims, the material recorded in the books is of course partial and selective, shaped to fit the needs of those who kept them. The entries do not form a continuous narrative in themselves but are the records of a series of moments and events arranged in chronological order; as Andrew Gordon writes of Henry Machyn's 'diary', they are 'snapshots of divergent collective identities without the smoothing out of discontinuities characteristic of a narrative *memoir*.'[13] The purpose of the Memoranda in evidencing

---

[9] On the pervasiveness of various forms of charitable giving in early modern England, see Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

[10] The Memoranda for the period covered in this study have very few of the side remarks that add depth to studies such as Eamon Duffy's *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2001) or Adam Smyth's *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Forbes, *Chronicles from Aldgate,* draws on some of the more interesting examples of this kind of material in the St Botolph's Memoranda and registers.

[11] Alice Wotton was probably the daughter of Edward Wotton, with whom Sidney was 'at the Emperors Court'. His wife's maiden name was Pickering. 'Wotton, Edward, first Baron Wotton (1548–1628)', *ODNB*; Philip Sidney, *The defence of poesie* (1595), STC22535, B1ʳ; 9234/1/2 fol.111ʳ (13 November 1584).

[12] 9234/1/2 fol.1ʳ (15 December 1583); 9234/5 fol.263ʳ (18 December 1594).

[13] Andrew Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London*, p.42.

the careful surveillance of the church is suggested by the watchful face inscribed in the text of the first surviving Memoranda book [Figure 2]. Performing compliance with rules, recording that compliance and justifying any deviance, the Memoranda are records of surveillance and control of the space of the church and the people who use it.
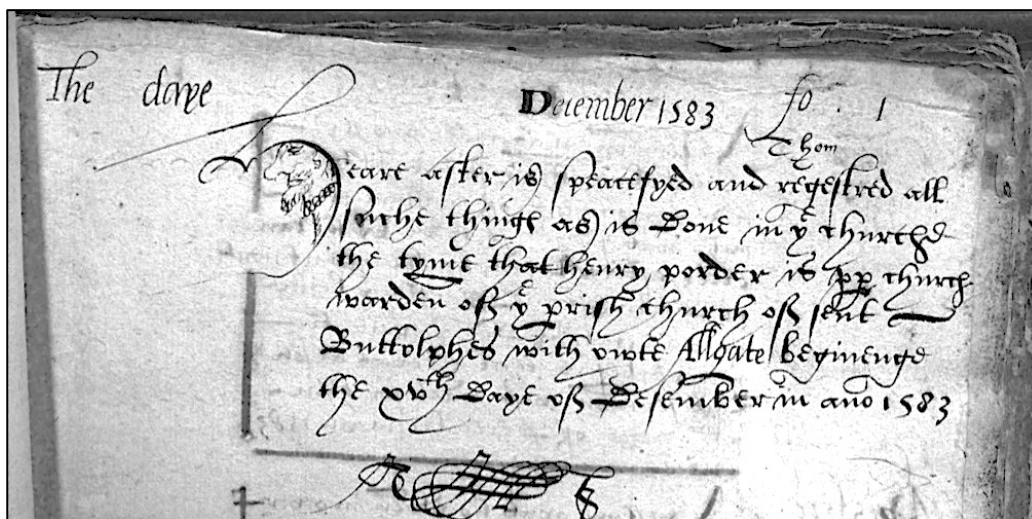

Figure 2: Note from opening page of St Botolph's Memoranda Book for 1583, 9234/1/2 fol.1ʳ (15 December 1583). With permission of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London.

The Memoranda which record alms collections accordingly focus on the purposive spare and bare essentials of the case, the who, why, what and where, that form the skeleton of narrative. Only occasionally does an entry copy out a full version of the petition, together with the third party address to the church authorities that bids them to carry out the collection.[14] More usually an extract is given which omits the preamble and focuses on the key facts: who is being collected for, who authorised the collection, when and how much was collected. The Memoranda of the collection made in January 1594 on behalf of prisoners held at the King's Bench prison is a typical example of a collection made on behalf of the prisoners held at the Marshalsea Prison:[15]

> Memorandum that a collection was gathered in our p[ar]ishe churche of St Buttolphes withowt aldgate london the xiijth day of Januarie 1593. ffor the prisoners in the custodie of the marshall of the marshalsey of the Queenes bentche by vertue of the Queenes Maties letters pattens graunted unto Symon Ellis by him selfe or his suffitient deputie Joyntly or severally to aske gather and receyve the almes and charitable giftes what soever for the said prisoners shalbe given to them as well within liberties as withowt in our cittie of london and the

---

[14] Examples include the collections for the town of Beccles, 9234/2/1 fol.8ʳ (22 December 1588) and for William Hamond, Thomas Martin and Jhon Teay, 9234/2/1 fol. 3ᵛ (18 December 1589).
[15] The first collections recorded in the Memoranda are for the prisoners of the King's Bench 9234/1/2 fol.3ʳ (22 December 1583) and the 'marsallcyes' ('Marshalsea') 9234/1/2 fol. 6ʳ (29 December 1583). A total of 15 collections were made for the prisoners of the King's Bench and the Marshalsea between 1583 and the last on 12 December 1596 (9234/6 fol.74ʳ).

suburbs of the Cittie The said letters pattentes are to endure hentill the ixth Day of october next coming Dated at St Albones the vjth of november in the xxxvth yeare of the Queenes Maties Rayne et ch: And there was gathered for the said prisoners at the said tyme by David george and Jhon Ansell Churchwardens the some of two shillinges which some being ingrosed upon one of his briefes the said mony was delivered unto the said symon Ellis the xxjth day of Januarie Ano 1593 by our pishe Clarke. [16]

The page from the Memoranda showing this collection is reproduced below [Figure 3].

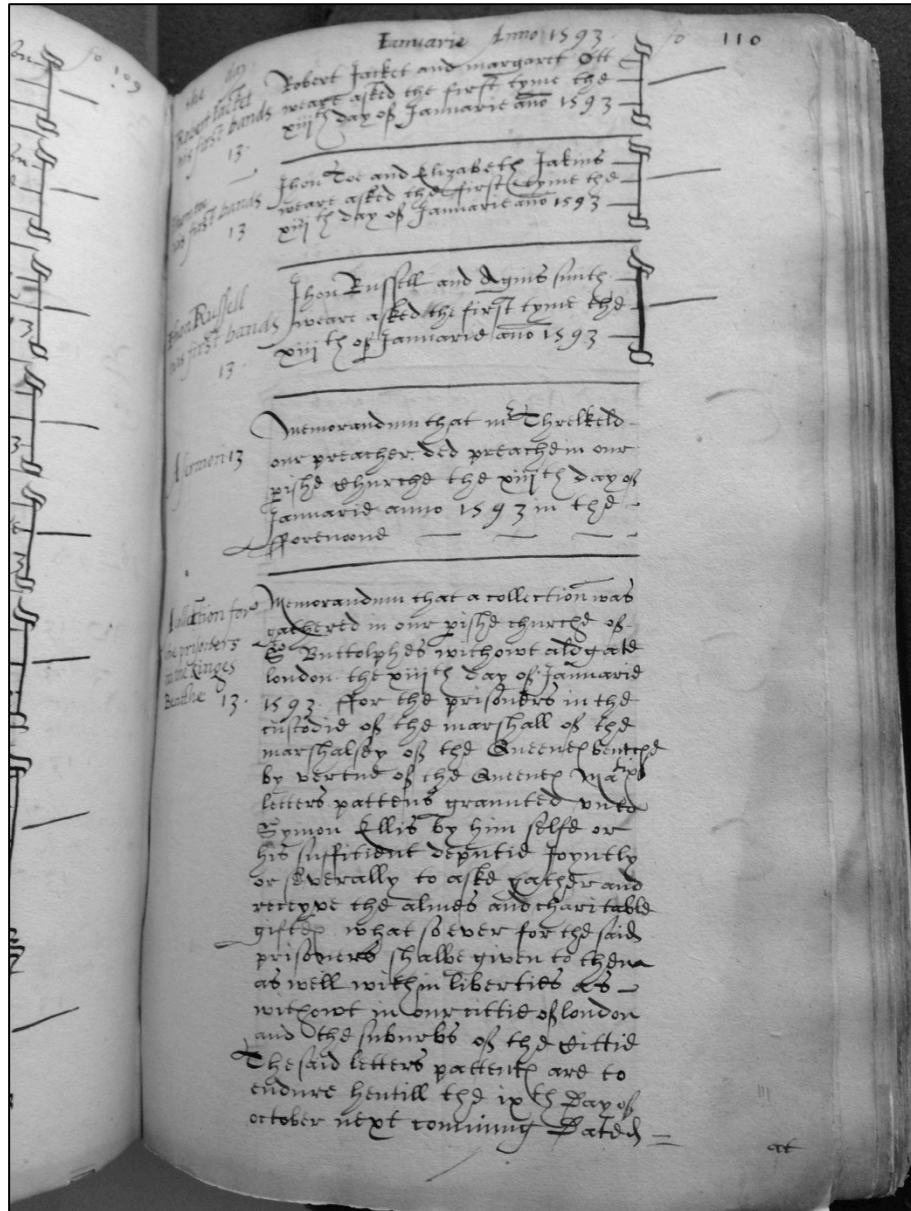**Figure 3: Page from St Botolph's Churchwardens' Memoranda Book for 1593-4, showing part of a collection for 'the prisoners in the Kinge's Benche' (lower half of page). 9234/4 fol.110ʳ (13 January 1593/94). With permission of London Metropolitan Archives, City of London.**

This entry records, as many do, that the amount collected was 'ingrosed upon on of his

---

[16] 9234/4 fol.110ʳ (13 January 1593/4).

briefes', that is, it was written on the document that Symon Ellis produced as his authorisation and afterwards took away with him. The Memoranda do not incorporate copies of the original briefs, because the petitioner needed to retain his or her paperwork as evidence that they were licensed, and to present it at the next location where they might collect. This process of noting on the bill the amount presented to the petitioner, contributes to the impression given by the Memoranda of the clerical rectitude of Thomas Harridance, the clerk for most of this period, and the 'me' of the note about the Woottunn christening above.[17] The word that he uses habitually to mean writing on a document, 'to ingross', means literally 'to write large' but it carries a distinctly legal or official sense, 'to write out or express in legal form.'[18] By writing upon a petitioner's brief, Harridance appropriates the material object to say something both about himself and the parish which he served; the Letters Patent that Symon Ellis carried away from St Botolph's demonstrated to subsequent readers not only the generosity of its parishioners but the conformity of St Botolph's administration and its alignment with the authority of the Letters Patent. If, as in this case, 'the form of the text is the place where it does its ideologically significant work' the abbreviated text included in the Memoranda signifies bureaucratic competence and emotional detachment from the suffering of the prisoners in the Marshalsea Prison to which it bears witness.[19]

Few copies of the original petitions for collections recorded at St Botolph's can be found, although briefs for the larger collections, especially those for the relief of whole towns or for large civil engineering projects, were printed and sometimes appear in collections of printed ephemera.[20] A copy of Gregory Pormorte's Letters Patent is one of the few surviving briefs that can be matched to a collection at St Botolph's, held on 12 January 1586/7.[21] The printed Pormorte brief appends to the Queen's Letters Patent, further directions from John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury (1530/31?-1604) and John Aylmer, the Bishop of London (1520/21–1594). Directed to all 'Parsons Vicars, Curats, Readers and Churchwardens', these require the letters to be read aloud

---

[17] The first entry by Thomas Harridance/Harrydance is three months after the books commence on 25 March 1583/4 (9234/1/2, fol.34^r) and the last is on 24 November 1599 (9234/5/2, fol.182^r). The last entry in the series is made in June 1600.

[18] *OED*: 'engross', I.1.a.

[19] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p.204.

[20] For example, *A booke containing all svch proclamations as were pvblished dvring the raigne of the late queene elizabeth,* collected by Humfrey Dyson (1618), STC 7758.3 contains *An exemplification [...] Towne and Port of Hastings* (1578), STC 8101 (fol.179^r).

[21] 9234/1/1, fol. 17^r (12 January 1586/7); *The exemplification [...]Gregory Pormorte, marchant of the towne of Kingstone upon Hull* (1586), STC 8158. Another example is the Letters Patent for the collection for Penzance, Mousehole and Newlyn, STC 8247.6, which was held at St Botolph's in 1596. 9234/5/1 fol.172^v (4 January 1595/6).

in church, preceding the collection. The letters specifically instruct the 'ingrossing' of the amounts collected on the copy of the brief once the collection has been held:

> *AND* further that you the *Churchwardens,* or your sufficient deputies, do collect of al such parsons their said charitable benevolence, & not omyt to wright on the backe syde, of the coppie of y said Pattent, the countie, the name of the parishe, the minister, your owne names, every giver, and what he gives, and the same to deliver, ~~with the copies of the Saide Pattents, beinge endorsed~~, to my Archdeacon, or his Comissary, at the next Court, for and to the use of the said poore Marchant.[22]

The clerk at St Botolph's duly recorded the parish's compliance with the instructions that they had been given:

> there was gathered for him the Some of xxxiij Shillinges and fower pence The wch monye beinge Ingrosed upon the Backesyd of the coppie of his Letteres patenes The Sayde monye Was Delivered unto one Jhon Collins beinge his Deputie the Sayd xijth daye of Januarie in ano 1586 by the Handes of Jhon gowsell and Humphrie Rowland beinge churchwardens.[23]

Making the collection and delivering the proceeds to the recipient (if they had not collected in person) was a task in which compliance with processes of communal supervision was performed. The delivery was usually carried out by two churchwardens, each acting as witness for the other and able to vouch that the money had reached the intended recipient. Differences between the printed and manuscript versions of the Pormorte collection suggest that recording a collection also involved at least two people, one to read the salient details out loud and another to make the memorandum. Part of the printed version of Pormorte's collection reads as follows:

> our Welbeloved subjecte *Gregory Pormort,* Citizen and Marchant of Kingestone, upon Hull: in our Countie of *Yorke,* viz: the losse of nine Shipps with his goods therein amowntinge to many Thousande poundes, the last whereof, being a goodly new shippe, was soddainely consumed by fire, in Hull Harboure, to the great astonishing of the whole towne.[24]

The following is the St Botolph's version, which is clearly taken from the printed version; note that almost every key word, including the petitioner's name is spelled differently in the manuscript:

---

[22] *The exemplification [...] Gregory Pormorte.*
[23] 9234/1/1, fol.17ʳ (12 January 1586/7).
[24] The exemplification […] Pormorte.

and was to relieve one Grigorie Pormorte of the cittie or towne of Kingestone upon Hull who havinge lost nyne Ships wt his goodes therein amowntinge to the Somme of manye thowsand powndes the Last whereof beinge a goodlie newe Ship was Sodenlye consumed by fyer in Hull harbor to the grete astonishment of the whole towne of Hull.[25]

A narrator who is uncertain whether Hull is a city or a town is substituted for the Queen's possessive 'our well beloved subject' and 'our Countie of Yorke'. The narrative of the petition is taken (more or less) verbatim from the printed bill, but the spelling varies substantially, suggesting that Harridance was writing down a text that was being read out loud to him, and not copying it out directly from a printed version. Just as two men were needed to take the collection to the Archdeacon, so too was the memorandum of that collection compiled by at least two people, Harridance who wrote it, and the churchwarden who was responsible for the collection and who had an interest in its details being correctly recorded, reading out the text. Making collections, and making records at St Botolph's, was an activity in which communal practises of supervision and recording intersected, and creating the Memoranda was a way of reading and writing that incorporated checks and balances into the process. Through these practises the place of the church was shaped, not only as a space for worship, but a place of watchfulness, supervision, communal action and charity, a space where community was shaped by performances of supervision.

Gregory Pormorte represents one type of alms petitioner; he appears to have been able to call on the support of powerful patrons to support his appeal for charitable alms, and his seems to have been a national campaign.[26] At the other end of the scale, some collections were made without a bill, but instead under the personal endorsement of the preacher, the curate or another leading member of the congregation. In 1589 a collection was gathered for William Camp, a scholar at St John's, Cambridge, at the request of Mr Scott, a regular preacher at the church.[27] George Langley 'who sayd he was a preacher of Bristo and was without living' was gathered for in 1592 at the request of St Botolph's preacher, Christopher Threlkeld.[28] In 1594, a collection was made for a poor parishioner at the instigation of John Ansell, the churchwarden:

---

[25] 9234/1/1, fol.17^r (12 January 1586/7).
[26] Archbishop Whitgift came from Grimsby and his father was a merchant in the town- there may have been a family or social connection between Whitgift and Pormort. 'Whitgift, John (1530/31?–1604)', *ODNB*. The collection at St Botolph's raised 33 shillings and 4d, making it one of the largest in the Memoranda.
[27] 9234/2/1 fol. 100^r (21 September 1589).
[28] 9234/2/2 fol.39^v (26 March 1591/2).

> Memorandum that I ded deliver unto Jhon Read in scomer aley the some of ijs ixd the xvth day of september ano 1594 at the appoyntment of Jhon Ansell the Churchwarden being mony gathered the said day at the Church Dore.[29]

An alms collection at St Botolph's could enact a number of social relationships: religious solidarity, community charity or compliance with national authorities, or a combination of any of these. In each case, a collector had to convince the church authorities that the story that he or she was presenting was truthful and the cause was deserving. Before they even arrived at St Botolph's, those carrying a bill would have had to persuade several sets of powerful people of the merit of their case. The case of Richard Wybird, who collected at St Botolph's several times in 1589 and 1590, is perhaps a typical story, although its unfolding is unusually clear in the St Botolph's records. A tailor from Hingham, Norfolk, who had been 'grieviuslye wownded and maymed' at the battle of Zutphen (1586), Wybird first appeared at St Botolph's in October 1589, with a passport to travel to London to petition the Queen for relief.[30] Apparently successful, he collected again in April 1590, in a group with five other wounded ex-soldiers, bearing Letters Patent saying that he had been offered an alms room at Norwich Cathedral and could seek alms until it became vacant.[31] In January 1592/93 Wybird's wife appeared at St Botolph's, bearing a passport from the Privy Council which allowed the couple to go 'into the Countrie amongst there friends at Norwich', the alms room apparently still unavailable.[32] On this last occasion, the Memorandum notes that 'the said Richard wybird hath had one other collexion gathered heare before tyme', suggesting that one of his other collections had fallen out of memory. We can construct from the abbreviated notes of the Memoranda a narrative of the attempts by Wybird and his wife to relieve the poverty into which they had fallen following his military service and the limited means by which the state attempted to alleviate it. Many of the other collections listed in the Memoranda, like the Wybirds', and including the very last one, are for men making their way to alms houses where they have been promised rooms or who are waiting for such offered rooms to become vacant.[33] Sir Phillip Sidney was also wounded at the Battle of Zutphen and while he famously endured a long and lingering death, the grandeur of his funeral is an ironic contrast to the miserable sufferings of injured survivors like Wybird. Sidney's body was held at the Minories, where it would have been easily accessible to the clergy and

---

[29] 9234/4 fol. 217ʳ (15 September 1594).
[30] 9234/2/1 fol.112ᵛ (26 October 1589).
[31] 9234/2/1 fol.49ʳ (26 April 1590).
[32] 9234/2/2 fol.17ᵛ (2 January 1591/2).
[33] 9234/5/2 fol. 255ᵛ (20 April 1600).

parishioners of St Botolph's, for three months before burial at St Paul's. Settling

Sidney's debts and paying for the funeral was said to have cost his father-in-law

Walsingham some £6,000.[34] The spectacular procession of more than seven hundred

mourners who followed his cortege most likely passed by St Botolph's from the

Minories and entered the City through Aldgate.[35] The Memoranda record of this

remarkable event states only that 'Ser Phillip Sidne his funirall was solemnized in

powles the 16th daye of februarie 1586.'[36] The lack of interest that the Memoranda show

in Sidney's funeral compared to the careful recording of Wybird's collections,

underlines the limits of their purpose, which is to record, not the interesting or the

curious, but the things within their authority for which the wardens might one day be

held answerable.

As the examples of Pormorte and the Wybirds show, collections bills involved

some of the country's most powerful people in the affairs of the most vulnerable. The

selection of those who were allowed to collect, and the exclusion of those who were not,

was an exercise in patronage, and the bills usually sought to control the movement of

the petitioner by stipulating the areas in which he or she could collect. The geographical

limits of the briefs, which often stretched over several counties, as Ilana Krausman Ben-

Amos has observed, legitimized and enhanced the authority of the issuer by surpassing

their local boundaries of influence and calling on a sense of obligation beyond the

immediate community.[37] The collection bill is thus an instrument of the wider authority

of the state, or people representing its authority, and its ability to determine who could,

and who could not, legitimately request alms. The imposition of civic authority over the

collection process is perhaps seen most clearly in the collections ordered by Lord

Mayors and Senior Aldermen for their servants who were to be married. It was not

unknown for communities to collect for couples who were getting married and there is

some evidence that London companies required donations to members who were

marrying, and that these were not voluntary contributions but had the compulsory nature

of right and custom.[38] Those were however donations to fellow members in an

---

[34] 'Sidney, Sir Philip (1554–1586)', *ODNB*.

[35] Images of the funeral procession, drawn by Thomas Lant and engraved by Theodor de Bry, were published as *Sequitur celebritas & pompa funeris quemadmodu[m] a Clarencio Armorum et insignium rege instituta es* (1588) STC 15224.

[36] 9234/1/1 fol.35r (16 February 1586/87).

[37] Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving,* p.338. Ben-Amos states that 'these public appeals required royal approval' (p.337) but the briefs recorded at St Botolph's are issued in the name of a variety of authoritative figures, as discussed.

[38] R.A. Houston, *Bride Ales and Penny Weddings: Recreations, Reciprocity, and Regions in Britain from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p.63. Houston finds

organisation, a Livery Company, that was designed for the mutual aid and support of its members. Throughout the period covered by the Memoranda, collections were made at St Botolph's at the direction of city officials, including various Lord Mayors, Alderman and the Registrar of the Bishop of London for servants in their households who were to be married.[39] The parish collection appears to have become a perquisite of the job for Lord Mayors through the 1590s, enabling them to bestow largesse on their selected servants at the expense of London's congregations more generally. The amounts collected for servants' weddings are modest, ranging between six and eleven shillings. Cases of more pressing need seem to have been recognised more generously in comparison; on 25 October 1590, for example, when six shillings was collected for Lord Mayor Harte's maid servant, eleven shillings was collected for Jhon Richardson of Carlell (Carlisle?) 'who as ou' preacher sayd was a scholler owte of money beinge verie sicke of an agewe and having xii skore myles home.'[40] While collections for Mayoral servants seem to be an expression of communal support for the representatives of the civic structures that organised London life, if measured by money, congregational sympathies seemed to lie more with the poor, sick scholar miles away from home than with the Mayor.

The petitions' narratives can be read as texts in which many layers of performance are captured, which respond to the tests set by alms-giving, that is, charitability, discretion, and the ability to discern the truth. Produced collectively, the collection narrative is a piece of writing in which the disparate intentions of its producers determined its form and the language that it deployed. The limits of its concerns allow its purposes to be identified in ways that are productive for thinking about the ways in which community is formed. For the petitioner, the narrative was required to elicit sympathy and alms from the potential giver, while concurrently, for the patron, or issuer of the Letters Patent, the bill was an opportunity to display their authority. Even those bearing the Queen's Letters Patent had to pass the scrutiny of the churchwardens and clerk before they were allowed to present their cause to the parish and in many cases, only the personal recommendation of senior figures in the parish supported their claims. The stories that petitioners told needed to be both convincing

---

that 'contributory' weddings, where the guests donated substantial gifts to help poor young couples set up home were uncommon in south and east England, pp.59-65.

[39] 9234/1/2 fol.51ᵛ (10 May 1584); 9234/1/1fol.87ʳ (11 June 1587); 9234/2/1 fol.19ʳ(25 January 1589/90); 9234/1/2 (10 May 1584); 9234/2/1 fol.105ʳ (25 October 1590); 9234/4 fol.236ᵛ(20 October 1594); 9234/6 fol.51ʳ (17 October 1596); 9234/6 fol.62ʳ (14 November 1596); 9234/6 fol.238ᵛ (17 April 1597); 9234/7 fol.131ᵛ (13 August 1598).

[40] 9234/2/1 fol.105ʳ (25 October 1590).

and moving; they must both reassure the parish authorities that their charity was not being abused and elicit the sympathy that ensured generous contributions to the collection. The clerk who recorded the collection in the St Botolph's Memoranda had to demonstrate the church wardens' good judgement about who could collect and the parish's compliance with the various requirements of church and civic authorities. The Memoranda then, are testament to some of the ways in which the relationships that formed an early modern community in London were shaped by the processes of alms collection. Necessarily partial, many of the processes which determined their surviving form and content are now obscure, including how Pormorte came to have a national collection, or how many potential petitioners were rejected. Having looked at who made the Memoranda and some of the reasons why they take the form that they do, we can now turn to consider aspects of their content, specifically the rhetorical strategies that the alms petitions adopt in order to achieve their various and sometimes divergent objectives.

2. **Fires and the Genre of Alms Petitions.**

This section will investigate the ways in which the identies of petitioner and donor are shaped by the generic characteristics of the petition. In order to tame the 'wild content' of the many different disasters and begin to impose on them a form that is translatable into evidence that we can begin to analyse, this section will look particularly at one sub-set or type of the alms petitions, that is the petitions that seek relief after fires.[41] Sharing features with both letters of supplication and factual narratives, the alms petitions do not feature as a distinct genre in the models for official and semi-official writing included in letter writing manuals and other didactic texts that shaped sixteenth century writing.[42] As will be seen, however, they do adopt certain tropes, phrases and modes that are distinctive and which identify the petitions as a separate genre in themselves. Jacques Derrida's proposition that 'a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text', is an invitation to identify and assign a genre to each and any text, including the alms

---

[41] 'Wild content' is Hayden White's term, taken from *The Content of the Form*, p.213.
[42] I utilize here Peter Mack's categorisation of genres, taken from *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

petitions and the memoranda into which they are incorporated.[43] As a type of supplication, in which the petitioner asks potential donors for something (alms), they share certain rhetorical modes with the letter form of supplication. They may also be characterised as a subset of the genre of the factual narrative, the dispassionate recounting of events required in formal situations from diplomats or participants in court cases, sharing with the collection narrative the need to construct a convincing account of events that is perceived by its recipient to be authentic or 'true'. As Derrida pointed out, genre is an unstable category, and as soon as we define its edges, an exception comes along that redefines where those boundaries should be delineated. Derrida's reassurance that there must somewhere be a genre that a given text falls into, even if the previously defined bounds are stretched to accommodate it, allows recognition of the alms narrative's generic identity at the intersection of two established early modern literary genres, the factual narrative of events and the letter of supplication.

Using close reading to look in detail at some of the language used in one type of alms petition, those relating to fires, we can begin to see how they figured fires as the cause of economic loss and how the possibility of 'absolute undoing' like that of the petitioners, appealed to anxiety about changing social status, indicating a communal urge to maintain existing social structures. 'Fire' narratives are selected as a 'type' to explore the generic features of the petitions in more detail, because there are a large number of them (42 or roughly 13% of the collections relate to fires) and they exemplify a wide range of the concerns dealt with in the petitions. Although the alms narratives give the alluring sense of being immediate accounts of disaster and woe, the stories of the petitioners are mediated by several layers of authority, translated into the versions told in the official letters patent, and then extracted for the record made of the petition itself by the clerk of St Botolph's, which is often the only record that remains of the collection or the story that lies behind it. The objective of the petitions was not the relief of absolute poverty and this leads to the standardised generic forms of language which they utilised, and which could be applied to a variety of situations. Despite the obviously devastating consequences for individuals and communities of the disasters which had reduced them to beggars, difference was effaced in the homogenised language of the petitions. Where we might expect to see dramatic and emotive descriptions of disaster, their content is restrained, detail is limited and horror is

---

[43] Jacques Derrida, 'The Law of Genre' trans. by Avital Ronell, *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (Autumn, 1980), 55-81 (pp.65, 69).

subdued. This generic convention is however relaxed when it comes to petitions describing London events, which are described in more detail, and seem also to insist on notions of neighbourliness which help to construct community in early modern London. Materialised in the Memoranda is an urge towards compassion that is framed by the drive to contain and control those requesting assistance, manifested in the generic form and content of the petitions themselves.

Among the roughly three hundred collections narratives in the Memoranda, there are forty-two which request alms for those who have been ruined by fires, of which thirteen are collections for entire towns, a large enough number for typicality to be discerned in them. Between 1588 and 1598, there were collections for the inhabitants of Beccles, Blythborough (twice) Wandsworth, Bottesford, Marlborough, Stratford upon Avon (twice), Penzance, Wolverhampton, Uttoxeter, Barkway and Tiverton. Often the collections for burned towns were held near to Christmas and raised relatively large sums; the collection for Beccles was announced on 22 December 1588 and delivered 17 shillings 4d on 15 January following.[44] The first of two collections for Stratford Upon Avon, which was held on 23 December 1594 raised 29 shillings, although a second, held in June 1596, raised only 8 shillings and 10d.[45] A collection for Penzance on 4 January 1595/96 raised 19 shillings.[46] The larger collections, including the one for Beccles, were often gathered 'through the parish' which appears to mean that the parish's collectors for the poor went from door to door gathering contributions for the good cause, which were then counted and recorded in the church. Organizing such collections at Christmas time, when donations were always more generous, suggests a level of communal solidarity towards suffering urban communities.

In the exemplary letters of supplication that modelled requests for favours from patrons, writers argued that generous assistance to the supplicant would enhance the honour of the donor and they emphasised any other advantage they could identify to the donor.[47] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos writes of the elaborate displays of deference that a supplicant was required to exhibit in any request for patronage or gifts, and also that this exchange of deference was regarded as a fair exchange:

> Implicit in this elaboration of rules of approach was the recognition of the efficacy of deference as a form of reward. In return for favours and help, a

---

[44] 9234/2/1 fol.9ᵛ (22 December 1588).
[45] 9234/5/1 fol.11ʳ (23 December 1594); 9234/6 fol.5ᵛ (20 June 1596).
[46] 9234/5/1 fol.172ᵛ (4 January 1595/6).
[47] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, pp.124-133.

petitioner offered a patron or a potential provider of aid signification of status and enhancement of his or her reputation and esteem.[48]

Any request for help was therefore a relationship of giving and receiving between donor and petitioner. The 'quality of turning to someone', which Mikhail Bakhtin calls 'addressivity' is, he argues, an essential defining component of any genre, a constitutive feature of any piece of writing, and 'without it the utterance' (a term that he uses to incorporate both spoken and written forms of words) does not and cannot exist.'[49] Attention to this 'addressivity' can help to unpick some of the distinctive generic qualities of the alms petition. Letters of supplication are directed towards an individual and so are tailored to outline the personal advantages to the donor accruing from their generosity. In this, they differ from the purpose of the alms narrative, which was to impress on many and unknown recipients the credibility and deserving of the petitioner, and the authority and judgement of their patron. In the case of the alms narrative the addressee was diffuse and various, and a petition (like a play) had to move a diverse audience whose reaction had to be anticipated and manipulated in the petitioner's favour. While the petitioner's patron sought the enhancement of his honour that any carefully prepared supplicant offered, the petition itself was directed towards multiple addressees; and while the appeal for alms is addressed to an entire community, the record in the Memoranda is shaped to satisfy the supervising eye of the church authorities.

Narrative techniques and structures were emphasized in Elizabethan guides to rhetoric that drew on Erasmus's *De Copia,* and advised that the four key virtues of the other generic relative of the alms petition, the factual narrative, were clarity, brevity, plausibility and propriety in the choice of words.[50] Applying these techniques appropriately to alms narratives enabled petitioners to present their accounts as credible and to ensure that they were themselves perceived as honest. The formal elements of a plausible narrative identified by early modern theorists may be supplemented by the division of narrative into two fields as proposed by Gerard Genette. 'Every narrative', Genette writes, 'includes two types of representation, though they are blended together and always in varying proportions.'[51] He uses the term 'narration' to describe representations of actions and events, and distinguishes this from representations of

---

[48] Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p.198.
[49] Mikhail Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Modern Genre Theory,* ed. David Duff (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), pp.82-97 (p.94).
[50] Mack, Elizabethan Rhetoric, p.36.
[51] Gérard Genette, 'Boundaries of Narrative' trans.by Ann Levonas, *New Literary History,* 8.1 (1976). 1-13, (p.5).

objects or people, which he calls 'description'. Representing actions and events in more detail than objects or people, the alms petitions emphasise 'narration' over 'description', and adopt the qualities of clarity, brevity, plausibility and propriety, to carefully construct representations of both people and events that are at once convincing and moving. The narration of events is prioritised over description, which is, as we will now explore, mainly limited to the economic.

The brevity of the alms petitions' descriptive element and the limited nature of its concerns is shown when they are compared to other accounts of fires that may also have been available to the congregation at St Botolph's. A contemporary ballad printed in London personifies Beckles in its lamentation about the fire. The 'sonet' begins:

> MY loving good neighbours, that comes to beholde,
> Me sillie poore Beckles, in cares manyfolde,
> In sorrow all drowned, which floated of late,
> With teares all bedewed, at my wofull state,
> With fire so consumed, most wofull to vewe,
> Whose spoile thy poore people, for ever may rue,
> When well you have vewed my total decay,
> And pittie have pierced, your heartes as it may,
> Say thus my good neighbours that God in his ire:
> For sinne hath consumed pore Beckles with Fire. [52]

Utilising the language of lamentation, the town appeals to its its 'good neighbours' for pity and moralises about pride and discord as the causes of Beccles' disaster; nowhere does it appeal for financial support. Another lament for the town of Tiverton, *The True lamentable discourse of the burning of Teverton* (1598), describes in vivid detail the fire that destroyed the town and killed many of its inhabitants, while 'the residue of the wofull people remaining yet alive being overburdened with exordinerie sorrow, runs up and downe the fields like distraught and frantick men.'[53] The pamphlet presents the disaster that hit Tiverton as God's punishment of the town for its lack of charity, specifically its 'small regard of the poore, which were dayly seene to dye and perish in their streetes for lacke of reliefe' and warns the wealthy merchants of London and other towns to 'learne by her calamitie to loke unto thy selfe.'[54] Representations of objects and people, including the personification of the town itself, results in highly emotive descriptions, through which the ballad and the pamphlet underline the moral lessons that they seek to present about excessive civic pride and lack of charity; 'For one onely

---

[52] D. Sterrie, *A briefe sonet declaring the lamentation of Beckles* (1586), STC 23259.
[53] Anon., *The True lamentable discourse of the burning of Teuerton* (1598), STC 24093, sig. B2[r].
[54] *True lamentable discourse*, sigs.B2[r] and [v].

parish, my selfe I mought vaunt| To match with the bravest', says the personified Beccles. By adding drama to the story, they do, of course, make it more saleable even as they strengthen the impact of the lessons to be learned.

In comparison, the language used by the Memoranda to describe the fires themselves is surprisingly moderate and reserved, even recognising the very different purposes for which the accounts are written. The collection for Tiverton was held in St Botolph's in November 1598, about seven months after the fire and the narrative is notably restrained in comparison with the pamphlet, saying that the people of the town:

> weare greatly Hindred by Fyer Whereby Fower Hundred dwelling Howses Within the Saide Towne weare utterly consumed and burnt and the Moveables wrytinges & plate money goods Weare and other Marchandyzes wthin the Same weare destroyed to the value of iC & Fiftie Thowsand powndes besides Fiftie persons burnt to death.[55]

The language of lamentation that we find in the ballad: woes, care, sorrow, tears, pity, decay and sin, are entirely absent from the collection narrative. The descriptive element is instead limited to the value of the goods and other assets which have been lost, with the deaths of fifty people mentioned almost as an afterthought, and the terrible emotional and social consequences for the townsfolk of losing everything they possessed, which is described at length in the pamphlet, almost entirely absent. In the alms narratives, the fire at Beccles was 'extreme and sudayne', in Wandsworth houses and goods had been 'burnt, wasted and consumed', in Marlborough houses were simply 'burnt with fire.'[56] Additional cautionary and moralising comments are not made and only the collection for Blythburgh hints at a divine cause: 'by the vissitatio'of god in the nyght season there was destroyed by fire.'[57] On Sundays, when the collections were usually made, there were often two services featuring sermons or lectures and although the Memoranda always note the preacher, the subject matter of the sermons is not usually recorded. We cannot know whether preachers in the church drew on the disasters described in the petitions as moral exemplars in the way that the ballad and the pamphlet do. The collection at St Botolph's for Tiverton, like those for other towns, raised a substantial amount and although it is impossible to tell how widely the pamphlet was disseminated, its dramatic narrative, moral warning and the way in which it extends the duties and obligations of neighbourhood to the people of London may perhaps have supplemented the rather dry description of the petition in moving the

---

[55] 9234/5/2 fol.179[r] (26 November 1598).
[56] 9234/2/1 fol.8[r] (22 December 1588); 9234/4 fol.151[r] (14 April 1594); 9234/4 fol.178[r] (19 June 1594).
[57] 9234/2/1 fol.21[r] (1 February1589/90).

congregation to donate generously. The fires affecting entire towns overwhelm the possibility of a community like Marlborough or Tiverton relieving need locally, as the Tiverton ballad so vividly describes, and yet the petitions do not seek to evoke fear of comparable communal disaster. The dramatic descriptions of the fires and their aftermaths included in the ballad and the pamphlet are absent, and the opportunity to draw a lesson about the moral conduct of the victims of the fire is not taken up.

In the absence of spectacular descriptions or even spiritual language, the interests of the Memoranda lie in the economic, and not the spectacular or moral, consequences of disaster. Instead, the narratives seek to encourage pity for the hopeless economic situation of those who have lost everything. The petitions describe the absolute poverty to which those who have lost everything in the fire are reduced. They describe the 'extreame empoverishinge and utter undoing of the Sayd Inhabitaunts there poor wife and Children for ever' in Beccles; the 'grete henderance losses & utter undoing of many' in Blythburgh; similarly, the people of Wandsworth were suffering 'there great hinderance and utter undoinges.'[58] At Bottisford there was 'utter undoing and decay'; at Stratford Upon Avon the 'greate hinderance & utter undoing of many people…left in such a miserable estate that many of them are lyke to perishe' and at Uttoxeter the 'poore distressed Inahabitantes [were] utterly undon or Hindred by misfortune.'[59] A rhetoric of economic disaster is deployed, in which the phrases 'great hindrance', 'extreme impoverishing' and 'utter undoing' appear repeatedly. In a culture where formal writing often used established patterns taken from model letter books, the formality of such repeated rhetorical devices may have been a re-assuring counter to the chaos that was being described in the petition; perhaps, as Peter Mack says of formulaic letters of request, or commiseration with mourners, 'by following well established norms they conveyed a sense of order and reassurance.'[60] What seem to be at stake in their appeal for charity is the absolute need of the destitute and, crucially, their inability to help themselves. In this language of absolutes, to be 'utterly undone' is to be financially ruined, but it also carries with it an active sense of reversal, 'un-doing' what had been done, the loss of fortunes that had been built, prosperity that had been achieved. Connecting the material and social meanings, the *OED* suggests that 'undoing' in the sense of 'unfastening and opening', as in to 'undo' a parcel, relates to

---

[58] 9234/2/1 fol.8[r] (22 December 1588); 9234/2/1 fol. 21[r] (1 February1589/90); 9234/4 fol.151[r] (14 April 1594).
[59] 9234/4 fol.151[v] (14 April 1594); 9234/6 fol.5[v] (20 June 1596); 9234/7 fol.60[r] (5 February 1597/8).
[60] Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p.116.

the releasing of bonds, ties or fastenings.[61] 'Undoing' then, is also suggestive of the loosening of the social bonds and ties that bind communities together. The opposite of 'undoing' in the sense that it is used in the petitions is not relief, but restoration or even making again. Close reading of the language of these narratives reveals that they require not only the relief of absolute poverty but that they also offer hope of some restoration of the correct social order, which relied on economic distinction and which was obliterated by disaster; the undoing, or reversal, of the 'undoing' is the unspoken objective of the petitions.

Where the descriptions of the fire itself and the social misery that it produced, are relatively restrained in the alms petitions, hyperbole and the potential for exaggeration is reserved for the description of the economic losses suffered in the fires. At Tiverton, besides the four hundred houses destroyed and the fifty people who died, property of various sorts to the enormous value of £150,000 was reported as lost.[62] The people of Barkway in Hertford were said to have lost 'many & Sundrie dwelling Howses & good barnes Full of Corne & dyvers catle […]to the value of Fower and Twentie Hondred powndes & upwardes' in their fire in October 1597.[63] The losses at Blythburgh were said to be 'three thowsand powndes and upward' and those at Marlborough reportedly amounted to 'the some of ten thowsand powndes'.[64] The losses quantified are so large as to be almost inconceivable, becoming almost mythical in their magnitude.[65] The collections at St Botolph's, which usually amounted to less than £1, were insignificant in comparison, but perhaps expressed a sense of social solidarity and compassion for those who were suffering, an extension of neighbourliness to people of other towns and other places that were presumably unknown to them.

Besides the collections for burnt towns, twenty-five collections were also held for individuals who had suffered losses in fires, of which twenty were made under the Queen's Letters Patent, while the other five were made for residents of London, under the precept of the Lord Mayor. Few sixteenth century petitions have survived and so in most cases we cannot compare the Memoranda of a petition with the original source document. A rare surviving bill for a collection for Hugh Evance of Thetford, printed in 1591, allows us to extrapolate the form that the bills received at St Botolph's are likely

---

[61] 'Undo', v., *OED.*
[62] 9234/5/2 fol.179^r (26 November 1598).
[63] 9234/7 fol.73^v (12 March 1597/8).
[64] 9234/2/1 fol.21^v (19 May 1589); 9234/4 fol. 178^r (9 June 1594).
[65] The National Archives Currency Converter multiplies prices by approximately 100 between 1600 and 2005, giving the Tiverton losses as approximately £15million at 2005 prices. <www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results>[accessed 11 June 2015].

to have taken, and confirms the formulaic nature of many of the alms petitions.[66] The 'sudden misfortune' of the fire had resulted in 'the extreme impoverishing and utter undoing of the said *Hugh Evance* his poore wife & children [f]or ever.' The value of the assets lost, which included Evance's malting house, kill house, three hundred combes of malt, all his barley and his dwelling house came to £260.[67] The property that enabled him to support himself and his family come first in the petition, before his dwelling house; this is an appeal for support made on economic grounds, although not a claim for restitution of his absolute loss. Economic losses, the previous prosperity of the petitioner and the value of business assets and other goods are frequently emphasised in the fire narratives in the Memoranda. These losses are connected to the undoing of identity; in his bill Evance is not described, as early modern men often are, by his trade as a brewer or his status as a householder but as a 'poore and true subject'. His social identity is irreversibly changed, 'undone' by the loss of his economic resources. In 1587, after Mathew Roe was 'utterly ympoverished and undon' by pirates and other losses at sea, he is described as 'Havinge been a Mr and owner of shippinge'; like Hugh Evance, not only his property but his identity has been lost; he was, but is no a longer a 'Mr'.[68] The power of economic disaster to undo social identity is manifested in the cases of Evance and Roe.

While the national collections described above follow established generic conventions, collections for residents of London made under bills issued by the Lord Mayor occasionally give more descriptive detail, as if the writer of the bill cannot resist breaking the bounds of generic decorum to give a more exciting version of the disastrous events. Raphe Mason of St Clements Without sustained:

> Verie great Losses by the extremitie of Sodayne and greate Fyer […] tending to the undoing of the Sayd poore man in that He lost not onely by the same Fyer His dwelling Howse beinge parcel of drewrie place, the wch he is bownd to rebuild agayne at his proper Cost wch wilbe verie Chardgable unto Hem. [69]

He also lost goods to the value of three hundred pounds and nineteen horses which were burnt in their stables. The bill goes on to comment 'it is greate Charritie to relieve ouer neyghbores dwelling in the Cittie wt us in Suche distresse', illustrating perhaps a felt

---

[66] Evance did not collect at St Botolph's but his petition is one of the few that survives, I have not been able to find any for collections at St Botolph's except Gregory Pormorte's discussed pp.61-2 above. *Whereas wee are credably certefied aswell by the pittifull supplication and petition of our poore & true subiect Hugh Euance* (1591), STC 8203.5.

[67] A 'combe' is a measure equal to four bushels. 'Combe' n.1.3, *OED*.

[68] 9234/1/1 fol.101ʳ (9 July 1587).

[69] 9234/2/1 fol.28ʳ (15 February 1588/9).

need to offer greater support for those who were 'neyghbores' than those from which the congregation was more distant. Peter Dickins' house in Bride Lane caught fire at two o'clock in the morning:

> at wch tyme He Had also too of his Servantes Burnt to death and Him Selfe with the rest of His Familye verie Sore Skorched and Burnt and He with His leaping owte of a windowe beinge xxx Foote High verie Sore Bruised and Hurt So that noew Lyenge at Surgiorie in great perrell of His lyfe.[70]

The collection for Dickins and his family was held only two weeks after the fire and gathered the substantial sum 16 shillings and 11d, suggesting that collections for local causes appealed successfully to a sense of social solidarity towards fellow Londoners.

One of the largest fire collections gathered at St Botolph's was for three citizens and their families living on New Fish Street Hill; William Hammond, Thomas Martin and Jhon Teay.[71] The record for this collection is particularly detailed and reveals the mechanisms by which the city enforced charitable giving by its citizens as a form of mutual support, and the ways in which civic and religious responsibilities were intertwined. Hammond was a leather seller who lost his house and goods to the value of £3,000 in the fire, Martin was a grocer whose 'mantion howse' had to be pulled down and who lost goods worth £500, Jhon Teay was a merchant whose losses amounted to £300; Hammond and Martin each had a wife and five children. An appeal was made throughout the city on the basis that they had 'no other meanes to help and relieve them selves' and to 'releafe of there great miseries.' The Alderman for Portsoken Ward (Richard Gourney) was instructed to nominate two or three 'honnest and Discrete inhabitannte' of the ward, who were to go with Hammond, Martin and Teay when they presented themselves, to visit every parishioner in person and 'to do there best indevors by all the good means the can to pswade everie suche inhabitaunnt to yeald there liberall and charitable benovelence.' The men nominated to accompany the petitioners - Henry Conway, Philip Shipman and George Clarke - were members of the parish vestry, and therefore senior and authorative members of the parish.[72] The alderman was instructed to deliver the money 'by your owne hande' to the Chamberlain of London.

The carefully detailed procedures for making this collection illustrate some of the ways in which the communal structures of London operated in support of citizens who were integrated into its institutions. The ward and Alderman represented civic authority in London, while the vestry was a committee of laymen that looked after

---

[70] 9234/2/1 fol. 68ᵛ (15 June 1589).
[71] 9234/2/1 fol.3ᵛ-4ʳ (18 December 1589).
[72] 9234/2/1 fol.2ᵛ (14 December 1589).

parish affairs.[73] In practice, as here, the two institutions were often entwined and mutually supportive. Alms petitioners who had managed to obtain Letter Patents or precepts from the Lord Mayor were not entirely indigent or powerless; in ways that are often now obscure to us, they had been able to access patronage networks in order to obtain the support of powerful members of London's civic elite. In a case like that of the residents of New Fish Street Hill, who had been wealthy men, the court of Aldermen had a clear interest in persuading the affluent people of London's parishes to contribute towards supporting their social equivalents, as a form of mutual insurance should they require such help themselves one day. Hammond, Martin and Teay made 'pittiful and lamentable complaynte' to the Mayor and the Aldermen, who in turn were able to exert moral and social pressure on their 'neyghbores' by ordering personal contact between senior local residents and potential donors in visits to their homes. The rhetoric of the alms narrative positions the petitioners as humble supplicants deserving of pity, and the parishioners as benevolent neighbours who were able and willing to relieve the pitiable state of the petitioners with their 'liberall and charitable benovelence.' The effectiveness of this rhetoric can be measured by the amount that they collected, an exceptional £5, 19 shillings ½ d. As a comparison, the next largest collection recorded is the 33 shillings gathered for Gregory Pormorte and only fourteen collections in the period covered by the Memoranda exceeded 20 shillings. Feelings of neighbourhood, combined with the pressure of a personal visit from the senior members of the parish, were clearly an effective strategy for ensuring 'liberall and charitable benovelence'; we can only speculate as to how voluntary this charitable giving really was.

One of the (perhaps) counter-intuitive aspects of the alms petitions is that, even though, as the Memoranda witness, the indigenous and wandering poor sometimes lay dying in the streets of St Botolph's parish, and the Lower End was particularly slum-like, the greater the previous wealth of the applicant, and accordingly, the larger the size of their loss, the more the rhetoric suggests that they deserve the charitable benevolence of the congregation.[74] Even where economic resources had been lost, petitioners could evidently draw upon social capital established by their membership of London's social

---

[73] The official role of the vestry in running parish affairs was determined largely by custom and varied from parish to parish. Judging from the Memoranda, St Botolph's had an active and authoritative vestry in the period under discussion. Gary Gibbs, 'New Duties for the parish community in Tudor London' in *The Parish in English Life,* ed. by French, Gibbs and Kümin; J.F. Merritt, 'Contested Legitimacy and the Ambiguous Rise of Vestries in Early Modern London', *The Historical Journal,* 54.1 (2011), 25-45.

[74] On poverty in the parish, besides the parish histories listed in note 98 to 'Introduction', see especially Orlin,'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings'.

structures. The Lord Mayor states that the New Fish Street Hill collection will 'be ratably distributed by me and my brethren the aldermen according to everie mens losses', that is proportionately or *pro-rata*, to what they had started with, and not according to their absolute need.[75] Where prosperity may have been regarded as a sign of providential reward for good character, paradoxically, great loss does not seem to have been seen as a punishment, or as a sign of God's displeasure.[76] In a culture where social status was largely fixed, the previously well-to-do were able to call on communal support in a way that the roaming bands of 'sturdy beggars' could not. Although the information offered by the Memoranda is too limited to be definitive, many of the collections seem to suggest that the St Botolph's parishioners responded to an appeal to a communal feeling of neighbourly responsibility towards fellow Londoners. The biggest collections included those that were issued nationally, including those for the people of Stratford and Marlborough after their fires, for Gregory Pormorte and for Casper Cameroni, a Hungarian raising ransoms for Christians held captive by 'the Turk', but the largest collections otherwise were for local causes.[77] The attribution of neighbourly cause to generous effect needs to be approached with care here; as one of Erasmus's adages, taken from Horace and Virgil warns: 'It is time for us to be aware when the neighbour's house is burning.'[78] As Erasmus notes, sympathy for others can be combined with self-interest, especially when the risk is proximate - neighbours were also at risk when a fire started, especially in a crowded city or town.

The victims of fires in London, like those of New Fish Street Hill, received collections that were larger than usual, including some residents of Maiden Lane for whom a collection was also made in the Liberty of East Smithfield, and others 'who Hardlie Escaped being left naked' after a fire in Nightingale Lane which was in the parish.[79] Social solidarity also seems to have been in operation when the minister or preacher promoted the good cause of a poor scholar or fellow cleric. Jhon Clappam, a poor scholar, and Jhon Pryce, a poor minister, for whom large collections were made in the church, were advocated for by the St Botolph's preacher, possibly on the basis of

---

[75] 9234/2/1ʳ (18 December 1589).

[76] The protestant approach to wealth is a much debated matter and detailed discussion of it is outside the scope of this study. Ryrie however offers a helpfully balanced summary: 'being rich was not itself an obstacle to salvation. What mattered was how you went about it. Protestants' theology of justification made this possible; their commitment to the social hierarchy and their need for friends in high places made it prudent. And so wealthy Protestants could, quite literally, have the best of both worlds.' Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p.453.

[77] 9234/1/1 fol.17ʳ (12 January 1586/87); 9234/5/1 fol. 105ᵛ (17 August 1595).

[78] *Collected Works of Erasmus* (6) *Adages III.iv.1 to IV. ii.100,* ed. by John N. Grant (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2005) p.160. Also cited in Davies, *The Gift,* p.33.

[79] 9234/2/2 fol. 42ᵛ (23 January 1591); 9234/6 fol. 255ᵛ (29 May 1597).

personal acquaintance.[80] In 1587, the parish collected 13 shillings 6d for Robert Bawme, 'a poore Scholler' who had been born in the parish of St Katharine Cree, just inside the Aldgate from St Botolph's and was living in Whitechapel.[81] The collection was to enable Bawme to go to school in Oxford and three years later, when Bawme was a scholar at Lincoln College, a further collection was made towards his fees there.[82] In both cases the collections were held without the presentation of official bills. Bawme is one example several poor scholars, supported, in part at least, informally by the charity of the local community. Parishioners who were old, sick or confined to debtors prisons also received generous support and some form of communal solidarity seems to have been in operation in 1596 when two parishioners made a collection on behalf of Christopher Benn, 'an Auntient parishioner being owld and in need & being at the Said tyme in Ludgate for Debt', and similarly in 1598, when Toby Wood (a prominent member of the vestry) gathered a collection for Agnes Browne, a widow who had been in prison for five years for debt, 'being borne in this parish.'[83] Both collections raised substantial amounts towards the prison charges to enable the release of the prisoners.

Close reading of the ways in which stories of fires were told brings into relief some of the characteristics of these narratives and opens them up to investigation; by reading across a large group, certain features such as the absence of description and the focus on economic loss become apparent. Conversely, identifying these particular aspects of the petitions as a group allows them to be placed against their context in a way which is mutually illuminating. It can be seen that the alms petition was a genre in which concern for description was subordinate to its ends and also that this generic decorum might be relaxed where more local cases featured; where Londoners were themselves involved in disaster, the dramatic alms narrative was a way of making local events a shared experience which insisted on a communal duty of neighbourliness. The alms petitions were instrumental literary works designed to mitigate the economic loss of the petitioner but they also suggested ways in which dramatic and sudden changes in fortune might be negotiated. Identities of both petitioner and donor are shaped by the rhetorical elements of the petitions, which enact deference and gratitude in petitioners while projecting charitable benevolence on potential givers. Notions of neighbourhood are similarly shaped by the alms petitions. A printed bill for a national collection might

---

[80] 9234/1/2 fol. 93ᵛ (20 September 1584); 9234/6 fol. 53ʳ (24 October 1596).
[81] 9234/1/1 fol. 83ʳ (4 June 1587).
[82] 9234/2/1 fol. 118ᵛ (6 December 1590). Bawme may be the Robert Balme who was ordained in 1591: 'Robert Balme' (CCed Person ID 55162), *CCed.*
[83] 9234/6 fol.32ᵛ; 9234/7 fol.131ᵛ.

propose 'neighbourhood' to extend across the country from Beccles, or Stratford, or any burned town, which tried to access the wealth of London to relieve its losses. Conversely, social solidarity with people living in London seems to have encouraged generosity towards neighbours who were local residents or otherwise associated with the parish, perhaps through birth. Neighbourhood and community are shown to be flexible concepts in the alms petitions which are reciprocally shaped by, and constitutive of, Londoners' experience of their city.

3. **Maimed Soldiers and the Discourse of Begging**

Having looked at some petitions, like the one for the residents of New Fish Street Hill discussed above, that had evident support from the authorities, I will now turn to other alms petitioners who appear, in contrast, to have turned up at the church and managed to persuade the wardens at St Botolph's to allow them to collect alms. Individuals whose cases were heard at St Botolph's had been able to counter a discourse of begging in which the tension between the duty to give and the duty to give responsibly was negotiated. The identities of beggar and donor are mutually formed, and while the beggar had to contend with the developing trope of the sturdy and workshy beggar, for the potential donor, discriminating between the truly needy and the fraud was one of the skills required for negotiating life in the city.

Collecting alms at St Botolph's was at once a quotidian activity and a potentially problematic one. Perhaps it is impossible to think of any manifestation of sixteenth-century English culture without considering the impact of the Reformation, but the alms petition, and giving alms generally, is a particular nexus at which Reformed theology, tradition and social necessity meet.[84] The collection for the poor during the church service is representative of the kind of middle ground compromise negotiated as the Reformation was gradually imposed in England; carried forward from the pre-Reformation liturgy into the new, everyone knew they were supposed to put their penny in the poor box, but it was not always clear why they were doing it. The form of worship at St Botolph's in the period covered by the Memoranda would have been determined by the 1559 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, in which the radical Protestantism of the Edwardian version of 1552 was somewhat tempered. Described by

---

[84] Natalie Zemon Davies discusses various forms of religiously motivated gifts (sacrifices, offerings etc) in *The Gift in Sixteenth Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.167-208.

Brian Cummings as 'a classic compromise', the revised 1559 liturgy stayed in force, with minor amendments through many editions of the *Book of Common Prayer*, until it was prohibited in 1645.[85] Although it was printed in huge numbers, its state-sponsored ubiquity should not be confused with popularity; the *Book of Common Prayer* was disliked by many for its role in displacing the Latin liturgy, and by others for not being reformist enough. It is at once both 'the epitome of consensus religion' and equally 'the squeezed middle, between traditionalist and radical.'[86] The Reformation in England was a process of gradual change characterised by some confusion about, and resistance to, reformed theology among congregations. Lack of comprehensive evidence means that the progress of Reformation across the country is difficult to pin down, but it is broadly accepted that it was adopted quite quickly in London parishes like St Botolph's, not least because of the proximity of church authorities that could ensure outward conformity.[87] As discussed in the introduction, there is some fragmentary evidence that Robert Heasse, the Minister of St Botolph's from at least 1564 until his death in 1596, was a Calvinist but the Memoranda do not record any particular incidents of defiance of the Bishop's authority. Nonetheless, regardless of the enthusiasm with which the Reformation was embraced in the parish, 'some fragments of the old world' as Diarmaid MacCulloch observes, 'took their cue from the survival in modified form of the liturgical year, adopted new guises and found a home within the reformed Protestant parish.'[88] Besides the post-Reformation anxiety about residual Catholic practices, there was also continued debate about how the reformed theology should be applied, although Alex Ryrie has recently argued that in the daily practise of religion, the division between puritan and conformist 'which has been so important in English historiography, almost fades from view when examined through the lens of devotion and lived experience.'[89]

Collecting cash donations from parishioners was a procedure that survived the Reformation, but the meaning of that act had shifted, or, at least, the official theological understanding of it had changed, and so making charitable collections in the parish church was one activity where uncertainty, and consequently anxiety, about the

---

[85] *The Book of Common Prayer: The texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662* ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.xxxiii.

[86] Brian Cummings, 'Print, Popularity and the Book of Common Prayer' in *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England* ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.135-144 (p.144).

[87] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd edn (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001).

[88] MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation,* p.116; *The Parish in English Life,* ed. by Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs and Beat Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).

[89] Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* p.6.

reformed theology may have arisen. In the Catholic Church, collections had been made to pay for masses to be said on behalf of the souls of the dead, and as an attempt to speed the path of one's own soul through Purgatory.[90] Pre-Reformation churches and liturgy, with their elaborate decorations and abundance of candles were expensive and required fund-raising among the congregation, which donations were also believed to be the benefit of their souls.[91] Reformed theology discarded the notion of Purgatory and denied the efficacy of salvation by good works, replacing it with the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. Nevertheless, as Eamon Duffy comments, the church collection represented 'at least one element of continuity with Catholic belief and practice' and giving alms to the poor remained a Christian duty.[92] Christopher Haigh, who describes the church-goers of England in the late sixteenth century as 'de-catholicized but un-protestantized' points to the persistence among the population of the belief that salvation might be bought by good works, despite the austerity of Protestant teaching on the reliance on faith alone.[93] There is, of course, no way of knowing how many of the congregation of St Botolph's donated alms in the secret hope of securing their own salvation.

The second book of *Homilies* issued in 1563, deals extensively with the spiritual reasons for giving alms in the homily 'of Almes deedes, and mercifulnesse toward the poore and needy.'[94] The homily counters arguments that sins are cleansed by the giving of alms using economic imagery: 'so sayeth the wise man 'Hee which shewth mercy to the poore, doeth lay his money in banke to the Lord, for a large interest and gain', and presents the Reformed view that by giving alms, the giver shows that God's grace is present and working through him.[95] The detailed discussion of alms giving in the homily indicates that, at least early in Elizabeth's reign, the church authorities were unsure that congregations understood why it was good for them to give alms and that confusion about the precise purpose of their charity probably persisted even among reformed congregations. Stephen Bateman (c.1542–1584), who as a member of Archbishop Parker's household was close to the formative discussions of Anglican theology, nonetheless framed his definition of charity in distinctly Catholic terms, identifying the seven 'Acts of Mercy': 'to fede the hungry, to clothe the naked, to

---

[90] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England,1400-1580,* 2nd edition (Yale: Yale University Press, 2005), p.338.
[91] Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath.*
[92] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, p.505.
[93] Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations,* p.290.
[94] John Jewel (?), *Certain sermons or homilies appointed to be read in churches, Book 2* (1563), STC 13666.
[95] Jewel, *Certain sermons*, p.172.

harbour the harbourless, & lodge the stranger, to visit the sicke, and to relieue the prisoners and poore afflicted members of Christ' as the 'duties of all faithfull people.'[96] Pre-Reformation doctrine is adapted to Anglican theology in Bateman's statement that 'suche as say that workes onely iustifieth from sinne' are incorrect and 'although workes are nedefull and necessary, yet beyng without faith, hope, & charitie, nothing at all auayleth.'[97] In Calvinist theology, visible good works were a means of distinguishing the elect from the reprobate, and, as Ian Archer observes, 'it is one of the paradoxes of Calvinism that while denying that good works were efficacious in achieving salvation, its adherents were nevertheless urged to perform them.'[98] This lack of clarity about why anyone should give alms had to be overcome by the petitioners; if prosperity was a sign of God's favour to the elect, it was an easy step to interpret poverty and misfortune as a sign of error or God's displeasure. Part of the task of the alms petition was to convince the hearer that the petitioner was a worthy recipient of God's grace as it operated through the giver.

Despite the nuances of theological interpretation, almsgiving was recognised as a Christian duty, required from even the poorest parishioner, and a discourse around begging developed which framed the relationships between giver and receiver, deserving and undeserving. The alms donor and the recipient were recognised to be mutually dependant, and the giving of alms was seen to be a reciprocal arrangement since the donor required the existence of the beggar in order to fulfil the spiritual obligation to give alms. While theologically, beggars were to be treated, in Bateman's words, as the 'poore afflicted members of Christ', in a society where social status was seen as fixed and determined by God, the collection narratives and the petitioners who carried them, brought parishioners uncomfortably face to face with the possibility of falling into indigence and absolute poverty, of being 'utterly undone', like the victims of fires discussed earlier. The popular literature and drama of the period enters into this discourse by both holding up the beggar as a wise man, able to critique, Christ-like, society from his position as an outsider and paradoxically, as a fraud and a cheat,

---

[96] Stephen Bateman, *A christall glasse of christian reformation* (1569), STC 1581, sig.Dii[r]. Bat[e]man was an associate of Bishop Parker's whose extensive library he helped to assemble. There were several Batman/Bateman families in the parish, and shortly before his death he preached several times at St Botolph's between January –March 1583/84 at which time he was Minister at Newington. The sermon on 5 January 1583/4 was his 'newe yeares gift' to the parish. 9234/1/2 fol.8[v] (3 January 1583/4); fol.9[r] (5 January 1583/4); fol.12[r] (14 January 1583/4) and fol.35[r] (28 March 1584). 'Batman [Bateman], Stephan [Stephen] (*c*.1542–1584)',*ODNB*.
[97] Bateman, sig. D1[v].
[98] Ian W. Archer 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Sixth Series) 12 (2002), 223-244 (p.228-9).

preying on the settled citizen.[99] In either case, the beggar is framed as the 'other' in popular discourse, while the narratives of the collections at St Botolph's show that their situation was perilously close for any of its parishioners.

The tension between the duty to give to the poor and the suspicion that they were frauds and cheats, 'undeserving' of charity is clear in Thomas Harman's *Caveat for commen cursetors*.[100] Dedicated to the immensely wealthy 'Bess of Hardwick', Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, the *Caveat* is A Warning against the various false and cheating beggars that it claims are roaming the countryside and exploiting and frightening law-abiding people.[101] The fear of unauthorised uses of space, and especially unlicensed walking, permeates Harman's work but despite his almost unremitting hostility to the vagrant poor, he recognises in his dedication the duty of everyone, even the very poor, to give alms. Quoting scripture and St Augustine, he notes that even the poorest, who have nothing more to offer than a cup of cold water, have a duty to give. Charity is described in the meagre terms of the widow's mite in the Bible, argues Harman, to show that even the poorest can partake in the spiritual blessings that it offers. This did not, of course, excuse the rich from giving more than just bread and water, in accordance with their greater wealth. Conversely, the rich also had an obligation to accept even the smallest offerings of the poor. The captive Princess Elizabeth in the play *1 If you know not me you know nobody* is praised by three poor men in exactly these terms: 'They say shee's such a vertuous Princesse, that sheele except of a cupp of cold water' (sig. D4^v; 844-45); by accepting even the poorest man's gift, Elizabeth proves not only her own humility but also her concern for the spiritual welfare of the poor.[102] The petition of an alms-seeker was aimed, not only at the

---

[99] The closely related figures of the pilgrim, shepherd or hermit might also be a disguised King, see Kevin A. Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp.36-39.

[100] Thomas Harman, *A caveat for commen cursetors vulgarely called vagabones* (1567), STC 12787. All references are to this edition, which was re-published as *The groundworke of conny-catching* (1592), STC 12789 as part of a series of 'cony-catching' literature fashionable in the 1590s, of which later examples, especially those of Robert Greene, are part jest book, part satire and have a wider scope that Harman's work, covering the cheats and scams of various types of 'rogues' besides the travelling beggars on which Harman focuses. Robert Greene's works in this genre include: *A notable discouery of coosenage* (1591), STC 12280; *The second part of conny-catching* (1591), STC 12281; *The blacke bookes messenger* (1592), STC 12223; *A disputation, betweene a hee conny-catcher, and a shee conny-catcher* (1592), STC 12234 and *The third and last part of conny-catching* (1592), STC 12283.5. See also John Awdelay, *The fraternitye of uacabondes* (1575), STC 994.

[101] As Linda Woodbridge has pointed, Harman's work does not tell us anything useful about what beggars themselves were really like, but it is revealing of early modern attitudes towards them. *Vagrancy, Homelessnesss, and English Renaissance Literature (*Chicago: University of Illinios Press, 2001).

[102] Thomas Heywood, *If you knovv not me, you know no bodie: or, The troubles of Queene Elizabeth* (1605), STC 13328; *If you know not me you know nobody* ed. by Susan Doran (London: Malone Society, 1935).

wealthiest members of St Botolph's congregation, but towards all parishioners who sought an opportunity to give alms for their own spiritual welfare.

While charitable giving was a spiritual necessity, over-generosity that might leave the giver impoverished was discouraged for pragmatic reasons and givers were expected to exercise judgement in their giving, so that only the justifiably poor received relief, and not any wandering rogueish beggar. The homily *of Almes deedes* encourages the poor to give by stating unequivocally that God will ensure that those who give away their goods will not be left in poverty:

> It can not be therfore (deare brethren) that by geving of almes, we should at any tyme want our selves, or that we which relieve other mens neede, should our selves bee oppressed with penurie. It is contrary to Goddes worde, it repugneth with his promise, it is against Christes propertie & nature to suffer it, it is the craftie surmise of the devyl to perswade us it.[103]

Some preachers, including Latimer, preached that a man would never be impoverished who gave his money away as alms.[104] Notwithstanding this promise, the congregation of St Botolph's seem to have understood that a certain amount of pragmatic judgement was to be exercised by the charitably inclined. The cautionary story of Dorathy Hobson, a widow who had 'falen into Extreame povertie much want and distrese' despite formerly being 'of good welth whereby she maynteyned her selfe and famely in good sorte' was heard in St Botolph's in 1590.[105] 'Trowbled and afflicted in mynd and concience' Hobson had given away or sold her property to give to the poor 'thinking there by to merritt some love and mercye of god.' In a process that constituted the opposite of self-fashioning, the alms narrative says that 'she sowght to destroye her self' by dispossessing herself of her ability to support herself. Hobson had destroyed her 'self' as a respectable widow but had failed to fashion a new identity as a charitable benefactor; she had instead become a beggar. The congregation did not appear to feel much sympathy for her and she received only two shillings and 8d, one of the smallest collections at St Botolph's.

Discretion and judgement were required of alms givers, as Harman argued and as the case of Dorathy Hobson demonstrated. Although giving to the poor was a religious obligation that the church facilitated, the wardens and clerk also exercised their judgement in ensuring that only genuine and deserving cases were allowed to

---

[103] Jewel, *Certain sermons,* p.180.
[104] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p.454.
[105] Hobson actually had two collections, but the first says only that she 'by pittifull meanes was falen in in decaye'; 9234/2/1 fol.52ʳ (27 April 1589) and 9234/2/1 fol.113ᵛ (22 November 1590).

collect alms, both to ensure that the church was not a site where the parishioners were defrauded and also because allowing a petitioner to collect reduced the amount collected for the parish's own poor, of which there were many. In 1592, for example, two begging wives of injured soldiers were each given a shilling from the poor box but were not allowed to collect:

> in consideration of the greate overtie that was in the said p[ar]'ishe of poore Men to be relieved by collections in the p[ar]'ishe to gathered and the and the p[ar]'ishe besydes verie mvche burthened by lysences and pas'porte' graunted by the Lorde' of her Ma'ties privie cownsell to poore maymed people

and because 'the greate povertie that was in the p'ishe to be relived and the p'ishe verie mvche burdened by lysenes and pasporte' graunted to poore and maymed people.'[106] The Memorandum carefully record why the wardens have decided to override the directions given by the licences that Jhon Steele's and Robert Warrington's wives carried, and explain that meeting the needs of the parish's own poor took priority.

A petitioner had to offer a persuasive case to the churchwardens and clerk before petitioning the congregation for alms. He or she had first to convince the parish authorities of a genuine inability to support themselves and their family, and that their story and the documents that supported it were true. In doing so, they had to contend with official suspicion as Elizabethan statute and proclamations declaimed, ever more vehemently, against beggars, and especially those allegedly masquerading as counterfeit soldiers through the 1580s and 90s.[107] A 1591 proclamation states that the 'great multitude' of beggars 'wandring abroad' who claim to be former soldiers are frauds: 'whereof the most part pretend, that they have served in the warres of late on the other side of the Seas, though in trueth it is knowen, that very mane of them, either have not served at all, or have not bene licenced to depart from the places of their service, as they ought to have beene, but have runne away from their service.'[108] An attempt was made in 1592 to control vagrants in London who took the 'cloake and colour' of injured soldiers:

---

[106] 9234/2/2 fol.108[r and v](24 July 1592). Things were to get much worse a few weeks later when the first person died of plague, in what was to become a major epidemic.

[107] Historical studies of the problem of the vagrant poor in early modern England include John F Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1971); A.L. Beier, *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Stuart England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1983) and *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London: Methuen,1985); Paul Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988) and *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000).

[108] *The Queenes [...]wandring abroad of a great multitude of her people, whereof the most part pretend, that they haue serued in the warres of late on the other side of the seas* (1591), STC 8210.

there are divers persons pretending to have served in the late warres and service as Souldiers, that remain within and about the Cities of London and Westminster, whereof some are maymed, others have received hurtes and woundes, or have other infirmitie whereof they are not as yet perfectly cured: And some amongst these have neither bene maymed nor hurt, nor yet served at all in the warres, but take that cloake and colour, to bee the more pitied, and doe live about the Citie by begging.[109]

In 1594 a further proclamation described 'a multitude of able men, neither impotent or lame, exacting money upon pretence of service in the warres without reliefe, whereas many of them never did so serve, and yet such as have served, if they were maymed or lamed by service, are provided for in the Countreis, by order of a good Statute.'[110] The language of the proclamations exposes two anxieties around the beggar who claimed to be a former soldier - that he was 'neither impotent or lame' and was therefore a fraud who chose to live by begging rather than honest labour, or that they never had been in the Queen's Service at all. Further, the inability of the authorities to relieve those injured in the state's service, and the impotence of its attempts to control the behaviour of its population, was embodied in the begging ex-servicemen.

The idea that the story told by a man claiming to be a former soldier could not be believed became fixed in the official language of legislation in the late sixteenth century, and together with the vogue for 'rogue' literature, created a discourse of suspicion around beggars who claimed to be maimed soldiers. By the time that Middleton and Dekker produced *The Roaring Girl* in 1611 the counterfeit soldier had become a comic figure on stage.[111] Towards the end of the play, Trapdoor enters '*like a poore Souldier with a patch o're one eie, and* Teare-Cat *with him, all tatters*' (K2ᵛ; 10.64). Tearcat, a 'rufflar' or pretend soldier, has been teaching Moll's former associate Trapdoor, the skills of the 'whip-jack', or pretend sailor. Trapdoor's story is shaped around a list of exotic and exciting locations; he claims to have served with 'many *Hungarians, Moldauians, Valachians*, and *Transiluanians*, with some *Sclauonians*' and to have begged all over Italy 'From *Venice* to *Roma, Vecchio, Bononia, Romania, Bolonia, Modena, Piacenza*, and *Tuscana,* with all her Cities, as Pistoia, Valteria, *Mountepulchena, Arrezzo*, with the *Siennois*, and diuerse others' (K3ʳ:10.90-99). The traditional and semi-mythical nature of this tale, handed from one rufflar to another, is suggested when he claims that he has fought against the Turk at the siege of Belgrade, a city which had last been besieged in 1521 and which remained part of Ottoman territory

---

[109] *Wheras […]there are diuers persons pretending to haue serued in the late warres and seruice as souldiers* (1592), STC 8218.

[110] *A proclamation for suppressing of the multitude of idle vagabonds* […](1594), STC 8236.

[111] Middleton and Dekker, *The Roaring Girl*.

until 1699.[112] Tearcat has taught Trapdoor a narrative full of peril and the glamour of foreign places; he has also, he claims, been a slave on a Venetian galley. Plausible at first, they win the sympathy of Moll and her gentlemen companions by claiming to have been maimed 'in both our nether limbs'; 'By my troth, I love a soldier with my soul'(K3[r]; 10.82-83) says Moll, as she encourages the others to hand over alms. As Trapdoor tells his tale, however, Moll, with whom the audience is invited to identify, swiftly recognises that he and Tearcat are 'mere rogues'. Tearcat attempts to avoid exposure by pretending to be Dutch, and adopting a pidgin Dutch speech: *'Ick, mine Here. Ick bin den ruffling Teare-Cat, Den brave Soldado...'*(K3[r]; 10.103-04). Sir Beauteous offers money to 'be rid of their iobbering' but Moll persists in revealing the true nature of the beggars' performance as she demonstrates to her audience how they might learn to identify and deal with rogues. Tearcat and Trapdoor are figures drawn from the rogue literature of Thomas Harman, John Awdely and the comic writer Robert Greene, who make use of the beggars' cant that those texts purport to expose.[113] Trapdoor's long lists of places and nationalities utilise the rhetorical technique of *copia*, a rhetorical strategy of amplification which includes vivid description and pathos, used 'to raise the level of the style and to make what is described appear livelier and more important', and in this case, comic.[114] The play illustrates the kind of beggar's story that might be found convincing by potential donors; Tearcat and Trapdoor are shown to be persuasive narrators, whose oratory tricks even the witty and experienced Moll at first. The comic lack of judgement of the gentlemen that she accompanies is demonstrated by their inability to discern that the narrative is untrue. Tearcat and Trapdoor show how a petitioner's credibility was reliant on their performance and also how that performance could be made to seem credible even when it is fraudulent.

In *The Roaring Girl*, Tearcat is a 'rufflar' and Trapdoor is a 'whip-jack', terms taken from Harman's *Caveat* in which he sorts the different kinds of beggar not by age, nationality or even gender but by the genre or 'type' of the story that they tell. The 'rufflar', for example, claims 'rufully and lamentably, that it would make a flinty heart to relent, and pitie his miserable estate, how he hath bene maymed & brused in the

---

[112] Trapdoor's story echoes that of Thomas Morgan, heard at St Botolph's in 1588, 'who Served unde[r] Sr william Gorge knyght in Hungarie Where by Infedyles He was Taken prisoner and above xv yeares kept bond and thrall in most cruell Slaverie and Bondage Hentell ower lovinge Subiect edwad cottonn esquyer most charetablye Redeemed Hem from the Same.' 9234/1/1 fol.69[r] (26 May 1588). On the ransoming of captive soldiers, sailors and others see Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002) and Daniel J. Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery & Redemption* (New York & Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2001).
[113] On staged beggars' cant see William N. West, 'Talking the Talk: Cant on the Jacobean Stage', *English Literary Renaissance*, 33.2 (2003), 228-251.
[114] Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric,* p.42.

warres.'[115] Although the rufflar may have a wound to show, this is likely to have been incurred in 'some drunken fray' since, Harman argues (somewhat against his own purpose), a true soldier would prefer to rob or steal rather than beg or ask for charity. Harman identifies several types of beggars who fake disability: the 'palliard', who displays self-inflicted sores on his legs; the 'abram-man' who pretends to be mad; the 'counterfeit crank' who imitates falling-sickness (epilepsy), and the 'dummerer' who pretends to be mute.[116] Throughout the text Harman maintains an absolute certainty that most of the beggars that he claims to have encountered are cheats and frauds and he deploys against them a rhetoric that combines their dishonest storytelling with other moral laxity, especially in sexual matters, referring to the women as 'doxies' and asserting that the wandering gangs of beggars indulge in orgies in the barns in which they shelter.[117] He never suggests that these beggars may be honest people who have simply fallen on hard times through no fault of their own, or indeed, be genuine former soldiers. His distinctions between deserving and undeserving slip and slide into one another, as he seems to accept that some cases may merit assistance but then dismisses each in turn as frauds. By turning the begging soldier into a witty trickster or 'rogue', as do *The Roaring Girl* and Harman, his need for real assistance was dismissed. Yet, as Linda Woodbridge notes, laughter can mask oppression and 'pieces couched as comic warnings occurred in periods of deep public anxiety [which] suggests serious purposes underneath the laughter.'[118]

The narratives that were recorded at St Botolph's similarly register anxiety about the meaning of alms giving, the processes by which it should be carried out in church, and, perhaps more deeply, fear of the descent into poverty and the need to maintain social status which was expressed in the stigmatization of the vagrant poor in literary texts. *A Caveat* and *The Roaring Girl* position the reader or audience on the side of the perceptive Moll, and set up 'other' uninformed givers as potential fools and dupes; anxiety arises not only from the misdemeanour of the beggar himself but from the possibility of being part of a reciprocal transaction which is in fact one-sided. The obligation of a recipient to enhance the status of the donor is undermined if in fact he becomes a dupe, a victim of trickery; in *The Roaring Girl*, reciprocity, and therefore

---

[115] Harman, *Caveat* sig. Bii[r]. Awdelay's *The fraternitye of uacabondes* gives similar definitions for the canting names mentioned here.
[116] Harman, *Caveat* sigs Ciiii[r]; Ciiii[v]; Di[v]; Dii[v].
[117] Greenblatt points out that Harman purports to have obtained most of his information by tricking the people that he writes about, in a cynical use of actual deceit to expose supposed deceit. *Shakespearian Negotiations*,(Oxford: Oxford University Press,1988), pp.49-52.
[118] Woodbridge, *Vagrancy,* p.20.

honour, is restored when Tearcat enters into a 'canting' competition with Moll. By 'singing for his supper' he earns the reward of a tip from Moll's gentlemen friends, who can go on their way without loss of face. The comic restoration of order achieved in this scene indicates the importance of reciprocity in the exchange between the petitioner and the alms-giver which was enacted when alms were given in the church. The authenticity of the petitioner and the veracity of their narrative is essential in achieving this reciprocal balance. A congregant at St Botolph's might also have been a reader of rogue literature and/or a play-goer watching Moll; in each location, and in varying modes, judicious alms giving was presented as the mark of a competent city dweller.

The 'rogue literature' of Harman, Greene and others has attracted the critical attention of many literary scholars, with early scholarship tending to accept their accounts of vagabonds as evidence of some kind of anthropological observation.[119] Less attention has been paid to literature that attempted to counter their hostile approach towards beggars. The parable of Dives and Lazarus, for instance, was commonly used to exemplify inappropriate behaviour towards beggars and in John Foxe's *The Acts and Monuments*, a contemporary story was framed around it. Christopher Landesdale of Hackney, Foxe reported, had unmercifully let a beggar, known only as 'Lazarus' slowly die over six weeks in a ditch outside his home without offering any relief, while the beggar 'lay broyling in the hote sunne, with a horible smell, most pitifull to behold'.[120] When, two years later, Landesdale drunkenly fell off his horse and drowned in a ditch, it was considered by his neighbours to be his just deserts for his un-neighbourly behaviour. 'And thus', Foxe concludes 'hast thou in this story (Christian brother and Reader) the true image of a rich glutton & poore Lazarus set out before thine eyes, whereby we haue all to learne.' Foxe's narrative stresses the Christian duty of one neighbour to another, and as in the alms petition narratives, neighbourliness seems to be related to physical proximity; Landesdale was responsible for 'Lazarus' because he was suffering close to his house. Foxe's tale is another assertion that the identities of beggar

---

[119] Early accounts of rogue literature in this mode include Frank Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (Oxford 1913, reprinted London & New York 1967) and Gamini G. Salgado, *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Dent,1977). The introduction to Linda Woodbridge's *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* gives a powerful analysis of the shortcomings of this approach. See also William C. Carroll, *Fat King, Lean Beggar*; A. L. Beier, 'On the boundaries of the New and Old Historicism: Thomas Harman and the literature of Roguery', *English Literary Renaissance*, 33.2 (2003),181–200; *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* ed. by Craig Dionne and Steve Mentz (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2006) and see also Patricia Fumerton, *Unsettled*.

[120] John Foxe, *The Actes and Monuments* (1583) Vol.12, p.2128. On-line at *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), <http//www.johnfoxe.org> [Accessed 9 May 2015].

and donor are mutually constituted; Landesdale can only become Dives when 'Lazarus' arrives at his gate.

In another morally exemplary text, Stephen Bateman used the image of a rich man ignoring a beggar to represent pride :

> The rich man signifieth a proude man, couetous, such a one as careth for no poore man, but for such as hym lyketh (to many such are not good in a common wealth): the poore man signifieth the pouertie generall, whose petitions of such are not heard, nor once relieued.[121]

The rich man is characterised as proud and covetous in his response, and like Dives, is defined by his relationship to the beggar. A rich man has an obligation to assist the poor and the failure to give alms, as in Landesdale's story, is presented as a threat to the community, or 'commonwealth'. Refusing to relieve the suffering of the poor is depicted by Foxe and Bateman as both sinful and a failure to participate fully in the community.

In 1581, protestant evangelist Anthony Gilby (c.1510-1585) produced a polemical dialogue *Betweene a Souldior of Barwicke, and an English Chaplain*, which uses the figure of a crippled soldier to represent honest reformation set against the wealthy and comfortable priest, the maintainer of 'popish' traditions in the English Church. In comparing their fortunes, the soldier asks how he too might become a clergyman since it appears to be an easier life. Using the words quoted at the start of this chapter, he complains that: 'I have gotten nothing by my long service but stripes and woundes, and nowe I must needes leave of this trade, because I want my legges, and ashamed I am to begge.'[122] In Gilby's dialogue, the disabled soldier has been reluctantly reduced to begging despite his service to the Queen; he is a richly allegorical Christ-like figure who represents honest service ill-rewarded, in contrast to the chaplain who lives in ill-deserved luxury. Phillip Stubbes (*c.*1555- c.1610), like Gilby, and despite his concern about all forms of performance and their potential for deceit, takes a much less sceptical view about the honesty of the poor in his *The second part of the anatomie of abuses*. While agreeing that 'stout, strong, lustie, couragious, and valiant beggers' who are able to work should do so, as far as the 'halt, lame, impotent, decrepite, blind, sicke, sore, infirme, and diseased, or aged and the like' are concerned 'everie Christian man is bound in conscience to reléeve' them.[123] In what could be read

---

[121] Bateman, *christall glasse,* sig. H4ʳ
[122] Gilby, *Pleasaunt Dialogue*, sig.B2ᵛ.
[123] Stubbes, *anatomie of abuses,* sig. F8ʳ⁻ᵛ.

as a riposte to Harman, who clamed to be a Justice of the Peace, he complains that the poor are driven from parish to parish like flocks of sheep and comments on the cruelty of requiring those who are clearly in need to obtain a license to beg:

> Here they dare not tarrie for this Justice, nor there for that Justice, here for this man, nor there for that man, without a licence or a pasport, wheras a man would thinke their old age, their hoare haires, their blindnesse, lamenesse, and other infirmities shoulde bee pasports good inough for them to go abrod withal if they cannot get reléefe at home.[124]

The cruelty of bureaucracy unmercifully applied is one of Stubbes' abuses. Nowhere does he mention counterfeit beggars or sham performances; he emphasises instead the Christian duty of the secular and religious authorities to be neighbourly and to relieve the poor and needy in their home parishes, so that they are not forced out on to the road to beg. The discourse that classified all beggars, especially former soldiers, as frauds, an attitude that was encouraged by official proclamations and the writers of rogue literature, is resisted by reformist writers like Foxe, Bateman, Gilby and Stubbes. The Memoranda show that many former soldiers were able to persuade the authorities of St Botolph's of the truth of their stories, meaning that St Botolph's church became a space where the fictional stories of literature were embodied as truth for the congregation.

That there were many wounded former soldiers and mariners seeking alms in this London parish is evident from the Memoranda, where collections for around seventy named individuals, or approximately one-fifth of the individual collections, were made for former soldiers or mariners who had been in the Queen's service, by some way the largest number for any category of petitioner. For the first few years covered by the Memoranda, up to 1589, the collections for former soldiers are not made for itinerant beggars but for injured soldiers resident in and around London. Robart Webstar, from St George's in Southwark, Jhon Darcie, of London, Thomas Thornton of Hackney and Jhon Clarke of Stepney all collected between 1584 and 1587, raising small sums of between 2 shillings 3d and 4 shillings 8d.[125] Darcie and Thornton collected on the same day and raised 3 shillings and 1d each and Darcie came back in 1588, when he collected 3 shillings and 6d and in 1589 when he collected a further 6 shillings.[126] Darcie had Letters Patent from the Queen that testified that he was an old man, who had received 'Dyveres hurtes and Maymes in his body and limes whearby he is becom

---

[124] Stubbes, *anatomie of abuses,* sig. G1ᵛ.
[125] 9234/1/1 fol. 102ᵛ(11 October 1584); fol. 97ᵛ(2 July 1587) fol. 98ʳ(2 July 1587); fol. 37ᵛ(17 March 1587/8).
[126] 9234/1/1 fol.57ᵛ(28 April 1588); 9234/2/1 fol.17ʳ (12 January 1588/9).

utterlie decrept and Lame'.[127] He had been offered an alms room at Westminster
Cathedral when one became available but in the meantime, he was allowed to collect
throughout London to support himself. Webstar, Thornton and Clarke were all blind and
Webstar and Clarke were allowed to collect at the church without licences 'at request.'
Thornton, even though his licence covered only Middlesex, was collected for
'althowghe not ewsed […] at the request of Dyveres of the nether ende of the parishe
Beinge in the libertie of east Smithfield.'[128] Typically before 1589, collections for
former soldiers and mariners were infrequent, and raised modest amounts for people
who may well have been known to the parishioners, or who had local supporters who
could vouch for their inability to work. The obligation to neighbours in this instance
stretched beyond the parish but still seems to have applied to people living close by.
Webstar, Darcie, Thornton and Clarke were not the able bodied wandering vagrants of
which Harman wrote and their stories of need were confirmed by communal memory
and local knowledge.

There is however a discernable shift during 1589 when many more wounded
soldiers begin to appear making collections in the Memoranda. The majority of
collections for former soldiers and mariners occurred in the period between 1 March
1590 and 29 October 1592, that is, some time after Foxe, Gilbey, Harman, and Stubbes
had written about them in the 1560s and 1580s, indicating that their works were not a
direct response to the increase in numbers of this type of beggar following the wars on
the Continent.[129] In 1592, as mentioned above, the parish was barely able to deal with
its own poor and began to turn petitioners like Mrs Steele and Mrs Warrington away
without allowing them to collect. On the same day that they were rebuffed, the wardens
did allow a collection by Agnis Hasleton, wife of Richard Hasleton of Stepney:

> Above nyne yeares passed was taken prisoner vnder the King of Argiere having ever
> sence remayned there as a Captyve in most vyle slaverie and miserable bondage
> And is worse vsed becavse he will not for sake his faythe in Chryst and can' not be
> redeemed from thence but by paying the some of one Hondered pownde'. for his
> rannsom' the w'ch he and his wyfe having a great Chardge of Children depending
> vpon there hands are no way able to pay.[130]

---

[127] 9234/1/1 fol.97ᵛ(2 July 1587).
[128] 9234/1/1 fol.98ʳ(2 July 1587).
[129] It may be that the effect of the wars took some time to be felt; Richard Wybird mentioned above said
that he was injured in the Battle of Zutphen in 1586 but did not appear at St Botolph's until 1589. The
Memoranda book covering the period 14 December 1592 to 8 September 1593 is absent. After the
resumption of the record there is a marked decrease in the number of collections recorded for former
soldiers and mariners.
[130] 9234/2/2 fol.108ʳ and ᵛ(24 July 1592).

The clerk doesn't explain why Mrs Hasleton was allowed to collect when the wives of Steele and Warrington were not. Perhaps there was more neighbourly feeling towards a resident of a nearby parish like Stepney, perhaps the maritime nature of the parish elicited sympathy for a prisoner overseas, perhaps Hasleton's sponsors were more influential? Maybe it was just that his story was more exciting or pitiable.[131] In any case, although their reasoning is now invisible to the reader of the Memoranda, the exercise of the wardens' discrimination about who would be allowed to collect is apparent.

Former soldiers and mariners usually carried the Queen's letters Patent or an Admiralty passport, and are most often described as 'maymed'. The most frequent reason for seeking assistance is that the petitioner, like Richard Wybird mentioned earlier in this chapter, has been offered an alms room at one of the great cathedrals including Westminster, Worcester, Winchester, Salisbury or Norwich, which is not yet available. Jhon William, for example, is described as a poor and maimed soldier with a wife and children, who lost a leg and his right arm during service in the Low Countries. William had been allocated an alms room at Worcester Cathedral but was fourth in line for the next vacancy and so in the meantime was allowed to beg for relief.[132] The Memoranda entry copies out much of the wording of William's license, which includes a degree of compulsion in the giving of alms; William is permitted to 'demand and collect' alms, 'praieng and Requiring' that everyone who could, should assist him. Usually the former soldiers and mariners collected individually; only sometimes do they appear to have travelled in the groups of which Harman was so wary, with several collecting on the same day. Occasionally, like Thomas Kingslie and Edward Noren 'too sowldiers maimed at the sea', they had a joint licence and so were required to travel together.[133]

One of the limitations of the evidence provided by the Memoranda which record 'all thinges done in the church' is its inability to give us information about absence. We have no way of knowing how many petitioners were turned away from St Botolph's for lack of proper documents, or because the churchwardens suspected they were frauds; the Memoranda do not often include references to the things not done. Equally, the Memoranda deal only with things done in church; what happened outside the building

---

[131] Hasleton's story was told in two pamphlets, *A discourse of the miserable captiutie of an Englishman, named Richard Hasleton* (1595) STC 12924.5 and *Strange and wonderfull things. Happened to Richard Hasleton* (1595) STC 12925. See also Vitkus, *Piracy, Slavery & Redemption*.
[132] 9234/3 fol.21ʳ (24 January 1590/1).
[133] 9234/2/1fol.4ᵛ (13 December 1590).

and the churchyard is only rarely referred to, and then often obliquely or in passing. Even by the partial and limited account given by the Memoranda, we can understand however that at St Botolph's real questions of truth and fraud had to be evaluated on a regular basis. In fulfilling their duty to their neighbours, the fictional dilemma that Harman posed, of how to distinguish between an alms seeker who deserved relief and a 'counterfeit', must have been a question that the parishioners of St Botolph's asked themselves almost daily. In addition to the personal credibility of the petitioner, a concept of neighbourliness or community seems also to have come into the reckoning. The decision about whether or not to give alms to a maimed man claiming to be a former soldier required judgement and discrimination. The popular discourse around begging former soldiers illustrated to listeners, readers and playgoers how they might respond to such beggars and a variety of ways in which their judgement might be performed.

4. **The Jarkeman and the Unstable Authority of Text**

This chapter has shown some of the ways that early modern responses to neighbourhood, community, and ideas around trust and credibility can be explored through the alms petitions. The uncontrolled troublesome walking and wandering of beggars was pinned down in place and memory, as their petition narratives were incorporated into the text of the Memoranda, and their stories were transformed into a legitimising record of communal action. I will now move on to consider the ways in which the very materiality of those books suggest notions of judgement, veracity and trust and the ways in which they were performed in early modern London.

Patricia Fumerton has described the how the uncertainties of abode and employment, the continual shifting of place and the requirements of spatial mobility, created an 'unsettled subjectivity' among the poor lower orders of early modern England.[134] Many of the parishioners of St Botolph's were part of this 'unsettled' group, as were the alms seekers who gathered at the church, their lives characterised by instability, movement, makeshift and poverty. The Memoranda are the residue of the interaction between settled and unsettled and the potential for mistrust between the two. As textual artefacts, the Memoranda participate in the discourse of trust and credibility and the ways in which they explore issues of the authenticity and the reliability of texts expose anxieties about both. The careful records of petitions made in the Memoranda

---

[134] Fumerton, *Unsettled,* p.xiv.

attempt to close down and regularise the potentially unruly activity of making, and remembering, a collection in the church. As London experienced rapid urban change, Andrew Gordon has argued, written documents start to appropriate the place of communal memory as evidence of truth and credibility, creating an awareness of the potential for 'conflict between collective memory and the material culture of information storage.'[135] This tension between immaterial memory and material evidence is implied in the very existence of the Memoranda, which supplement, and even displace, collective memory of events with a written document. Even as they preserve long beyond living memory, the old methods of remembering like the rogation perambulations of the parish boundaries described in the Introduction, the textual artefacts displace those old methods. Even so, as Gordon further argues, 'the prospect of translating memorial authority into textual form was attended by anxiety and suspicion' and this sense of anxiety is suggested by the careful and extensive recording of the details of events in the church space, including the alms collections.[136] The written word of the Memoranda is at once witness to the completeness and rigour of the wardens' control of their church and evidence that they had allowed only valid collections to be made there, in compliance both with the requirements of their own conscience and the Church. Control of the church space, and compliance with instructions, rather than the piety and devotion of the congregation, was registered when an alms petition was written into the Memoranda. The churchwardens anxiously demonstrate that they have exercised their own wise judgement in allowing only deserving and properly authorised alms seekers to claim the charity of the parishioners.

Even as the Memoranda attempt to construct an authorative text, the alms petitions presented at St Botolph's push at the boundaries of textual authority. Adrian Johns, and others, have shown that the sixteenth-century printed book was neither fixed nor uniform and that the printed word in the sixteenth century was unstable and contingent.[137] The Geneva Bible, for example, contained blank spaces in which the

---

[135] Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London*, p.191.

[136] Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London*, p.202.

[137] Elizabeth Eisenstein's notion of a 'Printing Revolution' relied largely on the idea of a fixed and unchanging text disseminated through print; Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). This notion of the stability of print has been challenged by among others Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). On the relationship between print, manuscript and authority see Adam Fox, 'Custom, memory and the Authority of Writing' in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* ed. by Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp.89-116; David McKitterick, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order*; William H. Sherman, *Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* ed. by James Daybell and Peter Hinds (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010).

reader could make their own marks, part of the project, as Femke Molekamp suggests, of individually understanding and internalizing the Word.[138] Printed texts could be written on, could be copied into manuscript, could be altered from one impression to the next. The shifting interchange between print and manuscript is exemplified by a manuscript prayer book prepared by Robert Heasse, the minister of St Botolph's, which combines text taken from the printed *Book of Common Prayer* with the elaborate penwork and decoration made possible by manuscript.[139] Accordingly, print was recognised to hold an unstable authority and merely possessing a printed or manuscript bill was insufficient to guarantee the holders' authenticity. The churchwardens given the task of policing alms petitioners at St Botolph's were reminded of the possibility of producing counterfeit licences in a proclamation of 1596:

> There are another sort of vagabond persons that either themselues doe make, or cause counterfeite passports to be made, and licences to begge and gather Almes, [...] thereby to defraude her Maiesties subiects, and sometimes repaire to the Churches at the time of Diuine service, to make and gather collection by coulour of these counterfeit licences.[140]

The responsibility of church officials to police the use of official documentation used to control begging was made explicit in the proclamation, which places a duty on 'all Parsons or Uicars of Parishes, Churchwardens, […] to whom these kinde of evill disposed persons may resort' to examine the licenses carried by alms-seekers, 'and finding cause to suspect the same, they shall bring them before the next Justice of the Peace to be strictly by them examined.' The authority of passports and licences was brought into doubt by the possibility of forgery and the parish church, as the proclamation recognised, was in danger of becoming a space where fraud and deceit were perpetuated.

Harman's *Caveat* is acutely aware of the unreliable nature of the printed word and it claims that many of the different kinds of vagabonds that it lists rely on counterfeit paperwork. The passport system was open to abuse by the 'roge', who carries a certificate to say that 'he hath beene whipped and punished for a vacabond' and claims that he is now returning to his home parish, as required by law.[141] The 'fresh water Mariner or whipiacke' and 'Demaunder for a glymmer' (who is usually female) carry

---

[138] Femke Molekamp ' "Of the Incomparable Treasures of the Holy Scriptures": The Geneva Bible in the early modern household' in *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England,* ed. by Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.121-136.

[139] Folger Shakespeare Library, MS. V.a.174.

[140] *A proclamation against [...]lewd & audacious persons falsly naming themselues messengers of her Maiesties Chamber* (1596), STC 8249.

[141] Harman, *Caveat* sig. C1[r].

counterfeit briefs that permit them to collect because they have lost everything in a
disaster at sea, or by pirates, or in a terrible fire:

> These will runne about the countrey with a counterfet licence […] having a large
> & formall wryting as is above saide, with the names and seales, of suche men of
> worshippe at the least foure or five as dwelleth neare or nexte to the place where
> they fayne there landinge.[142]

Harman warns that the brief carried by the Frater, who pretends to collect for a hospital
'is a copy of the letters pattents, & utterly fained, if it bee in paper or in parchment
without the great seale.'[143] Despite the convincing appearance of the 'large & formall
wryting' that these alms-seekers carry, Harman notes that 'they have of their affinitie
that can write and reade' and who will provide false testimonials for two shillings.[144]
The 'Iarkeman' who 'hath hys name of a Iarke, which is a seale in their Language, as
one should make writings and set seales for licences and pasports', acts as a scrivener
for other rogues, writing and setting seals on counterfeit licenses and passports. He is
regarded by Harman as particularly invidious, presumably because he could earn an
honest living using his skills, but used them instead to facilitate the deception of the
settled community with his counterfeit documents. Both Harman and Awdelay's *The
fraternitye of uacabondes* associate the Jarkeman with 'the Patrico' who is given the
particular status of a vagabond priest; 'a patriarke Co doth make mariages', playing on
the association between the clergy and the ability to write, and making him especially
threatening to the church's authority.[145] Those who were found to have created faked
documents, especially when the forgery misrepresented the State, faced severe
punishment. In 1586 a clerk was 'hanged, bowelled and quartered' for counterfeiting
the Queen's signature ('signe manuell') and in 1596 a scrivener in Holborne suffered
the same punishment 'for taking the greate seale of England from one olde pattent and
resenting the same to a new.'[146] In Heywood's *Edward IV,* Fogge, an attorney is
sentenced to be 'drawn, and hanged, and quartered' for counterfeiting the King's hand
and seal (sig L4^v ; II.21.100). As these examples suggest, even the presence of an
official seal on a document could not be regarded as conclusive evidence of a bill's
veracity, and Harman claims that he has himself detected a counterfeit seal of the
Admiralty on the paperwork carried by a 'fresh water Mariner', although he does not

---

[142] Harman, *Caveat* sig. D2^r, E2^r.
[143] Harman, *Caveat* sig. C3^v.
[144] Harman, C*aveat* sig. C1^r.
[145] Awdelay, The fraternitye of uacabondes, sig.A3^r.
[146] John Stow, *A summarie of the chronicles of England* (1590), STC 23325.2, p.728; (1598), STC 23328.5, p.445.

explain how he knows it to have been a fake or misused. Without a test for distinguishing genuine from false, it is unclear how the recipient of a petition was intended to tell the rogue from the disabled, or the deserving from the fraud. The Jarkeman could produce a fake license equipped with little more that a piece of paper, some ink and wax, and so Harman resorts to suggesting that printed material was more reliable because of the greater supervisory powers permitted by the printing press: 'if the same briefe be in print, it is also of authoritie: for the Printers will see and well understand before it come in presse, that the same is lawfull.'[147] His assumption that printers share his interest in the legality of beggars' documentation may have been optimistic, but it is suggestive of the affinity that he seeks to build between the settled, respectable and hierarchical community against the transient and indigent beggar.

In contrast to the unhesitating certainty displayed by Harman's text, which is in any case more helpfully read as a literary conceit than a truthful record of his actions, other local officials demonstrated more uncertainty about the possibility of distinguishing truth from fiction. In 1596, Edward Hext, a Justice of the Peace in Somerset, wrote to Lord Burghley about the difficulty of determining the veracity of a beggar's passport. Having apprehended the son of a gentleman, Hext explained that he had gone to considerable trouble to prove that he was a fraud:

> I kept him in prison too monethes and examined hym often, and yet still confirmed the trewth of his paseport with most execrable othes, whevppon I sent ynto Cornwall wher he sayde hys mother dwelt, and by that meanes discoverynge him, he confessed all; by which your Lordship may see yt ys most hard to discover any by examinavion, all beinge resolved never to confesse anye thinge, assuring themselves that none will send too or three C myles to discover them for a whipping matter, which they regard nothinge.[148]

Hext surmises, probably correctly, that fraudulent beggars relied on the probability that few magistrates would bother to go to so much trouble to prove that they were lying, when begging was only a 'whipping matter'. Awareness of those limitations allowed those who, as Hext saw it, chose the life of vagrancy to make a mockery of the law; as he complained to Burghley, 'they lawghe in ther sleves att the lenity of the lawe and the tymerousnesse of thexecutyoners of yt.'[149] Unlike Hext, who is painfully aware of his limited ability to prove that a suspicious document was fraudulent, Harman appears

---

[147] Harman, *Caveat* sig. C3ᵛ.

[148] 'Edward Hext, Justice of the Peace in Somerset, to Burghley on the increase of rogues and vagabonds, 25 Sept., 1596', R.H. Tawney and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England,* 3 vols. (London: Longmans, 1924), II, p.343.

[149] Tawney and Power, *Tudor Economic Documents II*, pp.345-6.

unafraid to act on his own authority, with little proof required other than his own conviction that the majority of beggars are frauds: 'I have divers times taken away from them their lycences, of both sortes, with such money as they have gathered, and have confiscated the same to the povertie nigh adjoyning to me.' Why the son of a gentleman, or indeed anyone else, would choose the difficult and dangerous life of a beggar if they had any other option never seems to be considered by either Hext or Harman. Positioning himself as the expert arbiter while other alms givers are implicitly positioned, like Moll's gentlemen friends, as foolish gulls, Harman claims to be operating to prevent 'the utter deludinge of the good gevers.'[150] Harman privileges neighbours over strangers and personal knowledge over documentation; petitions, beggars and strangers are, in his estimation, all equally likely to be counterfeit.

Given the official pressure on church officials to detect and prevent fraud, even though documentation was recognised to be unreliable, as we might expect, traces may be discerned in the Memoranda of this need to evaluate the honesty of those allowed to solicit alms from the congregation. Although those clearly identified as frauds are absent from the books, since these record only collections that were actually permitted, almost all of the types that Harman identifies as counterfeits appear as petitioners. Victims of fires ('Demandaur for a glymmer'), wounded soldiers and mariners ('fresh water Mariner' and 'whipiacke'), and collectors for hospitals ('frater') are among those who appear most frequently. There are occasional suggestions of unease about alms collectors. The ways in which writing acted as evidence was important to the compilers of the Memoranda, as is suggested by the careful recording of acts of writing: 'the wch monye Beinge wrighten in a booke wch the before named Emanuell musichius Browght for the Same purpose By ower parishe clarke.'[151] The making of a collection is often recorded or 'ingrossed' on the back of the licence before the money was handed over, so that one form of writing endorsed another. Writing was however supplemented by memory, and the clerk's ability to recognise solicitors in person was clearly an important way of controlling access to the congregation's charity. When Thomas Brytton, who claimed that he 'was fallen into great povertie and had Receyved dyvers Hurtes in in [sic] the warrs' made a collection in 1595, it was the second time he had been to St Botolph's and the clerk records that 'the sayd Thomas Brytton was an owld man that ded speake in the nose and had gathered a colexion heare before by the said

---

[150] Harman, *Caveat,* sig. A2ʳ.
[151] 9234/1/1 fol.53ʳ (21 April 1588).

lysence but went a way so that his name was not taken.'[152] When a collection was made without a bill for Henrie Ro, 'who went upon ii stilte' in 1590, the clerk noted that 'This man had bene gathered for before.'[153]Although Symon Ellis had been collecting on behalf of prisoners at the Marshalsea since at least March 1589, when he appeared in 1592, the clerk's note implied some concern about Ellis's identity or his right to collect under the licence issued in the name of William Hyne: the money 'was delivered unto one that named hem selfe symon Ellis being an owld man with a gray bard who said he was deputie unto William hyne.'[154] Doubt may have arisen because on the same day the parish was also presented with a licence to collect for the prisoners of the Marshalsea issued to one Edward Evance. The problem was solved by giving each collector a share of the money collected, but the note about Ellis's appearance, apparently intended to answer the question 'who did you give the money to?' indicates that some doubt remained over whether further enquiries might be made. Symon Ellis seems to have resolved the doubts over his identity or right to collect as he reappeared to collect several further times through the 1590s.[155] When a preacher called George Gurney collected the substantial amount of 18 shillings 2d supposedly on behalf of his brother, the clerk used his records to check on Gurney's story. The money was 'delivered unto the Forsaid mr George Gourney Which Collexion was soposed to be gathered For Him Selfe For that He did give me the parish Clarke the name of His Brother to be George gourney which was His owne name as we did Fynd by our bookes'- Harridance had recorded Gurney's first name when he preached the previous Sunday.[156]

Despite the impression given by the popular discourse that all petitioners for alms were greeted with sceptical hostility, suggestions of suspicion such of these are infrequent in the Memoranda. When they do appear however, they confirm the essential part played by writing in recording and managing the processes of giving and receiving alms while paradoxically revealing the underlying instability of the written word.

5. **Performing Charity in Church**

Stories, Michel de Certeau argues, 'carry out a labor that constantly transforms places into spaces or spaces into places' and the alms petition narratives worked to transform the place of St Botolph's into a space where the community practiced its charitable

---

[152] 9234/5/1 fol.35ᵛ (23 February 1594/5).
[153] 9234/2/1 fol. 49ʳ(26 April 1590).
[154] 9234/2/1 fol.31ᵛ(2 March 1588/9); 9234/2/1 fol.123ᵛ(23 November 1589); 9234/2/1 fol.62ʳ (31 May 1590); 9234/3 fol.36ʳ (14 March 1590/91); 9234/2/2 fol. 20ʳ (9 January 1591/2).
[155] 9234/4 fol.110ʳ (13 January 1593/4); 9234/4 fol.263ʳ(15 December 1594); 9234/5 fol.141ᵛ(9 Nov 1595).
[156] 9234/5/1 fol.2ᵛ (13 June 1596).

benevolence.[157] At stake for the clergy, the wardens and the clerk was the possibility that a beggar might turn the church into a place where the expected relationship between alms-petitioner and alms-giver was subverted, a space where fraudulent alms seekers could enact some of 'the ingenious ways in which the weak make use of the strong.'[158] Whatever the truth of a petitioner's situation, the ability to present him or herself as the humble avatar of Christ, or Lazarus, and not the embodiment of the Devil was essential. In a culture where outward appearance was a marker of social identity, social status was embodied and performative and much of the public and official concern about begging arose from the possibility of faking incapacity, of seeming, rather than being, truly deserving of compassion. The 'demandaur for a glymmer', Harman says 'will most lamentably demand your charity, and will quickly shed salt tears, they be so tender hearted.'[159] He points here to the importance of performance in soliciting alms; the ability to tell a good story, which moves the intended donor to pity, was an essential part of the alms collection. Harman depicts begging as a performance, a sham and a deceit. The 'rufflar' makes a show of his wound, which is real, but the story of how he got it is a fiction; the 'palliard' pretends he cannot speak English; the Fresh water Mariner tells stories of pirates and shipwreck while the 'demaunder for glymmer' tells of fire and devastation. For the 'counterfeit crank' and the 'dommerar', who act out physical disability, epileptic fits and dumbness, their ability to solicit alms is particularly dependent on the quality of their acting. The *Acte For the Punishement of Vacabondes* (1572) included common players of interludes among the other forms of beggars (as did the similar Act of 1598), not only because they were uncontrolled 'masterless men' but because of concerns about the inter-changeability between players and feigned beggars.[160] Players and other performers are included with the beggars as if they were all subsets of the same untrustworthy and troublesome class of performers. The inclusion of the players in the list of prohibited rogues reflects anxiety about the nature of their labour; like the counterfeit beggars, they earn their living through performance, playing, and it was feared, deceit. In the Act, the status of beggars and players is perilously close; all of the types of rogues and vagabonds listed are in some sense players and performers and the rhetoric of deceit is applied to discredit them all.

---

[157] De Certeau, *Everyday Living,* p.118.

[158] de Certeau, *Everyday Living,* p.xvii. De Certeau refers here to the 'tactics of consumption' which, like the quotidian activity of alms giving, 'lend a political dimension to everyday practices.'

[159] Harman, *Caveat,* sig. E2[r].

[160] 'An Acte For the Punishement of Vacabondes' in Tawney and Power, *Tudor Economic Documents,* II, pp.328-331. This item is not included in the *ESTC*. See also the appendix to A. L Beier's *The Problem of the Poor* for a summary of the nine Poor Laws and their provisions, passed between 1549 and 1610 (pp. 40-41).

Despite the anxieties of the anti-theatrical polemicists, including Stubbes and Stephen Gosson, the performance of the players was overt and recognised as such; most people knew that when the player stepped on to the stage as King, he was not really a king.[161] It was, perhaps, more difficult to distinguish between the performance of a player and that of the 'counterfeit crank' who pretended to have epilepsy, and the 'dommerar' who pretended to be dumb and 'will gape, and with a maruelous force wil hold downe their tonges doubled, groning for your charity, and holding vp their handes full pitously, so that with their deepe dissimulation they get very much.'[162]

The reciprocal relationship between playing and begging is seen at work on stage, where disguise and transformation is often enacted around the figures of beggars who are not what they seem. These stories had both Biblical and Classical antecedents; Lot and his wife entertain two angels who purport to be travelling strangers, and *Metamorphoses* tells the story of Jupiter and Mercury, who, disguised as mortals 'went to a thousand homes, looking for somewhere to rest, and found a thousand homes barred to them' until they were taken in by Baucis and Philemon.[163] In both of these ancient narratives, the divine visitors destroy the cities that they have visited for their wickedness and inhospitality, but spare their humble hosts. The figure of the blind seer descended from the character of Tiresias of Greek drama and epic, appears in sixteenth century drama as the wise blind beggar. *The Old Wives Tale* (c.1590) features Erestus, a bewitched young gentleman who appears as a wise old beggar by day and a bear by night.[164] In Chapman's *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1596), the central character disguises himself as three different characters, including the blind beggar and fortune teller, Cleanthes.[165] Both Erestus and Cleanthes are characters who drive the plot of their respective plays, representing the potential of the marginalized to exercise power through deceit, with which the discourse of begging is so concerned. The clerk and churchwardens of St Botolph's had to be expert auditors, able to distinguish the stories of the authentically deserving from those of the players and counterfeits.

The process of alms collecting was shaped and controlled by *The Book of Common Prayer* which directed what happened in the church during services. The link between the performance on stage and within the church is made directly by Cummings, who describes it as 'a performative book' and its rubrics as 'a little like the stage-

---

[161] Stephen Gosson, *Playes confuted in fiue actions* (1582), STC 12095; Stubbes, *The anatomie of abuses* (1583), STC 23377
[162] Harman, *Caveat,* sig. Diiii.
[163] Genesis 19; Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (London: Penguin, 1955), pp. 195-98.
[164] George Peele, *The Old Wives Tale* (1595) STC 19545.
[165] George Chapman, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598) STC 4965.

directions in a Shakespeare play', through which *The Book of Common Prayer* attempted to control both speech and action in the church during services.[166] As Daniel Swift observes, 'it exists in order to instruct a set of practices, which take place outside of itself.'[167] The collection of alms for the poor remained a part of divine service through the various versions of the *Book of Common Prayer* that attempted to define and control what happened in the parish church after 1549.[168] During the church service, the minister was directed to 'earnestly' exhort the congregation to 'remember the poore', and to recite any one or more of twenty appropriate biblical texts, including, for example, Matthew 6: 'Lay not up for yourselves treasure upon the earth; where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven; where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.'[169] Robert Heasse's manuscript prayer book indicates that he chose texts that did not assume any wealth among his parishioners, but which were suitable for encouraging donations from even the poorest. Only five of the twenty available texts are recorded in his book: 'Let your light so shynn before men that they maye see your good work & glorify your father which is in heaven' (Matthew 5); 'What soever you wolde that men should do to you even so do unto them, for yt is ye lawe & ye prophites' (Matthew 7); 'Gyve alms of thy goodes, and turn never thy face frome any poore man, And the face of the lorde shall not be turned aways from thee' (Tobias 4); 'he that hath pitie upon the poor, lendeth unto the lorde: & looke what he layeth out it shalbe payde hyme agaynne' (Proverbs 19); and 'Blessed is that man yt provideth for ye sick & nidy ye L shall dilyver hymme in the tyme of trouble' (Psalm 62).[170] Reflecting the widespread poverty of the parish, Heasse's selected texts stress the spiritual benefits of alms-giving rather than the risks of accumulated wealth.[171] Andrew Gordon writes that community in early modern London is 'enacted spatially, acoustically and socially, with persistent emphasis on corporeal unity'; the congregation that gathered in the church and listened to Robert Heasse's exhortation formed a community in which each was asked to perform the part of alms donor.[172]

---

[166] Cummings, 'Introduction', *Book of Common Prayer,* p.xxxiv.

[167] Daniel Swift, S*hakespeare's Common Prayers: The Book of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p.36.

[168] J.P. Boulton, 'The Limits of Formal Religion'. Much of this study of religious practice is based on St Botolph's.

[169] The Book of Common Prayer, p.127.

[170] Folger MS V.a.174 fol.33^r.

[171] The amount raised by these collections is estimated to be around £8 p.a., compared to the £40 p.a. in poor rates for the parish; Archer, 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', p.239.

[172] Gordon, *Writing London*, p.3.

The power of rhetorical performance in the solicitation of charity is acknowledged in the bills for collections. Instructions from the Bishop of London appended to Gregory Pormorte's petition are precise about the manner and timing of its delivery. It is to be read 'to all your Parishioners assembled in your churches[...]immediately after the second Lesson: Exhorting and stirring up her highness said, loving Subjects to this good work, to the uttermost of your powers.'[173] The Letters Patent for collections to be made towards the cost of re-edifying Culliton harbour in Devon (1575) state that its bearers are to be permitted 'to aske and gather contributions and gifts of all persones in every severall Churche and Parishe' and furthermore, the clergy are instructed to actively support the collection, encouraging the 'benevolence and contribution of charitable persones' by 'declarying' the 'considerations here mentioned that have us moved', 'exhortyng their Parishioners and Auditors to be liberall in suche contribution' and also by 'puttying in minde of wealthy persones in tyme of sicknesse, to further the said workes, by waie of their giftes and legacies.'[174] The alms petitions demanded performance, not only by the petitioner, but from the clergy.

It is unlikely that alms petitioners appealed on their own behalf as the authority of the minister was established by his being the only permitted voice in the church while divine service happened.[175] Officially, congregational participation was supposed to be restricted to answering 'Amen' to the prayers, although in fact many joined in collective singing of the metrical psalms and they increasingly said aloud the Lord's Prayer and Creed, the responses in the Litany and the Morning Prayer, and the general confession.[176] Many petitioners did not collect in person in any case, often because they were too disabled, sick or in prison. In other cases, wives collected on behalf of their husband or family, and they were certainly unlikely to have been given leave to speak in church. The official instructions appended to the bills confirm that the minister, rather than the bearer of petition, spoke to the congregation in an effort to elicit alms from them. Although permissive, in that it enabled the holder to beg for alms, the bill was therefore also restrictive; stories of suffering were often told in a prescribed form and voiced by others. The act of telling the story was transformed from a first person to third person narrative, with the petition functioning as a script for the minister to

---

[173] Elizabeth I, For the reliefe of Gregory Pormorte.

[174] Elizabeth I, To the justices of peace, or cheef gentlemen of our parishes, and all other officers, toward the furtherance of this good woorke (1575), STC 8068. ESTC incorrectly gives 1675.

[175] *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon,* ed. by Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[176] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p.318.

vocalize the suffering of the petitioner. The petitioner became the object of the petition they bore, rather than the subject of their own story, and the church became a space where the petitioner was objectified before the congregation.

The liminal and uncertain status of the people that they featured is reflected in the way that the petitions were incorporated into the service itself. The timing for the collection ordained by the Book of Common Prayer, was that it was to be taken immediately before Communion:

> Then shal the Churche wardens, or some other by them appointed, gather the devocion of the people, and put the same into the poore mens boxe, and upon the offerying daies appoincted, every man and woman shal pay to the Curate the due and accustomed offeryngs.[177]

This was a survival from the pre-Reformation mass, when the offerings would have paid for the saying of masses for the dead. The collection was, in practice, often taken at the end of the service, once the Communion had had a chance to do its good work and so that 'those who were genuinely moved by the communion, and those who wished to convince their neighbours or themselves that they had been, might dig that little deeper.'[178] The alms narratives formed part of the service and yet were irregular variations within it; Letters Patent or licences issued by the Admiralty, the Lord Mayor, the Privy Council and so on secular instruments and not the word of God or his ministers and they were part of the process by which the parish was transformed 'from a "ritual unit" into unit of local government' in the late sixteenth century.[179] Paradoxically, both controlled and uncontrolled, the alms petition was a cautionary and official text but also one which often described sudden and unexpected disasters and to which the congregation were able to respond with more or less generosity as they felt moved.

The petition narratives suggest that besides the convincing nature of a petition's rhetoric, there were two additional ways to confirm that only the deserving poor collected at the church, beyond the spoken word and the written document that they offered. Almost all of the former soldiers and mariners are described as 'maymed', 'hurte', 'shot' or the loss of a specific limb, usually a leg or legs, is mentioned. Blindness and extreme old age were also given as qualifying reasons to collect. The stories of wandering ex-servicemen were confirmed not only by their paperwork, but by

---

[177] *Book of Common Prayer*, p.128.
[178] Ryrie, *Being Protestant*, p.348.
[179] Berlin, 'Reordering Rituals' p.61; Merritt, 'Contested Legitimacy'.

the embodied evidence of visible disability which could be displayed in order to verify that the petitioner was not an undeserving 'sturdy' beggar. The Memoranda suggest that not all petitioners remained passive objects of pity and that they sometimes took matters into their own hands. The liminal space and time at the threshold of the church, and at the end of the service, could be utilised by a collector who might gather 'at the Church doors'. Although pushed to the edges temporally and spatially, occasionally a petitioner, his wife or friends collected in person, instead of, or supplementing the church collection. The Memoranda sometimes refer to the 'gathering' being done 'at the Church dores', either by the petitioner, or by the Churchwardens or overseers for the poor. In 1584 Robart Webstar 'had Sufferance to make his collexion him selfe at the churche dore wheare he gathered ijs iijd' and in 1594, alms were delivered to a local man, Jhon Read 'being mony gathered the said day at the Church Dore' by the churchwarden.[180] In 1595 a collection was gathered in the church for Edward Sanderson, whose wife in addition, 'gathered more money afterwards at the peoples going out of the church, she standing at the church door & was all in the forenoon.'[181] Mrs Sanderson's attempt to supplement the official collection by collecting at the church door was noted as it deviated from normal procedure but it was not extraordinary. Soliciting for alms outside the church door moved the supplicant outside of the controlled space of the church and blurred the lines between begging and authorised collections. Collectors in person, like Mrs Sanderson, were able to display their own poverty and suffering and also to speak on their own behalf to potential benefactors, operating outside the authorised narrative of the petition, they were able to reclaim subjectivity in their own story.

6. **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown how the Memoranda books of St Botolph's can be read as literary texts alongside other imaginative and polemical works in order to allow insight into some of the ways in which a particular community was concerned with alms-giving, community and the use of space in early modern London. This process has involved a repeatedly shifting perspective, for example, from close attention to the particular words used in a petition, to the wider angle of the discourse within which a

---

[180] 9234/1/2 fol. 102ᵛ(11 October 1584); 9234/4 fol.217ʳ(15 September 1594).
[181] 9234/5/1 fol. 23ᵛ (19 January 1594/95).

begging soldier's petition might be located. Throughout, attention has remained focused on the texts of the alms petitions and the meaning that they created for their first creators and audiences, the people who ran the church of St Botolph's, and the congregation that worshipped there. This method allows both for better understanding of a particular text and also the ways in which the meaning of that text might be bound up with meanings which were already associated with the activity and places that produced it, the processes that shaped the formation of alms petitions and the way in which they were preserved in the Memoranda. The selected examples have largely been those, such as fire, or maimed soldiers, which as a group allow some general conclusions to be drawn beyond an individual cases. This has resulted in the reluctant omission of individual cases that fell outside of such groups, such as that of Frauncis Pemertonn 'beinge a poore Boye borne in this parishe and nowe lyeinge in St thomas Spittle in Sothworke in the handes of Sugions and havinge hes legges Cutt of', who was supported by the parish from June 1587 until his death in April 1588.[182] By acting as a memorial to otherwise forgotten people like poor Francis, the Memoranda fulfil a function that could scarcely have been envisaged by their creators.

This chapter has shown how deeply personal experiences were mediated through generic forms of narration as they were circulated through the parish, allowing the beggars who were supported by a petition to be re-integrated, even if only temporarily, into the community from which they had been excluded by economic disaster. Alms petitions, which appear at first to be a series of dramatic vignettes of individual catastrophe, on closer examination are found to be narratives that are structured to fit a conventional structure, and that deploy a range of modes, including that of sudden economic disaster and collapse to create a rhetoric of deserving. The petitions are shown to be an expression of communal responsibility for the poor, constitutive of a community formed in part by moral imperatives to uphold economic and social structures. They also reveal anxiety about the role of alms giving in a society where the implications of Reformation were still being worked through, and where the religious purpose of alms-giving, as a remainder and reminder of Catholic religious practise, was a continuing source of anxiety, which required awareness and judgement to negotiate with credit. Conflicting discourses of counterfeiting and truth, reflected in the quotes from Anthony Gilby and *The Roaring Girl* given at the start of this chapter, suggested

---

[182] Francis Pemmerton appears in the Memoranda volume 9234/1/1 at fol.44^v (5 March 1586/87); fol.87^r (11 June 1587); fol. 92^r (21 June 1587) and fol.101^v (9 July 1587). He was buried on 24 April 1588 (fol. 55^r).

that the community had to be protected from deceit, even as they were encouraged to fulfil their duty to give alms. Attempts by petitions to define and capture the truth, in an attempt to organise and control the wandering of the 'unsettled', are shown to be defeated by the instability and unreliability of texts which were inadequate for the task. Throughout, it has been shown that the identity of beggar and donor, alms-petitioner and alms-giver are mutually dependant and constructed with direct reference to each other. Study of the petitions allows insight, not only into the experience of delivering and receiving a petition, but also the ways in which the narratives that they contained shaped the ways in which an early modern London neighbourhood was formed.

The stories of the alms petitioners purport to be 'true', although the 'truth' that they offered was often partial and/or contested. As I have shown, versions of the petitioners' stories turned up in fictional and imaginative presentations of beggars, which both reflected behaviour and attempted to shape responses to it. The next chapter will turn to the ways in which other 'true' stories, in this case from London's history, were shaped for presentation in another performance location available to the congregation of St Botolph's, that is the early modern London theatre.

Chapter Two

The Places of Tragedy in Early Modern London

The Places of Tragedy in Early Modern London

> *Smoke,* Get thee vp on the top of S. Buttolphs steeple, and make a
> proclamation.
> (*Edward IV,* sig.B1[r]; 1.5.65-66)

This chapter explores what it might have meant to London play-goers to visit the play-house in the 1590s and hear familiar stories retold, and familiar locations represented on stage. It focuses on *Edward IV* and *A Warning for Faire Women,* which are among the earliest plays which presented London to Londoners; first performed in the late 1590s, they are contemporaneous with the St Botolph's collections narratives with which they share the thematic concerns of space, authority and community. Reading the plays alongside the petitions which this study has already examined, enables a more nuanced reading of each, as the concepts of neighbourhood that the parishioners brought with them into the playhouse are foregrounded. Attending a play, like attending a church service, was a collective experience and, following on from the discussion of the ways in which the narratives of the alms petitions shaped ideas of community, this chapter explores how these plays use narratives from London's history to transform the city's places into comprehensible spaces of belonging and community. Among the first to fashion London's people as tragic subjects in their own right, they show tragedy happening in the spaces of London, and not in the classical past or the distant courts of Italy or Spain. Renaissance tragedy was a genre which, following the classical tradition, was concerned with political issues and public figures; this chapter investigates the implications of showing citizens and, importantly, their wives, as tragic subjects. Narrative, as this study aims to show, is a way in which people negotiate change, and historical narrative is about shaping what is remembered and what is forgotten, a crucial element in forging communal identity.[1] In telling the stories of people like Jane and Matthew Shore, and Anne and George Saunders, on stage for the first time, these plays shape London's processes of community formation in a time of change, by re-telling the stories of its own citizens.[2] As they fashion a mode of historical tragedy that reshapes the genre from the story of 'how some damnd tyrant, to obtaine a crowne, stabs, hangs, impoysons, smothers, cutteth throats' (*A Warning,* sig. A2[v]; Induction 50-1), they create a version of London's history that reflects the city of the playhouse audience back to

---

[1] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London, Verso, 2006), pp.187-206

[2] The couple are referred to as 'Sanders' in the play text but 'Saunders' in the historical accounts. I have therefore used 'Saunders' when referring to the historical people and 'Sanders' when referring to the play's characters.

itself. These plays imagine London as a space resistant to outside forces, represented by Smoke the soldier who appropriates the steeple of St Botolph's, and the auditory space of Aldgate, to proclaim the invasion of the city. In the construction of London's stories about itself, and in the tactical and strategic use of the city's spaces by stage characters, this chapter argues, a communal identity of early modern London was fashioned.

Edward IV has a complicated early performance and printing history.[3] Rowland, who is the most recent editor of the play, offers the following summary of the complex history of site, company and play: 'in its first five or six years of existence the play was performed by three linked but separate companies on the stages of at least three different playhouses.'[4] In 1599, when the play was printed, they had recently established themselves in a newly re-built playhouse, The Boar's Head in Whitechapel, just a few minutes walk east along the Mile End Road from St Botolph's church; Rowland suggests that it is likely that *Edward IV* was one of the first plays offered by the company in its new home.[5] *A Warning*, which was also printed in 1599, is described on its title page as acted 'lately' by the Chamberlain's Men, probably at the Curtain, or possibly at the Globe, to which the company moved in late summer 1599 but unfortunately nothing much more is known about its performance history.[6] Despite the limitations of available evidence, there seems to be no doubt that *Edward IV* was a popular and commercial success. The play text was printed at least six times between 1599 and 1626, and when Derby's Men collapsed and Heywood became a member of the Earl of Worcester's Company, the play appears to have been rewritten for

---

[3] On performance and textual history, see Rowland, *Edward IV,* pp.1-6. On the history of Derby's/Strange's Men, see Lawrence Manley and Sally-Beth MacLean, *Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays*. None of the early quartos of *Edward IV* bear Thomas Heywood's name, but the play has been designated as one of Heywood's since the Restoration. Rowland states that his review of the available evidence is 'only a partial and qualified confirmation of Heywood's involvement in the play' but he concludes that 'although final proof is lacking, there is a strong possibility that Heywood was at least a principal author of the play, and this edition will assume hereafter that he was.' (*Edward IV*, pp.9,11). Wiggins and Richardson's *Catalogue* ascribes it 'tentatively' to Heywood, while suggesting Dekker or Drayton as other possible authors (IV, pp.124-134). The identity of the dramatist not being essential to my argument, I shall follow Rowland's judgement on the matter and also assume the play's author to be Thomas Heywood.
[4] Rowland ed., *Edward IV,* p.6.
[5] Rowland ed., *Edward IV,* p.8; Herbert Berry, *The Boar's Head;* Julian Bowsher, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland.*
[6] There is no direct evidence for performance beyond the attribution to the Chamberlain's men on the title page of the first edition. On the dating of *A Warning,* Cannon, its most recent editor refuses to commit to more specificity than the middle of the 1580s, when tobacco smoking was introduced, and 1599 when the play was printed: 'to attempt greater precision, based on the evidence that is available would be to go beyond the evidence and enter the realm of conjecture and speculation. Of speculation alone there has already been a surfeit'(Canon, *A Warning,* p.48). Andrew Gurr dates the play as 'a couple of years before'1597 in *Shakespeare's Opposites,* p.38. Wiggins and Richardson give a range of 1595-99, with a 'best guess' of 1597, *A Catalogue,* III, pp.401-405. *DEEP* gives a range of 1596-1600, with a 'best guess' of 1599.

performance at the Rose. A receipt in Henslowe's accounts records a payment 'in earnest of the Booke of Shoare, now newly to be written for the Earle of worcesters players at the Rose', and a further entry records a loan to Henry Chettell and John Day 'in earnest of A playe wherin shores wife is written.'[7] That the play became was both well known, and associated with citizen playgoers, is indicated by Francis Beaumont's use of it in his 1607 satire on citizen tastes, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* to represent what David Bevington describes as the 'homely dramatic fare' of the sort that citizens enjoy.[8] The citizen's wife Nell, has limited play-going experience, but if she had seen anything, it would have been *Edward IV:* 'I should have seen *Jane Shore* once'(sig.B1ᵛ; Ind.50-51). *Edward IV* is used by Beaumont as an exemplar of 'citizen' taste, but since both *Edward IV* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* craft a complex relationship between London's people and the theatre, Beaumont's targeting of 'Jane Shore' for satire could perhaps be seen as an acknowledgement of the hugely successful play's power to challenge the Blackfriars' market for subversive drama, rather than a sign of its simplicity or homeliness. Unfortunately, no similar conclusions can be drawn about *A Warning*, which survives only as a single edition, but about the performance of which, including dates, little else is known.

      Given the dates and locations of the early performances of these plays, while bearing in mind the scant availability of evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that many of the people who heard the petition narratives at St Botolph's also saw these plays performed. This chapter now goes on to discuss how *Edward IV* and *A Warning* reconfigure London's history for their play-goers and in the process claim a place for London's citizens in the tragic centre of narratives of their own city. This is not to argue that London is depicted on stage simply for the sake of representing London, but rather that it operates as the complex setting in which these dramas take place; in what follows, the relationships between setting, play and context are explored. It has been shown that the collection narratives demonstrated anxiety about the veracity and stability of the written word, and in these plays we see that contested versions of narrative truth are also revealed in the different treatments of historical events on which *Edward IV* and *A Warning* are based. The next section will consider the ways in which

---

[7] Henslowe's Diary, p.194, p.226

[8] Francis Beaumont, *The knight of the burning pestle* (1613) STC 1674; *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* ed. by Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004). Introduction to *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* in *English Renaissance Drama* ed. by David Bevington et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), p.1067.

these different versions of historical events projected alternative ways of being a Londoner to the play-goer.

1. **Performing London's History as Tragedy**

Edward IV and *A Warning* are plays that are engaged in writing a version of London's history that elevates the private lives of its citizens to the level of tragedy; 'Tragedie' in the dispute between genres which opens *A Warning,* scolds 'Hystorie' from the stage and in these plays stories of London are prioritised over courtly and dynastic power play, as the right to tell London's history through the stories of its citizens is asserted. Although based on historical events, neither *A Warning* nor *Edward IV* are interested in history in the militaristic, dynastic mode signified by Historie's attributes of drum and ensign, but rather they recover stories, located in London, that 'make the heart heave, and throb within the bosom'(*A Warning,* sig. A2ᵛ; Induction,45). The following discussion will explore the ways in which different versions of historical events are staged to offer alternative London histories to the playgoer.

The many versions of the story of *Edward IV,* which include Thomas More's history of the reigns of Edward IV and Richard III, Shakespeare's *Richard III* and the popular poetic and ballad depictions of Jane Shore which emerged in the late sixteenth century throw the play's treatment of the history into particular relief. Reading *A Warning* alongside its source narrative, Arthur Golding's pamphlet *A Briefe Discourse*, shows how historical events could be reshaped on stage in a new genre, which positioned the people of London, and their communities, in the place of kings and courts. [9] Tragedy remarks that many of her audience were witness to the story of the Saunders: 'many now in this round| once to behold me in tears were drowned'(sig. A3r-v; Ind.97-8) and at stake in these plays is the meta-question of whose memories are written, and how collective memories are written as history. Many of the analogues and sources of these plays are attempts to shape communal memories into histories at the service of royal and aristocratic patrons; *A Warning*, and especially *Edward IV* make claims for the history of London that shape the city as an independent entity, with its own values and loyalties. Discussing tragedy as a genre, Sidney argued that its proper subject matter was the stories of kings:

---

[9] Arthur Golding, *A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Saunders* (1573), STC 11985.

> High and excellent Tragedy […] openeth the greater wounds and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; that maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyrannical humours; that with stirring the affects of admiration and commiseration, teacheth the uncertainty of this world, and upon how weak foundations gilden roofs are builded.[10]

A Warning appears to respond to this claim, when in the epilogue Tragedie states that the play has shown 'the launces that haue sluiced forth sinne,| And ript the venom'd ulcer of foule lust' (sig.K3v; 2718-19).[11] Here she argues that the ulcers from which example may be drawn are not only those of tyrants but also a merchant, his wife and their friends and acquaintances. *Edward IV,* also embodies 'sinne' and 'foule lust' in the the body of a citizen wife, Jane, but also shows that it was introduced there by the king and heroically resisted by the citizens. Tyranny and 'the uncertainty of this world' are shown to be located, not only in courts but in London, and the play creates in Matthew Shore a tragic hero towards who the 'affects of admiration and commiseration' are directed.[12] Londoners, these plays imply, can learn from their own stories; as Matthew Shore says, 'Were I as young| as when I first came to *London* to be prentice,| This pageant were sufficient to instruct,| And teach me euer after to be wise.' Where Sidney conceives of tragedy as an elite genre, these plays reimagine it as located amongst the people of early modern London.

    Edward IV is one of several plays that were first staged in the 1590s dealing with the wars amongst the Plantagenets and the Tudors. These included The Queen's Men's anonymous *The True Tragedy of Richard III* (1594) and plays performed by Sussex's and The Admiral's Men, known as *Buckingham* (1594), *Owen Tudor* (1600) and *2 Henry Richmond* (1599), all now lost.[13] Three works by Shakespeare on the wars between York and Lancaster: *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (1590-91); *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York and Good King Henry the Sixth* (1591) and *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third* (1592-93) are some of his earliest plays and they emphasise and sometimes exaggerate the part played in the foundation of the Tudor dynasty by men from the Stanley and Talbot families who were ancestors of the late-sixteenth century theatrical patrons Lord

---

[10] *Sir Philip Sidney* ed. by Duncan-Jones, p.230.
[11] Sidney's *A Defence* first became available to the public in 1595 when two editions were published: *The defence of poesie* (1595) STC 22535, by William Ponsonby and *An apologie for poetrie* by Henry Olney (1595) STC 22534.
[12] Tragedy's insistence on 'truth' in the Epilogue reverts to an older generic convention, superseded by the 1590s norm of highly artificial revenge tragedy. Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels*, p.150.
[13] Knutson, 'Adult Playing Companies, 1593-1603'.

Strange (Earl of Derby), and the Earls of Pembroke.[14] Manley and MacLean argue that the particular slant that they give on the Stanley family and its involvement in the establishment of the Tudor dynasty arises from Shakespeare's employment with Strange's Men and their connections with the Pembroke family at the time when these works were written.[15] In addition to exemplifying the ways in which 'professional theatre and artistic patronage might combine to protect and promote family interests', the dramatization of the destructive wars between the houses of Lancaster and York was more generally resonant as the end of the Queen's life approached in the 1590s, with no clearly identified successor to the throne of England.[16] Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third* ('*Richard III*'), which was first printed in 1597, follows the narrative structure of the historical chronicles and exhibits the generic interest of this kind of history play in dynastic power struggles. Apparently written when Heywood was working for Derby's Men (but probably after Shakespeare had left them to join the Chamberlain's Men in 1594), Heywood's *Edward IV* shows the same historical period as that dramatized in *Richard III*, but from the perspective of the citizens rather than the court.[17] In doing so, it establishes a relationship between citizens and nobility which offers Matthew Shore as the possessor of heroic virtues of honour, loyalty and valour while the royal and noble characters, Edward IV, Richard III and Falconbridge, are shown as venal, violent and driven by sensual desire. Demonstrating none of the adaptations of plot in favour of an aristocratic patron that Manley and MacLean tease out in *Richard III*, the foundations of the Tudor dynasty are shown in *Edward IV* only in a brief reference to 'Harry Richmond' at the very end of the drama. The play focuses instead on showing how the civic stability of London is set against the turbulence of ruling dynasties and the destructive forces set in motion by the disputes between men who, despite their superior social status, are inferior in moral character to the citizens of London.

---

[14] William Shakespeare, *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* (1590-91), pp.55-90; *The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York and Good King Henry the Sixth* (1591), pp.91-124; *The Tragedy of King Richard the Third* (1592-93), pp.183-222, all in *The Oxford Shakespeare*.

[15] Manley and Maclean, *Lord Strange's Men*, pp.3-30; Lawrence Manley, 'In Great Men's Houses: Playing, Patronage and the Performance of Tudor History' in *Rethinking Historicism from Shakespeare to Milton*, ed. by Ann Baynes Coiro and Thomas Fulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.159-180.

[16] Manley and Maclean, *Lord Strange's Men*, p.30.

[17] Since the first performance date of *Edward IV* is uncertain and the history of Strange's Men, as Manley and MacLean show, is complicated and obscure at around this time, it is impossible to be precise on this point of timing.

To dismiss *Edward IV* as 'homely dramatic fare' or as a 'romantic London drama', does a disservice to the audiences for which it was first performed, assuming as these comments do, that they were non-discriminating and politically unsophisticated, and that their main focus of interest should have been the court and royal politics.[18] Scholars have read the play as one which perpetuates the myth of mercantile nobility, often focusing on the minor character of Lord Mayor Crosby as a figure of the self-made and self-aggrandising City Father, and treating him as slightly ridiculous figure.[19] *Edward IV* is not however a wish-fulfilling romance that shows London's citizens as loyally, but inappropriately, imitating the chivalric virtues of the aristocracy as satirised by *The knight of the burning pestle.* In the very act of appropriating events from London's royal history and re-shaping them around London's citizens, *Edward IV* signals its intention to give voice to the city's own values which, it proposes, are different than, and superior to those of the court.[20] Citizen characters in the play, especially Matthew Shore, show qualities of chivalric honour which are entirely absent in the elite men who are shown to be threats to London and its citizens. Sheldon P. Zitner's introduction to *The knight of the burning pestle*, explains that it satirises 'citizen adventure plays', that 'look backward to idealised familial relationships in shop, trade and community, rather than to the "real" world of cash nexus and social scramble depicted in the satiric comedies of the children's companies.'[21] I suggest that *Edward IV* is a synthesis of the two 'worlds' that Zitner identifies, in which citizen values of honour, credit, chastity and valour are promoted as a 'real' and not nostalgic, and as a counter to the deceit, patronage, cynicism and 'social scramble' of the court. In stories of citizen adventure such as Heywood's *The foure prentises of London* (1602), or Dekker's *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599) the interests of the citizens, city, monarch and country are aligned and the city's virtues include deference and patriotism.[22] In contrast, *Edward IV* and *A Warning* offer a model of London which confers on its

---

[18] David Bevington, *English Renaissance Drama,* p.1067; Angela Stock, '"Something Done in Honour of the City": Ritual, Theatre and Satire in Jacobean Civic Pageantry', in Mehl and others, *Plotting Early Modern London*, pp.125-144 (p.128).

[19] Stock and Laura Caroline Stevenson, for example, both discuss the character of Mayor Crosby in more detail than that of Matthew Shore, although he is a minor figure in the drama. Stock, 'Something done'; Laura Caroline Stevenson, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

[20] The act of appropriation is often overtly political; as Julie Sanders observes of twentieth century appropriations of canonical works, see Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006)*,* p.7.

[21] Zitner ed., *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, p.31.

[22] Thomas Heywood, *The foure prentises of London* (1615) STC 13321. Farmer and Lesser tentatively identify this play as *Godfrey of Bulloigne, wth the Conquest of Ierusalem,* giving it a 'very uncertain' date of 1594. Wiggins and Richardson's range is 1601-1607, with a 'best guess' date of 1602; Dekker, *The Shomakers Holiday.*

inhabitants an identity distinct from that of aristocratic and even gentry values, and which is not reliant on, and may even oppose, aristocratic and royal patronage.

The treatment of the subject matter of *Edward IV* is deeply political in its implications, as a number of critics have recognised. Rowland has described it as one of the 'most politically explosive plays to appear on the early modern stage.'[23] He notes that 'the play tenaciously addresses tensions which had threatened to tear 1590s London apart' including debate about the regulation of the tanning industry, food shortages in London, the disastrous Irish campaign led by Essex, and the abuses of patents and engrossments of trade by the Crown.[24] The play's use of the 'disguised ruler' as a sinister secret observer of his subjects is seen by Kevin Quarmby to be a response to the uncertain political conditions of the 1590s.[25] Richard Helgerson suggests that the play's elevation of Jane Shore to the status of 'a secular saint' is a subversive act that claims for her 'an authority that has traditionally been claimed for Kings and saints' and that the popularity of the play contributed to the establishment of 'an emerging bourgeois cult of home and community, a cult that defined itself in conflicted relationship to the competing cult of royalty.'[26] Hobs the rural tanner, is a more self-aware, politically attuned 'common man' than the one usually presented in traditional ballads and in his presentation of the impact that contact with the king has on the other characters, Nora L. Corrigan concludes that 'Heywood deliberately manipulates these ballad conventions in order to blacken the king's character and raise questions about the rightness of social distinctions.'[27] Building on the findings of these critics, I argue that the play is indeed political in all the ways that they suggest, and further, that it proposes that citizens have a distinct set of values that differs from that of royalty and the court, and that these values are in fact superior to those of the elite.

In addition to its contents, the use that these plays make of the tragic form suggests a confident appropriation of a genre usually reserved for elite participants in the state, Sidney's kings and tyrants. Tragedie's 'Epilogue' to *A Warning* appears to address directly the way that it confutes expectations that her genre will deal with affairs of great men when she says 'Beare with this true and home-borne Tragedie,| Yeelding so slender argument and scope,| To build matter of importance on,| And in

---

[23] Richard Rowland, '"Speaking Some Words but of no Importance"?: Stage Directions, Thomas Heywood and *Edward IV'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 18 (2005), 104-124 (p.104).
[24] Rowland ed., *Edward IV*, p.19.
[25] Quarmby, *The Disguised Ruler*, p.46.
[26] Richard Helgerson, 'Weeping for Jane Shore', *South Atlantic Quarterly* 98.3 (1999), 451- 476.
[27] Nora L. Corrigan, 'The merry tanner, the mayor's feast, and the king's mistress: Thomas Heywood's *1 Edward IV* and the ballad tradition', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 22 (2009), 27-41., p.41.

such form as happly you expected'(sig. K3ᵛ; 2729-32). Even allowing for the conventional self-deprecation of dramatic prologues and epilogues, as it acknowledges the 'slender' material, the Epilogue firmly asserts the right of this story to be recognised as tragedy. Although 'home-borne' may mean uncultured or unsophisticated, in this case, Tragedy refers back to her opening claim that 'My sceane is London, natiue and your owne' (sig.A3r; 45).[28] This 'home-borne' tragedy is indigenous to London, about London's citizens and produced for their theatre and Tragedy addresses a sophisticated audience which has expectations of genre and which is able to decide whether to 'beare with' the play or not.

The full title of *Edward IV*, retained through all five re-printings between 1600 and 1639, indicates from the outset that it is a play as much concerned with its humbler subjects as with kings: *The first and second parts of King Edward the Fourth, Containing His mery pastime with the Tanner of Tamworth, as also his love to fayre Mistresse Shoare, her great promotion, fall and misery, and lastly the lamentable death of both her and her husband. Likewise the beseidging of London, by the bastarde Falconbridge, and the valiant defence of the same by the Lord Maior and Cittizens.* This is a play, the title announces, in which the king shares the stage with his subjects, the Tanner of Tamworth, Mistress Shore and her husband, the Lord Mayor and the Citizens, who will play with him on equal terms. Despite controlling crucial parts of the action for about half of Part Two, the Duke of Gloucester/Richard III is not mentioned in the title at all. While Edward IV, the French King Lewis, Richard III, Queen Elizabeth, the Princes in the Tower and various courtiers and aristocrats all appear on stage, the far greater attention that is paid by the play to the lives of their subjects is signalled in advance by its title. Although the title offers the tanner of Tamworth, the defence of London and the story of Mistress Shore as the main attractions of the play, its hero is undoubtedly the citizen Matthew Shore, who appears throughout and whose moral dilemma subsequent to his wife's 'great promotion, fall and misery', is treated as the tragic centre of the drama. Henslowe's references to the play as 'the Booke of Shoare' and 'a playe wherin shores wife is writen', offer a contemporary reading of the play that confirms that the story of the Shores was the main focus of audience interest.[29] In *Edward IV,* a familiar historical framework from the chronicles is combined imaginatively with popular verse narratives of the Shores' story and the ballad tradition to create the innovative character of Matthew Shore as citizen hero. The subject matter

---

[28] 'Home-born', adj. *OED*
[29] *Henslowe's Diary*, p.194 and p.226.

is adapted to stage London as a place of honest commerce and right reason, a site of honour and valour which exists in opposition to, and is threatened by, the greed and corruption of the nobility and royalty which threaten to undermine it.

Where the political and social viewpoint of *Edward IV* is sophisticated and consistent, *A Warning* is complicated, and at times confusing in its presentation of London and its citizens. A dramatic re-telling of the 1573 murder of a wealthy London merchant named George Saunders, *A Warning* is derived from published accounts of the murder and subsequent trial taken from a contemporary pamphlet written by Arthur Golding (1535/6–1606).[30] The murderer, Captain George Brown, was a servant of Golding's nephew, Edward de Vere, the 17th Earl of Oxford (1550–1604) and Golding's pamphlet has been described as an attempt at 'damage control', written in order to disassociate the murder from Oxford.[31] Certainly neither Golding's account, nor the drama derived from it, make any mention that Brown was Oxford's servant.[32] Oxford's daughter Elizabeth de Vere (1575-1627) married William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby (1561-1642) in 1595 and as both the De Veres and the Stanleys were important theatrical patrons, it is not surprising that the drama does not mention this dishonourable family connection with a murderer. The play is not however a straightforward dramatization of Golding's account and it makes certain adaptations in order to create a citizen tragedy in which the characters' lives in London are much more significant and the question of Anne's culpability is much more nuanced. The historical George and Anne Saunders were themselves well connected to the elite Protestant circles of Edwardian and Elizabethan England. Anne was sister-in-law to the Duchess of Somerset (1510-1587), widow of Edward Seymour, the Lord Protector (1500-1552) whose second husband was Anne Saunders' brother, Francis Newdegate (1519-1582).[33] George Saunders was half brother to Walter Haddon (1514/15-1571), the protestant

---

[30] Golding, *A briefe discourse.* The Golding pamphlet refers to the couple as 'Saunders' while the play uses 'Sanders'. I use 'Saunders' when referring to the historical people and 'Sanders' when referring to the dramatic characters. Similarly, 'Anne Drury' is the historical figure and 'Anne Drewry' is the character.

[31] Louis Thorn Golding, *An Elizabethan Puritan: Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses and also of John Calvin's Sermons* (New York, 1937), p.36; Alan H. Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003).

[32] The Earl of Oxford purchased 7 acres of land in St Botolph's parish, the former Great Garden of Christ Church from the merchant Benedict Spinola in 1580. The land had been acquired from Magdalene College which still considers itself to have been cheated in the transaction- in 1989 a gargoyle caricaturing Spinola was erected at the college and an article features on the Magdalene College website: [http://www.magd.cam.ac.uk/high-finance-and-low-cunning/] accessed 18 June 2014. 'The Earle of Oxforde's rentes' near Hogg Lane are mentioned a number of times in the St Botolph's Memoranda.

[33] The Duchess was herself a patron of Protestant writers and translators: 'Seymour [*née* Stanhope], Anne, duchess of Somerset (*c.*1510–1587)', *ODNB*.

reformer of Cambridge University under Edward VI.[34] The writer of *A Warning* seems to have reduced the social status of his characters for dramatic purposes, down-playing the elite and aristocratic connections of Anne and George Saunders so that the characters more closely represent Londoners of a middling status, whose interests, the play shows, are all within the city; it seems unlikely that the sister-in-law of a Duchess would sit, as Anne Sanders does, without attendants, on her front doorstep. Unresolved in questions of genre and sympathies, and especially on Anne Sanders' culpability in her husband's murder, the play can, even in its contradictions, tell us something about the ways in which staged narratives shaped Londoners' views of themselves and their city.[35]

Edward IV and *A Warning* are plays that are interested in relationships between London, its people and forces that operate outside the city; to adopt Stephen Greenblatt's terms, the power of the city and the forces that attempt to subvert it. In Greenblatt's model of subversion and containment, 'the subversiveness that is genuine and radical […] is at the same time contained by the power it would appear to threaten. Indeed the subversiveness is the very product of that power and furthers its ends.'[36] Subversion, Greenblatt argues, is a product of the power that it appears to threaten, and actually furthers the ends of that power. Where Greenblatt is centrally concerned with Shakespeare's plays and their depiction of royal power, in *Edward IV* and *A Warning* 'power' is shown to be located in the city itself. If the marriages of the Shores and the Sanders represent the social and economic integrity of the city, then in these plays the undermining of these marriages by the adulterous attentions of King Edward and Captain Browne are an attempt to subvert the communal structures of the city, where these plays suggest, power ultimately lies. Jane Shore and Anne Sanders both face the consequence of their betrayal of the city's values through expulsion and ultimately death, an end which is shared by Browne, as the moral order of the city is restored. As a play that is deeply concerned with the moral transgressions of royalty as well as citizens, *Edward IV* places blame on the corrupting figures of Falconbridge, Edward IV and Gloucester but its real radicalism lies not in the action on stage but in its almost

---

[34] E. St John Brooks, 'A Pamphlet by Arthur Golding', *Notes and Queries*, 2 (1938),182-184. The several versions of the story by Golding, Stow and Holinshed (see note 67)*,* indicate that the murder was seen as an event of some significance by those historians, involving important people and of more than simply sensationalist interest.

[35] Frances E. Dolan, 'Gender, Moral Agency and Dramatic Form in *A Warning for Fair Women', Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900,* 29.2 (1989), 201-218.

[36] Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearian Negotiations*, p.30. While applying Greenblatt's model here I am also aware that, as critics have since noted, not all power relationships fall into Greenblatt's model of subversion and containment.

complete indifference to the individual who happens to sit on the throne and its assertion of the underlying power of the city. It is to London that Jane addresses her farewell and from which she accepts her punishment: 'and *London* too,| farewell to thee, where first I was inticde, |That scandalizde thy dignitie with shame.'(K6ʳ; 2.20.23-5). Ultimately these plays propose that the real power over London's citizens lies in the city, exemplified by its ritual punishment and executions, and not with outsiders, be they Irish captains or royalty.

Turning now to *Edward IV* and reading it alongside its sources and analogues, allows us to see that the play gives a version of London's history that elevates the city as a location of power and replaces kings and nobles with citizens at the tragic centre of the drama. The main source for the historical events of the play is the account of Richard III's reign written by Thomas More in 1513 and later incorporated into the chronicle histories of Edward Hall (1542) and Raphael Holinshed (1577 and 1587).[37] Shakespeare's *Richard III* is based on the same source but Heywood's version of history displays more interest in the demotic than Shakespeare's; although it opens with a scene at court, subsequently the first part of *Edward IV* rarely shows the royal characters other than in interaction with their common subjects, principally the Shores, the Mayor and citizens of London or Hobs the Tanner. Where Shakespeare's focus is on the play of power within the court and the royal family, *Edward IV* is interested in the impact of misused royal power on its subjects; its history is told from the viewpoint of characters whose lives are very like those of many of their audience. The feudal contract under which a king offers order and security to his subjects in return for their loyalty, and which justifies the king's elevated status in the social hierarchy, is broken from the outset of *Edward IV* as the citizens themselves are required to defend London against predatory claimants to the throne. Much of Part I depicts the citizens of London mounting their own 'valiant defence' of London against 'the bastarde Falconbridge' (Thomas Neville), while Edward IV amuses himself in 'mery pastime' far away from London in rural Tamworth. The inability, or unwillingness, of the king and nobility to protect the security and stability that London required for its commerce to flourish is vividly depicted by the threats of the rebel soldiers to ransack the mercers' shops of Cheapside where they will 'measure veluet by the pikes' (A5ᵛ; 1.2.66-67) and to 'sell pearles by the pecke' at Leadenhall (A5ʳ;1.2.53). The Mayor and Aldermen plan and

---

[37] Thomas More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth, and king Richard the third unfinished' in Raphael Holinshed and others, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), STC 135689, pp. 711-737. Transcript accessed on-line at *The Holinshed Project* ed. by Ian Archer and others <http://www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed >[accessed 12 June 2012].

execute the defence of London, aided by apprentices who form a disciplined militia, while the king is nowhere to be seen; in this play, the king's military capability is largely irrelevant.[38]

In contrast to the citizens' brave and disciplined defence of London, royal military valour is throughout absent, with a succession of scenes at the start of Part II, emphasising this absence. Seven scenes depict Edward's negotiations with King Louis of France; peace is eventually achieved, not through military skill but because Louis willingly submits without a fight rather than enter into battle. The only characters that we see engaged in warfare in this play are therefore the Londoners and the rebels, and it is the Londoners who are given the opportunity to display the heroic qualities that are more usually attributed to nobility. This fashioning of the citizens of London as a military force is not simply romantic or incidental but shows London to be a self-contained entity, signified by its ability to defend its own walls from the attacking rebels who wish to 'ride in triumph thorow Cheape to Paules'(sig.B4^v;1.9.19). The action of *Edward IV* ends at an indeterminate moment after Richard's enthronement, with a suggestion that the royal power struggle is unresolved and will continue; this play, and by implication, London, is not interested in the Battle of Bosworth or its outcome.

Edward is described by More as a popular king, 'heartillie beloved with the substance of the people', who is among other qualities 'politike in counsel.'[39] In addition to his fine personal qualities, More tells of Edward's flattering hospitality and courtesy towards the civic authorities of London, represented by his gift of venison to them:

> His highnesse being at Windsor in hunting, sente for the Mayor and Aldermen of London to him for none other errande, but to have them hunt and bee merye with him, where hee made them not so stately, but so friendly and so familiar cheare, and sente venson from thence freely into the Citie.[40]

Hunting was a pastime intimately connected with nobility; 'a sport for Noble peeres, a sport for gentle bloods […] Hunting was ordeyned first for men of Noble kinde' and

---

[38] Citizens' musters are mocked in citizen satires, for example, Beaumont's *the knight of the burning pestle:* 'Rafe, I will have thee call all the youths together in battle-ray, with drums and guns and flags, and march to Mile End in pompous fashion' (sig.I3^v;V.1.57-59). In *Edward IV* it is Falconbridge's troops which enter '*marching, as being at Mile End*'(sig.B4^r;I.9,sd). Mile End is further down the road from Aldgate.

[39] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.711.

[40] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.711.

since it was obtained only by hunting, venison was regarded as a noble meat.[41] The venison is a generous and symbolic gift, representing 'friendely' feelings between a king and his common subjects, which elevates their status and strengthens the bond between them, but it is also intended to elicit loyalty and generosity from the City in return. More's Edward is a popular and hospitable king who enjoys an affable relationship with the leading citizens of London and Shakespeare uses the same characterisation as a foil for the villainous Gloucester. More comments that, although 'he was of youth greatlie given to fleshlie wantonnesse', this did not reduce Edward's popularity; 'this fault not greatlie gréeved the people.'[42] In *Richard III*, when Gloucester, plotting to be Richard III, instructs Buckingham to stir up the people of London against Edward's memory, among Edward's faults that he is instructed to list is his intemperately lustful behaviour towards the women of the city:

> Moreover, urge his hateful luxury
> And bestial appetite in change of lust
> Which stretched unto their servants, daughters, wives,
> Even where his raging eye, or savage heart,
> Without control, listed to make a prey.
> (III.5.78-82)

Buckingham reports that the crowd at Guildhall has met the accusations against Edward in silence 'like dumb statues or breathing stones'(III.7.7-8). The citizens either do not recognise the accusations, or if they do, do not hold them against Edward. Shakespeare makes the defamation of Edward one more lie told by the scheming Gloucester and his accomplice Buckingham, in their increasingly desperate attempts to win the acclamation of the recalcitrant citizens of London. Where Shakespeare's *Richard III* is focused on the struggle for political and dynastic power at the highest levels of the court, *Edward IV* emphasises throughout the economic and social consequences for his subjects of Edward's inability to control his 'fleshlie wantonnesse'; the accusations that are treated as malicious lies in *Richard III* are realised in *Edward IV*. In this play 'hateful luxury' is one of Edward's defining characteristics, identified immediately in the play's very first scene, which shows Edward's own mother berating him for his impolitic marriage to Elizabeth Grey, which will alienate Warwick and the King of France; she calls it a 'rash vnlawfull act' (A2ᵛ;1.1.22) and describes Elizabeth as 'the base leauings of a subiect's bed'(A3ʳ;1.1.75). Edward responds with jovial sensuality about the 'work' he has been

---

[41] George Gascoigne, *The noble arte of venerie or hunting* (1575), STC 24328 sig.A4ʳ.
[42] More,'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.711.

about to beget an heir with his new Queen. In *Edward IV,* the relationship which Richard's oratory constructs - 'bestial appetites', 'savage heart' and 'prey'- between hunting, feasting and lust, is enacted by Edward as he has to leave the Mayor's carefully prepared feast before eating, overcome by his desire for Jane Shore who is acting as his hostess. The relationship of companionable hospitality that More describes, where Edward has the Mayor and Alderman over to Windsor to 'hunt and bee merye with him' is inverted when Edward gracelessly leaves the feast, to the Mayor's great distress: 'O God here to be ill?|My house to cause my Soueraignes discontent?|Cosin Shoare, I had rather spent' [died] (sig.DV^r;1.16.178-180). This play's Edward is a weak man made irrational and impolitic, first by his 'love' marriage to Elizabeth Woodville, and then by his desire for Jane Shore; his discourteous rejection of the fellowship and hospitality of the city is shown to be a consequence of his inability to control his own fleshly appetites.

One of the most vivid scenes in *Richard III* is the final scene of Act Three, in which Gloucester, as 'the Protector', manipulates the citizens of London into acclaiming him King despite his seeming reluctance; 'will you enforce me to a world of cares?' (III.7.213). Shakespeare's version of these events, derived from More's account, shows the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and citizens as overawed by the presence of Gloucester and duped by the courtly rhetoric of Buckingham, Catesby and Gloucester; the Mayor is the only one of them who speaks and he says only four short lines out of the two hundred and thirty-seven in the scene. When Gloucester disclaims seeking the throne: 'For God doth know and you may partly see, how far away I am from desire of this,' the Mayor responds with apparent sincerity 'God bless your grace! We see it, and will say it'(III.7.227). Shakespeare's citizens are rendered acquiescent and almost speechless in the face of the rhetoric of Richard and his accomplices. More offers a more cynical and less patronising explanation of the citizens' acquiescence to Richard's accession; that they were reluctant to interfere with political matters outside their sphere of influence, either out of fear or self-interest:

> And so they said, that these matters be kings games, as it were stage playes, and for the more part played upon scaffolds, in which poore men be but the lookers on. And they that wise be will meddle no further. For they that sometime step up, and playe with them, when they can not playe their parts, they disorder the playe, and doo themselves no good.[43]

---

[43] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.731.

More, writing in 1513, takes his metaphor from the drama of the itinerant players, acted on a temporary stage or 'scaffold', its contingency even more marked, and closer to an execution scaffold than those of the late sixteenth century playhouses. 'Poore men', claim More's citizens, disingenuously, are explicitly inexpert at royal politics, expected to observe, but not participate in, the performance of monarchy. Inexpert meddling might, the implication is, 'doo themselves no good' and result in the step up to the other kind of scaffold and so the citizens deliberately self-deprecate in order to avoid the dynastic and unpredictable politics of the court. The citizens in More's account withdraw from the dangerous public stage and reserve the right to be private men, a role which both More and Shakespeare appear to accept on face value as appropriate, but *Edward IV,* being both more interested in the citizens, and more sophisticated in its reading of them, points to the reasons why they might take up this position.

Edward IV's Gloucester/Richard III is a coarser version of the 'self-delighting ironist' suggested by More and dramatized by Shakespeare; Rowland calls him 'a pantomime villain.'[44] But where Richard's motivation in this play is reduced to self-serving wickedness, the characterisation of the chief citizens of London in response to him is fuller and more nuanced than that given by either More or Shakespeare. The Lord Mayor and the Aldermen, who had after all achieved their own positions by negotiating the complex politics of the city's hierarchical institutions, were clearly far from poor and were adept politicians. Their refusal to take part in dangerous 'kings games' where they might 'doo themselves no good', is put into the mouth of Hobs the Tanner, who, when asked by the disguised King Edward 'And thou dost not hate the house of Yorke?' replies: 'Why no, for I am just a kin to Sutton Wind-mill, I can grinde which way so ere the wind blow, if it bee Harrie, I can say wel fare Lancaster, if it be Edward I can sing, Yorke, Yorke for my monie' (C5^v;1.13.45-48). Hobs, like More's citizens, consciously opts out of the internecine struggles of the houses of York and Lancashire from which there is no gain to be had for the commoner. Refusal to take sides in the war is one political strategy presented by the play; Hobs is well aware of the conflict but he refuses to be drawn to one side or the other. Scenes showing the acclamation of Richard III by the city are omitted from *Edward IV*; references to Richard's changed status from Protector to King pass without comment and we know that royal power is passing mainly because we are shown Matthew Shore's heroic attempt to prevent the murder of the young princes in the Tower. The play ends with

---

[44] Gary Taylor, introduction to *Richard III*, *The Oxford Shakespeare*, p.183; Rowland, *Edward IV*, p.56.

Richard's gloating return after his coronation, his subsequent fall already set in motion by Buckingham, who wants to 'seat [Richmond] in his throne.' (L8ᵛ; 2.23.107) but this is the only passing reference to Henry VII, the founder of the Tudor dynasty, as 'Harrie Richmond' (L8ᵛ; 2.23.106) and he never actually appears on stage. In a play that is concerned throughout with the integrity of London's boundaries, the citizens' intervention in dynastic power-play happens only when London itself is threatened. The dramatic affairs of the Plantagenets and Tudors in this play form a background to the story of the Shores.

Edward, Richard and the other nobles are shown in *Edward IV* as rather simple characters who are almost entirely driven by private pleasure and personal ambition. Jane Shore and her husband Matthew, are contrastingly dramatically complex characters at the centre of the play's action, who are emblematic both of the vulnerability of London to forces that threatened it from outside, and of its potential to resist such forces.[45] Poetic representations of the Shore story by Thomas Churchyard, Anthony Chute and Michael Drayton were derived from More's engaging description of Edward IV's favourite concubine: 'the meriest was this Shores wife, in whom the king therefore tooke speciall pleasure.'[46] Where Churchyard and Chute produce a narrative of the life of 'Shore's Wife' which is devoid of any political and social context, in which she seems to float in a temporal and spatial vacuum, both Heywood and Drayton set Mistress Shore in a precise London setting, which they use to comment on the nature of contemporary London and its inhabitants. Drayton's *Englands heroicall epistles* in which the Shore story appears, was first printed around the same time that *Edward IV* was produced, and Henslowe's *Diary* mentions Drayton numerous times in the period 1597-1602; it seems likely that Drayton and Heywood would have known each other and their work.[47] Shore's occupation as a goldsmith (the historical Shore was a mercer)

---

[45] Heywood's is the first literary treatment to assign given names to the Shores. His literary predecessors call her 'Mistress Shore' or 'Shore's Wife.' The historical people were called William and Elizabeth Shore ['Shore, Elizabeth [Jane] (d. 1526/7?)' *ODNB*]. Perhaps their names were unknown by Heywood's time or probably it was simply more politic to call an infamous courtesan 'Jane' instead of 'Elizabeth'; for dramatic purposes it was probably less confusing if the King's wife and his mistress did not have the same name.

[46] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.724; Thomas Churchyard, 'How Shores wife, Edwarde the fowerthes concubine, was by king Richarde despoiled of all her goods and forced to do open penance', in William Baldwin, *A Myrrour for Magistrates* (1571) STC 1249, sigs.Vvᵛ-Xiiiiʳ; Michael Drayton, 'Edward the fourth to Shores Wife' and 'The Epistle of Shore's wife to King Edward the Fourth', *Englands heroicall epistles* (1597), STC 7193, fol.53ᵛ-60ᵛ; Anthony Chute, *Beawtie dishonoured written under the title of Shores wife* (1593), STC 5262. For a review of the literature, dramas and ballads inspired by the story of Mistress Shore see James L. Harner, 'Jane Shore in Literature, A Checklist', *Notes & Queries*, 4 (1981), 496-507.

[47] The relative dating of Drayton's poem, Heywood's *Edward IV* and the ballad, *The woful Lamentation of Mistris Jane Shore, a Gold-smiths Wife of London* (STC 22463.5) is uncertain because the dates of first

and the location of the shop in Lombard Street appear to be details created by Drayton and taken up by the play. In Drayton's verse epistle 'Edward the fourth to Shores Wife' the adversarial nature of the relationship between the city and the court is made explicit, as the courtiers' accusations that the merchants of the city, described as proud and miserly, hoard up their undeserved and excessive wealth for their own selfish ends: 'Nor is it fit a Citty shop should hide,|The worlds delight, and Natures onely pride,|But in a Princes sumptuous gallery,|Hung all with Tissue, flor'd with Tapistrie.'[48] Mistress Shore is objectified as a treasure that is hidden away by the 'wretches' of the city when she should be displayed in a palace gallery; here the court is figured as a place of public display, where the 'world's delight' could be shown for all to enjoy. Merchants of the city, it suggests, lack the aesthetic capacity to appreciate the true value of the treasure that they possess. Drayton's conception of Mistress Shore as a jewel in a goldsmith's shop, a precious possession to be either hidden away from thieves or displayed for admiration, is a recurring paradigm within which early modern thought about city women is constructed, and which was adopted by all subsequent treatments of the story.

The depiction of the Shores' marriage as a happy one is essential to Heywood's conception of them as representative of London itself; threats to their marriage are aligned throughout with threats to London. As Falconbridge demands admittance to the city he makes threats against the commerce of London and against the city's women, specifically Jane, whose fame as 'the flowre of London for her beautie' (A8[r];1.4.41) has spread beyond the city itself:

> *Shoare*, listen me, thy wife is mine, thats flat,
> This night in thine owne house, shee sleepes with mee.
> Now, *Crosebie* Lord Maior, shall we enter in? (A8[r];1.4.46-7)

Seeing the city as a place where everything precious is a commodity to be traded, Falconbridge repeatedly offers to his men, not only its silks, pearls and other luxury goods, but its women and their homes. His threat to London is the destruction of the commerce that is the source of its wealth and also the households, like the Shores, within which that wealth was generated. In depicting the Shores' marriage as stable and happy before Edward's intervention, the play again deviates from previous treatments to

---

performances of the play and the ballad are unknown, but all were probably first produced between 1597 and 1600, most likely in this order, based on comparing details between the different forms of the story. See James L. Harner, '"The Wofull Lamentation of Mistris Jane Shore": The Popularity of an Elizabethan Ballad', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 71 (1977), 137-149.

[48] Drayton, *Englands heroicall epistles*, fol.53[v].

establish the city's moral superiority over the court. The marriage of the historical

Elizabeth and William Shore was in reality annulled in 1476, at her petition, on the

grounds of his impotence.[49] More does not mention this, but perhaps knowledge of the

annulment lies behind his assertion that the Shores' marriage was an unhappy one.

More says of William Shore, that he was 'an honest citizen, yoong and godlie, & of

good substance', but he explains, they were married when Elizabeth was too young,

'forsomuch as they were coupled yer she were well ripe, she not verie ferventlie loved

him, for whom she never longed.'[50] In the various verse treatments, Shore is usually

absent and silent, and Mistress Shore complains about her marriage, from which she is

longing to escape, even before the king appears. Thomas Churchyard's Mistress Shore

echoes More when she complains that she has been married off while too young: 'When

that mere love I knewe not howe to use.'[51] Anthony Chute's *Beawtie Dishonoured* is

narrated by Mistress Shore and is in part a cautionary tale for rich old men who choose

a beautiful young wife, with Shore characterised as the 'ancient doting.'[52] More's

account of the Shores' marriage, together with the poetic treatments derived from it,

constructs citizen husbands like Matthew Shore as dull, covetous, and probably

impotent; Jane's choice, although immoral, is seen as being understandable, the

attraction of life at court as irresistible. In *Edward IV* it is the treacherous Mistress

Blage, a character invented by the play, to whom Jane turns for advice, and who voices

the popular allure of the court. Encouraging Jane to take up the King's offer to take her

as his mistress, she says:

> True, I confesse a priuate life is good,
> Nor would I otherwise be understood,
> To be a Goldsmiths wife is some content,
> But daies in court more pleasantly are spent.
> A households gouernment deserues renowne,
> But what is a companion to a crowne?
> (E3ʳ;1.19.57-65)

Like More, Mistress Blage distinguishes between the 'priuate life' of the citizen, and the

public life of the court. By the end of the play Mistress Blage is shown to be false when

her greed for Jane's remaining possessions expose her as a disloyal and immoral woman

and she is abandoned to die alone, destitute and friendless.

---

[49] 'Shore, Elizabeth [Jane]',*ODNB*.
[50] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.724.
[51] Baldwin, 'How Shores wife', sig.Clviiᵛ.
[52] 'Let th' ancient doting therefore be precise/ The quicke ey'd young will haue a time to wincke it.'
Chute, *Beawtie dishonoured,* sig.Ciiiʳ.

Where Mistress Blage conforms to popular stereotypes of Londoners as venal and driven only by financial greed, Matthew and Jane resist this characterisation. Vigorous and heroic, Matthew is compared to Edward throughout and shown to be his superior. While both Edward and Matthew are shown to be uxorious, Edward's marriage is based on sensuality and he easily slips into infidelity. Matthew recognises Jane's beauty but their marriage is shown to be based on mutual regard, faith and companionship, which is destroyed by the King's seduction of Jane. Describing Jane's fidelity, Matthew says 'thou wast a maid, a maid when thou wast wife […] so good, so modest, and so chaste thou wast' (sig.E7ᵛ;1.22.79-81).[53] When Jane offers to make 'sweet Mat' wealthy in recompense for losing her, 'ask what thou wilt: were it a million that may content thee, thou shalt have it' (sig.E8ʳ;1.22.119-20), Matthew refuses to enter into a mercantile exchange of his wife:

> I have lost what wealth cannot return.
> All worldly losses are but toys to mine;
> O, all my wealth- the loss of thee was more
> Than ever time or fortune can restore.
> (sig.E8ʳ;1.23.123-126)

Confounding expectation that a citizen's wife, like any of his merchandise, can be purchased if the price is right, Matthew's refusal to be bought off is part of *Edward IV*'s depiction of London as a place where community, represented by the Shores, is based on bonds of marriage and loyalty, of belonging and not of money and possessions.

Despite Mistress Blage's preference for life at court, London is constructed in *Edward IV* as a place where the status of citizen's wife is more desirable than that of king's courtesan. Jane and Matthew's loving devotion to each other is established in a domestic scene which appears after the defeat of the rebels but before Edward arrives in London. Jane's first speech is addressed to Matthew and begins:

> I am not sad now you are here with me,
> My joy, my hope, my comfort, and my love,
> My deere, deere husband, kindest *Mathew Shoare*.
> (sig.B3ʳ⁻ᵛ;1.8.6-8)

Asked by Jane why he has pushed himself to the front of the fighting, Matthew lists the reasons why he has fought Falconbridge, which include chivalric loyalty to the King

---

[53] Rowland notes that this is specifically late sixteenth terminology, by 'maid' Matthew means a chaste woman within marriage. Rowland, *Edward IV* p.194.

and the city, but which are both superseded by his loyalty to Jane. Matthew is a private man who has been pulled into a public role only reluctantly:

> First to maintaine King *Edwards* royaltie,
> Next to defend the Cities libertie.
> But chiefly *Iane*, to keepe thee from the foyle,
> Of him that to my face did vow thy spoyle.
> (sig.B3ᵛ;1.8.15-18)

In a play full of paradoxes, Matthew's reason for defending London 'first to maintain King Edward's royalty' is ironic when it is the king himself who will eventually carry out the threat to 'spoil' Jane that Falconbridge has made. From his first entry Matthew Shore is shown as a leader of other men; as he organises the defence of London, he reports to the Mayor that the men of the city have been mustered by the livery companies, a civic equivalent of the gathering of soldiers by a feudal lord. At the height of the fighting Matthew is given a role of martial leadership by the Mayor:

> And therefore, Cosin *Shoare*, as I repose
> Trust in thy valour and thy loyaltie,
> Draw forth three hundred bowmen, and some pikes,
> And presently encounter their assault.
> (sig.B6ᵛ; 1.9.162-5)

He defends the city from the final assault outside the gates at the end of the Mile End Road, that is, in the space outside Aldgate, directly in front of St Botolph's church. Matthew's honourable status in the play comes at first from his ability to play the chivalric role usually ascribed to the aristocratic elite; his virtue is initially framed in the same terms as those applied to Falconbridge, as opposing military leaders. This chivalric code is, however, shown by the play to be insufficient to create a virtuous man. In contrast to the ambitious, lustful and vengeful Falconbridge, Edward and Richard, we are shown Matthew as a reputable and honest trader, without personal ambition, who embodies the values of the city.

Matthew reasserts citizen values over those of the court when, having performed armed service to King Edward by defending London, he refuses to be knighted in the field because to do so would disrupt the elected hierarchy which defined the social structures of the city: 'Farre be it from the thought of *Mathew Shoare*,|That he should be aduanc'de with Aldermen|With our L. Maior, & our right graue Recorder'(B8ʳ;1.9.233-35). Matthew combines valour with reason, loyalty and honour; while he steadfastly

refuses to allow Jane to return as his wife, Matthew treats her with pity and a controlled reason that contrasts with the irrational desire and revenge that Edward and Richard display towards her. The first part of the play works to establish the city's values as those of loyalty, modesty, loving relationships, valour and reason against noble values of aggression, impulsiveness, desire and greed.

Jane's initial appearance as a faithful wife waiting for her husband to return from fighting echoes the stories of Penelope and Lucretia, of which several versions in poetry and drama were made in the late1590s and early 1600s.[54] The audience, probably already aware that Jane will become the famous mistress of Edward IV, and primed for tragedy by the playbill, would enjoy the irony in Jane's vows that:

> Yet *Iane* will be thy honest loyall wife.
> The greatest Prince the sunne did euer see,
> Shall neuer make me proue vntrue to thee.
> (sig.B3ᵛ;1.8.26-28)

Jane's statement that 'these hands shal make this bodie a dead corse,|Ere force or flatterie shall mine honour staine'(B3ᵛ;1.8.30-31) aligns her with Lucretia, who, in the many versions of her story became a powerful exemplar of wifely chastity in European Renaissance culture. Shakespeare's verse treatment, *The Rape of Lucrece*, was published in 1594 and Heywood produced his own dramatized version, *The Tragedy of the Rape of Lucrece,* which was probably first performed at the Red Bull around 1607 and remained popular in print and performance for the next thirty years. Chastity and diligent domesticity are aligned as virtues in Lucretia's story; in Shakespeare's version 'only Collatinus finds his wife (though it were late in the night) spinning amongst her maids', her avoidance of idleness signalling her to be a virtuous wife.[55] In *Edward IV*, references are made to Jane's exemplary domestic labour as she 'makes huswifery to shine'(D3ʳ ; 1.16.48).[56] Her industrious 'huswifery' distinguishes the play's Jane Shore from, for example, Drayton's Mistress Shore, less seduced than seductress, whose moral incontinence is demonstrated by her restless complaints against the boredom of idle confinement. Instead of engaging in domestic work, like the virtuous Lucretia and

---

[54]See for example Peter Colse, *Penelope's Complaint* (1596) STC 5582; William Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*, *The Oxford Shakespeare,* pp.237-255; Thomas Middleton, *The ghost of Lucrece* (1600) STC 17885.5; Thomas Heywood, *The rape of Lvcrece, A True Roman Tragedie* (1608) STC 13360.

[55] Alex Ryrie argues that this emphasis on diligent labour among earnest Protestants may have originated in a fear that idleness would allow for sinfulness 'The roots of the Protestant work ethic may lie less in Calvinism's theological crises than in the simple need blamelessly to pass the long, long wait until death.' Ryrie, *Being Protestant,* p.456.

[56] Shakespeare, 'The Rape of Lucrece' (p.238).

Jane, she has only 'sports', 'pleasures' and 'toys', 'Our dogge, our Parrat, or our Marmuzet' on which to set her mind; her confinement to the home, relieved only by a weekly walk, is unproductive, spiritually and economically.[57] *Edward IV* offers Jane's diligent, domestic labour, 'a households gouernment', as a dramatic foil to contrast with the sexual licence and idleness that she is offered by the king. In a parallel scene in *A Warning,* Anne Sanders is established as a careful custodian of her household's resources when she instructs her son that dinner must wait until his father returns from work and that he must 'go bid your sister see/ my Closet lockt when she takes out the fruite'(336- 37). A good wife was considered to be responsible for maintaining the economic integrity and stability of the household and this short exchange confirms Anne's status as a 'good' wife at the opening of *A Warning.*[58] Renaissance retellings of the story of Lucretia established it as a powerful Republican myth, inflected towards the contemporary politics of the various authors who appropriated it. [59] The image of Lucretia as a woman diligent in her domesticity and also symbolic of the foundation of Rome as a republic is resonant with the creation of the character of Jane Shore as an exemplary citizen wife until she is seduced by the king. London is suggested to be an analogue of republican Rome, with its liberty from the tyrannical Tarquins as a founding principal, aligning Matthew with the wronged husband Collatinus and placing Edward in the position of Sextus, the violator, whose lust and betrayal of his subjects leads to the downfall of the Tarquins as kings of Rome.

The attempt to promote Matthew and Jane as model citizens does present the dramatist with the awkward problem of explaining why Jane would leave Matthew to become the King's mistress. As a city wife, Jane is integrated into the social structures of London through networks of kin and civic institutions. She is connected to the city's governing institutions through Matthew's membership of one of the most prestigious livery companies, the Goldsmiths' and her uncle is the widowed Lord Mayor, for whom she acts as hostess when the King visits him at home at Crosby Hall. Mistress Shore, as created by Chute and Drayton, is only too willing to leave behind a dull husband for the glamour of the court. Jane is however, much less easily persuaded by the king's advances, and she submits to Edward reluctantly, saying 'if you enforce me, I have nought to say; But wish I had not lived to see this day'(E3ᵛ;1.19.108-109). Edward and Jane appear together in only three scenes in Part I - the scene where they first meet

---

[57] Drayton, Englands heroicall epistles, fol.53ᵛ.
[58] Hubbard, *City Women,* p.112.
[59] Ian Donaldson, The Rapes of Lucretia: a Myth and its Transformations (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).

(scene 16), when Edward comes to the Shores' shop (scene 17) and when he finally persuades her to become his mistress (scene 19).[60] We never see Edward and Jane together as lovers and there is none of the intimate and loving relationship that the play shows between Matthew and Jane. In Part II they appear together once only, when there is a confrontation and then a reconciliation between Queen Elizabeth and Jane, in which Edward is very much an incidental figure. We see Jane after she has left her husband and home, mainly in the role of 'secular saint' identified by Helgerson, in which she intercedes with the king to help petitioners, visits prisoners, manages to form an unlikely sisterly allegiance with the Queen and then submits to her 'martyrdom' at the hands of King Richard.[61] She is not depicted on stage as the 'merry courtesan' described by More and her response to her situation is characterised by regret and repentance. Describing her attempts to fend off Edward's attentions, Jane identifies herself with the city under siege. Trying unsuccessfully to persuade Matthew to take her back as his wife, she says to him:

> I must confess I yielded up the fort
> Wherin lay all the riches of thy joy.
> But yet, sweet Shore, before I yielded it
> I did endure the longs't and greatest siege
> that ever battered on poor chastity.
> (E7ᵛ;1.22.86-91)

Matthew's successful defence of the city against Falconbridge is ironically echoed by Jane's failure to defend herself from Edward. The trope personifying the city of London as a besieged female, subject to attack, has been widely discussed, by scholars including Gail Kern Paster, Laura Gowing and Lawrence Manley.[62] Jane reshapes the discourse that reverberates between the besieged city, chastity, suggestions of Lucretia, and herself to create a metaphor from the vulnerability of London and its citizens to attack by Falconbridge and by Edward. In doing so, she recalls the defence of London by Matthew and the other citizens, and underlines Edward's betrayal of those same citizens.

Although he has no ambition to emulate Collatinus in attempting to depose the king, Matthew Shore is a dignified and self-possessed man, and importantly, is not

---

[60] These are modern scene numbers, following Rowland, *Edward IV*.

[61] Helgerson, 'Weeping for Jane Shore'.

[62] Gail Kern Paster, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia,1985); Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Laura Gowing," 'The Freedom of the Streets': women and social space, 1560-1640" in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.130-151, p.132.

particularly submissive or deferential to either king, Edward or Richard. When explaining to the unsuspecting Mayor, and Jane's brother why he feels such unease about Edward's visits to his shop, he describes the king disparagingly as 'undermining', 'slie' and, echoing Sidney's comment about ulcers covered in tissue, describing Edward as 'a mightie one like him| Whose greatnes may guilde ouer ugly sinne'(sig.E4^v; I.20.48-49). Matthew, as a skilled craftsman and freeman of London, is free of the courtiers' dependency on courtly servitude and so he is able to leave England and make his living abroad to escape public shame, 'it shall never be said that Matthew Shore/ A king's dishonour in his bonnet wore' (sig.E5^r;1.20.90-1).[63] More says simply that Shore abandoned his wife out of deference, and perhaps fear, 'one that could his good, not presuming to touch a kings concubine', and in other versions of the story, Mistress Shore's husband simply fades away, but *Edward IV* allows Matthew to voice his reaction to the king's behaviour and the betrayal that he feels, and together with Jane, he remains at the heart of the play.[64] It is their dilemma that the play, particularly Part 2, explores, as Jane deals with the consequences of her actions and Matthew decides whether or not to help her. On returning to London, Matthew risks his life to offer Jane some relief in her suffering, but refuses to take up Richard's demeaning offer that he can help her only if he takes her back as his wife. He defiantly argues with Richard and tells him that he has been 'wronged by a king' (sig.L4^v; 2.21.114) and that 'a king did cause her blame' (sig.L5^r; 2.21.141); in his last speech before dying he says 'Now tyrant *Richard*, doo the worst thou canst: she doth defie thee'(sig.L7^r; 2.22.108-9). Both Jane and Matthew die resisting to the last Richard's attempts to coerce them into moral compromise. *Edward IV* reshapes the royal history of the Chronicles into a story of civic resistance to the tyranny of an unjust king. Physically powerless to escape Richard's judgement, the Shores refuse deference to follow their consciences to their deaths and are held up as exemplary figures by their fellow Londoners, who bury their corpses, 'for the loue |they bear to her| And her kind husband, pitying his wrongs' (sig.L8^r; II.23.71-72).

Having discussed *Edward IV* at length, we return now to *A Warning*, another play that appropriates London's history in order to rewrite it as tragedy. In the play's meta-theatrical Induction to, the figure of 'Tragedie' speaks directly to the audience, presenting the playgoers to themselves as Londoners:

---

[63] The 'wittold' or complaisant cuckold was to become a figure of fun in city comedies, for example, Master Allwit in Thomas Middleton's *A chast mayd in Cheape-side* (1630) STC 17877.
[64] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.724.

> All you spectators, turne your chearfull eie,
> Give intertainment to Tragedie.
> My sceane is London, native and your owne,
> I sigh to thinke, my subject too well knowne,
> I am not faind: many now in this round,
> Once to behold me in sad tears were drownd.
> (sig.A3^r;Ind.93-98)

In enacting the appropriation of stories about London, Tragedie raises questions about who can and should control the narrative of collective events in a city 'native and your owne.' Like *Edward IV* , we can read *A Warning* alongside its sources to see that, in rewriting London's history as tragedy, it challenges authorised versions of that history. Tragedie assumes the familiarity of the story to many of the audience, 'my subject too well knowne', and further, she characterises the London audience as capable of moral judgement. The murder of George Saunders and the subsequent trials had taken place within living memory, and as Tragedy remarks, drawing attention to the role of memory in creating a collective identity, some of the spectators may have had personal recollections of the events depicted on stage: 'many now in this round, Once to behold me in sad tears were drownd.' Londoners, at least those who could recall events from some twenty years earlier, are invited to remember the dramatic scenes of executions, of which they may also have been spectators.[65] The performative nature of punishment and drama, and their ability to create a collective identity for those 'in this round' are suggested in the Induction and like *Edward IV,* it makes the claim that citizens' stories can be tragic. Alongside this notion of collective memory, *A Warning* stages a London in which communities are created, at least partly, by distinguishing those who live in London from those who do not, as it repeatedly directs the audience's attention to the distinction between those who are 'native' to London and those who are 'new' to the city. Since many of the people in early modern London were migrants who had arrived there through the process of rapid demographic change that occurred during the late sixteenth century, many of the audience may have had the slightly uncomfortable experience of being counted among the outsiders. As Jean Howard remarks, 'between foreigners and aliens, London must at times felt like a city where nearly everyone, to

---

[65] Golding's pamphlet description of the crowds at the execution of Anne Saunders in 1573 says that 'so great a number of people, as the like hathe not bene saene there togither in any mans remembraunce. For almoste the whole fielde, and all the way from newgate, was as full of folke as coulde well stande one by another: and besides that, great companies were placed bothe in the chambers neere abouts (whose windowes & walles were in many places beaten down to looke out at) and also upon the gutters, sides, and toppes of the houses, and upon the battlements and steeple of S. Bartholomewes'*(A Briefe discourse,* Bii^r).

one degree or another was "new".'[66] Anne and George Sanders are depicted as victims
of a stranger, Captain Browne, who like the king in *Edward IV* comes from outside
London to seduce and corrupt. Like *Edward IV*, *A Warning* uses its central female
character to examine the ability of London, as a site of civic virtue, to repel and to
contain external forces which threaten its disruption and destruction.

Although the story of the Saunders did not generate as many analogues as that of
the Shores, besides Golding's pamphlet, versions of it were included in Stow's *Annales*
and Holinshed's *Chronicles*.[67] Something of the play's approach can be discerned by
careful comparison with its sources and Golding's account of the murders, which has an
overt moral and didactic purpose; it will 'shewe what is to be gathered of this terrible
example and how we oughte to apply the same to our own behoofe.'[68] His version of the
story focuses on Anne Saunders as an adulterer and the procurer of her husband's
murder, presenting as verbatim her 'confession as she spake it at the place of
execution':

> The devil kindled in my hearte, first the hellish firebrand of unlawfull lust &
> afterward a murtherous intent to procure my saide husbande to be bereved of his
> life, which was also by my wicked means accomplished.[69]

In comparison to Golding's unequivocal blaming of Anne, the stage version is
ambiguous about Anne's culpability in her husband's murder. Anne seems to be
manipulated by the unscrupulous characters around her; the action of the play is driven
by Captain Browne's illicit desire for her, which is triggered by one brief meeting,
much as Edward's is for Jane Shore in *Edward IV*. Like Jane, Anne has a widowed
friend, Anne Drewry, who like Mistress Blage, encourages the affair because she hopes
to profit from her friend's 'promotion' up the social ranks. Also like Jane, Anne seems
reluctant to engage in the betrayal of her husband. Where Golding's account refers to
Anne having been in childbed when the murder occurred, with the implication that the
child was Browne's, the play's events are collapsed into a much shorter time frame and
childbirth is mentioned only in passing. On stage Anne, who has denied any
involvement in the murder, eventually and dramatically confesses that she had
consented to the murder of her husband and then compounded her guilt by denying it, a
somewhat less culpability than the 'murtherous intent' and 'wicked means' to which

---

[66] Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City'*, p.11.
[67] John Stow, *The annales of England* (1592) STC 23334, pp.1152-53; Holinshed, *Chronicles,* p.1258.
[68] Golding, *A briefe discourse,* sig. C3[r].
[69] Golding, *A briefe discourse*, sig. D2[v].

Golding has Anne confess. Having downplayed the sense of Anne's culpability, the play's ambivalent approach to her guilt is demonstrated by its use of a dramatic device to providentially reveal Anne's guilt. She has worn a white rose into court, and states that she wears it 'In token of my spotless innocence, As free from guilt as is this flower from staine' (sig. I1^v;2313-14). Anne's guilt is revealed when the rose suddenly changes to 'another hue' (sig. I2^v;2375). This dramatic device makes a striking visual statement of guilt that undermines the rather more subtle inflection given by Tragedy's comment that Anne has only 'dipped a finger in' her husband's murder, while the rest of the murderers have unambiguously bloody hands. Tensions and contradictions apparent in the play arise from these conflicting didactic and dramatic demands on its material, and the ambivalence in its attitude towards Anne's guilt arises in part from the play's attempt to establish Anne and George Sanders as ideal London citizens; like *Edward IV*, it displays some difficulties in re-characterising its central female figure from idealised citizen's wife to adulteress. The play's ambiguities and contradictions mean that the playgoer is positioned as a judicial assessor of guilt or innocence, as Anne's trial is acted out in front of them. [70] The play's fascination with signs, portents and the providential revelation of misdeeds, associates with the genre of 'the theatre of God's Judgement', the demands of which sometimes conflict with the creation of it as a purely domestic play about an adulterous and murderous wife. Throughout, playgoers are invited to compare the version of Anne's story presented on stage with their memories of the case, or alternative versions that they may have read and to judge her innocence or guilt.

2. Ways of Walking the City

Besides drawing on memories of historical events, refracted through popular entertainments and serious chronicles, to create a chronological sense of the city, *Edward IV* and *A Warning* also engage with play-goers' experiences of London as a specific and mappable space. Among the first plays to be set explicitly in London, both engage with the topography of the city, and especially, in key scenes of both plays, characters describe walking in the streets of London. In their narratives of walking, both stage and London become practised places, responding to, and reflecting the world

---

[70] On the audience as judge and the 'Theatre of God's judgement' in *A Warning*, see Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

outside the theatre as they transform London's places into spaces. Critics of early modern theatre have grappled with the question of why dramatists of the 1590s started to set plays in recognisable London settings and to what effect. Drawing on de Certeau, Crystal Bartolovich's discussion of the use of specific London locations in Haughton's *Englishmen for my Money*, argues that the creation of London onstage through 'concrete detail and allusion [...] participates in the production of the city as abstract space and encourages the audience to experience their own increasing alienation from the city as pleasure.'[71] She argues that 'the play's depiction of familiar locales and insider jokes belongs to an enjoyably externalized and impersonal London-a neutral but stable space-as opposed to a diffuse and historically mobile city that its population struggles, chaotically, to produce.'[72] Bartolovich's audience, even as they recognise London on stage, see it as something abstracted from the city that they themselves inhabit; this staged alienation, she argues, allows them to take pleasure from what is in reality a process of confrontation between people and London as a 'thing', independent of its human producers. Jean Howard, writing about scenes set in places like the Royal Exchange, argues for an instrumentality in the presentation of such highly visible London locations, the functions of which were unintelligible to most Londoners. She writes that 'through their place-based dramatic narratives, playwrights helped representationally to construct the practices associated with specific urban spaces, directing audiences to the uses to which city spaces could be put and to the privileged modes of conduct and cultural competencies associated with each...through its fictions drama helped less to transcribe than to construct and interpret the city.'[73]

Both Bartolovich and Howard see London as an essentially alien and even hostile place, which its inhabitants had to learn to negotiate and setting plays in the city as a means to change the places of London into practised spaces for the city's inhabitants. Rowland however, writes of the use of references to London's streets in plays prior to *Edward IV* (including *Englishmen for My Money*) that 'such intimacy with the nooks and crannies of London merely invests those who possess it with a complacency and amused condescension towards those who don't.'[74] Each of these analyses appears to position London as being an essentially strange, alienating and possibly hostile place, about which the playwrights and players, as expert city inhabitants, could educate the playgoers, and in which one group of knowledgeable

[71]Bartolovich, 'London's the Thing', p.146
[72]Bartolovich,'London's the Thing', p.146-7.
[73] Howard, Theater of a City, p.3.
[74] Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre*, p.35.

Londoners laughed at their less experienced neighbours. Rowland argues, however, that *Edward IV* is different, being a ground-breaking portrayal of London strongly influenced by the chorography of John Stow, and that 'both the antiquarian and the playwright were opening up new forms of cultural and political awareness, by which affiliations within and to the communities in which the citizens lived and worked were privileged at the expense of structures and strictures of subject-hood imposed by the crown.'[75] Building on Rowland's perception that what seems to be important in *Edward IV* is the identification of a particular kind of community in the streets of London, this section will now show how both *Edward IV* and *A Warning* establish a sense of the local and communal that operated in London, and how one of the ways in which this is expressed is their descriptions of walking in London.

As Jean Howard observes, there were probably many native Londoners who did not know their way around its streets at all well, and many 'strangers' and 'aliens' who were entirely familiar with the city. The 'knowability' of London's spaces on stage did not depend on the nationality of the spectator and the distinction between outsiders and those for whom London was 'native and your owne' was unstable when assessed in terms of knowledge of the city.[76] *A Warning* and *Edward IV* seem however to fashion London as a stable place of strong communal bonds, where disruption to that stability comes from without and not within. The threat to London in *A Warning* comes from Captain Browne, a gentleman who describes himself as a 'Captain' and who other characters describe as a 'gallant'. When writing to Frances Walsingham about the Saunders' case, Robert Cecil described Captain Brown as Irish.[77] Where we might take this to mean that he had been born in Ireland, Brown was in fact a Yorkshire man who had seen service in Ireland. Although neither Golding, Stow or Holinshed mention Brown's Irish service, importantly for the way that the play constructs London, this piece of information seems to have survived into the drama's representation of events. Fear of the contaminating effect of Ireland's spaces was pervasive in sixteenth-century England, where, as Stephen O'Neill puts it, there was a 'belief that Irish space had the capacity to transform radically those who entered it', and of moral degeneration in Englishmen who spend time in Ireland; freed from the strict code of urban behaviour there was a fear that the liberty and freedom outside the pale would lead to degeneracy

---

[75] Rowland, Thomas Heywood's Theatre, p.24.
[76] Howard, *Theater of a City,* pp. 39-41.
[77] Quoted in Nelson, *Monstrous Adversary,* p.89. Nelson transcribes various Privy Council records relating to the case pp. 89-92.

and licentiousness.[78] This thinking depended on a division between those who were inside the city, and those who were outside of it, 'beyond the pale.' Following the Induction, which has divided the spectators into those for whom London is 'native and your owne', and by implication, those for whom it is not, the play's action commences with George and Anne Sanders, their neighbour, Anne Drewry and her servant 'Trusty' Roger, saying good-bye to Captain Browne at the end of a convivial meal. Immediately attention is drawn to both Browne's status as a newcomer to London and to his having been in Ireland. Sanders thanks him for his 'good discourse of Ireland/ wheras it seems you have been resident' (sig.A3ᵛ;105- 106), going on to further remark that 't'is great pittie the inhabitants/will not be civill, nor live under law'(sig.A3ᵛ;115-16).[79] Browne pointedly replies, 'As civill in the English pale as here/ and laws obeide, and orders duly kept'(sig.A3ᵛ ;117-18). By locating himself within the pale, Browne asserts his position on the side of the civil, lawful and obedient, but as the play proceeds and his adulterous and murderous plot is revealed, we see that he is actually none of these things.

Mary Faugh, a bawd who appears in John Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* (1604) distinguishes between London's citizens and the unreliable 'Ireland captains':

> Who helped thee to thy custom, not of swaggering Ireland captains, nor of two-shilling Inns O'Court men, but with honest flat-caps, wealthy flat-caps, that pay for their pleasure best of any men in Europe, nay which is more, in London? (sig.C2ᵛ;2.2.29-35)[80]

The 'honest flat caps, wealthy flat-caps' are the artisans and citizens of the City and despite the derogatory nickname (the rebel Spicing calls the Mayor and Citizens of London 'flatcaps' in *Edward IV* (sig.A8v;1.5.26), Faugh considers them to be both wealthier and more trustworthy than either Irish captains or young men from the Inns of Court. Like Faugh's remark, the discussion between Sanders and Browne that opens *A Warning* sets up an opposition between Browne, the 'swaggering Ireland captain',

---

[78] Stephen O'Neill, Staging Ireland: Representations in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), p.83.

[79] Given the continued turmoil in Ireland during the sixteenth century, this remark could refer to events at any time between 1573, when the action of the play is set, and the date it was printed in 1599, although it is most likely to reflect events in the 1590s, often referred to as 'the crisis decade' in Irish history, when Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone led the war against the English settlors which began in 1595. Stephen O'Neill, *Staging Ireland,* p.14.and John McGurk, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The 1590s Crisis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[80] John Marston, *The Dutch courtezan* (1605) STC 17475; *The Dutch Courtesan* ed. by David Crane (Lonodn: A&C Black, 1997).

degenerated by his time in Dublin, against George Sanders, 'native' of London, a city that is figured in the play as a space of order and good government.

Browne claims that he is well known 'unto the better sort' (sig. A3^v;110) in both Dublin and London and he offers, as proof of this, his attendance at 'as great feasts as this we had today' (sig. A3^v;112) where the Sanders appear to have met him for the first time. Where and why it has been held is not made explicit but the audience is probably intended to imagine a civic function like the dinner hosted by Mayor Crosby in *Edward IV*. The city feast is used in both *Edward IV* and *A Warning* as a sign of London's communal solidarity and abundant wealth, an alternate site of fraternity and influence outside of the court. It was at once convivial and highly organised, combining the formality of the civic undertakings of processions, collections and elections, and of Protestant worship, with the drinking and feasting. The meal that the Sanders and Browne have just attended may have been imagined as something like the annual dinner held each year by the churchwardens of St Botolph's, Aldgate and their wives after the Archdeacon's visitation. In 1593, 25 men and women met 'at the howse of Mr George Clarke, a vintner dwelling at the signe of the Kings Head withowt Aldgate' where they ate mainly fish (it was Lent), some pippin pies and drank claret, hypocras and sack, at a total cost of £2, 11 shillings and 9d.[81] Feasts like this were a collective practise that re-enforced the urban community and recollection of such civic and civil formalities may have contrasted in the audience's mind with widespread perceptions of Irish incivility.[82] By marking Browne as Irish, from the outset he is constructed not just as a stranger in London but as a threat, which is soon put into action. The juxtaposition at the very outset of *A Warning* between the city feast and Irish incivility marks out London as a place of lawfulness and order and its inhabitants, the Sanders, as 'civil' against the corrupted and corrupting Browne, an outsider who threatens to bring incivility and disorder into the London household.

After meeting the Sanders at the feast, Browne asks Anne Drewry to help him meet Anne again and the directions that she gives to him illustrate how knowledge of the city marks out the native from the stranger:

BROWNE: But where's her house?

---

[81] 9234/4 fol.134^v(12 March 1593).
[82] Anti-Irish sentiment is expressed in works such as John Derricke's *The Image of Irelande, with a discouerie of Woodkarne* (1581). STC 6734, which is vehemently anti-Irish and shows the attempt to subjugate the Irish under Sir Henry Sidney.The only surviving copy complete with its woodcuts is held at Edinburgh University and available on-line at *Masterpieces of the research collections of the University of Edinburgh* [www.docs.is.ed.ac.uk/docs/lib-archive/bgallery/Gallery/researchcoll/Ireland.html].

DREWRY: Against Saint Dunstones church.
BROWNE: Saint Dunstones in Fleete street?
DREWRY: No, neere Billinsgate, Sainte Dunstones in the East, that's in the West.'
(301-305)

St Dunstan's in the East was a prominent landmark in the city and the inability of
Browne to recognise its significance in negotiating the streets of the city marks him out
as a stranger.[83] Stow makes the same clarification as Anne Drewry; 'This church of St.
Dunstan is called, in the east, for difference from one other of the same name in the
west.'[84] Stow goes on to say that 'it hath a great parish of many rich merchants.' Fleet
Street, as an expert Londoner would know, was the place to find lawyers, or in
Browne's case, more probably gallants from the nearby Inns of Court, but not
merchants. The play distinguishes between those who are part of a shared, unifying
cultural knowledge, that is, those who know that a merchant's wife is much more likely
to live near the St Dunstone's at Billingsgate than the one at Fleet Street, from strangers
such as Browne.[85]

Mapping the routes taken by characters in *Edward IV* and *A Warning* on to
Norden's map of late-sixteenth century London creates a visual representation of how
many of the concerns explored by these plays coincide and overlap. The ways in which
descriptions of walking the streets of London become signifiers of communal belonging
is illustrated in Figure 4 below, which shows two routes through London discussed
below. It also draws attention to the extent to which the fiction of the stage drama
overlaps with the city of the audience outside the theatre; in these plays, for perhaps the
first time, the people of London could watch characters who talked of walking through
the same streets that they did. There may even be some meta-theatrical significance to
this route, passing as it does the sites of the Bell and Cross Keys Inns, where plays were
performed until 1594. Franco Moretti writes that mapping a literary work in its specific
space 'brings to life the internal logic of the narrative: the semiotic domain around
which a plot coalesces and self-organizes.'[86] *A Warning* and *Edward IV* are among the
first plays to dramatize specific London spaces, naming the streets, buildings, quays,

---

[83] 'St Dunstan in the East and St Lawrence Poutney were prominent in all the panoramas for their tall, possibly thirteenth century spires. It may have been intentional that these two churches which had the tallest spires, were on the crest of the ground as it rose above the river, and they would have been visible for miles from the south.' John Schofield, 'Medieval Parish Churches in the City of London: the archaeological evidence' in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, ed. by Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.35-55 (p.46).
[84] Stow, *A Survey*, p.129.
[85] The merchant Pisaro's house at Crutched Friars in *Englishmen for My Money* is only a few streets away from the Sanders' house.
[86] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London: Verso,1999), p.5.

city gates and districts known to their audience, to create a semiotic domain, a territory of signs, from London. We can see that Edward and George Sanders trace similar paths through London and this can help to understand how the dramas conceive of London as a space; George and Edward occupy the same physical place but as a space, 'a practiced place' it has very different meaning for each of them.
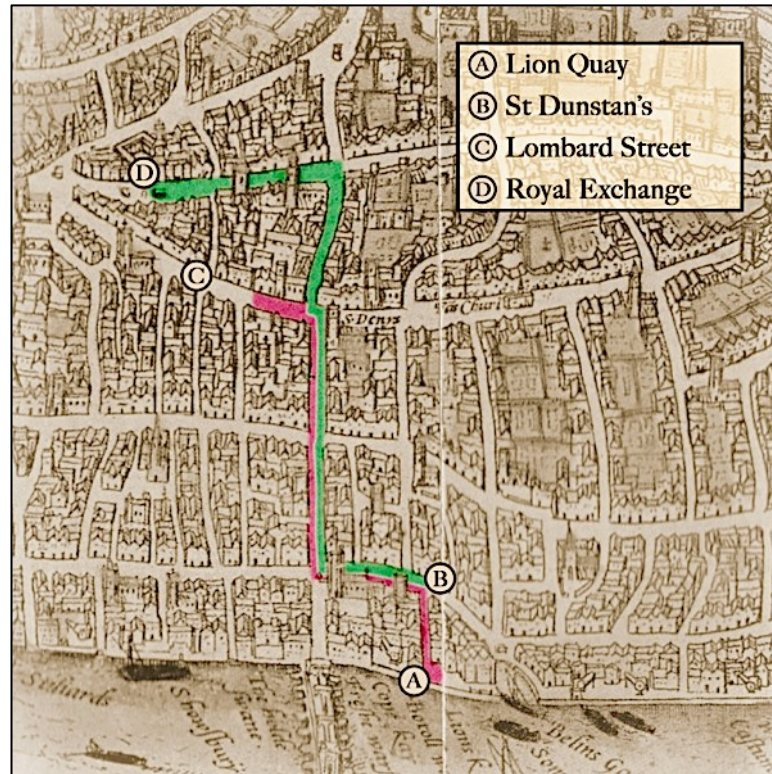

Figure 4: Detail of John Norden's map of London, showing walking routes described in *Edward IV* and *A Warning* © Oliver Elliot. [87]

The map shows routes taken by characters in *Edward IV* and *A Warning*. The Sanders' house is against St Dunstone's in the East, 'neere Tames Streete' (1694), and Lion Quay, which was the quay on the east side of London Bridge. Although the ironically named 'Trusty Roger' reports that he has 'had a jaunt/ Able to tyre a horse' (1115-6) trailing George Sanders around London for the day, the area that he has covered is actually rather small, as can be seen from the map:

> First know, That in the morning, til it was nine a clock,
> I watcht at Sanders doore until he came forth,
> Then followed him to Cornhill, where he staied
> An hower talking in a marchants warehouse,

---

[87] John Norden, *London, a guide for cuntrey men in the famous city of London* (1593). Detail taken from John Norden's 'Speculum Britainiae', re-issued in 1653, accessed on *The British Library On-Line Gallery*, [www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/a/007000000000001u00033000.html], accessed 1 October 2012.

from thence he went directly to the Burse,[88]
And there he walkt another hower at least,
And I sat at heeles. By this stroke eleven
Home then he comes to dinner, by the way
He chanced to meet a gentleman of the court [...]
I watcht at his doore til he had din'd,
Followed him to Lion key, saw him take a boate,
And in a pair of Oares, as soone as he
Landed at Greenwitch, where ever since,
I trac'd him too and fro [....]
(sig.E1^v;1120-1138)

George's route from St Dunstan's ('B'), where he lives, to Cornhill and the Royal Exchange ('D') is marked in green on the map and Lion Quay, from where he departs to Greenwich is marked 'A'.

In *Edward IV* the disguised king, seeking out Jane Shore, reports that he has arrived by river:

This shape is secret, and I hope ti's sure,
The Watermen that daily vse the Court,
And see me often, knew me not in this,
At Lyon key I landed in their view,
Yet none of them tooke knowledge of the King.
(sig.D6^r ;1.17.21-5)

His route, which begins where George's ended, at Lion Quay, follows that taken by George and Trusty Roger, from Lion Quay ('A'), up Grace-church Street to Lombard Street ('C') and is marked in pink on Figure 4. Edward's destination, the Shores' shop, is at the All Hallows end of Lombard Street, close to Cornhill and the Royal Exchange; 'Soft here must I turne,|heeres Lumbard Streete, and heres the Pellican'(D6^r ;1.17.27-8). Considering how Edward and George Sanders trace similar paths through London starts to reveal how the dramas conceive of London as a place.

George Sanders' walk is purposeful as he carries out his proper business as merchant and resident of London. The audience is invited to empathise with him as he continues his business entirely unaware that he is being followed and of the plot against him. The commercial sites of London are connected by Sanders' morning walk between the warehouses, the Royal Exchange and the quays on the river, and his day is made up

---

[88] The Bourse was renamed 'The Royal Exchange' in 1571, two years prior to events depicted in the play. Roger's use of the name at least twenty years out of date by the time the play was performed may be intended to suggest some historical accuracy, in that he uses the name current when the events in the play took place, actual current usage or simply to denote his lack of expertise in commercial matters.

of encounters with other men of business; the merchant whose warehouse he visits, the trading of news at the Exchange and the gentleman who he chances to meet on the way home to dinner.[89] Pierre Mayol describes how the act of walking in a neighbourhood progressively privatises it; the neighbourhood is 'an outgrowth of the abode', a series of trajectories from the private space of the home. He argues that, in the act of walking around a neighbourhood the pedestrian takes possession of it, as he recognises other people and they recognise him. As it creates a transition between the home and the city, the neighbourhood is thus 'the possibility offered everyone to inscribe in the city a multitude of trajectories whose hard core permanently remains the private sphere.'[90] Mayol's work is based on twentieth century cities but studies by Laura Gowing and Lena Orlin among others show that the notion of a distinct division between the private household and the public space outside of it was tenuous and negotiable in early modern London. [91] The presence of lodgers, servants and visitors within the house, and the informal nature of building practises meant that the transition that neighbourhood represents between home and city is more blurred than Mayol suggests. As Gowing notes, 'the lack of privacy in houses and the tenuous boundaries of city space made for particular experiences of neighbourhood relations' that were determined by these indistinct divisions between public and private realms.[92] Another important difference between twentieth century and early modern experiences of neighbourhood is gender, which Mayol does not discuss, although he repeatedly refers to the pedestrian as 'he'; for him 'multiple trajectories' through the city are available to 'everyone' in a way that they simply were not for early modern women, whose experience is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3. Nevertheless, Mayol's imagining of neighbourhood as a transitional space between home and city is helpful when thinking about male experiences of the city and how characters like George Sanders and Edward negotiate it on stage.

Sanders is an integral part of commercial London, and his open and sociable travel through London, is contrasted with Browne's inexpert negotiation of the city; the series of encounters about which we are told establishes that George Sanders is in his neighbourhood. The characters on stage describe journeys that negotiate the public

---

[89] Compare for eg to the Portuguese merchant Pisaro in *Englishmen for my Money* who Bartolovich argues is the personification of the economic forces that undermine the cultural unity of London. Bartolovich, 'London's the Thing'.

[90] Pierre Mayol, 'The Neighbourhood', p.11.

[91] See also Laura Gowing," 'The Freedom of the Streets'and *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power of seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)*;* Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994) and *Locating Privacy*.

[92] See Gowing 'The Freedom of the Streets' p.136.

spaces of the city, but where Sanders knows, and is known to, London, Edward creeps around in disguise, unrecognised, in what Matthew describes as 'slie walking' (sig.E4[v]; 1.20.45). Sanders, the merchant, is in his proper place and London, as a neighbourhood where he is known, affords him protection from the murderous Browne who stalks him. By contrast, there is a sense of disruptive and threatening intrusion when Matthew Shore recognises that Edward has visited his shop in disguise, 'When kings themselues so narrowly do prie|Into the world, men feare, and why not I?' (sig.E4[v];1.20.54-55) As individuals, Edward and Sanders are both men walking through the same place but the unease felt by Matthew Shore at Edward's visits expresses the conflict that arises when a king 'comes muffled like a common Seruingman' (sig.E4[v]; 1.20.34).[93] Captain Browne and the King are intruders, and London is not their neighbourhood. To be 'at home' in the city is to trace those trajectories between private and public space that make the public space a private one.

One of the 'semiotic domains' of these plays is suggested by the work of Lawrence Manley, who has shown the significance of the route up Gracechurch Street taken by George Sanders and King Edward, as the way in which monarchs traditionally entered London in order to join the main ceremonial processional route through the city.[94] Manley argues that these processions acknowledged and re-enforced a mutual dependence between monarch and city, and confirmed the mutual symbiosis of London and the Crown, a belief which, as *Edward IV* in particular shows, was contingent and subject to continual reassessment. In a play that exposes the relationship between monarch and city to be exploitative more often than it is mutually supportive, Edward's arriving in disguise at Lion Quay is significant because he has abandoned the ceremonial entrance required to maintain the proper relationship between monarch and city. His choice of route is symbolic of the breach he is about to make in the mutually supportive relationship between London and the king. De Certeau sees the ways that people walk the streets of cities, using tactics for negotiating them that are unplanned by city authorities and corporate bodies, as a form of welcome subversion; 'these procedures and ruses of consumers [of space] compose the network of an anti-discipline.'[95] The monarch's ceremonial route through the city is, in de Certeau's terms, a strategic use of the urban environment but Edward's journey through the

---

[93] Kevin Quarmby refers to Edward as 'sinister' and writes of the 'discomforting sense of social paranoia within the play' generated by his disguised visits to both the city and the countryside. Quarmby, Disguised Ruler, pp.42-45.

[94] Other than for coronation processions which started at the Tower. Lawrence Manley, *Literature and Culture*, pp. 223-235.

[95] Michel de Certeau, *Everyday Living*, pp. xiv- xv.

neighbourhood represents an inappropriate appropriation of the space of London, which for him, as the representative of an institution of power, should remain public, 'un-private' and therefore unknown. Of the two, only George Sanders, resident of London, where he is known and repeatedly greeted, has the right to treat the city as his neighbourhood.

Howard writes that the popularity of the commercial theatre arose in part 'because of the work it unconsciously but robustly and imaginatively performed in accommodating Londoners of all stripes to the somewhat bewildering world in which they were living.'[96] Far from being a bewildered presence in London's streets, Sanders is shown as embedded in its structures of community and sociability, a 'dayly guest' of a family he calls 'true friends' and who call him 'sweet master Sanders' (sig.D2[r];871-6). Sanders refuses the offer of a light home, because 'the streetes are ful of people' (sig.D2[v];892); in this play, the populous streets of London are not bewildering or threatening but are instead protective of its inhabitants. Browne's murderous plan is frustrated when Sanders meets another friend who insists on lighting his way home; 'A plague upon't, a light and companie,|Even as I was about to do the deede' (sig.D3[r]; 930-31) Browne complains. While the streets of London might harbour dangerous strangers like Browne, the threat is disarmed by Sander's network of friends and acquaintances, fellow merchants who know him and his home. The streets in which King Edward and George Browne creep as unknown strangers are sociable places for George Sanders, who is eventually murdered, not in London, but when he travels to Kent and Browne ambushes him on Shooter's Hill.

Like George Sanders, Matthew Shore is shown as embedded in a network of commercial and social links within London. As a member of the Goldsmiths' Company, Shore is a member of a highly skilled and regulated craft, and is placed within a structure of control and supervision that was seen as emblematic of the civil governance of London.[97] One of Matthew's fears is that the King may falsely accuse him of breaking the tight strictures of the goldsmiths' statutes by selling 'false compound metals, or light gold' (fol.E4[v];1.20.52-53), crimes which could result in a death sentence. The Shores are integrated into the social and economic network of the city and Matthew is shown to be a well-known and respected figure in the city and crucial to its defence. Cuckolded by the king, the imagery that Matthew uses to describe himself

---

[96] Howard, *Theater of a City,* p.14.
[97] Paul Griffiths, 'Politics made visible: order, residence and uniformity in Cheapside, 1600- 45', in *Londinopolis,* pp.176-196.

indicates not just shame but desolation and isolation; 'Where shall I hide my head, or stop mine ears, but like an owl I shall be wondered at' (sig.E6ᵛ;1.22.11-12).[98] The mobbed owl is an object of shameful attention but also symbolises exposure to the retribution of communal justice. The tragic consequences for Matthew of the king's appropriation of Jane are not just personal but social and economic; as a cuckold he is excluded from the structures of the city into which he had once been integral. When he re-enters London in Part II, he disguises himself as 'Matthew Flood', and, in the absence of a legitimising identity, only narrowly misses being hung as a pirate.[99] Unlike Edward however, Matthew's disguise allows him to act for the good, as he tries to save Edward's young sons in the Tower and to relieve Jane's suffering.

Descriptions of the navigation of specific London places in *A Warning* and *Edward IV* demonstrate the ways in which these plays, which are among the earliest to present London in this way to playgoers, conceive of the places of the city and the ways in which it may include spaces of which there are right and wrong ways to navigate. Walkers like George Sanders create and strengthen neighbourhood through their legitimate use of the city's streets in which bonds of friendship and business are created and strengthened. Illicit walkers, like Browne and Edward, contrastingly undermine and threaten the community to which they are outsiders. While London is home for Sanders and Shore, the inexpert and transgressive negotiation of the city's streets by Edward and Browne signify that they are strangers and also threats to that community.

---

[98] The mobbed owl is a solitary and misplaced creature, rejected by the other birds for intruding into daylight visibility. The owl has a long association with sin and shame in both the Christian and Classical traditions. Ovid explains that this was because Nyctimene was metamorphosed into an owl because she 'violated her father's bed': 'She is a bird now, it is true, but her guilty conscience makes her flee the sight of men and the light of day. She hides her shame in darkness, and is driven off by all the birds, fro every quarter of the sky.' *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (London: Penguin, 1955), p.66. The owl is numbered among the unclean birds in Leviticus 11:16-17. In medieval iconography, the hostility of other birds towards the owl 'symbolizes the stern rebuke of virtuous people directed to those who openly indulge in sinful acts', and is also associated with anti-Semitism. Mariko Miyazaki, 'Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism', in *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life and Literature* ed. by Debra Hessig (New York: Garland, 2000), p.35. See also Alexandra Cuffel, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2007). Rowland also discusses the significance of owls at *Edward IV* p.191, n.12. Golding uses the same imagery when he cautions his readers against voyeuristic enjoyment of his cautionary tale; he has written it, he says 'not to the intent that men shoud gaze and wonder at the persons, as byrdes do at an Owle', *A briefe discourse,* sig. Ciiiᵛ.

[99] See Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre,* pp.59-63 for the particular significance of this choice of pseudonym, which resonates with a notorious contemporary legal case about the status of marriage, which was associated with St Katherine's, the Liberty adjacent to St Botolph's.

3. **Women and the Spaces of the City**

A Warning and *Edward IV* suggest that early modern London was crossed by paths, the meanings of which were defined by the status of the walker. In these plays, walking is shown to be a male activity and London as a place from which men may fashion, or threaten, community in the act of walking. In contrast, for women like Jane Shore and Anne Sanders the experience of public space is shown to be both constrained and risky. The London experienced by Anne Sanders and Jane Shore differs markedly from that enjoyed by their husbands; for them its streets are places of danger that they are expected to negotiate with care. Towards the end of *A Warning,* the condemned Anne Sanders gives to each of her children a book of the Marian martyr John Bradford's holy meditations, and tells them, 'therein you shal be richer than with gold/ safer than in faire buildings' (sig. K3^r; 2705-6).[100] Among Bradford's meditations for daily use is: 'When you goe foorth of the doers praye: Nowe must I walke among the snares of deathe, stretched out of Sathan and of hys myschevous mynysters in the worlde.'[101] In a play that is concerned with the use of city spaces by both men and women, *A Warning* dramatizes Bradford's mistrust of the world outside the home, as a worldly and sinful place where Satan lays traps for the undefended, especially if they are female.

The proposal that early modern 'domestic tragedies' reflect the teaching of Protestant conduct books, in which the household is modelled as a microcosm of the state, with the head of the household functioning as the authority over the family as a king is authority within his realm, is well rehearsed.[102] In this model, seduction of the wife represents an invasion of the household and her infidelity stands for treason. Daughters and married women are the property of their husbands or fathers, so that what is at issue in a woman's sexual transgression are the property rights of her husband or father. Consequently, the boundaries of households require policing and maintenance like the borders of a country, and the streets outside the household represent uncontrolled spaces which cause deep unease. While this reading often seems to be reflected in the way that society is presented on the early modern stage, historians have

---

[100] This detail is apparently taken from Golding's *A briefe discourse.* Jane Shore is also given a book of meditations in her exile 'wherin is food, manna of heaven, to refresh thy soul […] The sovereign balm for my sick conscience' (2.20.73, 81).

[101] Several books of Bradford's meditations had been published by 1573 but which one Anne bequeathed to her children is not recorded. This text is taken from John Bradford, *A godlye medytacyon* (1559) STC 3483, sig.b7^r.

[102] For a recent summary of this reading, see for example Catherine Richardson, 'Tragedy, family and household' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy* ed. by Emma Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

also noted that, as we might expect, real life was more nuanced than the impression given by the ideologically constructed guides to conduct.[103] As Pamela Allen Brown points out, if all sixteenth-century women obeyed the moralists' injunction to stay indoors away from sin, they would not have been able to fulfil their domestic duties of doing the laundry, going to market, fetching water and taking bread to the bakers.[104] Addressing this contradiction in her study based on the deposition books of the London consistory court, Eleanor Hubbard argues that the main priority for both men and women in early modern London was economic stability and that sexual transgression was seen as a problem usually only when it had economic consequences for the rest of the community. It has, she states, 'become increasingly clear that histories of gender that distinguish baldly between male privilege and female disability fail to capture the subtleties of early modern social interaction.'[105] Nevertheless, despite the care that this suggests is required when considering binary oppositions such as indoors/female/domestic and outdoors/male/public, the paradigm of the virtuous woman as one who was indoors and occupied with domestic labour was a powerful one. The story of Lucretia presents her as desirable because she is virtuous, and her virtue is demonstrated by her presence in the home, participating in the labour of the household.

When *A Warning,* in an early scene sets Anne Sanders on her door-step, waiting for her husband to return from his day's business, it gives us a clue that Anne's virtue may be problematic. It is suggested that Anne Sanders is regularly found on her doorstep; her conspiring neighbour Anne Drewry tells Browne to 'watch her when her husband goes to the Exchange/ Shee'l sit at doore' (sig. B2^r; 292-3). De Certeau writes that 'there is no spatiality that is not organized by the determination of frontiers'; like Bradford he sees a clear distinction, a frontier, between 'inside' and 'outside', 'faire buildings' and 'the snares of death.'[106] In their function as places to cross the frontiers between the home and the street and, as such, crucial to the experience of urban space, the use of doorsteps, windows and other thresholds in early modern drama has received particular attention. Discussing the relationship between women and domestic spaces, Peter Stallybrass describes the threshold in Jacobean revenge tragedy as emblematic of 'the symbolic burden that women are forced to bear (as well as the semiotic power with

---

[103] Gowing, *Common Bodies*; Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Hubbard, *City Women*; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Boydell & Brewer, 2007).
[104] Pamela Allen Brown, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2003), p.60.
[105] Hubbard, *City Women,* pp.4-5.
[106] De Certeau, *Everyday Living*, p.123.

which they are invested) when they are conceptualized as mapping both an ideal enclosure and its impossibility.'[107] Where Bradford and de Certeau envisage a domestic space surrounded by solid 'frontiers' that clearly distinguish inside from outside, Laura Gowing, in her studies of early modern legal cases, has shown that in densely populated London, a household's boundaries were not absolute and were often provisional.[108] The early modern urban house was accessible to an extended family, apprentices, servants, customers, and lodgers, and several households may have shared areas such as stairways, yards and kitchens. The boundaries of a house and its relation with its neighbours was also tenuous; sound carried through thin walls and windows without glass, building practices were informal and unplanned, wooden houses could be easily altered, windows and doors added, walls built, properties and rooms subdivided, sometimes only with a blanket. The domestic space allocated to women was not private or solitary but communal and social. Rather than being confined within the walls of the home, female presence was permissible, and even required, in specific outdoor spaces like courtyards and doorsteps, in which a woman's own neighbours could monitor and control her behaviour; Gowing argues that a woman's sense of her own space was centred on a fairly circumscribed area of her home and its immediate environs, places where she was known. A doorstep like Anne's therefore constituted a symbolic threshold and dividing line between the household and the rest of the world but it was permeable barrier and it was also a communal space where women gathered to work in the good light, and talk and also to watch over their neighbours.

The scene located at the Sanders' doorstep opens with the stage direction, '*Enter Anne Sanders with her little sonne, and sit at her doore*' (sig.B2^v ;321). Where the presence of George Sanders in the streets of London constitutes community, the presence of Anne on her doorstep, although socially authorised, is much more problematic, involving as it does a tension between her public availability to scrutiny and suspicious privacy; modesty and visibility. Lena Orlin describes Elizabethan public policy as 'schizophrenic' in its desire to promote regulation through the private household but also to invade that privacy through communal surveillance; 'the state relied on the private household and also distrusted its internal activities; it authorized

---

[107] Peter Stallybrass, 'Reading the Body and the Jacobean Theatre of Consumption: The revengers Tragedy (1606)' in *Staging the Renaissance* ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (Abingdon:Routledge, 1991), p.218. See also Mukherji, who writes of Anne's doorstep, 'this liminal space is eloquent of how adultery was perceived and experienced: as a rupture of a personal, intimate stability, which involved, at the same time, a violation of ownership and usurpation of property.' *Law and representation,* pp.95-97.
[108] Gowing, 'The Freedom of the Streets' and *Common Bodies.* See also Orlin, *Locating Privacy.*

the householder and also deployed the larger community to monitor his domestic conduct.'[109] Privacy, even if it could be achieved, rather than being a desirable state, implied something sinister and hidden; 'to many, in fact, privacy seemed a menace to public well-being. It threatened to deprive people of knowledge to which they thought they were entitled and about which they felt a sense of social responsibility.'[110] Gowing describes how the threshold space between the domestic interior and the street became a place where a woman's reputation was monitored and controlled. Anne is described by her friend and neighbour Anne Drewry as a woman who is 'very honest', 'verie circumspect, verie respective of her honest name' (sig.B1^v;256,273-4) but that 'when her husband goes to the Exchange, Shee'l sit at doore' (sig.B2^r;292-3). Drewry is clearly carrying out the function of the supervisory neighbour and is able to report on Anne's regular behaviour. This communal monitoring of what people, and especially women, were up to could take place only in the company of others and so solitariness was regarded as suspect.[111] Paradoxically, the communal oversight to which women were expected to make themselves available, could be problematic when it also presented women to the objectifying gaze of men and *A Warning* demonstrates these tensions when it places Anne Sanders on her doorstep.

Anne's encounter with Browne shows how carefully she must negotiate her presence on her doorstep and the underlying problem seems to be that she is there unattended. As Browne's first remark to Anne makes clear, while she sits at her door she can attract the attention of anyone who happens to pass by, particularly because she is not protected by any companion: 'God save ye mistris Sanders, al alone?/Sit ye to take the view of passengers?'(sig.B3^r; 354-55). Not only is she subject to the male gaze, but her gaze might also be directed outwards, and it is unclear whether by 'take the view' Browne means that Anne is an active looker, a taker-in of the view, or one who takes/receives the view of passers-by. Anne is 'al alone' having sent her son inside and the absence of the supervising presence of neighbours or family draws Browne's comment, and also his faint suggestion that she is doing something wrong. In response she both denies the outward gaze and asserts her status as a dutiful wife; 'No in good sooth sir, I give smal regard/ Who comes, or goes, my husband I attend/ whose coming wil be speedie from th'Exchange.'(sig.B3^r; 356-58). Browne feels that he can comment on the solitary appearance of a female acquaintance, and in response, Anne seems

---

[109] Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture*.

[110] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p.192.

[111] Mary Trull, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013).

compelled to justify her presence on her doorstep. When George does return shortly after Browne has left he also comments on her solitary presence on the doorstep 'How now sweet *Nan,* sitst thou here all alone?' (sig.B3ᵛ; 401). Again, their conversation suggests that to be alone on the doorstep is to invite unwanted attention, as Anne acknowledges:

> ANNE: Better alone than have bad company.
> SAND.: I trust there's none but good resorts to thee.
> ANNE: There shall not sir, if I know what they bee.
> [sig.B3ᵛ; 402-04]

Anne challenges Browne for standing at the door of another man's household without a legitimate reason and refuses to stay and talk to an unsolicited male visitor but her confidence that she can distinguish good company from bad is shown by subsequent events to be misplaced, which is the 'warning' in *A Warning.*

Anne's culpability in attracting male attention is both suggested and denied; sitting on her door-step she has made herself available to 'take the view of passing strangers' and specifically the gaze of Browne and yet she is also able to repel that gaze because she is demure, modest and virtuous. He resorts to the trope of the virtuous woman as a city under siege, repelling Cupid's arrows: 'But so demure, so modest are her lookes,/ so chaste her eies, so vertuous her aspect,/as do repulse loves false Artilerie' (sig.B2ᵛ; 346-8). Once Browne has departed from her doorstep, Anne makes it clear that she regards his approach to her as an intrusion and a nuisance. She grumbles:

> These arrand-making Gallants are good men,
> that cannot passe and see a woman sit
> of any sort, alone at any doore,
> But they will find a scuse to stand and prate,
> Fooles that they are to bite at every baite.
> (sig. B3ᵛ; 394-399)

Apparently Anne has experienced this kind of encounter before but even though she regards the gallants as fools and praters, in her last remark she acknowledges the risk that an unattended female may be assumed to be acting as 'bait' in the hope of catching male attention. Browne's subsequent report to Anne Drewry about his encounter with Anne Sanders illustrates the moral supervision afforded by neighbourhood surveillance. He has not been able to advance his planned seduction of her because 'neither time/ nor place consorted to my minde: beside/ recourse of servants and of passengers/ might have been jealous of our conference'(sig. B4ᵛ;494-497). In *A Warning* urban spaces,

how they may used and by whom are shown to be problematic. Anne's morality is opened to question by her use of space, as play-goers are invited to participate in communal judgement about Anne's solitary presence in the semi-public space between her house and the street.

Anne is a stationary character who, other than her doorstep scene, is usually seen in interior spaces: her home, the court and prison. Jane Shore by contrast, especially after becoming Edward's mistress, is mobile and her moral transgression is reflected in her negotiation of London's spaces unsupervised. Matthew Shore is acutely aware of the distinction between right and wrong ways of women walking. Observing Jane 'deckt in her courtly robes [as] King Edwards concubine' (sig.E6^v;1.20.20-24) he says:

> When she with me was wont to walk the streets,
> The people then as she did passe along,
> would say, there goes faire modest mistris Shoare.
> (sig.E6^v ;1.22.13-15)

Walking in public, modestly and with her husband was entirely acceptable, and Jane was held up by citizens as an exemplar 'when they would speake of ought vnto their wiues' (sig.E6^v;1.22.18). In this scene, Matthew recalls the 'right' way of female walking, and contrasts it with Jane's freedom as she moves about the city 'attended by many suitors' and is seen 'conferring priuatly' with them, and 'looking on their bils' (sig.E6^v;1.22.SD) Her agency is indicated by her decisions to accept or reject petitions, which she does without gifts or bribes in an attempt to 'redeem my ill'(sig.E6^v;1.22.36). In Part 2 she rushes with a royal pardon to the prison where the disguised Matthew and his companions are about to be hanged, and her freedom of movement suggests the underlying impropriety of her influence over the king. Her liberty to move about the city suggest sexual liberty and her indeterminate status as neither 'widow, maid nor wife' (sig.E7^v;1.22.85) does not fit the parameters available to a respectable woman, causing deep discomfort for Matthew.

This freedom of movement is brought under control by the symbolic walk of 'open penance' through London that Jane is made to undertake following Edward's death. The many ceremonial processions through London included the Mayor's Show, the entrances of kings, the funerals of important people like Sir Philip Sidney, perambulating the bounds on Rogation days and livery company processions to church and dinner.[112] For the men who participated in them, and for the people who watched

---

[112] Henry Machyn's 'diary' for example is largely made up of descriptions of these various kinds of processions, and especially funerals. *The Diary of Henry Machyn Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London*

them, these many types of formal walking were progresses of honour, embodying the communality of London. Processions could also enforce the shameful exposure to the public gaze that Matthew Shore fears, for example when condemned men were taken to the site of their execution. For London's women, who could not participate in the patriarchal and male-dominated institutions of early modern London, public exposure could be used as an act of shaming punishment.[113] More describes Mistress Shore as 'going before the crosse in procession upon a sundaie with a taper in hir hand [...] out of all araie, save hir kirtle onelie' and the play follows this account closely.[114] The apparitors (officers of the ecclesiastical court) who appear in *Edward IV* tell Jane that:

> This day it is commanded by the King,
> You must be stript out of your rich attire,
> And in a white sheete go from Temple barre
> Untill you come to Algate, bare footed,
> Your haire about your eares, and in your hand,
> A burning taper.'
> (sig. K4[r]; 2.18.192- 197).

The appearance of man or a woman in public dressed only in a white sheet was a symbolic act of penitence, particularly for sexual misconduct.[115]Although public penance performed in the market place, or, like Jane, walking through the streets, was a declining practice by the end of the 1570s, both men and women could be required to do penance in their parish church, dressed in a white sheet, through to the seventeenth century. In 1583 Jost Williamson, a Dutch man dwelling in Whitechapel, 'ded pennance in a whyghet sheete' in St Botolph's church 'and was For contracktinge him selfe unto one womann, and marryenge w[t] an other contrarye to the Law cannonicall.'[116] Performances like this created a theatre of penance in the church; shame and remorse were displayed and the community's power to impose moral conformity was demonstrated.[117] Of all of the characters in *Edward IV*, Jane is the only one whose journey takes in the whole ceremonial route west to east through London, including what Manley describes as the 'central civic axis' between St Paul's and St Peter's,

---

(1550-1563), ed. by John Gough Nichols (London:Camden Society, 1848), available on-line at British History Online <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/camden-record-soc/vol42>. See also Gordon, *Writing Early Modern London.*
[113] Capp, *When Gossips Meet,* Brown, *Better A Shrew.*
[114] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.724.
[115] Dave Postles 'Penance and the Marketplace', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2003), 441-468.
[116] 9234/1/2 fol.16[r] (26 January 1583/4).
[117] Postles, 'Penance', p.442.

which was at the junction of Cornhill and Gracechurch Street.[118] In appropriating this processional route, the public and ceremonial purpose of the penance is under-lined.

Although it is intended by Richard to humiliate and belittle her, Jane embraces the opportunity to demonstrate her penitence and accepts the reforming intention of the ceremony: 'my robe of shame but not my shame, put off' (K6^r; 2.20.9). Jane's acceptance of her penance invokes Mary Magdalene 'the prototype of the penitent whore'.[119] Marina Warner argues that the cult of the Magdalene and other harlot saints was intensified when Catholic doctrines of penance and the forgiveness of sins were challenged by the Reformation, and the play responds to this particularly Catholic association by giving Jane's penance a Protestant inflection. Rather than seeking intercession through a priest or saint, she says rather that she will study her prayer book which will be 'my soul's pleasure and delight/ To wipe my sins out of Jehovah's sight' (K7^r; 2.20.82-83). Jane's long monologue of repentance is addressed to a personified London 'Farewell to thee where I was first enticed/ that scandalized thy dignity with shame'(K6^r; 2.20.24-5). London, rather than the king, assigns blame, punishes and exacts revenge, as in a blazon of punishment of her body, Jane reaches her 'quick nimble feet, that were so ready to step into a king's forbidden bed':

> London, thy flints have punished for their pride
> And thou hast drunk their blood for thy revenge
> (K6$^{r\,-v}$; 2.20.32-3)

Walking London's streets barefoot, is for Jane a repentant mortifying of her flesh, inflicted in a final symbolic use of those streets by the play, as with dramatic irony, she is expelled from London at Aldgate, where her husband and the other citizens had fought to defend the city against the threats of the rebel Falconbridge.[120]

Jane's expulsion removes her 'sin' from the civil order of the city to the disordered space outside, a place for rebels and concubines and ironically, to the very place that her story was probably first performed. In the play, the space outside Aldgate is not the productive and recreational space nostalgically recalled by Stow, or the built up urban area it had become by the 1590s. 'You shall be then thrust forth the Citie gates,| Into the naked, cold forsaken field' reports Brackenbury (K3^r; 2.18.104-5). Steven Mullaney argues that marginal spectacle such as the performance of execution and expulsion helped to define the threshold of the city, and that in such liminal

---

[118] Manley p.237.

[119] Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage House, 1983), pp.224-235 (p.232).

[120] Spicing talks of 'the hacks this sword has made/Upon the flints and iron bars at Aldgate.' (1.10.36-7)

performances by marginalised people 'the horizon of community was made visible.'[121] In *Edward IV* the space outside the gate at Aldgate is imagined as an empty and desolate wasteland, 'barren fields', 'lack of meat, 'lack of friends,' Jane comments (K6^v ; 2.20.36-37). Here the play accentuates the sense of London as an enclosed and protective space contrasted with the friendless bleakness that surround it. The association between Jane, as a sexually transgressive woman, and the Magdalene is inescapable, and through it, the area without Aldgate, where the city's men have earlier displayed their military valour, becomes a version of the wilderness in which the Magdalene was reputed to have wandered after Christ's death. Jane can even be seen as a Christ-like figure whose penitential walk and expulsion to a bleak field outside of the city echoes the stations of the cross, with London as Jerusalem and her final destination Golgotha-like in its desolation outside the city walls. If all sin is expelled from the city then what remains within, the play seems to imply, is virtue. The wilderness and wasteland that O'Neill argues was associated with Ireland is found here, right against London's walls. In expelling Jane from the city, a symbolic break is made between London and her, and the tragic conclusion of the play for Jane, like Anne Sanders, is permanent exclusion from community, through death.

And yet, even as it shows the miserable deaths of Matthew and Jane, and repeats the legend that that the location is named 'Shores' Ditch, as in memory of them' (L7^r; 2.23.74) *Edward IV* shows the possibility of resistance by the city to the monarch. In attempting to exclude Jane from the community, Richard succeeds only in re-affirming community around her, as the people that she has helped in the past intervene, at considerable risk to themselves, to help her. The play, written to be performed in the extramural theatres and for the people who lived in parishes like St Botolph's, continues to associate the Shores' story with locations around Aldgate as it is reported that the couple have been buried together at 'the Friars Minories'. Despite More's account of having met Mistress Shore in her old age, and Stow's impatient historian's objection that 'Soerditch so called more then 400 yeares since, as I can prove by record', the pathetic deaths of the young and beautiful Jane and Matthew in the ditch make a much more satisfactory dramatic conclusion than Jane's fading into a wrinkled and penurious old age.[122] Far from being marginalised by Richard's punishment, Jane and Matthew

---

[121] Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage*: *License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*, revised edn (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).
[122] Stow, quoted in Rowland, *Edward IV*, p.310.

remain part of its community and are integrated into its geographical memory through the story of Shore's Ditch.

4. **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that the ways in which *Edward IV* and *A Warning* construct London is sophisticated and nuanced. The places of London are interwoven in each of these plays with stories from the city's history, which are confidently claimed to be tragedy. Versions of stories, not only those of the Shores and the Sanders, but also classical references, such as those to Lucretia and allusions to Mary Magdalene and Christ, are adapted in them so that London's play-goers are positioned as sophisticated viewers of drama, who are discriminating and judicial in their assessment of genre, character and allusion. Repeatedly, they are asked by these plays to assess what 'virtue' is in the city, for men and especially for women. By placing the action in the streets of the city with which play-goers were familiar, viewers were invited to align themselves with the characters, who offer models of citizen virtue, while at the same time they were shown how the use of those streets was gendered. In these plays, London is experienced as a space of community, which is at once both integrative and self-protective.

Such readings of the city echo those found in the petitions, which presented individual and collective stories to charitable donors who were asked to exercise discerning judgement as to the truth and deserving of petitioners. As I have shown in Chapter One, the parishioners of St Botolph's often gave more generously to their fellow Londoners, either from a sense of neighbourly obligation, or perhaps because they found their stories more likely to be true. Petitions and plays worked alongside each other, through the stories that they told, to create a sense of the city as a community. The next chapter will move from these places of London where the 'real' and the imaginary overlap, to London spaces which are entirely fictional, and yet paradoxically, in some ways more 'real'; the shop, the tavern and the ordinary.

Chapter Three

Spaces of Commerce in the City

Spaces of Commerce in the City

I can assure you many narrow eyes have looked on her and her condition.
(*The Fair Maid of the West* (1604), sig.F1[r])

you the said Alderman do requier the said p'son vicar minister Church Wardens
and others Joyninge with them, […] as they will answer the contrarie at their
perills that they within the space of .x. Dayes, next ensuinge, do make a trewe,
and Fformall certifficate in wrightinge, Subscrybed with all their hande', of the
names, surnames behavior and qualitie of everie suche evill affected p'son'
which vpon enie of their searches, they shall have Cawse to suspecte, and to
deliver the same vnto you.[1]

The previous chapter has shown that tragedy was a generic category through which
stories from London's historical past could be meaningfully reworked. Turning now to
comedy, a genre that concerns itself with the domestic and everyday, this chapter will
discuss the ways in which urban spaces: the shop, the tavern, the ordinary and the
garden, relate to concepts of credit, judgement, veracity and trust, especially in relation
to women. The discussion in the previous chapter focused on what might be described
as 'public' realm and versions of 'reality': the response of drama to historic events, the
use of the tragic genre, the ways in which London's streets were experienced by men
and women. We have also seen that the alms petitions heard at St Botolph's reveal some
of the ways in which community was constituted in the space of the church by
mechanisms of control and authority, mediated through charity and materialised in the
Memoranda. In order to suggest more fully the way London's spaces were both 'read'
and simultaneously layered with meaning which was often close to symbolic, this
chapter will focus on entirely imaginary places of commercial exchange in early
modern London, those that are located in the spaces that arise between the binaries of
interior/exterior, public/private and domestic/commercial and which are the setting for
comedy.

 The main sources used for this chapter are the first part of Thomas Heywood's
The Fair Maid of the West (1604) and George Chapman's *An Humerous dayes Myrth*
(1599), but it also refers to other relevant comedies, especially *The shomakers holiday*
(1599) and *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607) and *The Roaring Girl* (1611).
This section focuses on these comedies because they are also contemporaneous with the
St Botolph's Memoranda (although see below regarding uncertainty about the dating of
The Fair Maid) and because they offer particularly insights into the spaces with which
this study is concerned. Although entirely fictional, spaces created in these comedies,

---

[1] 9234/2/2 fol.6[v] (14 December 1591)

including Veronne's ordinary and Bess's tavern, represent for playgoers aspects of their own quotidian urban experience and this chapter will consider some of the effects that viewing these places on stage might have had. By presenting playgoers with situations and settings in which they could easily imagine themselves, they invite reflection on the way in which those spaces are experienced outside of the theatre. In doing so, they pose a problem for the playgoer, for many of whom the female characters of the city were not 'other', but were versions of their own wives, sisters and neighbours or even themselves. Among the questions that these plays ask, are how does a woman manage the contradictory demands placed upon her by her use of space and how does the way one uses space allow the playgoer to discriminate between a 'good' and a 'bad' woman? Which practices are selected for depiction in these plays and why are they regarded as significant in creating the spaces of London on stage?

Sir Philip Sidney draws attention to the relationship between comedy and life outside the theatre when he describes comedy as 'an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he representeth in the most ridiculous and scornefull sort that may be, so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one[…] nothing can more open his eyes than to finde his own actions contemptibly set forth.'[2] We might look to the 'City Comedies' for Sidney's bitter, 'ridiculous and scornful' mode of satire, but *The Fair Maid* and *An Humerous dayes Myrth* operate instead in a comic mode in which the imperative of the 'happy ending' directs the action towards the confirmation of community and the reintegration of its characters into the social body.[3] In place of satire, *The Fair Maid* offers a mode of comic excess and carnivalesque inversion, while *An Humerous dayes Myrth* explores character types in the more sophisticated style of the 'comedy of humours',which ends nonetheless with the King declaring 'now al are friends' after a day of tricks played not from malice but 'an hurtfull motiues of delight' (sig.H2[r];13.324-25).[4] The ridicule, scorn and contempt that Sidney identified as characteristic of comedy are largely, although not entirely, absent from these plays

---

[2] Sir Philip Sidney, *An apologie*, sig.F3[r].
[3] The ways in which such integration is achieved are used by Lawrence Manley to distinguish between the citizen comedies of the late Elizabethan period (eg *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Shoemaker's Holiday)* and the satirical Jacobean City Comedies, characterised by the predatory economic cycle that they depict, where each character is defined by their economic status and either preying on, or preyed upon by, the others. Transcending class conflict by pairing off citizens and gentry, romance in these 'citizen comedy' plays creates, Manley argues, 'the socially magical triumph of an inclusive national ethos over the demonic spectre of competition' using miraculous rises in status and fortune like that of Richard Eyre, to suppress or even erase the social differences that set the comedy in motion. Manley, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London,* p.440. On the 'predatory economic cycle' and City Comedies, see also Leonard Tennenhouse, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986) and Paster, *The Idea of the City.*
[4] I concur with Edelman's 'unhurtful' in place of 'an hurtfull' here.

which, in both cases, present a more gently humorous depiction of London which resolves into an integrative reaffirmation of community. While I do not argue that they are direct representations of life in sixteenth-century London, Sidney's 'imitation of the common errors of our life' is however one of the aspects of comedy with which they engage, and among the issues that they offer up for the playgoers' consideration are those arising from the use of urban space, female credit and commerce in early modern London.

Most critical work on *The Fair Maid* has focused on questions of gender, the identification of the leading character Bess with Elizabeth I, and national identity arising from the voyage that Bess leads to the Court of the 'Mullisheg' (Mulai Sheik) in Fez.[5] Although both *The Fair Maid* and *An Humorous Day's Mirth* are notionally set outside London, they are amongst the earliest plays to depict the commercial culture of the early modern city and in particular the contested ways in which women might use spaces. As the epigraph to this chapter suggests, an early modern woman was expected to be both available to communal surveillance and also removed from the male gaze. This chapter will now discuss some of the ways in which staging the spaces of the city; the tavern, the ordinary, the shop, and the garden, where the boundaries between private and public space were negotiated, allowed these plays to engage the audience in their presentation of the complex relationships that form community and neighbourhood, and the ways in which those relationships were inflected by gender.

1. **Female credit and 'public' houses** [6]

In its consideration of the ways in which working women are represented in these plays, this section will begin with a discussion of what working in a tavern or an ordinary might imply and particularly the ways in which a woman's social credit is assessed when her work and her domestic space cannot be physically or conceptually separated because they are located in the same place. In *The Fair Maid* and *An Humerous dayes Myrth* the 'public' houses of London, Bess's taverns and Verone's ordinary, are shown to be places where practises that support community control and authority, including

---

[5] See for example, Jean E. Howard, 'An English Lass Amid the Moors: Gender, race, sexuality, and national identity in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*', in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge, 1994), pp.101–17; Jowett, *Voyage Drama*. Rowland gives only passing attention to the play in *Thomas Heywood's Theatre*.
[6] The term 'public house' in its modern sense of an establishment that sells alcohol to the public, did not come into use until the mid-seventeenth century. Through the sixteenth century it could mean any building for communal use, including a church. A 'public house' could also mean a brothel from the mid-seventeenth century. 'public house, n.' *OED*.

supervision and gossip, are enacted, albeit it in ways that are sometimes comically unexpected. In these highly gendered and socially stratified spaces, female credit is both challenged and confirmed as deep unease arises from the presence of working women who threaten to disrupt accepted hierarchies of gender and status.

The Fair Maid is the story of Bess Bridges, who cannot marry her true love, Spencer, because he is a gentleman and she is the barmaid daughter of a 'trade-falne' tanner (sig.B2ʳ;1.2.18). The difference in status between Bess and Spencer is the central problem of the plot and the apparently irreconcilable status difference between them is eventually resolved by Bess's pragmatic ability to make money, which elevates her social standing to match Spencer's. The play's romantic elements include a love story, an exotic voyage and a swashbuckling, cross-dressing heroine, but these elements are all framed and enabled by Bess's status as a working woman and her ability to turn a profit. Where Manley identifies in 'citizen comedies' a 'socially magical triumph' which effaces commercial competition as it overcomes status differences within couples, in *The Fair Maid* we are explicitly shown at length where and how Bess makes money in her business; her commercial activities are not magically passed over but shown in action.[7] Mere wealth, however, is not enough to make Bess a gentlewoman; the drama establishes that Bess's status, or 'credit', both sexual and economic, as determined by the community in which she lives and works, is what makes her a worthy wife for Spencer. Bess's beauty and good sexual conduct which construct her identity as a 'Fair Maid', are only two of several factors determining her credit; her reliability, generosity, responsibility and diligence are also taken into account by the community that surrounds her. For early modern men and women creditworthiness was not simply a financial attribute and neither was it determined simply by wealth. Credit could be lost by both men and women through being disruptive to the community or weak in providing for and managing a household.[8] Women working in taverns and ordinaries, who carried out many of the domestic duties around food and drink that they might also perform in the home, faced particular difficulties in conforming to notions of female credit. A woman selling one form of domestic service, the provision of food and drink, might easily be accused of selling sexual services, and in a location where the

---

[7] For Manley, see note 3. Bess's ability to make money is prodigious but it does not require 'magical' external intervention, such as Simon Eyre's miraculously successful merchant venture in *The Shoemaker's Holiday.*

[8] For discussion of the many elements besides financial trustworthiness that constructed an early modern woman's credit, see Gowing, *Common Bodies*; Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet* and 'Separate domains? Women and Authority in Early Modern England' in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* ed. by Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (Basingstoke: Macmillan,1996) pp.117-145; Natasha Korda, *Labors Lost.*

distinction between her public, working environment and her private, domestic space was indeterminate, private sexual conduct and public commercial behaviour could be easily conflated. *The Fair Maid* shows Bess as overcoming the obstacles of conventional expectation to successfully access all the ways in which financial and social credit might be accumulated until she is able to match Spencer's status, and it shows the tavern to be the surprising space where this is done.

Although the most memorable parts of the play arise when Bess appears as a cross-dressing ship's captain, leading her crew to adventures in exotic places, until late in Act IV of *The Fair Maid,* she is seen most frequently in a tavern, first as a drawer at The Castle in Plymouth and then as mistress of The Windmill at Foy. The late sixteenth-century tavern was an upmarket establishment, enjoying a respectable, even fashionable reputation, and it was frequented by merchants, gentry and other affluent folk.[9] It was importantly, though not rigidly, distinguished from the alehouse by its premises, being larger, while the alehouse was often simply part of the keeper's home, perhaps a cellar or partitioned room. Since the work of brewing was regarded as an extension of women's domestic duties, alehouses were an important source of female employment, and women often brewed the ale and ran the alehouse. A tavern however sold wine, and so the skills required of its owner included the purchase of expensive stock, and negotiations with international traders that extended the commercial activity involved beyond the domestic. A poor man's daughter like Bess might have been expected to run an alehouse because they could be set up with very little capital by a woman using her routine domestic skills. Bess, however, is given her tavern, and as its owner and manager she takes on what would usually be a man's occupation.[10] The relatively high status of the tavern, and its closely associated establishment the ordinary, 'an inn, public house, tavern, etc., where meals are provided at a fixed price', is indicated by its more wealthy clientele and Bess's taverns are presented as fashionable and substantial establishments frequented by 'captains' and 'gentlemen'.[11] A similarly up-market establishment, Verone's ordinary in *An Humerous dayes Myrth* is frequented by gallants, Counts, Countesses, and with comic improbability, the King and Queen of

---

[9] Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1983); *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Beat Kümin and B. Ann Tlusty (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England,* ed. by Adam Smyth (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004); Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014).

[10] Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp.140-170. See also Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014)

[11] 'ordinary, n.', *OED*.

France. The wide variety of wines and other refreshments that Bess stocks suggest an establishment with a discerning and wealthy clientele; Clem the drawer has a well-rehearsed patter in which he offers his customers a choice of alcoholic drinks from all over Europe: claret, metheglin (spiced mead), muscadine, cider, perry 'to make you merry', aragosa (from Spain), peter-see-me (Pedro Ximines sherry), canary, charnico (from Portugal), malmsey and various French wines, all accompanied by puns and jokes (sig. F2ᵛ;3.3.82-95). Bess's tavern is called The Windmill, possibly in reference to a well-known inn of the same name in Old Jewry, which appears in several scenes of *Every man in his humor* and which is mentioned by Stow.[12] A room called the Mermaid (sig. C3ᵛ;2.2.51) in Bess's tavern may also allude to a well-known London tavern, The Mermaid, which was mentioned in a number of contemporary plays, and which along with The Mitre, is described by Michelle O'Callaghan as the centre of a 'new elite urban social world.'[13] Depicting these spaces on stage, O'Callaghan argues, allowed the audience 'to participate vicariously in an elite culture of fashion, conviviality and leisure put on display.'[14] Veronne's ordinary, where the city's gallants gather, is clearly part of this culture. By associating her tavern with these London establishments, where play and pleasure were combined with civility and public demonstrations of wit, Bess is aligned with an urban culture of elite male sociability beyond that of a simple West Country alehouse that her tavern's location first suggests.

As *The Fair Maid* and *An Humerous dayes Myrth* explore, for a working woman, the tavern was both a place where they were earned money and a domestic space, and the elision of the public and private spaces could be at once both protective and problematic. O'Callaghan describes the fashionable London tavern as a mainly male space, where bonds of male fraternity and sociability were established. In *An Humerous dayes Myrth* the gallants meet at Verone's ordinary to discuss tennis, tobacco, fashion and the latest gossip. When the jealous wife of Moren, a young gentleman asks him, 'tell me then what ladies will be there?' he and his friend Lemot try to reassure her that no 'ladies' will be present:

> MOREN: Ladies? why none.
> LEMOT: No ladies vse to come to ordinaries, Madam.
> (sig.D3ᵛ;7.234-35)

---

[12] Stow, *A Survey*, p.243.
[13] Michelle O'Callaghan,' Tavern Societies, the Inns of Court, and the Culture of Conviviality in Early Seventeenth-Century London' in Smyth, ed., *A Pleasing Sinne*, pp.37-51.
[14] O'Callaghan, 'Tavern Societies', p.40.

Lemot, who, as his name indicates, has a facility with words, is quibbling between 'ladies' and other women, implying that any woman found in the ordinary could not be considered to be a 'lady'. His joke confirms that the ordinary is considered to be both a gendered and socially stratified place, and that a woman's presence in an ordinary or tavern both depends on, and determines, her social status. Later in the play, much farcical fun is had when several elite ladies visit Verone's ordinary, a trip that they perceive to be potentially damaging their reputations. Indeed, one otherwise virtuous young lady is called a 'light huswife' on the basis that she is there with another woman's husband (sig. F1[r]; 8.329). When we consider how far the playhouse reflects life in its surrounding community, and especially women's working lives, it is perhaps helpful to recall Natasha Korda's observation that, although they may reveal a great deal about early modern attitudes to female labour, plays depicting women's work 'do not offer self-evident data about the material forms of such work.'[15] While the plays suggest that Bess and the ladies of *An Humerous dayes Myrth* are transgressive in their presence in this masculine environment, in the world off-stage, attendance at an alehouse or tavern, for the more middling sort of woman at least, was an essential part of the convivial rituals that bound the neighbourhood together. For both men and women, drinking in alehouses and taverns 'was an essential element in the fabric of neighbourhood life' and yet Bess's taverns are, except for Bess, exclusively male spaces, in which we see only one other woman, a maidservant who is quickly despatched back to the kitchen.[16] Bess's customers, in her port taverns are mainly sea captains, soldiers and gentlemen and her colleagues are male drawers; in Verone's ordinary, Jaquena, a female drawer like Bess, is usually the only woman present. The precarious situation of the reputations of women like Bess and Jaquena is emphasized by their position as a lone woman amongst many men.

The credit that Bess gains from association with an elite establishment is constantly jeopardised by her being a woman in a male space, which opens her to accusations of sexual impropriety. Throughout the play we are shown that Bess's sexual credit, her 'honesty' (like 'credit', a word charged with both sexual and financial implications), is constantly inspected and challenged, even by her beloved Spencer. The play repeatedly confronts audience expectations of what a woman might do when placed in Bess's position, and she confounds them each time. In the play's opening scene, a gentleman, perhaps voicing what many of the playgoers were thinking, is

---

[15] Korda, *Labors Lost,* p.7.
[16] Hubbard, *City Women*, p.155. See also Hailwood, *Alehouses.*

frankly incredulous when told that Bess Bridges is 'honest':

> Honest, and live there?
> What, in a publike Taverne, where's such confluence
> Of lusty and brave Gallants? Honest said you?
> (sig.B1[v]; I.1.23-26)

Bess's initial encounter with Spencer confirms Laura Gowing's finding that 'part of being a respectable and adult woman in early modern England was resisting the idea of the female body as perpetually open to touch and investigation.'[17] An early modern woman was expected to be constantly aware of the boundaries of proper and improper touch, the policing of which was her responsibility. Spencer reports that he has tried what Gowing calls 'touch and investigation' and what he calls examining her 'even to a modest force', and that she has successfully resisted him:

> I have proved her
> Unto the utmost test, examin'd her
> Even to a modest force: but all in vain.
> She'll laugh, confer, keep company, discourse,
> And something more, kiss: but beyond that compass
> She no way can be drawn.
> (sig.B2[v]-B3[r]; I.2.58-62)

Bess seems to be in no way offended by this, and both parties appear to accept that the testing of boundaries is a legitimate way to 'prove' that Bess is a 'respectable' woman and so worthy of Spencer's love.

Spencer's refusal to accept Bess as virtuous until he has tested her chastity is echoed in the testing game that Lemot plays with Florilla, the young wife of the aging Count Labervele, in *An Humorous Day's Mirth.* Lemot, who cynically seeks to amuse himself by making trouble, arrives at Florilla's home, telling her that he has come to see her to carry out a religious exercise: 'you know we ought to proue one another's constancie, and *I* am come in all chast and honourable sort to proue your constancie' (sig.B2[v];4.153-155). In a scene in which a husband watches the virtue of his wife being put to the test, Lemot appropriates the neighbourly duty of surveillance to use in his flirtation with Florilla. Despite anticipating where this will lead, Labervele is seemingly unable to counter Lemot's argument that his wife's virtue must be tested in order to prove its strength. Labervele is shown as comically impotent, overwhelmed as he is by Lemot's facility with words and his wife's use of religious pretexts to back up Lemot's 'obscure and Philosophicall' arguments. Lemot claims that virtue is only real if it can

---

[17] Gowing, *Common Bodies,* p.52.

resist temptation, telling Florilla that to 'unworthily prove your constancy to your husband' she must come out of the religious seclusion into which she has retreated. Adopting the language of natural philosophy in order to overwhelm Labervele with his rhetoric, he insists that proof of virtue is obtained only by experiment, or testing:

> you must put on rich apparel, fare daintily, heare musique, reade Sonetes, be continually courted, kisse, daunce, feast, revell all night amongst gallants, then if you come to bed to your husband with a cleere minde, and a cleere body, then are your vertues *ipsissima*; then haue you passed the ful test of experiment.[18]
> (sig. B3ᵛ; 4.230-238)

Female credit, Lemot suggests, is the product of a woman's public behaviour; 'despite complaints about "gadding wives", it would have been impossible for an early modern London woman to gain a good reputation by keeping entirely to herself, because one of the most salient markers of local status was associating with other women "of the best sort."'[19] Lemot is only trying to tempt the reclusive Florilla into company as a game, and what he is really testing is her religious sincerity and not her chastity, but nevertheless his arguments incorporate the qualities by which Spencer appraises Bess's virtue. Secluded domesticity does not demonstrate virtue; Spencer's assessment does not include the standards to which 'good' women were often held: modest, demure, self-effacing, quiet. What is required by both Lemot and Spencer in their tests of female virtue is the public performance of the ability to resist temptation. Bess's vivacity in male company does not conclude with her sexual availability, and in this she complicates from the outset the simple binary that 'good' women are silent and that only 'bad' women 'laugh, confer, keep company, discourse' and kiss. The kiss, in both Spencer's and Lemot's tests, seems to be the limit of physical intimacy into which an 'honest' woman can be drawn. The threshold between female virtue and vice is flimsy, and on stage, while it is maintained by women, it is tested by men. This testing process extends to the audience, which is continually required to re-assess its attitudes towards Bess and Florilla as the plays progress. If it is comically improbable that Bess would dress as a man and captain a ship to look for her lover, is she equally unlikely to be 'honest' in her tavern; is everything about her a fantasy, including her chastity? And the sincerity of Florilla's religious beliefs, and how far she would have resisted temptation if truly tested, is left unresolved for the playgoer to assess at the end of her play.

---

[18] Mistress Page in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1597-8) also uses 'experiment' in the sense of a test for fidelity. Master Ford has, she says, brought his friends back to his house 'to make another experiment of his suspicion', *The Oxford Shakespeare,* pp.511-536 (IV.2.30).
[19] Hubbard, *City Women,* p.157.

Bess's tavern, and Verone's ordinary, are places where female credit is continually open to scrutiny and assessment. Verone has trouble controlling his household as his servants squabble over who has the authority to decide which tables are laid for the afternoon's service. Verone hints that the disruption of the hierarchical order of the household is symptomatic of moral disorder when he remarks aside: 'O sweet Jaquena, I dare not say I love thee' (sig.D4^v;8.23) and 'she shall not be my maid long, if I can help it' (sig.E^r;8.47). Verone's sly insinuation that he seeks to make Jaquena his lover as well as his servant points to the vulnerability of young women who lived and worked in a tavern to sexual approaches from the men around them.[20] This was countered to some extent by the ability of the community to supervise a women's behaviour and her credit in the ordinary, which is demonstrated when Catalian, one of the young gallants, remarks to Verone 'Hark you my host, you must marry this young wench, you do her mighty wrong else' (E2^r;8.122-3). The urge to marriage may come because Jaquena is visibly pregnant but the play is far from clear on this point. In addressing his remark to Verone, Catalian reminds him that he is responsible for the behaviour of the women in his household and also for any child that he might father. In the concluding scene of the play, when all the characters are given an appropriate posy from the lottery by Jaquena, who is dressed as 'Fortune', Lemot teases Verone by implying that Jaquena is pregnant with his child:

> LEMOT: And his posy is, to tell you the truth in words plain and mild, *Verone* loves his maid, and she is great with child.
> KING: What Queen Fortune with child, shall we have young fortunes my host?
> HOST: I am abused, and if it please your Majesty.
> MAID: I'll play no more.
> LEMOT: No faith you need not now, you have played your belly full already.
> HOST: Stand still good Jaquena , they do but jest.
> MAID: Yea, but I like no such jesting.
> (sig.H^r;sig13.278-288)

Jaquena's appearance as quixotic Fortune emphasises that both she and Verone are in a perilous position; even if she has not had a sexual relationship with Verone, the mere suggestion that she might have done is damaging to her status as an 'honest' maid, and to her credit and Jaquena reacts accordingly with indignation to Lemot's 'jest'.

---

[20] Verone's wife doesn't appear on stage, and it is uncertain whether he is married; although Jaquena refers to her mistress, 'Why I did but take up the cloth, because my mistress would have the dinner in an other room'(8.37-38) this could be another senior member of Verone's family. Verone might therefore intend to make Jaquena his wife and not his mistress. A character known as 'the boy' throughout is referred to only at the end of the play as Verone's son, indicating the inconsistencies in Verone's household relationships throughout the play. Edelman comments on the other 'discontinuities involving secondary characters' besides this, in his Introduction, p.34.

Although it was not unusual for women to be pregnant before they married, the paternity of an illegitimate baby was regarded as a justifiable matter for communal investigation and discussion since the parish, that is the mother's neighbours, might be required to pay for its maintenance. [21] The St Botolph's Memoranda recorded the conclusion of such efforts when illegitimate children were baptised in the parish. When Elizabeth Goodfellow, 'the bace borne dawghter of Ffrauncis Goodfellow a feltmaker dwelling in gloster being begotten of the boddy of Marie Jones a single woman' was born in East Smithfield, she was christened only after the father had been identified and William Lawdian, in whose house the baby had been born, had given a bond 'for the dischardge of the p'rishe the sayd child.'[22] Lemot's is the kind of remark that often resulted in a case before the consistory courts as men and women whose sexual good conduct had been brought into doubt tried to restore their good names, or credit, with the community.[23] This teasing of Jaquena and Verone is an illustration of the ways in which the sexual behaviour of working women like Bess and Jaquena was open to public discussion and teasing, which often elided work with sexual availability, and suggests the ways in which watchful intervention might be exercised on behalf of the community.

The ambiguous nature of taverns which made women available to both the seductive gaze and also to moral surveillance is also presented in *The Fair Maid.* The action of the play is set in motion by threats to Bess and suggestions that she is sexually available because of her presence in a tavern. Spencer has to go to sea hurriedly because he has accidentally killed a gentleman who called Bess a 'minx', 'drudge' and 'housewife' (sig.B4[r]; I.2.122-128). Roughman, the swaggering gallant of Foy, later manhandles Bess, threatens her and tries to turn away her customers, assuming that she will have to marry him if he insists, because she is an unprotected woman. The access that men have to Bess through her work threatens her reputation, but paradoxically, also helps her to fashion it, by making her open to the sort of communal surveillance excercised in Verone's tavern. The play proposes that the subjection of Bess to intense public scrutiny is to her advantage; as it dramatises the ways in which neighbourhoods enforced moral behaviour, Bess establishes herself as a creditable woman. Believing himself to be mortally wounded on the expedition to the Azores, Spencer leaves Bess a substantial legacy, on the condition that his friend Captain Goodlack finds that she is

---

[21] Hubbard, *City Women*.
[22] 9234/2 fol.9[v] (3 January 1589).
[23] Gowing, *Common Bodies*.

'well reported and free from scandal' and not 'branded for loose behaviour or immodest life'(D2^{v,r};2.2.83-85). It is not enough for Bess to simply be well behaved, the absence of 'scandal' and 'loose behaviour' must also be discussed and affirmed by the community. The standard of behaviour to which she is held does not relate to interior qualities of conscience and morals, or to behaviour when she is alone, singly or with a man. Rather, it is a performance that must be observed and noted by the people among whom she lives, and who, as Orlin and Gowing have established, felt that they had a moral duty to carry out such observation.[24] Pamela Allen Brown argues that this public assessment of reputation in order to maintain social order was women's work and the way that women claimed a place in the public sphere: 'What we now call gossip was, in fact, essential to being a good neighbour, and talking about neighbours and strangers was not considered the prelude to scolding or near kin to slander.'[25] These plays position the play-goer alongside the judgemental neighbour (*The Fair Maid)* or husband (*An Humerous dayes myrth*)*,* but even as ways of making such an assessment are modelled, their shortcomings are also made apparent.

When Captain Goodlack comes to Foy to find out whether Bess meets the conditions of her inheritance, he does not turn to women, who (other than Bess) are largely absent from the world of the play. He goes instead to the men who are the leading civil authorities of the town, the Mayor and the Alderman, to enquire about Bess's reputation. The epigram used at the start of this chapter, taken from a note made in the Memoranda, shows how the Aldermen and leading parishioners were expected to search out 'evil affected people' (in this case, Catholic sympathisers) and report on them; detailed searching of the parish is required, with refusal being 'at their peril'. This supervisory function of the parish is reflected on stage, where, even before Goodlack arrives, the Mayor and the Alderman enter discussing Bess, and like the churchwardens of St Botolph's, these men accept their civic duty to be omniscient about the lives of their townspeople. The Mayor voices his reservations about single women, and expresses the importance of a woman's behaviour in deflecting communal blame and distrust:

> Beleeve me, sir, she beares her selfe so well
> No man can justly blame her; and I wonder,
> Being a single woman as she is,
> And living in an house of such resort,

---

[24] Gowing, *Common Bodies,* Orlin, *Locating Privacy.*
[25] Brown, *Better a Shrew,* p.63.

> She is no more distrusted.
> (sig.E4ʳ; 3.2.1-5)

Bess has to overcome the default position, that a single woman in a tavern will be 'distrusted', that is, un-creditworthy and justifiably blamed. The Mayor does not specify for what Bess might be blamed or distrusted; her single status in 'an house of such resort' results in a generalised potential for bad behaviour of all sorts, both commercial and sexual. Formed in other people's minds and imposed on its bearer, the reputation of a woman like Bess is shown to be both performative and subject to continual re-assessment.

When he appears, Goodlack informs them that 'I was desir'd to make inquiry/What fame she bears and what report she's of' (sig. E4ᵛ; 3.2.34-35). They are not surprised that he expects the 'chief magistrates' of the town to know Bess and to share freely with him their opinion of her and his enquiry is treated as entirely legitimate. The Alderman provides the voice of communal scrutiny:

> I can assure you many narrow eyes
> Have lookt on her and her condition,
> But those that with most envy have endeavour'd
> T' entrap her, have return'd won by her vertues.
> (sig.Fʳ; III.ii.40-44)

Added to the possibility of blame and distrust, Bess has to contend with envy and the possibility of entrapment. The 'narrow eyes' looking over Bess have a searching moral and critical quality to them.[26] In *Arden of Feuersham*, Alice, the unfaithful wife complains that her lover dares not visit her 'because my husband is so Jelious: And these my narrow prying neighbours blab' (sig.A3ᵛ;1.1.134-35).[27] Allied with the sense of a confined space is the sense of narrowness as a strict, close or rigorous standard of morality which is difficult to follow. The *OED* notes that this use echoes the biblical verse 'Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'[28] It also implies the lack of reciprocity of the gaze to which Bess is subjected; as an archer may look out through the narrow arrow-slit of a castle to see the area in front of him, while being barely visible to the person outside, so the 'narrow eyes' allow a unidirectional surveillance of Bess. In the semi-public space of the tavern,

---

[26] In *Edward IV*, Matthew Shore expresses unease that the disguised king might find fault during his visits to the city 'when kings themselves so narrowly do pry' (sig.E4ᵛ;1.20.54); here again 'narrow' has this searching, evaluating quality.

[27] Anon., *The lamentable and true tragedie of M. Arden of Feuersham in Kent* (1592), STC 733; *Arden of Faversham*, ed.by Martin White (London: A&C Black, 2000).

[28] Matthew 7.14; "narrow", adj. and n. *OED.*

she is open to the gaze of whoever chooses to pass judgement on her. The narrow eyes watching her, Alice Arden suggests, are motivated not only by moral rectitude but by suspicion and malice, jealous prying and envy, but as *Arden of Feuersham* shows us, such suspicion may be justified. In *The Fair Maid* however, this patriarchal gaze works in Bess's favour as she is able to utilise it to protect both herself and her business. Looking hard at her reveals her virtue, despite the space in which she finds herself. Although her physical attractiveness attracts customers, her ability to control her tavern is used to indicate her self-control; her chastity is a continuum of her ability to manage her business.

Once she takes over at The Windmill in Foy, the boundaries between Bess, her servants, her business and her home, are fluid and require constant defending from the aptly named 'Roughman'. Threats to Bess's business are also threats to her household and her person. She asserts her authority as the head of the household, with the capacity to take legal action to defend her rights:

> Sir, if you thus persist to wrong my house,
> Disturb my guests, and nightly domineer
> To put my friends from patience, I'll complain
> And right my self before the Magistrate.
> (sig. C4^r; 2.1.89-92)

Roughman expects Bess to accept his advances, saying before he has even met her that 'I'll have her. It shall cost me to the setting on, but I'll have her' (II.1.6-7). Bess, despite her confusing status, which Roughman blusteringly struggles to comprehend, 'I tell thee maid, wife, or what e'er thou beest' (sig. C4^r; 2.1.72), emphasises her status as a distinct legal person, able to act on her own behalf to protect her business. As an unmarried woman with an absent father, Bess is not constrained by the legal doctrine of coverture, but her virtuous reputation enables her to assume that she will be protected by authority, as embodied by 'the Magistrate'.

A mobile and unattached female, Bess appears to have embraced the economic opportunity for poor and middling-sort working women that the transience of life in early modern London afforded. Her story is a romanticised version of the most common life path for an early modern woman in London, who after a number of years in service, would aim to marry and become mistress of her own household.[29] In the 'world upside down' of the play, Bess achieves the status of mistress before being married, although always in the hope of reunion with Spencer; crucially, unlike the more problematic Moll

---

[29] Eleanor Hubbard, *City Women.*

Cutpurse, Bess is not anti-marriage. Lena Orlin argues (in an article based on the St Botolph's Memoranda) that 'it was a feature of the expanding urban culture of London that there were people at every social and economic level who failed to find places in the old ways—through their kinsfolk and network of friends—and who relied on commercial exchanges instead.'[30] Orlin's article deals with the poor and middling sort who were nursed for money in St Botolph's parish, and finds evidence of the lonely deaths and clandestine births of transient people far from home. *The Fair Maid* gives the comic obverse of the stories told by Orlin; with her ability to make money, the commercial exchanges in which Bess participates integrate her into the community, despite her undefined and uncategorised status as an independent single woman.

Bess's actions and speech are used repeatedly in the play to challenge gendered divisions. Her status as a lone woman makes her vulnerable to Roughman who, in the absence of another man expects to be able to take possession of her body, her house and her household as master or 'Lord'. Her vulnerability to male violence is apparent when she complains of Roughman's unwanted sexual attentions and that he 'beates my servants, |Cuffes them, and as they passe by him kickes my maids, |Nay domineirs over me, making himselfe Lord ore my house and household' (sig.D3ᵛ; 2.3.30-32). To defend herself, and her business, Bess adopts certain male characteristics, even identifying herself as the master of the household, when she says to Roughman:

> You wrong me sir,
> And tyrannize too much over my servants.
> I will have no *man* touch them but my self.
> (sig.E2ᵛ; 3.1.50-3) [italics added]

Bess assumes the right to command her servants, even to administer corporal punishment, and she frames this as a man's role. Roughman believes that he is able to come into Bess's tavern at will, and he and Bess contest over who will be allowed to access the house. Roughman threatens to expel any rival men from the premises and in response Bess tells him that he can enter only if he behaves himself 'Sir, if you come like other free and civil gentlemen, Y'are welcome.' She sets the standard of behaviour that must be met even in her 'public' house, controls its thresholds and who will or will not be allowed to cross them; 'otherwise', she tells him, 'my doors are barr'd you'(sig. C4ᵛ; 2.1.101-02).

Bess's strategy for dealing with Roughman through assertion of her individual

---

[30] Orlin, 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', p.221.

authority is atypical; one of the best defences early modern women had against a predatory man like Roughman was to combine together with other neighbourhood women to publically shame him.[31] Bess is however shown without a network of female friends, relatives or confidants that might have supported her against Roughman and her exceptionality, which works within the carnivalesque inversion of this comedy, is shown when she finally overcomes Roughman, not by going to law, or uniting with other women, but by dressing as a young man, her 'brother', and challenging him to a fight. She draws attention to the gender characteristics that she has acquired along with her male dress; 'Me thinkes I have a manly spirit in me in this man's habit' (sig. D3^v; 2.3.5-6). When Roughman backs down and refuses the challenge, she has the ammunition she needs to cut his swaggering down to size and undermine his threats. Unlike the cross-dressing Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl*, Bess adopts male dress only briefly, in order to engage Roughman, and she rapidly readopts her female garments.[32] It is not in her male disguise that Bess triumphs over Roughman; he finally backs down when, dressed again as a woman, she reveals her trick and threatens to demonstrate publically his unmanly submission to her: 'in this woman's shape I'll cudgel thee and beat thee through the streets. As I am Bess, I'll do it' (sig.E2^v; III.2.124). Bess declines the expected female characteristics of passivity and gentleness, or collective action, and instead threatens Roughman with violence and an active and public shaming. Roughman is not emasculated by Bess's show of strength but instead is converted, from a swaggering bully of women into a 'valiant' man:

> She hath waken'd me
> and kindled that dead fire of courage in me
> which all this while hath slept.
> (sig.E2^v; 3.2.132-3)

His revived valour is excessive and irrational, to comic effect: 'I'll cross the street and strike the next brave fellow I meet' (sig.E3^r; III.2.136-7); nevertheless, Bess's apparently transgressive cross-dressing and the threat of public violence does not supress masculinity, but rather, by kindling 'that dead fire of courage' in Roughman, it restores masculinity to its proper place. Bess claims 'manly spirit' in her male clothing, but it is in 'this woman's shape' that she achieves dominance; the audience is able to enjoy her playful negotiation of gender roles while her female virtue, uniquely

---

[31] Gowing, *Common Bodies*; Capp, *When Gossips Meet* and 'Separate domains?'; Brown, *Better a Shrew*.
[32] Bess is dressed as a man when she reappears in Act IV scene iv 'like a sea captain.' She reminds her men that they have sworn 'not to reveal my sex' as she leads them into battle. (IV.4.82) By the time she reaches Fez she is 'wearied with the habit of a man' and back in her woman's clothes. (IV.5.6).

expressed, restores virtue in the men around her.

While Bess's commanding role is clearly exceptional and pre-figures her even more gender-defying position as ship's captain in the later acts of the play, the tension that arises between men and women in both Verone's ordinary and Bess's taverns reflect the ways that gender affected not just credit but status. The 'public' house, like any household, was a space where hierarchy was strictly policed. Bess's ability to subdue Roughman and restore order in her tavern depends on her status as mistress of her house, and the reformed Roughman, and the apprentice Clem, are entirely deferential to her authority. Elsewhere, women who challenge the status of men are treated with resentment and even violence. Roughman kicks at a kitchen maid who interrupts his conversation with Bess; although she retaliates and threatens to 'lay my ladle over your coxcomb' she retreats back to the kitchen (III.1.70). Neither Bess nor Jaquena, Verone's maidservant, are popular with their male colleagues when working as servants, because their relationships with men are believed to bring them privileges not available to their male colleagues. While Bess is working in Plymouth, her fellow drawer resents having to fetch her to serve Spencer and his friends, 'The devil rid her out of the house, for me' (sig. B2^v; I.2.41) he grumbles, doubtless because his own earnings are reduced by her popularity with the most profligate customers. As yet unsure of her relationship with Spencer she refuses to sit with him because 'My fellows love me not and will complain| of such saucy boldness' (sig. B2^v; I.2.68). Verone's manservant, Jacques, objects to being ordered about by the Jaquena when she attempts to exert authority over the male servants: 'Must you controule vs, you proud baggage you?' (sig.D4^v:8.24). These strained relationships, where men try to reassert their authority over women who have bypassed the conventional hierarchy balance the fantasy of Bess, independent woman, fatherless, and husbandless, who invigorates, rather than emasculates the men around her. Poor Jaquena, apparently seduced and then disowned by her master Verone, her fate left undetermined by Chapman, is more representative of the probable end of young women for whom the boundaries between work and private life became blurred.

2. **Selling women?**

Taverns and ordinaries have been shown to be places where communal supervision of women could be exercised and the ways in which setting a scene in these spaces positioned a playgoer, not only as observer of the women in them, but as their judge,

have been discussed. This section will turn to another commercial space of the city, that is the shop, in order to consider the ways in which playgoers were invited to respond to women in these liminal places, positioned between the domestic space of the home and the street. In doing so, some examples will be taken from *Edward IV,* a play that is revisited because it gives particularly helpful illustrations that extend the discussion of these dual private/public spaces that began in reference to taverns and ordinaries.

Walking past shops, living above and behind them and owning and working in them was an important part of the quotidian experience of Londoners, both men and women. By the early seventeenth century, the majority of small and medium sized buildings with frontage onto the streets of London had shops on the ground floor.[33] Many of these shops were rented and were located in front of and below rooms which had other functions. In 1596, for example, the vestry of St Botolph's agreed that they needed a new room to meet in, and they built it with a shop underneath that generated revenue for the parish.[34] As physical structures they were open to passers-by; medieval shops, like those shown in Figure 5, had open fronts, and this design was standard until glass became widely available. The Shores' shop is located on Lombard Street, near to the main 'Goldsmiths' Row' at the end of Cheapside, which was an area of high quality and expensive properties. Ralph Treswell's 1585 drawing of Cheapside, shows that even though the windows on the upper floors are fitted with diamond panes of glass, the shops on the ground floor have open fronts with counters that are very similar to those shown here.[35] Raising the large wooden shutter, which during the day was used as a counter, closed the front opening of the shop. When the shop was open, as can be seen from the photograph of the reconstructed buildings, the entire interior was clearly visible from outside, unless screens or curtains were used to partition off parts of the interior. Conversely, from the inside of the shop there was a clear view of anyone passing the building, approaching the counter or watching from across the street. Matthew Shore's apprentice suggests this semi-open design when he refers to their shop on Lombard Street as a stall: 'the gentleman, forsooth, the other day, that would have bought the jewel at our stall' (sig.E5^r;1.19.70-71). Although seeing into shops, and

---

[33] John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), p.74.

[34] 9234/6 fols.4^r (17 June 1596) and 260^r (7 June 1597).

[35] Ralph Treswell, *West-cheap (i.e. Cheapside), London* (1585), BM Crace 1880-11-13-3516. Available on-line at www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online and reproduced in Schofield, *The London Surveys,* Plate 1. On early modern Cheapside see Griffiths, 'Politics made visible'; Vanessa Harding, 'Cheapside: Commerce and Commemoration', in *The Places and Spaces of Early Modern London, A Special Issue of the Huntington Library Quarterly* ed. by Jean E Howard and Deborah Harkness, 71.1 (2008), 77-96.

being seen from them, was an intrinsic part of urban life for early modern Londoners, Leslie Thomson's survey of extant plays from the period 1580 to 1642 finds only thirty-two that feature a shop scene.[36] Thomson notes that following *Edward IV,* a 'brief and minor fad for theatrical shop scenes flourishes from about 1602 to 1613', with *Edward IV* as its origin and Jane Shore as the archetype for women shop-keepers.[37] As the referent work which is just below the surface of subsequent London plays including *The shomakers holiday* (1599) and *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607)*, Edward IV* was the paradigm of the construction on stage of an ubiquitous city space, the shop.

Figure 5: Pair of late medieval shops, Weald ad Downland Open Air Museum

On stage, the presence of a woman in a shop is shown to be unremarkable, but also a source of anxiety, because of the interaction that shop-work permitted between women

---

[36] Thomson defines a shop scene as 'stage directions that mention a shop or include dialogue, action, and props that define the location as a place where goods are sold.' Leslie Thomson, ' *"*As Proper a Woman as any in Cheap": Women in Shops on the Early Modern Stage', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 16 (2003), 145-161 (p.145).

[37] Thomson, 'As Proper a Woman', p.145.

and men who might well be strangers to them and their family. Purchasing expensive items such as goldsmith's work was a masculine activity in the late sixteenth-century and male relatives, apprentices and customers surround Jane Shore in her shop; her friend Mistress Blage is seen only in the private space of the parlour. In *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange,* Phyllis Flower's customers are male gallants who come expressly to view the sales girls as a form of entertainment.[38] Gosson's advice 'To the Gentlewomen Citizens of London' emphasised the dangers of the unsolicited gaze that awaited women in public places, and especially the theatre: 'for this is generall, that they which shew themselves openly, desire to bee seene […] Thought is free: you can forbidd no man, that vieweth you, to noate you, and that noateth you, to iudge you.'[39] Not only were women in danger when they went outside, but Gosson insisted that even in their own homes they were at risk from lascivious attention wherever they were exposed to the view of anyone except their family and closest friends: 'You neede not goe abroade to be tempted, you shall be intised at your owne windowes. The best counsel that I can giue you, is to keepe home, & shun all occasion of ill speech.'[40] Although Gosson seems to advocate that women stayed in at all times, except, perhaps, when they went to church, as David Pennington observes, when ideas like this appear to be reflected in plays, 'such misogynistic strands should not be mistaken for serious moral instruction, for much of the humour generated by these plays had to do with their exposure of the limits of patriarchal authority.'[41] Despite the rhetoric of polemical writers such as Gosson, there existed an underlying acknowledgement of the necessity for women to be active participants in the family business, although the paradoxical situations that this produced were the occasions for comedy, as in *The Fair Maid of the West,* or in the case of *Edward IV,* tragedy. Nonetheless, although it is treated with varying degrees of seriousness, the tension between inevitable visibility and desirable invisibility of women is apparent in each of the plays discussed here.

In *The shomakers holiday* (1599), which was probably written shortly after the first production of *Edward IV,* the gallant Hamond enacts Gosson's unsolicited observation as he watches Jane Damport, who is working in a sempster's shop from

---

[38] Anon., *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607), STC 13317. *The Fayre Maide of the Exchange* (ed. by Peter Davidson (London: The Malone Society, 1962). On shopping as a male activity see Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005). On the gendering of space in *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* see Howard, *Theater of a City,* pp.29-67.
[39] Stephen Gosson, *The schoole of abuse* (1579), STC 12097.5, sig.F4[r].
[40] Gosson, *The schoole of abuse,* sig.F2[r].
[41] David Pennington, " 'Three Women and a Goose make a Market': Representations of Market Women in Seventeenth-Century Popular Literature", *The Seventeenth Century,* 25.1 (2010), 27- 48 (p.33).

across the street:

> It doth me good to stand
> Unseen to se her, thus I oft haue stood,
> In frostie euenings, a light burning by her,
> Enduring biting cold, only to eie her.
> (sig.F3^v;14.17)

The shomakers holiday, like *Edward IV*, is another version of London history, the story of Lord Mayor Simon Eyre's dramatic rise in fortune, told in this case with romantic licence. In this strand of the plot, Jane Damport's husband has been press-ganged into the army, and having been left alone, she takes employment as a seamstress to support herself. Hamond, like Edward, takes her presence alone in the shop as an opportunity to attempt seduction. His speech conveys the experience of standing in the dark of a winter evening, and seeing Jane, illuminated by her lamp, but unseen himself; she is the object of his surveillance as she directs her glance downwards at her needlework. Like Edward watching Jane Shore in *Edward IV,* Hamond is 'muffled at another doore, he stands aloofe' (sig.F3^v;14.*sd*). These are plays written for the outside stage and performed in daylight, and during performance both actors and playgoers would have been in full view of each other, much as men and women working in shops and those passing by them would have been. The situation presented on the early modern stage is consequently more complex than the simple binary of male gaze and female recipient that Hamond suggests, not least because the gendered nature of that gaze was complicated by the boys playing the female characters. To the gaze of the men in the audience at the female character on stage, may be added the complexity of the gaze of the female playgoer at a male actor, who is representing a shop-woman perhaps like themselves, their daughter or their sister; or indeed, of the actor in a day-lit theatre, gazing back at his audience, or his fellow actors, like a woman looking out of a shop. The apparently simple presentation of a man standing in the street looking at a woman in a shop, turns out to be much more complex in gender terms than it first appears, and the questions that is raises are consequently more complicated and their answers less straightforward.

Like many other virtuous women characters, Jane Damport sews while she sits in the shop, and this is suggestive about the way in which the play conceptualises the space of the shop as both domestic and commercial. Dessen and Thomson's *Dictionary of Stage Directions* suggests that a stage direction stating that a woman is sewing,

indicates that a scene is set in a specifically domestic space.[42] As she sews, they suggest, a female character indicates that the imagined space that the character inhabits is essentially domestic in nature. The woman sewing in a shop therefore embodies the problematic relationship between the expected boundaries of the domestic space in which a woman was protected from the male gaze, and the openness of a shop. The importance of sewing to the characterisation of women can be seen in the specificity of the stage directions, such as those in *Edward IV* that state that Jane Shore enters 'with her worke in her hand' (sig.D5ᵛ;1.17.*sd*) and then 'sits sowing in her shop' (sig.D6ʳ;1.17.*sd*). Diligent and industrious sewing was a sign of domestic virtue and a woman sewing in a shop signals that she is usefully occupied and not idly watching passers-by or otherwise engaged in sinful idleness; as she sews, she embodies the domestic virtues of her household.[43] It also suggests that she considers the shop to be a domestic space rather than a public one, and that she will behave accordingly. Matthew Shore carefully points out that Jane was in his shop was an extension of her domestic role and not in a commercial capacity: 'though in my shop she sit, more to respect| Her servants duty than for any skill| she doth or can pretend in trade' (sig. E4ᵛ; 1.20.38-40). In *A Warning,* we can understand that Anne Sanders sitting on her doorstep is problematic because there is no mention of her sewing; without needlework she lacks a legitimate purpose for being outside other than to look idly about the street (sig. B3r; 355). The potential for the shop-woman to gaze outward from her shop was as troubling as her being the recepient of the male gaze; Gosson warned that a woman could be 'intised at your owne windowes' by what she might see from them. A sewing woman focuses on her work at hand, directing her gaze away from the street and bending it modestly downwards towards her work. On stage 'good' shop-women are usually seen to be sewing, mitigating the possibility that they might succumb to two of the threats, idleness or temptation, that awaited women who were out of their homes.[44]

In addition to the structural openness of the early modern shop, that blurred the boundaries between the interior room and the exterior street, the division of the internal spaces of buildings themselves made the relationship between domestic and commercial spaces a continuum rather than sharply distinct. Treswell's surveys show that London's buildings were packed closely together with narrow fronts, and up to five or six

---

[42] Alan C. Dessen and Leslie Thomson, A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580- 1642 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.193.
[43] Alex Ryrie places idleness alongside hypocrisy as the two vices with which early modern protestants were most pre-occupied, *Being Protestant,* pp.3-4. See also the discussion of Lucretia in Chapter 2.
[44] Bess Flower, the eponymous 'Fayre Mayde of the Exchange' and Jane Damport of *Shoemakers Holiday* both sew in their shops.

stories.[45] In the most common type, each floor would have two rooms, one behind the other, with the ground floor used as a shop and a warehouse, or both used as a tavern. The occupier would use the street-facing room above as a 'hall', that is a multi-purpose domestic space, in which the household would also receive visitors. A 'parlour' was usually a more private room, normally 'buried deep within the property […] even within a tavern it was a secluded withdrawing room', distinguished on Treswell's plans from the rest of the tavern's 'drinking rooms'.[46] Although this description makes spaces in buildings, and the uses to which they were put, sound clear-cut and ordered, Orlin remarks that Treswell's plans 'correct any unthinking assumptions we may have cherished that London houses were generally independent, free-standing buildings.'[47] Instead, the interior spaces are shown by the plans to be contingent, muddled and often unclear, produced by subdivision, re-building and other motivations now obscure to us. In theory, rooms were arranged in an hierarchy, from the freely accessible shop through to the parlour, to which access was controlled and limited. In reality, even where the function of such rooms was defined, access might have been less easy to control. Bess exclaims when Goodlack appears in her room that 'You are immodest, sir, to press thus rudely into my private chamber' (sig.F3ʳ;III.4.8-9) and Jane Shore's public reception of the king at Crosby Hall is contrasted with his transgressive appearance in the Shore's parlour 'where I intrude like an unbidden guest' (sig.E3ᵛ;I.19.78). The unexpected presence of a man in the parlour of the shop or the tavern is treated as a rude intrusion, avoiding as it does the supervising presence of other people that the public rooms afford. The anxieties that are being registered on stage about the commercial spaces of early modern London become clearer when the instability of boundaries between those spaces is appreciated.[48]

The permeability of boundaries between home, shop and street in early modern London was emphasised in drama by the fluidity of space on an Elizabethan stage, where props were few and flat scenery non-existent. Spaces on stage can be at once inside and outside, or move between the two without any clear demarcation. In *An Humerous dayes myrth* Edelman notes that 'scene 13 appears to start outside Verone's ordinary, and then seamlessly moves indoors without the stage clearing or any interruption to the action.' 'Overall', he concludes, 'the setting is not a garden or an

---

[45] Schofield, The London Surveys.
[46] Schofield, *The London Surveys*, p.18.
[47] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p.163.
[48] For discussion of these unstable boundaries taken from legal depositions, see particularly Gowing, *Common Bodies* and Orlin, *Locating Privacy,* pp.152-192.

ordinary, but simply 'the stage.'[49] Similarly, in scene 17 of *Edward IV,* when Edward comes to the Shores' shop, it is not clear whether he leaves the street and enters a shop, or whether he talks to Jane across the counter while remaining in the street. The shop that Jane sits in, like Bess's tavern and Verone's ordinary would have been created by a small number of portable props such as tables and benches. The stage direction indicates that it was staged by 'two prentizes preparing the Goldsmiths shop with plate' (sig.D5[r];1.17.*sd*), presumably using some glamorous looking artificial plate of the type that caused anxiety among the anti-stage moralists concerned about the theatres' ability to confuse imitation and real value, in both people and things.[50]

Paradoxically, while openness and visibility were presented on stage as problematic for the women who worked in shops, they were required as signifiers of honest trade.[51] Middleton's cheating draper Quomodo in *Michaelmas Terme* (1604) has servants called Falselight and Shortyard suggesting the fraudulent possibilities of a dimly lit shop. Good daylight and openness enabled customers to inspect the quality of goods and the moment when they were measured, reducing opportunities for cheating and fraud.[52] In the same way that visibility exposed goods to the risk of damage and theft, while at the same time offering protection against fraud, a woman working in a shop was subjected both to the attention of passers by like Hammon and Edward, while at the same time allowing for the supervisory inspection of female behaviour by neighbours.

Staged women in shops often reflect a wider suspicion that attractive women might be used to somehow beguile men into making purchases they did not want and could not afford. The accusation that traders used their wives in their businesses and in doing so, improperly exposed them to male attention was expressed often in plays but was matched by a suspicion that it was the shopkeeper's wife, and not his goods, who was the real object of male customers' desire. The profit motivated merchant who is more interested in obtaining wealth and property than he is in his wife is a recurring character in City Comedies. The villainous merchant Quomodo expresses this conflation of money, status and sex in *Michaelmas Term*e:

---

[49] Edelman, An Humorous Day's Mirth, p.36.
[50] Korda, *Labors Lost,* pp. 174-211.
[51] Middleton, *Michaelmas Terme* (1607), STC 17890. Edited by Theodore Leinwand in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.334-372.
[52] For discussion of Renaissance shop design as a means of enabling supervision and surveillance see Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance* and for the supervision of London goldsmiths see Griffiths, 'Politics made visible'.

> There are means and waies enow to hooke in Gentry,
> besides our deadlye enmitye, which thus stands
> they'r busye 'bout our wiues, We 'bout their Lands.
> (sig.B1ʳ;1.1.107-9)[53]

By the time that Middleton produced *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side* (1616), 'a Gold-Smithes Shop sets out a Citie Mayd' (sig. B2ᵛ; I.1.109), was a truism that articulated the connection between women being sold alongside the shop's wares.[54] An often hostile attitude towards shopkeepers and their wives develops in the drama of the seventeenth century, including *Michaelmas Term*e and *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side,* which articulate and amplify these interlinked anxieties about sex and money. Much of the underlying comedy of *The Fair Maid* however, arises from its confounding of the anticipated link between Bess's commercial acumen and her sexual availability. The audience hears of Bess before it sees her; as the play opens, three men are deciding where to go for dinner:

> CARROL: Where shall we dine today?
> 2 CAPTAIN: At the next Taverne by; there's the best wine.
> 1 CAPTAIN: And the best wench, *Besse Bridges*; she's the flowre
> Of Plimouth held: the Castle needs no bush;
> Her beauty drawes to them more gallant Customers
> Then all the signes i'th'towne else.
> (sig.B1ʳ; 1.2.17-22)

When Bess moves to Foy, it is commented that, although she has only been there for a week or so, 'in that small time shee hath almost undone all the other Taverns. The Gallants make no rendezvous now but at the Wind-mill' (sig.C3r;II.i.3-4). Bess's physical attractiveness is regarded as a commercial asset but in defiance of the standard paradigm, she sells only food and wine, and not herself. Bess's virtues are defined in their opposition to the cultural expectations about women in her situation. In discerning Bess's virtue, play-goers are aligned with Spencer, the romantic, dashing, but also judicial, object of Bess's affections. 'Beauty's a shrewd bait' he tells her 'but unto that if thou add'st chastity, thou shalt o'ercome all scandal' (sig.B1ᵛ;1.2.58-59). The audience of *The Fair Maid* are shown that while her beauty may be 'bait', Bess has the capacity to maintain the integrity of her bodily boundaries and her credit.

When London's shops were depicted on stage, they represented social spaces,

---

[53] Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Terme*.
[54] Thomas Middleton, *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side* (1630), STC 17877; *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, ed. by Linda Woodbridge in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.907-958.

economic functions and trades with which the spectators were familiar and which they perhaps even practised themselves. Viewing shops and shop-women in a play, playgoers were invited into a play-world which mapped spaces on stage onto life outside the theatre. This allowed plays to engage with questions around what a woman's place was in the city. In holding up audience members' pre-conceptions for examination, these plays require them to consider the impossibility of reconciling the conflicting demands that required women's presence in the family business against the exposure that this gave to the male gaze. The play-goers' judgement is tested in their response to the question, is every woman who works in a shop for sale herself?

3. **Close Walks and Private Rooms**

The staging of the commercial spaces, shops and taverns, of early modern London exposes for the playgoers' judgement, the conflicting expectations around the visibility of the women and confronts them with some of the difficulties that they present. The discussion will now return to *An Humerous dayes Myrth,* which as we have already seen, is a play that is concerned with the surveillance opportunities made available by the public rooms of a tavern, and examine the ways in which it comically confronts the consequences of prescriptions of privacy for women. What can the ways in which a garden and a private room in a tavern are treated in this play tell us about the complicated relationships between gender and space in early modern London?

 An Humerous dayes Myrth opens at dawn as Count Labervele, an old man with a young wife, tiptoes about in the dark in his nightshirt, to let himself into 'the holy green, my wife's close walk, to which not any but herself alone hath any key'(sig.A2^v;1.7-9). Labervele soon reveals that his wife has forbidden him access not just to her 'close walk' or private garden, but to her body. The enclosed garden, as 'hortus conclusus' elicits a complex set of allusions, much of it Catholic, the 'closeness' being associated with female virginity and Marian iconology, while the growth and natural aspects recalled paradoxically feminine fecundity and fertility.[55] Roy Strong argues that by the end of the sixteenth century, when a gardening language of compliment and allegory was well established in England, the enclosed garden was also

---

[55] Stanley Stewart, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969).

the symbolic garden of Queen Elizabeth, associated as it was with female virginity.[56] In some cases, where a home had been made from the house of a dissolved religious order, of which there were many around Aldgate, a close walk like Florilla's 'holy green', might actually have been made from a cloister. Florilla's 'close walk' is then at once a reminder of the Catholic practice of religiously ordained, barren chastity which was regarded by reformists as ungodly, and also a place of fertility and growth. It was also a reminder of the biblical garden of Eden, that is a place where metaphorical serpents could lurk and where women could be tempted into sin. The early modern garden on stage was on the one hand, 'an idealised feminine terrain' which drew on the gendered associations of woman and nature; in a garden, as in the ideal woman, nature was constrained by artifice.[57] On the other hand, in a culture where privacy from eavesdroppers could not be assured indoors and young ladies especially were not expected to be unescorted in the company of men, the garden offered the possibility of private conversations and even seduction, while the participants apparently remain in supervisory view.[58]

An Humerous dayes Myrth playfully picks up on these associations so that Florilla's walled and locked garden represents a young wife's reluctance to have sex with her husband, withholding from him the fecundity suggested by both her name and the garden. He complains that she is 'young and delicate, although too religious in the purest sort' (sig.A2^r; I.1.14), that is, 'a puritan', as she is referred to repeatedly in the play: a 'passing faire yong Lady, that is a passing foule Puritane'(sig.A3^v;2.87).[59] This being a comedy, we are intended to understand that Florilla's 'delicacy' may have more to do with her distaste for her husband than with sincere religious beliefs, as he muses:

> [It] is to be doubted, that when an object comes fit to her humour, she wil intercept religious letters sent vnto her minde, and yeelde vnto the motion of her bloud.
> (sig.A2^r; I.16-20)

---

[56] Roy Strong, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998), p.49. Chapman grew up in Hitchin, Hertfordshire, and may therefore have been familiar with Robert Cecil's famous emblematic garden at Theobalds Park, which lay on the main road between Hitchin and London; it is described in detail by Strong, pp.51-57. 'Chapman, George (1559/60-1634)', *ODNB*.

[57] Alison Findlay, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.66. See also Mariko Ichikawa, *The Shakespearian Stage Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[58] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, pp.231-8.

[59] 'When the word was coined, 'puritan' was used to mean a dour hypocritical killjoy […]its negative meanings have always predominated'. Ryrie prefers the word 'earnest' for protestants who attempted to practice sincerely. *Being Protestant,* p.12. Whether Florilla is earnest or not is left somewhat open by the text.

Labervele believes that given the right persuasion, her 'blood', or natural inclination for procreation, will override Florilla's religious thinking and his mission in the garden is to leave for Florilla two engraved cameos encouraging her to procreation, even though he fears that his own vigour is waning. He has had to copy his wife's key in secret: 'I haue clapt her key in waxe, and made this counterfeite'(sig.A2^r; I.9-10), in order to access the garden. The key, it scarcely needs pointing out, is a phallic substitute and his dispossession of the original key signals his emasculation. The comedy begins with a carnivalesque interest in the bodily functions of sex and procreation and an inversion of the proper order of things, which combine in a wife's withholding of her body from her husband.

Opening with Florilla's symbolically locked garden, *An Humerous dayes Myrth* shows its characters as constantly trying to reconcile the ideological constraints of female domestic confinement with the real social and economic requirements to appear in public spaces. Even within domestic spaces, Orlin argues that an intent to achieve privacy was regarded as suspicious in itself, regardless of what one might do in that privacy. In early modern London, 'the officers of church and state encouraged all early moderns to monitor their fellows in the interest of civil order [...] The unspoken principles of rights in these matters went not to privacy protections but instead to the need to know.'[60] For Florilla to mark off an area, even within her home, as private and forbidden to her husband is itself cause for suspicion. Mary Trull helpfully distinguishes between 'privacy' in the elite household which was a performance of controlled access to the person, and isolation or solitude, which was problematic.[61] Privacy, for a countess like Florilla, would properly involve her ability to withdraw from the general company with a select band of attendants, who could control who was able to approach her. A woman like Florilla would be expected to perform her status in the company of a retinue of attendants and not to go, as her husband complains 'more like a milke maide than a Countesse' (sig.A3^v;2.89-90). A newly married English gentlewoman in 1610 stipulated that her husband must provide a number of attendants, both male and female, for 'it is an indecent thing for a gentlewoman to stand mumping alone.'[62] The solitude that Florilla seeks in her walk is different to the privacy of controlled access that an elite woman would require. Florilla's isolation, her 'mumping alone' is a problem because it represents a failure to engage in her social obligations as a wife and a member of the

---

[60] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, p.226
[61] Trull, *Performing Privacy*.
[62] Quoted in Trull, *Performing Privacy*, p.79.

community, and because in itself, even seeking solitude was regarded as suspicious in a woman.

The conflict between Florilla and Labervele over sex, procreation, marital roles and religious observation becomes tied up in an argument as to whether Florilla should leave the house and its garden or not. Labervele believes that he is denied access to Florilla because of her excessive adherence to moral precepts like Gosson's which enjoin her to stay inside and meditate on 'religious letters sent to her mind'(sig.A2r;1.14), meaning that she is too 'close', both socially and sexually. He begs her to go out and socialise:

> Sure wife I thinke thy keeping alwaies close, making thee melancholy, is the cause we haue no children, and therefore if thou wilt, be mery, and keepe companie a gods name.
> (sig.B1^v; 4.58-60)

Labervele's authority is undermined as he pleads with her 'i'God's name', and he is unable to control his wife's extreme actions and her inappropriate appeal to religion. The resulting discussion between them reflects the contemporary debate about marriage in post-Reformation theology and Protestant conduct books.[63] Florilla, despite her earnest pretensions, has her theology hopelessly confused; when she agrees that it would be a sin not to 'use our marriage to the end it was made/ which was for procreation' (sig.B1^v; 4.64-65) she voices the Anglican position that marriage was a sacrament, and that couples were joined by God in marriage for the avoidance of fornification and the procreation of children. Other reformist thinkers believed that marriage was a civil contract, which depended on consent and was not necessary for salvation. In the debate between Florilla and Labervele, the playgoer is invited to consider the absurdity of taking patriarchal precepts about female seclusion to their extremes and to question whether they are really virtuous. Florilla and Labervele frame their discussion of whether Florilla should socialise or not in religious terms, appealing

---

[63] A full discussion of the post-Reformation debates about marriage is outside of the scope of this study but for historical accounts of early modern marriage in England and especially the contested post-Reformation transition to the 'companionate' marriage, see Lawrence Stone's *The family, sex and marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977) (first published in 1965) and David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). The discussion is helpfully summarized by Anthony Fletcher in 'The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England' in *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain : essays in honour of Patrick Collinson*, ed. by Peter Roberts and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.161-180. See also, Catherine Belsey's discussion of the effect of protestant theology on marriage and its effect on drama in 'Alice Arden's Crime: "Arden of Faversham" (c.1590)' in *Staging the Renaissance,* pp.133-150 (pp.133-4). On developments of Belsey's thesis on early modern marriage and drama, see Frances Dolan, 'Marriage and Shakespeare: An Open Question', *Literature Compass* 8/9 (2011), 620–634.

both to God and to 'the law':

> Sure my lord, if I thought I shold be rid of this same banishment of barrenness, and vse our marriage to the end it was made, which was for procreation, I should sinne, if by my keeping house I should neglect the lawful means to be a fruitful mother, & therefore if it please you ile vse resort.
> (sig.B1ᵛ; 4.64-65)

Despite her attempt to live a religious life, Florilla's nun-like celibacy and seclusion are shown to undermine the family, which after the abolition of clerical celibacy and the dissolution of the monasteries was figured in the post-Reformation theology as the nucleus of the Church and society.[64]

Florilla's thinking takes a spatial turn; sociability and fecundity, 'resort' and 'procreation' are linked in her mind, and she describes the absence of children in spatial and social terms, as 'banishment', a forced and physical exclusion from community. To Labervele, although he has raised the idea that she should 'keep companie', the alarming risk of illicit and uncontrolled sexuality is suggested by 'resort', which might mean not only a place of innocent entertainment, but also a brothel.[65] Apparently, and comically, unaware of the double-meaning of the word, Florilla seems to be innocently proposing that she will use a brothel in order to get pregnant.[66] Labervele makes a panicky aside, 'Gods my passion what haue I done? who woulde haue thought her purenesse would yeeld so soone to courses of temptations?' (sig.B1ᵛ; 4.69-71) as he struggles to regain control of the situation. Having encouraged her to 'keep companie' Labervele's hold over the situation swings comically out of control when Florilla unexpectedly changes her mind:

> LABERVELE: nay harke you wife, I am not sure that going abroad will cause
>   fruitfulnesse in you, that you know none knowes but God himselfe.
> FLORILLA: I know my lord tis true, but the lawfull means must still be vsed.
> LABERVELE: Yea, the lawfull meanes indeed must still, but now I remember that
>   lawfull means is not abroad.
> FLORILLA: Well, well, Ile keepe the house still.
> LABERVELE: Nay, heark you lady, I would not haue you thinke, mary, I must tell
>   you this, if you shuld change the maner of your life, the world would think
>   you changed religion too.

---

[64] Fletcher ,'The Protestant idea of marriage' p.162.

[65] When in *Measure for Measure,* Mistress Overdone asks 'but shall all of our houses of resort in the suburbs be pulled down?'(I.2.93-94) she is referring to brothels. William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure, The Oxford Shakespeare,* pp.843-872.

[66] How 'innocently' Florilla makes this suggestion is, I think, largely dependent on the way she is performed, as is the sincerity of her religious beliefs. It could, of course, all be a ruse to deceive Labervele into allowing her greater freedom. Calling her 'puritane' as the stage directions do, implies hypocrisy rather than earnestness, she is easily persuaded in any case.

FLORILLA: Tis true, I will not go.
LABERVELE: Nay, if you have a fancie.
FLORILLA: Yea a fancie, but thats no matter.
LABERVELE: Indeed fancies are not for judicial & religious women.
(fol.B1ᵛ;4. 58-87)

Labervele, while agreeing that women should be 'judicial and religious' but not fanciful, is torn between using Florilla's eagerness to do what is 'lawful' in order to keep her confined within the house and his desire to ensure her 'fruitfulness' by encouraging her to be less 'judicial and religious.' Uncertain of his own sexual capability, Labervele is reluctant to expose Florilla to the young men 'abroad' who might 'cause fruitfulness' in her. In this test of conflicting theologies, play-goers, many of whom may have lived on and among the sites of the dissolved religious houses to the east of the city, including St Katherine's, St Mary's Graces and the Minories, which all adjoined St Botolph's parish, are invited to consider whether 'keeping close' or 'using resort' are the best way to maintain the patriarchal family.

The seclusion of Florilla's solitary 'close walk' is associated with frigidity, barrenness, idleness and melancholy, and Lemot, the gallant, tempts her with the offer of a visit to Verone's ordinary, a vision of collective privacy as transgressive, secret, sexy, and fun:

> Then knowe there is a priuate meeting this day at Verones ordinarie, […] I wil prouide a faire and priuate room, where you shal be vnseene of any man, onely of me, and of the King himselfe, whom I will cause to honour your repaire with his high presence, and there with musicke and quick reuellings You may reuiue your spirits so long time dulled.
> (sig. C4ᵛ; 6.116-126)

Labervele attributes Florilla's excessive religiosity to an over-analysis of texts, referring to 'pure religion, being but mental stuff' and 'religious letters sent vnto her minde'. Her rejection of the appropriate apparel for her rank 'A veluet hood! o vaine diuelish deuice! a toy made with a superfluous flap' (sig B1ʳ ;4.55) certainly indicates that she may have been reading polemical texts like Stubbes' *Anatomie of abuses* (1583). Another protestant moral text, *A Christall glasse of Christian reformation* (1569), written by Stephen Batman (*c*.1542–1584), an occasional preacher at St Botolph's, suggest how the secrecy of a private room indicates that some kind of improper behaviour is intended.[67] The illustration of the sin of 'Lechery' [Figure 6] shows two couples enjoying a banquet indoors, accompanied only by a woman with a clawed foot (left)

---

[67] Stephen Batman, *A Christall glasse*, sig.E2ʳ. A more accurate translation of 'Philogenes' is 'a lover of women'

with a cup in her hand who represents 'Philogines, a lover of Lechery'. Through the windows behind are seen fighting men who represent the murders caused by adultery and through the other, offenders are led to hell 'whose continuance is endless.' A private room in an otherwise public place like a tavern or shop is presented as a space that could facilitate what Lemot calls 'revellings' and Batman calls 'lechery'. Plays imagine these alternate

Figure 6, 'Lechery' from Stephen Batman, *A Christall Glasse of Christian reformation* (1569) sig. E2[r]. With permission of The British Library, London.

spaces just off stage and out of view; characters in *The Fair Maid* refer to customers who are in the next room of the tavern, or in the room above; the Shores' shop has a private parlour, probably above or behind the shop. When Florilla, Martia (another young lady) and the King arrive at Veronne's ordinary, Lemot instructs that they enter the private room in secret; '*Jaques*, convey them into the inward Parlour by the inward room, and there is a brace of Crowns for thy labour, but let no body know of their being here'(8.255-258). The revelling couples of Batman's image are located in a 'faire and priuate room', of the kind that Lemot promises, a space in which a kind of revelling that combines lechery and consumption is possible. The avoidance of communal supervision of private behaviour suggests secrecy and deceit. Here is privacy in its transgressive sense, as a cover for the petty treachery of adultery and real potential sins, instead of those constructed by Florilla's muddled theology.

Lemot, and his gang of friends from Verone's, drive the action of the play by

conspiring to make mischief between the various married or potential couples who feature in it. Out of mischief, the young men attempt to disrupt all the patriarchal relationships, including those between men and their wives; fathers, daughters and sons; betrothed couples and even the King and Queen. Their youthful male sociability conflicts with 'a new domestic ethic' which the older Labervele is trying to establish in his own home.[68] Labervele, the husband who is trying to order his household rightly, finds that his tolerance of Lemot's flirtatious testing of Florilla's honour is stretched to breaking point when his wife quotes an obscure (and apparently invented) biblical verse at him:

> FLORILLA: Yea, my good head, for it is written, we must passe to perfection through al temptation, Abacucke the fourth.[69]
> LABERVELE: Abacucke, cucke me no cuckes, inadoores, I say, theeues, Puritanes, murderers, inadoores I say.
> (sig.B3^v; 5.242-246)

In his note to this passage, Edelman says that: 'there seems no explanation to this exclamation, other than to assume that Labervele is over-excited' but Labervele's outburst reveals the threats that he perceives to his household.[70] The assonance between 'Abacucke' and 'cuckold' triggers a vigorous reaction from Labervele whose authority is restored by ordering Florilla 'inadoores', away from the 'Puritanes' who threaten his property like thieves and murderers.[71] 'Cucking', or 'ducking' was the punishment for shrewish women who challenged patriarchal authority, a reminder to Labervele that he needs to take charge of the situation back from his wife.[72] The other assonance, between 'cuck' and 'fuck' completes the circle of associations between sex, space, religion and authority for Labervele, who consequently reacts with an excited attempt to regain control over his property and his wife.[73] In his exclamation, 'Theeues, Puritanes,

---

[68] An ethic in which 'virtue inheres in domestic duty, in the right ordering of the individual's household, commonwealth and the careful supervision of its associated possessions', Lena Cowen Orlin, *Private Matters and Public Culture,* p.180.

[69] The book of Habakkuk has only three chapters. If Florilla intends verse 1.4, it is entirely misquoted. Appositely it says 'Therefore the law is slacked, and judgement doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore judgement goeth forth perverted.' (Habakkuk, 1.4) It is interesting to speculate how many in the audience would have had sufficient knowledge of the Bible to understand the full irony of her misquotation.

[70] Edelman, p.77, n.246.

[71] 'cuck' also meant 'to void excrement': "cuck, v.1". *OED.*

[72] Martin Ingram, ' "Scolding Women Cucked or washed": a crisis in gender relations in early modern England?' from *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern England* ed by Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (London: UCL Press, 1994), pp. 48-80.

[73] "fuck, v." *OED.* The etymology and usage of 'fuck' is uncertain because it rarely appears in print but that 'it seems certain that the word was current (in transitive use) before the early 16th cent' according to the *OED.*

murderers!' Labervele connects adultery to theft of his property which may even, as it did for George Saunders, result in murder. His inclusion of 'Puritanes' as a threat reflects his annoyance that Florilla is trying to outsmart him with Biblical quotations, but it may also be a reflection on the 'puritan' view of marriage, that in the absence of consent, 'the couple could not be said to be joined by God, and could therefore justly be put asunder.'[74] If Florilla's beliefs are in earnest then her refusal to consent to intercourse with him could result in her discarding the marriage, and leaving Labervele, who does not share her beliefs, cuckolded and disgraced. Excessive piety, as Florilla shows, can become a form of rebellion. Labervele's solution is to take Florilla back inside the house, into the enclosed space where he can protect his property, and where 'theeues, Puritanes and murderers' can no longer threaten his ability to exercise appropriate supervision over his wife. Florilla recognises the surveillant power of the neighbourhood when, having lied to her husband and gone with Lemot to Verone's, she anxiously asks him 'why let vs be gon my kind *Lemot*, and not be wondered at in the open streets.' (F2ʳ;9.40-41). Having tested Florilla's religious sincerity for his own amusement, and proved her a hypocrite, the satirical Lemot sends her off with a scornful, 'Away, repent, amend your life, you haue discredited your religion for euer [...] go, *Abacuck*, go'(F2ᵛ; 9.71-75).

Florilla is however one of the few characters who is able to get the last word on Lemot. Having been tempted by him into a near disastrous dalliance, Florilla returns to the stage, dressed again 'like a Puritan'(sig.G3ʳ;13.87*sd*), unharmed but wiser from her experience of the world. As all the characters convene at the ordinary for the concluding scene of the play, Lemot challenges her:

> LEMOT: What Madam, are you turned puritan againe?
> FLORILLA: When was I other, pray?
> LEMOT: Marie Ile tell you when, when you went to the Ordinarie, and when you made false signes to your hus|band, which I could tell him all.
> FLORILLA: Cursed be he that maketh debate twixt man & wife.
> LEMOT: O rare scripturian! you haue sealed vp my lips
> (sig.G3ᵛ;13.135-39)

Lemot concedes to Florilla's determined use of scripture to efface her own lies, which silences his threat to reveal the untruths that she has told her husband. Her self-congratulatory reflection on her narrow escape responds to John Bradford's claim that the world outside the home as space filled with the devil's snares of temptation and

---

[74] Also the fate of Thomas Arden in *Arden of Faversham;* Belsey, 'Alice Arden's Crime', p.142.

sin.[75] As she often does, Florilla thinks in spatial terms as she says:

> Surely the world is full of vanitie a woman must take heed she do not heare a lewd man speake; for every woman cannot when shee is tempted, when the wicked fiend gets her into his snares escape like me, for graces measure is not so filled vp nor so presst downe in euery one as me, but yet promise you a little more: well, Ile go seek my head, who shal take me in the gates of his kinde arms untoucht of any.
> (G3ʳ;13.88-97).

Florilla complacently claims that she has escaped from sin because she is full of grace; the audience however knows that she is returning to her husband only after Lemot has rejected her. She has not rejected 'puritanism' but has instead directed it towards the confirmation of marriage and community. Scripture is quoted to stop Lemot making trouble between her and her husband, to whom she plans to defer as her 'head' and as we might expect in the resolution of a comedy, marriage is celebrated as she substitutes the embrace of her husband for the sterile isolation of her garden. For the reformed Florilla, her husband's presence, the 'gates of his kind arms', represent a physical space which offers the moral protection she had sought in her close walk. In a play where farcical confusion accumulates as characters repeatedly try to keep their location secret from their spouses and fathers, privacy, seclusion and secrecy are seen as modes in which the authorised uses of urban space are contested. As Florilla triumphs over both her husband and Lemot, her religious beliefs are held up for examination as pretexts for her own wilful behaviour and opportunities for smug self-satisfaction. Florilla's garden, and Verone's private room become spaces in the city where playgoers are invited to consider the sincerity of their own, and their neighbours', religious behaviour. Florilla embodies the conflict between public behaviour and private motivations that we have seen to be operative in early modern attitudes to credit and charitable giving in Chapter 1, a theme to which we will now return.

4. **Staging credit, commerce and charity**

In addition to the comedies that are the focus of this chapter, I now return to two plays discussed in Chapter 2, *Edward IV* and *A Warning*, to further develop the argument that in these plays, which are particularly focused on female characters engaged in commerce, London is treated as a space in which community is created in practices of

---

[75] For discussion of Bradford's *Meditations,* see p.148.

commerce and charity. This section investigates whether, for men and women, knowing how to negotiate the world of credit suggests citizen virtue, and whether charity can be used to restore credit once it is lost.

Early modern anxieties, about the exposure of women to the male gaze that have been discussed in Chapter 2, and in the comedies featuring in this chapter, were bound up with notions of women's 'credit', a complex and shifting concept, the slipperiness of which arises in part from the impossibilities of reconciling the ambiguities that this chapter has explored in connection with visibility and concealment. Among the places in which such tensions become apparent on stage are those in which commerce is practised. Many critics thinking about commerce and the stage have read into the dramas of late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century London anxiety about the breakdown of traditional feudal societies under the development of early capitalism.[76] The character of Thomas Gresham, merchant and founder of the Royal Exchange, depicted in Thomas Heywood's *2 If You Know Not Me You Know No-one,* is described by Jean Howard as 'schizophrenic', his contradictory nature indicative of anxieties about the redundancy of the old model of society under feudalism and the emergence of new social relations under nascent capitalism.[77] Catherine Belsey, in her analysis of *Arden of Faversham,* comments that the murder of Arden 'is primarily an instance of the breakdown of order − the rape of women and property − which follows when the exchange of contracts in the market economy supplants old loyalties, old obligations, old hierarchies.'[78] Jacobean revenge tragedy, Linda Woodbridge writes, reflects a sense of alienation from various aspects of early-modern society, 'the vagaries of life in a proto-capitalist marketplace, the sense that society was governed by forces beyond control, made audiences receptive to stories about people attempting to take control.'[79] Against these analyses which link the nascent capitalism of early modern London with a culture of alienation and social fragmentation, this study proposes that the plays that it discusses offer an alternative reading of the effects of commerce in the city. The breakdown of loyalties, obligations and hierarchies identified by Belsey in *Arden of Faversham* also destroys the Sanders, but while the Ardens may be characterised by greed, economic individualism and rapacity, George Sanders is never shown as anything other than honourable and creditworthy. Belsey argues that the cause of rape

---

[76] This assertion is discussed in more detail in the Introduction.
[77] Thomas Heywood, *The Second Part of, If you know not me, you know no bodie* (1606), STC 13336; *If You Know Not Me You Know Nobody*, ed. by Susan Doran (London: The Malone Society, 1935); Jean E. Howard, *Theater of a City*, p.57.
[78] Belsey, 'Alice Arden's Crime', p.136.
[79] Linda Woodbridge, *English Revenge Drama,* p.126.

and murder is the replacement of 'old loyalties, old obligations, old hierarchies' with contract exchange but George Sanders retains those ties of loyalty and obligation alongside his network of contracts. *A Warning* seems instead to apportion blame for murder on the indiscipline of men like Captain Browne, whose only employment is to follow others in service under the 'old' loyalties, obligations and hierarchies. While old structures may be being superseded in a changing London, we cannot read in these plays nostalgia or disquiet about the ways in which things are changing. Both *Edward IV* and *A Warning* propose the superiority of the independent life of merchants and skilled craftsmen, supported as it is by the institutions of London, against the dependency of the life of service of courtiers like Captain Browne or the 'courtnoles'(sig.C6^v;1.14.76) as Hobs the Tanner contemptuously calls them. These are plays in which commerce and charity are proposed as ways in which life in the city is organised, and we can see in them an exploration of the values that hold urban life together.

In *A Warning* we are presented with a detailed demonstration of George Sanders' financial and moral credit, and the ways in which it rests on new forms of written documentation that signify the network of commercial transactions by which it is established. In contrast to, and immediately following, scenes where a scheming widow, an Irish Captain and a serving man are shown conspiring against him, Sanders is shown in conference with his steward. Their brief and business-like discussion enumerates the large amounts of cash and bonds that Sanders needs to collect in, so that he can make his payment under a bond due that evening:

> SANDERS: Sirra, what bils of debt are due to me?
> MAN: All that were due sir as this day, are paid.
> SANDERS: You have inough then to discharge the bond
> Of maister *Ashmore's* fifteene hundred pound,
> That must be tendred on the Exchange to night?
> MAN: With that which maister *Bishop* owes, we have.
> SANDERS: When is his time to pay?
> MAN: This after noone.
> SANDERS: Hees a sure man, thou needst not doubt of him.
> In any case take heed vnto my credite,
> I doe not use (thou knowest), to breake my worde,
> Much lesse my bond: I pre thee looke vnto it,
> And when as master *Bishop* sends his money,
> Bring the whole summe: ile be vpon the Burse
> Or if I be not, thou canst take a quittance.[80]
> (sig. C1^v-C2^r; 559-573)

---

[80] 'A quittance' is a document releasing or discharging a debtor from his obligation.

Sanders is presented as a man of integrity; although his affairs are finely balanced he is shown as an expert manager of his own credit and reputation. He is concerned that the large amount owed to Ashmore should be paid as it falls due, and he is reliant on the money due to come in from Bishop to do this.

The Memoranda kept at St Botolph's formed part of a much wider sixteenth-century process, driven largely by the growth and increasing complexity of the city, whereby writing and the written record were coming to supplant memory and the spoken word as evidence of bonds of obligation. Increasingly in this period, as Andrew Gordon writes, 'the impermanence of urban sociability is countered in the written instruments of credit that appropriate the functions of memory.'[81] A merchant's books of account recorded what the merchant owed and what was owed to him, and so were crucial in determining his creditworthiness and for settling his estate after his death when memory was no longer available. Arthur Golding, who probably wrote the commendatory poem to James Peele's book on double-entry book-keeping, wrote in his account of the murder of George Saunders that the murder trial was delayed because 'the booke of maister Saunders accomptes and reckenings, whereupon depended the knowledge of his whole state, was myssing.'[82] Works on accounting by authors such as Peele and Jehan Ympyn Christoffels suggested that community is established by networks of memory, obligation and trust, and *A Warning* demonstrates that such networks are maintained and re-enforced by written documents.[83] Sanders' moral authority, his credit, is re-enforced by the absence of any mention of interest; in the world of the stage the taint of usury indicated a character as a villain, and by avoiding the suggestion of usury, Sanders' financial credit is more surely established.[84] This scene which shows Sanders diligently attending to his business affairs, establishes him not only as a rich merchant, but as a man of credit, at the centre of a network of financial transactions that create one form of community in London. The truth of his

[81] Gordon, *Writing London,* p.183*;* Adam Fox, 'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing'. Both Gordon and Fox find this transition from memory and the spoken word to records and written testimony to be more problematic and contested than is indicated in *A Warning* or the Memoranda.

[82] Golding*, A briefe discourse,*sig.B2ᵛ. On Golding's commendatory poem see Rebecca Tomlin, 'A New Poem by Arthur Golding?', *Notes and Queries*, 59.4 (2012), 501-505.

[83] James Peele, *The Pathe waye to perfectness* (1569) STC 19548; jehan Ympyn Christoffels, *A Notable and very excellent woorke* (1547) STC 26093.5..On writing and specifically merchants' credit see Ceri Sullivan, *The Rhetoric of Credit* (London:Associated University Presses, 2002); Mary Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998).

[84] Even though, as Orlin has remarked, lenders at interest were not, in fact, treated as moral outcasts, *Locating Privacy;* Kermode, 'Introduction', *Three Renaissance Usury Plays.* On gendered aspects of usury see Korda, *Labors Lost,* pp54-91.

word as a bond contrasts with the suspicion that a beggar's licence might be counterfeit. The relative credit, or credibility of a merchant and a beggar, and the extent to which that might lie in documentation, is held up for examination in church and on stage.

A Warning juxtaposes a scene showing how George Sanders fashions a form of male credit through commerce, with a more equivocal representation of female financial credit in the scene immediately following, where Anne Sanders is shown in negotiation with two tradesmen, a draper and a milliner. Karen Newman argues that women are depicted as monstrous when they leave the confinement of the domestic sphere to go into the city streets, to buy and sell in the market which is, at once, the public sphere and a place of consumption; the representation of consumption, she argues, is gendered and attributed to women.[85] Some of this uneasiness about the act of women shopping and consuming, even if not as satirically monstrous as in *Epicoene*, is conveyed by the scene of Anne purchasing luxury goods. A crisis arises when George refuses to give his wife the thirty pounds that she has requested so that she can pay for them immediately insisting that 'she must defer her market till tomorrow my great affairs must not be hindered by such trifling wares'(sig.C2^r; 579). To most of the audience, the thirty pounds that she intends to spend on linen, scented gloves and an Italian purse, would be far from 'trifling'. In an act of female shopping that contrasts with visits by men to shops as shown in, for example, *The Fair Maid of the Exchange, The Roaring Girl, The Shoemakers Holiday* and *Edward IV*, the draper and the milliner, both men, have brought their wares to Anne's house so that she can view them privately. Evelyn Welch has shown that early modern shopping 'was a series of relationships rather than a simple exchange of money for material goods' and that buying and selling goods in the sixteenth century revolved around financial credit and trust based on those relationships, an insight which is acted out in the scene between Anne and the tradesmen.[86] Anne appears to be an inexperienced or inexpert shopper, and although she is preparing to spend a large amount of money, she does not bargain or 'cheap' with the draper to whom she says 'I do like your linen, and you shall have your price' (C2^r;593). Despite saying that she does not believe that the perfume on them will last, she also offers to buy the gloves and purse without negotiation. Anne's failure to 'cheap' may simply represent fair dealing between her and the tradesmen, in which she does not use her powerful position to reduce their prices too far, aspiring to gentle generosity by not

---

[85] Karen Newman, 'City Talk: Women and Commodification, *Epicoene (*1609)' in *Staging the Renaissance*, pp.181-195.
[86] Welch's study is based on Renaissance Italy but many of her observations hold true for sixteenth century London. Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance,* p.226.

driving a hard bargain. Looked at the other way, she displays an extravagant failure to carry out a wife's duty to preserve the family's resources and in doing so maintain its economic stability, a neglect that diminishes her credit as a wife and foreshadows her more serious marital infidelity.[87]

When the family's servant appears to tell her that she cannot have the thirty pounds to pay the tradesmen Anne loses her temper, partly because receiving instructions from a servant lowers her own status: 'tis well that I must stand at your reversion, intreat my prentise, courtesy to my man: and he must be purse-bearer, when I need' (sig.C2^v;617). She perceives that her husband has failed to maintain the appropriate balance of power in the household; it was a husband's duty to support and maintain his wife's dominance over the rest of the household in order to maintain the appropriate order of authority and deference, and as the servant anticipates, Anne is unhappy that the servant is apparently placed higher in the household hierarchy than she is. Her main complaint however, is that she feels that she has lost face in front of the tradesmen by not fulfilling her side of the transaction, and that her credit is diminished, or 'breached':

> So that my breach of credit, in the while
> Is not regarded: I have brought these men,
> to have their money for such necessaries
> As I have bought, and they have honestly
> Delivered to my hands, and now forsooth
> I must be thought so bare and beggarly
> As they must be put of until tomorrow
> (C2^v;629-635)

As her judgement and ability to manage her household are called into question by this petulant display, her perception that her own credit is independent of her husband's and dependent on her own agency is also a sign of the breach in the Sanders' marriage. Clearly not thinking of her as 'bare and beggarly' the tradesmen respond by offering her credit based on her own ability to make a binding bargain: 'your word shalbe sufficient were it for thrice the value of my ware' (C2^v;637) says one; 'I would never desire better security for all I am worth' (C2^v;642-3) says the other. Despite the entreaties of the tradesmen who do not wish to lose a valuable sale, Anne refuses to accept the goods on credit with the simple explanation 'I have never used to go on credit' (C3^r;645). Not to 'go on credit' in the early modern period would be unusual; Craig Muldrew has demonstrated that the sixteenth-century economy was dependant on credit at all levels,

---

[87] On a woman's duty to husband the family's resources, see Hubbard, *City Women,* p.111.

even the smaller day to day shopping requirements.[88] Why then does Anne refuse to take the goods on credit, the play-goer might ask? There is perhaps a suggestion that she is an inexpert steward of her household resources, and an indication of her inadequate domestic care that will culminate in her connivance at her husband's murder. Anne is seen refusing to participate in the credit economy immediately after her husband has been shown fully immersed in it; her refusal of credit seems to indicate a breach in marital solidarity, feminine inadequacy and perhaps an absence of rationality.

Where the business calculations performed by George Sanders establish one sort of urban masculine credit, which is contrasted against his wife's failure to establish hers, the anxious self-auditing of Florilla in *An Humerous Day's Mirth* suggests another model of how female credit might be established, subject though it is to the satirical undermining of this comedy. The first entrance of the young Countess Florilla has her interrogating herself for idleness and trying to apply her 'earnest' theology:

> What haue I done? Put on too many clothes, the day is hote and I am hoter clad than might suffice health, my conscience telles me that I haue offended, and I'll put them off, that will ask time that might be better spent, one sin will draw another quickly so, see how the divell tempts!
> (sig. A4^v; 4.1-8)

Florilla is among the earliest depictions of a puritan on the English stage, and possibly the first female stage character to be called a 'puritan.'[89] In this play of 'humours' she represents the hypocrisy of religious adherence that is not backed up by any real understanding of theology. Popular protestant texts of the period encouraged rigorous examination of daily behaviour to ensure that godliness was maintained but where Bradford enjoins the faithful 'as in going abroad, you look that your apparel is seemly in the sight of men, so examine how seemly you appear in the sight of God', Florilla has stopped her self-examination at the level of apparel rather than the state of her soul.[90] The discovery of the cameos left by her husband on the ground provokes further doubt:

> Surely I feare I haue much sinned to stoupe and take them vp, bowing my bodie to an idle worke, the strength that I haue had to this uerie deed might haue been vsed to take a poore soule vp in the hie way.
> (sig.A4^v; 4.24-29)

As discussed above, Florilla offers the audience the opportunity to consider the

---

[88] Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation.*
[89] Edelman, *An Humorous Day's Mirth,* p.30; Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford and Sidney L. Sondergard, *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama Printed Plays, 1500-1660,* rev.(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
[90] Bradford, *A godlye medytacyon,* sig. B7^r.

difference between seeming religious and being virtuous and her scrupulous attempt to avoid sin satirises excessive 'puritan' self-auditing. James Aho comments on the links between accounting for sins and virtues and accounting for money arguing that the moral scrupulosity induced by Confession: 'an overly exacting, paralyzing anxiety; a dread even an offhand word, thought, or deed might, if undivulged to the priest, be the one that occasions eternal damnation', gave rise to the scrupulous record keeping that eventually evolved into the system of double-entry book-keeping.[91] One of the reasons that Luther condemned confession was that it led to the excessive pre-occupation with constantly recording and reporting sin, 'holy busywork' of no real virtue or value. Where Aho traces a pre-occupation with moral scrupulosity back to the Italian Catholic Church of the thirteenth century, it is more commonly linked in studies of English culture with the development of Protestant self-examination during the Reformation.[92] It is this process of self-examination that Lemot satirises when he reminds Florilla that the godly have a duty to 'prove' each others' virtue. Sanders undergoes a process of self-examination when he carefully checks that his credit will be maintained and this use of accounting rectitude as a sign of moral virtue is traced by Natasha Korda, who observes that 'by the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, an emergent ethos of Christian exactitude began to revalue diligence and precision in (ac)counting as virtues'; she goes on to argue that this was empowering for women who could use this perception of accurate accounting as a virtue to support the practise of lending at interest, including loans to theatrical companies.[93] Where Sanders' accounting establishes a masculine and social credit, Florilla's pedantic scrupulosity satirically reconfigures virtue into hypocrisy. The paralysis that is induced in Florilla by the impossibility of reconciling her bodily requirements, she is too hot, with the demands of godly behaviour, that all her actions be directed to some better task which she has yet to identify, epitomises the difficulty experienced by a woman in trying to fashion her own credit. In satirising Florilla's excessive and obsessive scrupulosity in her audit of her trivial 'sins', *An Humerous dayes Myrth* finds comedy in both the religious practices of the anti-theatrical godly and also possibly the accounting practices of women in the commercial world of the theatre.

If Florilla's counting is shown to be amusingly self-defeating because of its

---

[91] James Aho, *Confession and Bookkeeping: The Religious, Moral and Rhetorical Roots of Modern Accounting* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005), p.23.
[92] See for example, Poovey, *A History of the Modern Fact* and Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth Century England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004).
[93] Korda, *Labors Lost,* p.57.

disconnection from worldly realities − she never actually goes to the 'hie way' to pick up 'poor sovles' − Bess's reckoning establishes her virtue in the challenging moral environment of the tavern. Bess's financial virtue is established at the end of Act I when the General and Captains meet the Mayor of Plymouth to reckon up all the debts that the departing fleet has incurred as it was waiting to sail. The importance of the settlement to Plymouth is demonstrated by the high status of the figures involved in the negotiations, represented in dumb show, and the audience is intended to understand that this is a serious piece of civic business. Two tavern drawers comment on the difficulty of getting the large debts run up on credit settled, and note that Bess, unlike their own master, has received settlement for all her bills and cleared her books before leaving:

> Little knows Bess that my master hath got in these desperate debts.
> But she hath cast up her accounts and is gone. (I.3.11-12)

Unlike the tavern's customers, who are not to be found when the bill is to be settled, Bess's affairs are in order before she leaves Plymouth. Her facility with managing her accounts confirms her capacity to manage the world around her.

Later, Clem, the apprentice drawer who she has acquired along with the Windmill in Foy, reports to Bess, his new mistress, that he is taking a reckoning of eight shillings and sixpence to some customers in the Mermaid room. Her interest in the men is financial: 'here they vent many brave commodities, By which some gain accrews. Th'are my good customers, and still returne me profit' (C4ᵛ; II.1.54-56). When Bess queries the size of the bill, Clem takes her, and the audience through his arithmetic step by step. They have, he says, had 'six quarts of wine at seven pence the quart -seven sixpences' (D1ʳ; II.1.120) and twelve pennyworth of anchovies. Clem is able to multiply and knows that six multiplied by seven is the same as seven multiplied by six; Bess likewise makes the correct calculation 'Well, wine- three shillings and sixpence.' (D1ʳ; II.1.125). Clem proposes rounding this to ten groats (a groat equals four pence) but his new total of forty pence, is, as Bess points out two pence short. So instead Clem adds sixpence to the wine, rounding it up to four shillings and adds a further sixpence to the anchovies, 'for twelve penyworth of Anchoves, 18d' (D1ʳ; II.1.132). He adds a generous further two shillings and sixpence for 'Bread, beer, salt, napkins, trenchers, one thing with another' (D1ʳ; II.1.139). Bess keeps up with him throughout these calculations 'And what for the other halfe-crowne?' (D1ʳ;II.1.138) Finally, he totals all this up and if the audience has been following his reckoning they will notice that in the final addition, which should amount to eight shillings (wine 4 shillings + anchovies 18d

+ cover 2shillings 6d) Clem has slipped in a further additional sixpence, 'so the *summa totalis* is - eight s, 6d'(D1ʳ;II.1.140). He departs with a final pun on the double meanings of 'cast', both to add up and to vomit: 'Send them in but another pottle of Sacke, and they will cast up the reckoning of themselves.'(D1ʳ; II.1.144) Strangely perhaps, in a play that repeatedly establishes Bess's financial credit, she colludes with this false accounting and the play seems simply to accept the rough and ready morality that a fool, or at least a drunkard, and his money are soon parted. The comic opportunity afforded by allowing the audience to experience the bewildering arithmetic of the quick-thinking Clem was clearly too much fun to bring down to earth with careful accounting.[94] Bess's otherwise orderly running of her establishment is in sharp contrast with that of Ursula in Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) who sells roast pork, ale and tobacco, and instructs her tapster Mooncalf on how to cheat their customers by frothing up the beer as it is poured, taking the customers' glasses away before they are finished, and joining in the drinking himself: 'drinke with all companies, though you be sure to be drunke; you'll mis-reckon the better, and be lesse asham'd on't' (D2ʳ;2.2.81-82).[95] Where Ursula and Mooncalf cheat their customers in every way they can think of, we do not see Bess resort to this kind of behaviour; she is 'the Fair Maid' in more sense than one.[96]

Revenge drama of the period, Linda Woodbridge argues, is suffused with a hyper consciousness of debt and indebtedness, foreclosure and financial ruin that pervades the language it uses and makes a radical claim for 'fairness', modelled in the early modern mind as a balance of give and take, analogous to the balanced system of double- entry bookkeeping.[97] To 'get even', she argues, you must have a sense of equality. She places mathematics within this discourse as a way of expressing and thinking about equality and in doing so argues that it opens a door to social radicalism; 'status stripped equivalents were enabled by a pervading consciousness of numbers.'[98] Clem, with his facility for arithmetic and his awareness of what it can do for him, is

---

[94] Trevor Nunn's abridged version of *The Fair Maid* retained this scene as the third of his twenty-two, barely altered. In doing so, he emphasised its importance in establishing the characters of Bess and Clem, and made their commercial activity central to the adaptation's presentation of Bess. Royal Shakespeare Company, *An adaptation*, p.14. Rowland does not rate this production highly 'I shall pass over in indignant silence the abomination that was Trevor Nunn's adaptation', Rowland, *Thomas Heywood's Theatre,* p.99, n.35.

[95] Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew fayre* in *The Works. Second Volume* (1631) STC 14753.5. *Bartholomew Fair* ed. by John Creaser in *The Cambridge edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol. IV ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.253-428.

[96] Korda, *Labors Lost,* p.197.

[97] Woodbridge, *Revenge Drama*, p.91.

[98] Woodbridge, *Revenge Drama*, p.259.

perhaps the comic equivalent of Woodbridge's revenger. Although only 'newly come into my teens' (sig.C3v; II.1.30) he is already aware of ways to get even with customers who have drunk too much to add up their own bills. Bess initially wants Clem to write the customers a bill but by refusing to write down his calculations, he is able to 'bring them in a reck'ning at six and at sevens' (sig D1[r]; II.ii.124), which deliberately confuses them. Clem relies on drink inhibiting his customers' ability to check his reckoning and also on the inability of many gentlemen to perform even simple mathematical calculations. In the sixteenth century arithmetic was seen as a commercial skill and not an intellectual activity; in his essay on early modern numeracy, Keith Thomas quotes John Aubrey on the relative mathematical skills of a drawer like Clem and his customers whose education was focused on literacy and not numeracy: "Aubrey may not have been far wrong when he asserted that 'a Barre-boy at an Alehouse will reckon better and readier than a Master of Arts in the University.'"[99] On the early modern stage, a disregard for performing calculations suggested loftier concerns than mere money, so that concern with arithmetic is used as an insult by characters like Armado in *Love's Labour Lost* who declares loftily that 'I am ill at Reck'ning, it fitteth the spirit of a tapster' (I.ii.40-1) or Iago who uses it against the 'bookish theoric' Cassio, dismissing him as 'a great arithmetician.' (I.1.18, 23).[100] Paula Blank writes that ' "Numbering" is regarded by many of Shakespeare's characters as a matter of rote, prosaic, dully methodized, the business of unimaginative or simple-minded boors.'[101] Against this characterisation that Blank draws, we might recall however that Armado is a fop and Iago a villain and the credit of neither is enhanced by their disdain for arithmetic; such contempt for being good at arithmetic is often a reason to mistrust the judgment of a Shakespearian character. The 'counter-caster' Cassio survives to punish Iago and in Shakespeare's work generally 'there is a close link between the indisputable authority of figures in an account book and the moral balance sheet.'[102] Clem's ability to reckon, and to outwit his gentlemen customers offers a rejoinder to the self-regarding Armando or Iago who thinks that reckoning is below him and celebrates the numeracy of the tradesman.

Clem is a comic character, 'a splendid mixture of the classical cunning servant,

---

[99] Keith Thomas, 'Numeracy in Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 37 (1987), 103-132 (p.109).

[100] William Shakespeare, 'Love's Labour's Lost' and 'The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice', both in *The Oxford Shakespeare*, pp.307-336 and pp. 873-908. See Keith Thomas, 'Numeracy'.

[101] Paula Blank, *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), pp.123-4.

[102] Vivian Thomas, *Shakespeare's Political and Economic Language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), pp. 245-6.

the clown-fool of medieval ancestry, and the Elizabethan honest apprentice' and his cheeky arithmetic is entertaining.[103] Although he is positioned as the 'Fool' in the drama, Clem with his ready wit and mathematical fluency is certainly no fool. It is hard to imagine him being teased as Poins and Hal tease Francis, the drawer from the Boar's Head in *1 Henry IV,* although it might be said of Clem, as Hal says of Francis, 'his industry is upstairs and downstairs; his eloquence the parcel of a reckoning' (II.5.1-112).[104] When Hal teases Francis, there is an undertone of cruel bullying, in which the audience are invited to partake as they laugh at Francis, who is unable to complete a sentence as he is forced to rush between customers crying 'anon'. Clem on the other hand, shows that eloquence is available to a humble drawer, if only he is given the opportunity to speak, and he owns the drawer's cry of 'anon': 'The first line of my part was, Anon anon sir' (sig. F3[r]; III.3.98), he says to Goodlack. In *A Fair Maid,* Clem teases the audience with his rapid mental arithmetic, challenging them to keep up with his facility; those who cannot miss the joke. The play's audience is expected to see through through Clem's Latin tags and circumlocution and laugh with him at the gentlemen on stage, and perhaps also at those among them in the audience.[105] If, as Linda Woodbridge argues, Jacobean revenge drama, in its fixation on fairness and relish of vigilantism reveals 'widespread resentment of systemic unfairness – economic, political and social' in which 'revenge' represents a radical redrawing of economic inequalities, then we may find in *The Fair Maid* its mirror-image, redrawing economic inequalities between men and women as a radical celebration of Clem's wit and Bess's economic success.[106]

Bess Bridges' career as the bold and adventurous 'Fair Maid' is a romantic reflection on the reign of Elizabeth I, described by Mullisheg as 'the virgin queen, so famous through the world, the mighty empress of the maiden isle' (sig.H4[v];V.1.89-90) and one of Bess's heroic qualities is the ability to make and disperse fantastic sums of money.[107] When Spencer has to leave Portsmouth abruptly she is able to give him 'the hundred pund you gave me late […] beside what I have stor'd and sav'd which makes it fifty more' (sig.C1[v];I.3.31-33). Bess's commercial activities are, in contrast to Ursula's in *Bartholomew Fair,* orderly in every respect and she is well-rewarded: 'for money

---

[103] Royal Shakespeare Company, *An adaptation*, p.14.
[104] William Shakespeare, '1 Henry IV', *The Oxford Shakespeare,* pp.481-509. In this scene from before Hal's 'reformation' Shakespeare uses his disdain for reckoning to indicate Hal's lack of judgment.
[105] Turner is silent on the miscalculations in this scene.
[106] Woodbridge, *Revenge Drama*, p.7.
[107] The absurd excess of Bess's fortunes are revealed when she tells the Mullisheg that she is still 'not fully yet seventeen.' (sig.H4[v];V.1.74).

flows and my gain's great' (sig.D1ʳ;II.2.148-9). She funds her voyage to find Spencer with the small fortune that she has amassed besides his legacy: 'four thousand besides this legacy, in jewels, gold, and silver' (sig.F4ᵛ;III.4.90-91). Unlike Ursula, or other money-making characters of the City Comedies, Bess's commercial acumen does not appear as monstrous, exploitative or obscene and her commercial behaviour is never challenged, even when she appears to condone Clem cheating her customers. Her moral rectitude is confirmed when, having bought a ship to go and rescue Spencer, she disposes of the rest of her huge fortune, not through consumption but through charity:

> To set up young beginners in their trade, a thousand pound.
> To relieve such as have had loss by Sea, five hundred pound.
> To every Maid that's married out of Foy whose name's Elizabeth, ten pound.
> To relieve maimed Soldiers, by the year ten pound.
> (sig.G2ʳ;IV.2.29-37)

She also rewards Goodlack for his service to her, honours Spencer's previous legacies, and leaves something for her servants. Bess's charitable gifts, which are to be administered by the Mayor and Alderman, integrate her into the community and memory of Foy and mitigate concerns that the audience might have about how she raised her fortune. The causes which she supports, besides having personal significance to her, reflect the collections held at St Botolph's, for maimed soldiers, newly-weds and those who have suffered at sea - her generosity is clear when the real collections of a few shillings are compared to the many pounds that she endows. In *Edward IV,* Lord Mayor Crosby muses on his similar charitable legacy; like Bess, he has built a fortune from humble beginnings, and like Bess's, his charitable gifts have personal resonance; he leaves gifts to the man who found him as a baby, to the Hospital which raised him, and erects Crosby Hall as a 'poor house'. Rowland sees in the character of Mayor Crosby a sly reference to 'the most unpopular lord mayor of the Elizabethan period', Sir John Spencer, and argues that Crosby's building of his Hall was seen by Stow and others as a kind of over- reaching.[108] Although Bess's bequests are treated with absolute seriousness within the dramatic world of the play, perhaps there is also here an ironic dig at the rich of London and their self- aggrandising attempts to spiritually launder dubiously accrued wealth through charitable legacies and 'good works' of the kind that Rowland sees at work in *Edward IV*. But any underlying ironic intent is hard to detect in *The Fair Maid*; Bess's legacy is met with approval all round, mixed with an acknowledgement that Bess is exceptional: 'you want a precedent' the Mayor tells her,

---

[108] Rowland, *Edward IV,* p.52.

'you so abound in charity and goodness'(sig.G2ʳ; IV.2.45-6).

The potentially redemptive quality of charity is seen at work in *Edward IV*, a play in which charity and its consequences is one of the issues that is explored. Once Jane becomes the king's mistress, the main activity in which we see her engaged is petitioning Edward for various good causes. This aspect of her character is taken from More, who says of Mistress Shore:

> Where the king tooke displeasure, shee would mitigate and appease his mind: where men were out of favour, she would bring them in his grace. For manie that had highlie offended shee obtained pardon. Of great forfeitures she gat men remission. Finallie, in manie weightie sutes she stood manie a man in great stead, either for none or verie small rewards.[109]

More confesses that he is puzzled as to why she was willing to help people without reward; perhaps, he wonders, 'she was content with the deed it selfe well doone; or for that she delighted to be sued unto, and to shew what she was able to doo with the king; or for that wanton women and wealthie be not alwaies covetous.'[110] *Edward IV'*s Jane is motivated by none of these reasons, she speaks of penitence and a desire to mitigate her sins, even though 'the world doth know too well,| That all the coals of my poor charity| cannot consume the scandal of my name'(2.9.33-36). In a scene where she deals with various petitioners, she utilises the mercantile knowledge that she has acquired during her life in London to refuse the petition of the villain Rufford, who asks for licences to export corn and lead. The granting of export licences was an important tool of patronage and Jane uses her understanding of the complex import and export businesses of London in the interest of the poor and needy. The export of corn was a highly sensitive issue in the 1590s because serious food shortages had followed four bad harvests up to 1597.[111] Jane speaks on behalf of the poor of the city against greedy speculators when she scolds Rufford:

> I had your bil, but I haue torne your bill, and 'tware no shame I thinke, to teare your eares, that care not how you wound the commonwealth. The poor must sterue for food to fill your purse. And the enemie bandie bullets of our lead. (sig.E6ʳ;1.22.65-68)

Watching her, Matthew Shore notes that the power that she has to intercede with the king has made her a public figure; in her position as king's mistress she is able to do

---

[109] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.725.
[110] More, 'The historie of king Edward the fifth', p.725.
[111] Ian W. Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*.

more good than she could as a private person, as she intervenes to obtain mercy for various petitioners. Two of them, Jockie and Aire, become her devoted followers in Part II, as the question unfolds of whether her transgression against Matthew and her marriage can be overcome by her charity towards others.

In Part II of the play, each encounter that Jane has with Matthew involves a form of charity as a version of the seven acts of mercy is enacted.[112] After he observes her with the petitioners Matthew leaves the country, and when he returns, under the assumed name of Flood, he is falsely accused of piracy and held in the Marshalsea prison. Jane is, as Jockie explains, a weekly visitor at the city's prisons and hospitals, who gives money to buy the inmates food. As a plot device, this allows Jane unknowingly to intervene to save Matthew's life but it also shows that she retains a strong connection with London and its people. The congregation of St Botolph's regularly collected for the prisoners at the Marshalsea and for individual prisoners at the city's other prisons (see Chapter 1) and this very localised London charity connects the figure of Jane on stage to the playgoers watching her. Jane visits the sick when she tends to Mathew's wounds, incurred as he tried to save the young princes from Catesby and Lovell. Later, when she is expelled from the city and it is forbidden to offer her any assistance, those who Jane has helped earlier, try to offer her clothing, food and drink; consequently Jockie is whipped, and Master Aire, who she once saved from hanging, is hanged for treason. Like other characters he expresses a strong belief that charity is reciprocal; he says that he would 'rather choose to die for charity,| than live condemned of ingratitude' (sig.L3^r;2.21.28-9). Mistress Blage, Jane's old neighbour, is merciless when she expels Jane from her house following Richard's edict and the play punishes her harshly for this failure; all of her goods are unjustly confiscated by Richard and she is reduced to begging 'with her basket and clap-dish' (sig.K8^r;2.20.*sd*). Although she is forgiven by Jane, at the end of the play it is reported that 'Mistress Blage, for her ingratitude| To Mistress Shore, lies dead, unburied,| And no one will afford her burial' (sig.L8^r;2.23.77-80); it is Richard, not the people of London who ensure that the corpse is interred and not just left to lie in the fields outside Aldgate. Burial of the dead is the final act of mercy, and Jane and Matthew dig Aire's grave themselves as their last act before dying; their own bodies are taken to the Minories, located close to both St Botolph's and to the Boar's Head theatre. *Edward IV* shows its audience examples of how London, and very precisely, the area around Aldgate, can be the space in which the

---

[112] The Seven acts of mercy include: burial of the dead, visiting prisoners, feeding the hungry, refreshing the thirsty, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked and visiting the sick. See Chapter 1.

acts of mercy are practised.

As I have shown, the petitions required parishioners to exercise judgement and to balance the religious duty to be charitable with the requirement to be assess the honesty and merit of the petitioner. These plays also raise questions of virtue and charity and their connection with commerce and credit for play-goers. In viewing these plays, audiences are required to contemplate whether the credit of 'public' women like Bess or Jane Shore can be redeemed by their charity. In Florilla, we are presented with the emptiness of piety practised without any real understanding of the principles behind it, or ability to make judicious decisions about helping those less in need. The credit, and credibility, of a man like George Sanders rests in his word, and we are shown how carefully that is constructed; unlike a beggar bearing a petition, his credit does not rest in the slippery evidence of the written text. Theatre and church then present different stories of early modern London that juxtapose ideas of credit, community, commerce and charity. While not claiming that the theatre had the overt intention of teaching its audiences how to respond to these sometimes conflicting concepts, it can be seen that each form of narrative presents its hearer with aspects of the same dilemmas; how to be charitable, the perils of hypocrisy, the evaluation of merit and credibility. How to be a good neighbour, and who your neighbour was, is I argue, a question intrinsic to both petitions and the plays I have discussed here.

5. **Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that commercial urban spaces, shops, taverns, ordinaries and their intermediate status as spaces that were neither private or public complicated simple binaries about the place and spaces for women in early modern London. Sidney defended comedy by claiming that its function was to reveal home truths upon which its audience could act; 'but I speake to this purpose, that all the end of the comicall part, bee not vpon such scornefull matters as stir laughter onely, but, mixt with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of Poesie.'[113] If the 'warning' in *A Warning* is that tragedy arises when a woman like Anne Sanders strays from the closed boundaries of her domestic sphere, this chapter investigates what an audience might learn from a woman like Bess Bridges, the eponymous *Fair Maid,* whose home is a 'public house' with open access to anyone who chooses to enter or conversely from Florilla 'the

---

[113] Sidney, *An apologie for poetrie* sig.K3^r.

puritane' who tries to withdraw entirely from social life. In these scenes set in the 'public' houses of London, women like Bess and Jaquena occupy a liminal position between the poles of public and private, commercial and domestic, money and love. These scenes dramatize the surveillance used to ensure conformity with patriarchal values, which, even as they are comically resisted, are used to re-enforce community and to assert spatial practices of gender and hierarchy. In the places that allowed such surveillance, the commercial activities that produce spaces such as the tavern and the ordinary, are shown to support and re-enforce community in early modern London. The comedy in *The Fair Maid* and *An Humerous Day's Mirth* arises in part from their confrontation of the contradictions under which a woman's credit was constructed in relation to the patriarchal ideal of a feminised, private, domestic sphere. Where female credit is negotiated in spatial practice, it is also accounted for on stage in terms of commercial behaviour and charitable benevolence, activities which legitimise the presence of a woman in the public realm.

Conclusion

Through its examination of alms petitions and plays alongside each other, this study has made connections between some of the ways in which being an early modern Londoner was both experienced and mediated in the spaces of church and playhouse. Through petitions and plays, I have examined from different angles, the duties, concerns and relationships that made up the experience of neighbourhood in early modern London. Looking at plays as diverse as *A Warning for Fair Women,* a tragedy based on historical events, and *The Fair Maid of the West,* a comic romantic fantasy, which are connected by being early representations of London's spaces, tells us about the ways in which stories were used to respond to, and negotiate, the complex urban culture within which early modern Londoners lived their lives. Placing the St Botolph's alms petitions in to a literary context has allowed their relationship with other literary texts, and especially drama, to be revealed. Different ways of story-telling, plays and petitions, have been shown to be concerned with common themes of space, gender, community and commerce, and the complex ways in which these interact in the city.

In Chapter 1 the narratives of deeply personal disasters recorded in the alms petitions were shown to be mediated by generic convention and to respond to the wider contemporary discourse around truth and credibility surrounding beggars. It found that the space just outside of the City's gates at Aldgate was a site where language, space and performance were highly controlled, at least within the church, and where communal integration was achieved through instruments of control and supervision. The ways in which London's spaces were created on stage through the appropriation of the city's stories was discussed in Chapter 2, which explored some of the ways in which generic expectations are subverted and the real places of London appropriated on stage to fashion an identity for citizens which is distinct from that of courtiers, aristocrats and other non-Londoners. In claiming the ability to tell London's histories as tragedy and to own the city's streets, practices that make neighbourhoods in the city are intertwined with sense of belonging fostered by the exchanges of commerce. Who belongs in the city and the neighbourhood, and who does not, is a recurring issue here and in the collections. Examining tragic stories of Jane Shore and Anne Sanders allowed for the exploration of the ways in which men could find security in neighbourhood but for women, gendered uses of space were much more unstable and risky; the tension arising from conflicting claims about women's proper use of the city's spaces leads to tragedy

in these plays. Scenes depicting contemporary commercial spaces, the tavern and the ordinary, reveal them to be gendered in complex ways as Chapter 3 moved onto plays which adopt the comic mode to present entirely imaginary stories set in the quotidian spaces of London. This chapter contains an account of the ways in which female visibility was risky but paradoxically could also function as a means of protective communal supervision of moral behaviour of both men and women. The problematic privacy of Florilla's garden in *An Humerous Day's Mirth* is shown to ridicule expectations that women might remain entirely cloistered away from society. Finally, the examination of the relationship on stage between credit and creditability, and the ways in which these attributes are staged as being maintained through the performance of careful accounting or charitable generosity, brings the thesis back to themes that emerged from the study of the petitions discussed in Chapter 1.

This thesis started by asking what the plays of the late sixteenth century could tell us about the ways in which commerce was perceived in the city and whether it was always regarded with the mistrust and hostility that the dominant narrative about early modern drama suggests, focused as it is on the city comedies and flavoured perhaps by a modern hostility towards people who are engaged in commercial activity. It intended to explore the ways in which the stories told in the collection petitions, which also seemed to have an economic theme, would share certain concerns and themes with the plays performed in the contemporary city. How might Londoners see their city presented in the church on Sunday, through the medium of the petitions, and then on stage during the week? Would the two contradict or re-enforce each other? If narrative is a way to comprehend experience, what version of reality do these narratives shape, what do they include or exclude and in what ways can different narratives reflect on and shape one another? It has found that the relationships between plays and petitions is complex and subtle, and that plays such as *A Warning* and *Edward IV* may offer very different responses to what seems to be similar circumstances around their creation. This study demonstrates certain common concerns in both the petitions and the plays selected for study and throughout, the recurring theme of place and space in the urban setting emerges. The spaces of church and playhouse are shown to be spaces of performance, and the performative nature of spatial practises, from the parish's alms collections, to the watchful eye kept over Bess Bridges by the civic authorities of Fowey, emerges as a major theme of this study. From the maimed soldier attempting to persuade the churchwarden to allow his petition, to the consequences of Anne Sanders sitting unattended on her front step, the gendered and socially stratified uses of

London's spaces in relationships of patriarchy, patronage and power emerged as a recurring thematic concern.

In considering the narratives by which early modern Londoners tried to explore and interpret their rapidly changing city, this study has moved from the highly mediated stories of the petitioners whose claims were based on a complex version of reality, through the dramatized versions of historical events and people to the entirely fictional characters and events set in imagined spaces of the city. During this process recurring questions have arisen- how are these stories presented? Whose stories are they? How do they create meaning for the people who experience their telling? What, if anything is 'real', 'true' or 'authentic' about them? Do the collection petitions convey anything more 'real' about the experience of being a Londoner than a play? The stories told in the Memoranda of St Botolph's, and these early representations of London illuminate each other, allowing for a more nuanced reading of each.

The first chapter deals with texts which are the material records of 'real' stories of suffering and loss, told by people who did exist, in a building which was central to a real place, the parish of St Botolph's, Aldgate. Chapter 2 shifts to imaginative representations of historical events and people, who populate the places of London which can be traced in another imaginative way of capturing reality, Norden's street plan. The spaces of commerce created in the plays on which Chapter 3 focuses, the ordinaries and taverns of early modern London feature entirely fictional people and places, including Bess's tavern and Verone's ordinary. In these shifting versions of reality, questions of truth and credibility are raised, sometimes playfully, as in the question of whether 'Paris' is really Paris in *An Humerous Day's Mirth* (Chapter 3)*,* sometimes with deadly seriousness in the case of the Jarkeman and his counterfeit writings (Chapter 1). Ownership and interpretation of events such as the fire in Beccles (Chapter 1) or the story of the Shores (Chapter 2) are shown to be contested and shaped according to the demands of both writer and audience. From the counterfeit beggar, to the disguised King Edward, to Bess Bridges dressing herself as boy to bring Roughman to order, recipients of these texts are invited to make judgements about authenticity, truth and credibility in the stories that they tell. Demands that the churchwardens and alms-givers of the parish give judiciously, are shown to be reflected in the demands made on the playgoers who watched the performance. A reciprocal relationship is suggested, between playgoer and congregant, petitioner and donor, character and playgoer in which the performance fashions both petitioner and donor, character and playgoer.

There are many studies that investigate the ways in which the changes in early modern London between 1550-1600 were responded to by its inhabitants. In this study I have utilised literary techniques to build an understanding of the ways in which writing articulated experiences of London. Reading material which is more often treated as historical or dramatic source material as literary texts enables their common ground as texts about space to be uncovered, and the reciprocal shaping of Londoners in their spatial practices to be revealed. The boundaries between disciplines and genres, between literature, its context and social history have been approached, and at times pushed at, in order to show how those common themes are addressed. The thresholds between text and context, literature and history have been fruitfully crossed at times, for example, in the discussion of the way in which *Edward* IV's appropriation of history differs from that of Shakespeare's *Richard III,* or Thomas More's account of the same events. Underlying this approach has been the assumption that any understanding of the literary products of early modern London is enhanced by an increased understanding of the people by whom, and for whom, they were created. Conversely, the literature that they have left us allows a better understanding of those people themselves. Most of the individuals for whom the plays were first produced remain invisible, having left no written trace of their experience, especially the local people who lived and worked alongside playhouses and theatres. In the case of the Boar's Head and St Botolph's, these were places that were physically almost alongside each other, and in them, collective understandings of the city were shaped. An attempt to imaginatively empathise with the effect on playgoers of watching characters defend the city at Aldgate, enacted in a theatre just along the road is necessarily difficult and partial, reflecting both the complexity of any such reaction and the limitations of our own knowledge. An approach that combines close reading of texts with attention to the conditions in which those texts were produced allows a reciprocal relationship of reading between text and context that enriches both.

The alms narratives heard at St Botolph's were the subject of this study because they were rare survivals of an activity that probably happened in the city's churches on a weekly basis, the traces of which are now, in most cases, lost to us. Records from another church or churches, especially one of the small, rich parishes in the centre of the city, would have shown a different relationship to the staged places of London than St Botolph's. The ephemeral nature of the original petitions also means that most of them are known only from the abbreviated versions in the Memoranda, records prepared for a very specific purpose and accordingly narrow in their concerns. Adjusting another

boundary of the study to admit plays from a later period, and Middleton's or Jonson's acerbic satires, for example, would have identified a very different response to the places and spaces of the city. Imagining 'city comedies' in something of an opposition to the works dealt with in this thesis has shaped its response to the material, as has the decision to avoid privileging the works of Shakespeare over other literature of the period. The limitations and instability of the Memoranda point to the other less visible lacuna in our knowledge- how audiences were made up, how the St Botolph's congregation responded to Reformation, and especially how any individual out of the thousands in the theatre and in the parish reacted to any cultural product at any time.

This study is focused on the petitions for collections that were held in a particular church in a relatively short period, from 1583 -1600. The turbulence of this particular period in London's history is reflected in the Memoranda which record, albeit at times obliquely, the impact on St Botolph's parish of the plague outbreak of 1592/3, growing poverty and disputes over development of the land around the city.[1] The importance of this study is to show that many of the concerns in this rich, but very tightly focused, archive can be seen to be reflected in the drama of the period. The stories that were performed, in church and on stage, are shown to both be ways of mediating the experience of living in early modern London, and shaping responses to that experience.

---

[1] The start of the plague is recorded in the Memoranda but several months in 1592/3 are missing, either because no Memoranda were kept in that period, or because that volume(s) has become separated from the rest and somehow lost. The parish registers for the period survive, however, and record many hundreds of deaths in the parish from plague.

Bibliography – Material Produced Before 1650

[1] Manuscript Sources
[2] Early Play Texts, 1550-1650
[3] Printed Petitions and Proclamations
[4] Other Early Print Sources, 1550-1650

Bibliography – Material Produced After 1650

[5] Modern Play Editions
[6] Modern Editions of Other Early Print Sources
[7] Other Post-1650 Material
[8] Online Databases and Websites

Material Produced Before 1650

Place of publication for all early printed material is London unless otherwise stated. All titles and author attributions follow *ESTC* for printed sources and the relevant library catalogue entry for manuscript sources, including capitalization and punctuation.

[1] **Manuscript Sources**

London, London Metropolitan Archives, P69/BOT2/A/002/MS09221,
    P69/BOT2/A/003/MS09223 and P69/BOT2/A/019/MS 09234/001-007
Washington, Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.174.

[2] **Early Play Texts, 1550-1650**

anon., *A vvarning for faire vvomen* (1599), STC 25089
—   *The lamentable and true tragedie of M. Arden of Feuersham in Kent* (1592), STC 733
—   *The Fayre Mayde of the Exchange* (1607), STC 13317
Beaumont, Francis, *The knight of the burning pestle* (1613), STC 1674
Chapman, George, *The Blind Beggar of Alexandria* (1598), STC 4965
—   *A pleasant comedy entituled: An humerous dayes myrth* (1599), STC 4987
Dekker, Thomas, *The shomakers holiday. Or The gentle craft* (1599), STC 6523
Haughton, William, *English-men for my money: or, A pleasant comedy, called, A woman will haue her will* (1616), STC 12931
Heywood, Thomas, *The first and second partes of King Edward the fourth* (1599), STC 13342
—   *If you knovv not me, you know no bodie: or, The troubles of Queene Elizabeth* (1605), STC 13328
—   *The Second Part of, If you know not me, you know no bodie* (1606), STC 13336
—   *The rape of Lvcrece, A True Roman Tragedie* (1608), STC 13360
—   *The foure prentises of London* (1615), STC 13321
—   *The fair maid of the vvest Or*, *A girle worth gold*, first and second parts (1631), STC 13320
Jonson, Ben, *The comicall satyre of euery man out of his humor* (1600), STC 14769 and also in *The works of Beniamin Jonson, Vol.1* (1616), STC 14751
—   *Euery man in his humur* (1601), STC 14766
—   'Bartholomew fayre: a comedie', in *The workes of Beniamin Ionson* (1631), STC 14753.5

Marston, John, *The Dutch courtezan* (1605), STC 17475

Middleton, Thomas, *A chast mayd in Cheape-Side* (1630), STC 17877

— *Michaelmas Terme* (1607), STC 17890

— *The Roaring Girl. Or Moll Cut-Purse* (1611), STC 17908

Peele, George, *The Old Wives Tale* (1595), STC 19545

Wilson, Robert, *A right excellent and famous comedy called the three Ladies of London* (1584), STC 25784

[3] **Printed Petitions and Proclamations**

To the justices of peace, or cheef gentlemen of our parishes, and all other officers, toward the furtherance of this good woorke (1575), STC 8068

An exemplification of her Maiesties Letters Pattent, concerning the reparations of her Highnesse Towne and Port of Hastings *in the countie of* Sussex (1578), STC 8101

The exemplification of the Queenes Majesties letters pattents directed for the reliefe of Gregory Pormorte, marchant of the towne of Kingstone upon Hull (1586), STC 8158

Whereas wee are credably certefied as well by the pittifull supplication and petition of our poore & true subiect Hugh Euance (1591), STC 8203.5

The Queenes Maiesty vnderstanding of the common wandring abroad of a great multitude of her people, whereof the most part pretend, that they haue serued in the warres of late on the other side of the seas (1591), STC 8210.

Wheras the Queenes Maiestie doth vnderstand, that notwithstanding her late proclamation concerning such persons as wander abroad in the habite of souldiers, there are diuers persons pretending to haue serued in the late warres and seruice as souldiers (1592), STC 8218.

A proclamation for suppressing of the multitude of idle vagabonds, and auoyding of certaine mischieuous dangerous persons from her Maiesties court (1594), STC 8236.

Elizabeth by the grace of God Queene of England, France and Ireland ... to all and singuler archbishops, bishops ... whereas we are credibly giuen to vnderstand, as well by the pitifull supplication and petition of our poore and true subiects ... of our townes of Pensance, Mousehole, and Newlin (1595), STC 8247.6

A proclamation against sundry abuses practised by diuers lewd & audacious persons falsly naming themselues messengers of her Maiesties Chamber (1596), STC 8249

A booke containing all svch proclamations as were pvblished dvring the raigne of the late queene elizabeth, collected by Humfrey Dyson (1618), STC 7758.3

[4] Other Print Sources, 1550-1650

anon., *The True lamentable discourse of the burning of Teuerton* (1598), STC 24093

anon., *The wofull lamentation of Mistris Iane Shore a goldsmiths wife of London* (1620?), STC 22463.5

Awdelay, John, *The fraternitye of uacabondes* (1575), STC 994

Baldwin, William, *A myrrour for magistrates* (1563), STC 1248

Bateman, Stephen, *A christall glasse of christian reformation* (1569), STC 1581

Bradford, John, *A godlye medytacyon* (1559), STC 3483

Christoffels, Jan Ympyn, *A notable and very excellente woorke* (1547), STC 26093.5

Churchyard, Thomas, 'How Shores wife, Edwarde the fowerthes concubine, was by king Richarde despoiled of all her goods and forced to do open penance', in William Baldwin, *A myrrour for magistrates* (1571) STC 1249, sigs.Vv^v-Xiiii^r

Chute, Anthony, *Beawtie dishonoured vvritten under the title of Shores wife* (1593), STC 5262

Colse, Peter, *Penelopes complaint: or, A mirrour for wanton minions* (1596), STC 5582

Derricke, John, *The image of Irelande, with a discouerie of vvoodkarne* (1581), STC 6734

Drayton, Michaell, *Englands heroicall epistles* (1597), STC 7193

Gascoigne, George, *The noble arte of venerie or hunting* (1575), STC 24328

Gilby, Anthony, *A pleasaunt dialogue, betweene a souldior of Barwicke, and an English chaplaine* (Middelburg [?]1581), STC 11888

Golding, Arthur, *A briefe discourse of the late murther of master George Saunders* (1573), STC 11985

— *The. xv. bookes of P. Ouidius Naso, entytuled Metamorphosis* (1567), STC 18956

Gosson, Stephen, *The schoole of abuse* (1579), STC 12097.5

— *Playes confuted in fiue actions* (1582), STC 12095

Greene, Robert, *A notable discouery of coosenage* (1591), STC 12280

— *The second part of conny-catching* (1591), STC 12281

—   *The blacke bookes messenger* (1592), STC 12223

—   *A disputation betweene a hee conny-catcher and a shee conny-catcher* (1592), STC 12234

—   *The third and last part of connycatching* (1592) STC 12283.5

Harman, Thomas, *A caueat for commen cursetors, vvlgarly called vagabones* (1567), STC 12787

—   *The groundworke of conny-catching* (1592), STC 12789.5

Hasleton, Richard, *A discourse of the miserable captiutie of an Englishman, named Richard Hasleton* (1595), STC 12924.5

—   *Strange and wonderfull things. Happened to Richard Hasleton* (1595), STC 12925

Heasse, Robert, *A chrystian exhortation* (1566), STC 13017

Holinshed, Raphael and others, *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), STC 135689

Jewel, John, *Certain sermons or homilies appointed to be read in churches. Book 2* (1563), STC 13666

Lant, Thomas, *Sequitur celebritas & pompa funeris quemadmodu[m] a Clarencio Armorum et insignium rege instituta es* (1588), STC 15224

Middleton, Thomas, *The ghost of Lucrece* (1600), STC 17885.5

Peele, James, *The pathe waye to perfectnes in th'accomptes of debitour and creditour* (1569), STC 19548

Sidney, Philip, *The defence of poesie* (1595), STC 22535

—   *An apologie for poetrie* (1595), STC 22534

Sterrie, D., *A briefe sonet declaring the lamentation of Beckles* (1586), STC 23259

Stow, John, *The annals of England* (1592), STC 23334

—   *A summarie of the chronicles of England* (1590), STC 23325.2 and (1598), STC 23328.5

Stubbes, Phillip, *The anatomie of abuses* (1583), STC 23377

—   *The second part of the anatomie of abuses* (1583), STC 23380

Material Produced After 1650

[5] **Modern Play Editions**

Anon., *A Warning for Fair Women* ed. by Charles Dale Cannon (The Hague and Paris: Mouton, 1975)

—   *Arden of Faversham*, ed. by Martin White (London: A&C Black, 2000)

—   *The Fayre Maide of the Exchange* (ed. by Peter Davidson (London: The Malone Society, 1962)

Beaumont, Francis, *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* ed. by Sheldon P. Zitner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), and in *English Renaissance Drama* ed. by David Bevington et al. (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp.1067-1139

Chapman, George, *An Humorous Day's Mirth*, ed. by Charles Edelman (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010)

Dekker, Thomas, *The Shoemaker's Holiday,* ed. by Jonathan Gil Harris (London: Bloomsbury, 2008)

Heywood, Thomas*, If you know not me you know nobody,* ed. by Susan Doran (London: The Malone Society, 1935)

—   *The Fair Maid of the West, parts I and II,* ed. by Robert K. Turner, Jr (London: Edward Arnold, 1968)

—   *An adaptation of the two parts of Thomas Heywood*'s '*The Fair Maid of the West': a Programme /Text with Commentary,* Royal Shakespeare Company, (London: Methuen, 1986)

—   *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV,* ed. by Richard Rowland (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005)

Haughton, William, *Englishmen for my Money* in *Three Renaissance Usury Plays,* ed. by Lloyd Edward Kermode (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), pp.164-274

Jonson, Ben, *Everyman In His Humour: Quarto Version*, ed. by David Bevington in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol.1 ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.111-227

—   *Everyman Out of His Humour,* ed. by Randall Martin in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol.1 ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.233-428.

— *Bartholomew Fair* ed. by John Creaser in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson,* Vol. IV ed. by David Bevington and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp.253-428.

Marston, John, *The Dutch Courtesan* ed. by David Crane (London: A&C Black, 1997)

Middleton, Thomas, *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* ed. by Linda Woodbridge in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.907-958

— *Michaelmas Term* ed. by Theodore Leinwand, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.334-372

Middleton, Thomas and Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl; or Moll Cutpurse*, ed. by Coppélia Kahn, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed. by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) pp.721-778 and *The Roaring Girl* in *The Roaring Girl and other City Comedies* ed. by James Knowles (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001)

Munday, Anthony and Henry Chettle, *Sir Thomas More* ed. by John Jowitt (London: Arden, 2011)

Shakespeare, William, *The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster*, pp. 55-90; *Love's Labour's Lost*, pp.307-336; *The History of Henry IV*, pp.481-510; *The Book of Sir Thomas More*, pp.813-842; *Measure for Measure*, pp.843-872; *The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice*, pp.873-908; all in *The Oxford Shakespeare, The Complete Works* ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Wilson, Robert, *Three Ladies of London* in *Three Renaissance Usury Plays* ed. by Lloyd Edward Kermode (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2009)

[6] **Modern Editions of Other Early Print Sources**

The Book of Common Prayer: The texts of 1549, 1559, and 1662, ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Braun & Hogenberg, *Civita Orbis Terrarum* on The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library Historic Cities website < http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il> [accessed 6 May 2015].

Erasmus, Desiderius, *Collected Works of Erasmus: Adages III.iv.1 to IV. ii.100,* ed. by John N. Grant, 86 vols (Toronto: Toronto University Press,1974-2010), 6 (2005)

— *De Copia* in *Collected Works of Erasmus: Literary and Educational Writings II,* ed. by C.R. Thompson, 86 vols (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,1974-2010), 24 (1978)

Foxe, John, *The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online* or *TAMO* (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), <http//www.johnfoxe.org> [accessed 9 May 2015]

Henslowe, Philip, *Henslowe's Dairy* ed. by R.A. Foakes, 2ⁿᵈ edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Holinshed, Raphael and others, *'Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), *The Holinshed Project* ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian Archer and others <www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/index.shtml>

Machyn, Henry, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London (1550-1563),* ed. by John Gough Nichols (London: Camden Society, 1848)

More, Thomas *The historie of king Edward the fifth, and king Richard the third unfinished, written by maister Thomas More then one of the under shiriffes of London, about the yeare of our Lord 1513, according to a copie of his owne hand, printed among his other workes' in* Raphael Holinshed and others, *'Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1587), VI, pp. 711-737, on-line at *The Holinshed Project* ed. by Paulina Kewes, Ian Archer and others www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/index.shtml [accessed 12 June 2012]

Norden, John, *London, a guide for cuntrey men in the famous city of London, by the help of which plot they shall be able to know how far it is to any street,* on-line at the British Library Online Gallery <www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/onlineex/crace/a/007000000000001u00033000.html> [accessed 1 October 2012]

Ovid, *The Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary M. Innes (London: Penguin, 1955)

Shakespeare, William, *The Rape of Lucrece*, in *The Oxford Shakespeare, The Complete Works* ed. by Stanley Wells and Gary Taylor, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp.237-256

Sidney, Sir Philip, *The Defence of Poesie,* in *Sir Philip Sidney,* ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Stow, John, *A Survey of London written in the year 1598* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 2005)

Treswell, Ralph, *West-cheap (i.e. Cheapside), London* (1585), BM Crace 1880-11-13-3516 <www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online>

[7] **Other Post-1650 Material**

Agnew, Jean-Christophe, *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theater in Anglo-American Thought, 1550-1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

Aho, James, *Confession and Bookkeeping: The Religious, Moral and Rhetorical Roots of Modern Accounting* (Albany: State University of New York, 2005)

Anderson, Benedict, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* rev'd. edn. (London: Verso, 2006)

Archer, Ian W., *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

— 'Popular Politics in Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Century London' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Social and Cultural History of Early Modern London*, ed. by P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.26-46

— 'The Charity of Early Modern Londoners', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* (Sixth Series), 12, December 2002, 223-244

Atkinson, A.G.B., *St Botolph, Aldgate: The Story of a City Parish* (London: 1898)

Aydelotte, Frank, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (Oxford 1913, reprinted London & New York 1967)

Baker, Philip and Mark Merry, 'The poore lost a good Frend and the parish a good Neighbor' in *London and beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene* ed. by Matthew Davies and James Galloway (London: University of London, 2012)

Bakhtin, Mikhail, 'The Problem of Speech Genres', in *Modern Genre Theory,* ed. by David Duff (Harlow: Pearson, 2000), pp. 82-97

Bartolovich, Crystal, 'London's the Thing: Alienation, the Market, and "Englishmen for My Money"', *The Huntington Library Quarterly,* 71.1 (2008), 137-158

Bayer, Mark, *Theatre, Community and Civic Engagement in Jacobean London* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2012)

Beier, A.L *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (New York & London, Routledge Falmer, 1983)

— *Masterless Men: The Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London: Methuen,1985)

— and Roger Finlay, eds. *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London: Longman, 1986)

— 'On the boundaries of the New and Old Historicism: Thomas Harman and the literature of Roguery', *English Literary Renaissance,* 33 (2003),181–200

Belsey, Catherine, 'Alice Arden's Crime: "Arden of Faversham" (c.1590)' in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York and London: Routledge, 1991)

Ben-Amos, Ilana Krausman, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Bennett, Susan and Mary Polito, *Performing Environments: Site Specificity in Medieval and Early Modern English Drama* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014)

Berger, Thomas L., William C Bradford, and Sidney L. Sondergard, *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama Printed Plays, 1500-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Berlin, Michael 'Reordering rituals: ceremony and the parish 1520-1640' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000) pp.47-66

Berry, Herbert, *The Boar's Head Playhouse* (Washington: Folger Shakespeare Library Press, 1986)

Bevington, David, Lars Engle, Katharine Eisaman Mauss, Eric Rasmussen eds., *English Renaissance Drama* (New York: Norton, 2002)

Blank, Paula, *Shakespeare and the Mismeasure of Renaissance Man* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006)

Boulton, J.P., 'The Limits of Formal Religion: The Administration of Holy Communion in late Elizabethan and early Stuart London', *London Journal*, 10 (1984), 135-54

— *Neighbourhood and Society: a London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Bowsher, Julian, *Shakespeare's London Theatreland*: *Archaeology, History and Drama* (London: Museum of London Archaeology, 2012)

Brooks, E. St John, 'A Pamphlet by Arthur Golding', *Notes and Queries* (1938), 182-184

Brown, Pamela Allen, *Better a Shrew than a Sheep: Women, Drama, and the Culture of Jest in Early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003)

Bruster, Douglas, *Drama and the Market in the Age of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992)

Capp, Bernard, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)

⎯   'Separate domains? Women and Authority in Early Modern England' in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* ed. by Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (Basingstoke: Macmillan,1996), pp.117-145

Carlin, Martha,'Historical gazetteer of London before the Great Fire. St. Botolph Aldgate: Minories, east side; the Abbey of St. Clare; Holy Trinity Minories', ed. by Derek Keene (Unpublished), IHR BL.533/Sbo

Carroll, William C., *Fat King, Lean Beggar: Representations of Poverty in the Age of Shakespeare* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996)

Cerasano, S.P., 'Theater Entrepreneurs and Economics', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama,* ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.380-395

Certeau, Michel de, *The Practice of Everyday Living,* trans. by Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988)

Clark, Peter, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London and New York: Longman, 1983)

Colley, Linda, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2002)

Collinson, Patrick*, The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625*(Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Cook, Ann Jennalie, *The Privileged Playgoers of Shakespeare's London, 1576-1642* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981)

Corrigan, Nora L. 'The merry tanner, the mayor's feast, and the king's mistress: Thomas Heywood's *1 Edward IV* and the ballad tradition.' *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 22 (2009), 27-41

Cressy, David, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)

Cuffel, Alexandra, *Gendering Disgust in Medieval Religious Polemic* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2007)

Cummings, Brian, 'Print, Popularity and the Book of Common Prayer'*, in The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England* ed. by Andy Kesson and Emma Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), pp.135-144

Davies, Matthew, and James Galloway, eds., *London and beyond: Essays in honour of Derek Keene* (London: University of London, 2012)

Davies, Natalie Zemon, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)

Dawson, Anthony B., and Paul Yachnin, *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England: A Collaborative Debate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Daybell, James and Peter Hinds eds., *Material Readings of Early Modern Culture: Texts and Social Practices, 1580-1730* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2010).

Derrida, Jacques, 'The Law of Genre' trans. by Avital Ronell, *Critical Inquiry*, 7.1 (Autumn, 1980), 55-81

Dessen, Alan C. and Leslie Thomson, *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Dietz, Brian ed. *The Port and Trade of Early Elizabethan London: Documents* (London: London Record Society, 1972)

Dillon, Janette, *Theatre, Court and City, 1595-1610: Drama and Social Space in London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

— *The Language of Space in Court Performance, 1400-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Dionne, Craig and Steve Mentz, eds., *Rogues and Early Modern English Culture* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2006)

Dolan, Frances E., 'Gender, Moral Agency, and Dramatic Form in A Warning for Fair Women', *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, 29.2 (1989) 201-218

— 'Marriage and Shakespeare: An Open Question', *Literature Compass* 8/9 (2011), 620–634

Donaldson, Ian, *The Rapes of Lucretia: a Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982)

Duffy, Eamon, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

— *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001)

Eisenstein, Elizabeth L., *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

Elliott, Vivian Brodsky, 'Single Women in the London marriage market: age, status and mobility, 1598-1619', in *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage,* ed. by R. B. Outhwaite (Europa: London, 1981)

Farmer, David Hugh, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints* (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 2011)

Findlay, Allison, *Playing Spaces in Early Women's Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Finlay, Roger, *Population and Metropolis: The Demography of London 1580-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981)

Flather, Amanda, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Boydell & Brewer, 2007)

Fletcher, Anthony 'The Protestant idea of marriage in early modern England' in *Religion, culture and society in early modern Britain : essays in honour of Patrick Collinson*, ed. by Peter Roberts and others (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.161-180

Forbes, Thomas Rogers, *Chronicle from Aldgate: Life and Death in Shakespeare's London* (New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 1971)

Fox, Adam, 'Custom, memory and the Authority of Writing' in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England,* ed. by Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), pp.89-116

French, Katherine L., Gary G. Gibbs and Beat Kümin, eds., *The Parish in English Life* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Fumerton, Patricia, *Unsettled: The Culture Of Mobility And The Working Poor In Early Modern England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)

Genette, Gérard, 'Boundaries of Narrative' trans. by Ann Levonas, *New Literary History*, 8.1(1976),1-13

Gibbons, Brian, *Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston and Middleton* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis Ltd, 1968)

Gibbs, Gary, 'New Duties for the Parish Community in Tudor London' in *The Parish in English Life,* ed. by French, Gibbs and Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Golding, Louis Thorn*, An Elizabethan Puritan: Arthur Golding, the translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses and also of John Calvin's Sermons* (New York, 1937)

Gordon, Andrew *Writing Early Modern London: Memory, Text and Community* (Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2013)

Gowing, Laura, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth –Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003)

— ' "The Freedom of the Streets": women and social space, 1560-1640' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern*

London ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.130-151

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988)

Griffith, Eva, *A Jacobean Company and its Playhouse: The Queen's Servants and the Red Bull* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013)

Griffiths, Paul, Adam Fox and Steve Hindle, eds., *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996)

—   'Politics made visible: order, residence and uniformity in Cheapside, 1600-45' in *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* ed. by Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp.176-196

—   and Mark S.R. Jenner eds., *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000)

—   *Lost Londons: Change, Crime and Control in the Capital City 1550-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

Gurr, Andrew, *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London,* 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

—   *The Shakespeare Company, 1594-1642,* 4th edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

—   *Shakespeare's Opposites: The Admiral's Company 1594-1625* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

—   *The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642,* 4th edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Haigh, Christopher, *The Plain Man's Pathways to Heaven: Kinds of Christianity in Post-Reformation England, 1570-1640* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

—   *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993)

Hailwood, Mark, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014)

Harbage, Alfred, *Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions* [1952] repr., (London: Bloomington: Indiana University, 1970)

Harding, Vanessa 'The Population of London 1550-1770: A Review of the Published Evidence', *The London Journal,* 15.2 (1990), 111-128

— 'Cheapside: Commerce and Commemoration', in *The Places and Spaces of Early Modern London*, *A Special Issue of the Huntington Library Quarterly* ed. by Jean E Howard and Deborah Harkness, 71.1 (2008), 77-96

Harner, James L., ' "The Wofull Lamentation of Mistris Jane Shore": The Popularity of an Elizabethan Ballad', *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America,* 71 (1977),137-149

— 'Jane Shore in Literature, A Checklist', *Notes & Queries*, 4 (1981), 496-507

Harris, Jonathan Gil, *Sick Economies: Drama, Mercantilism, and Disease in Shakespeare's England* (Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003)

Harris, Mark, "'Inky Blots and Rotten Parchment Bonds': London, Charity Briefs and the Guildhall Library", *Historical Research,* 66 (1993), 98-110

Helgerson, Richard, 'Weeping for Jane Shore', *South Atlantic Quarterly*, 98.3 (1999) 451-476

Henke, Robert, *Poverty and Charity in Early Modern Theatre and Performance* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2015)

Hill, Tracey, *Pageantry and Power: A Cultural History of the Early Modern Lord Mayor's Show, 1585-1639* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010)

Hindle, Steve, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000)

Houston, R.A., *Bride Ales and Penny Weddings: Recreations, Reciprocity, and Regions in Britain from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014)

Howard, Jean E., 'An English Lass Amid the Moors: Gender, race, sexuality, and national identity in Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*', in *Women, "Race," and Writing in the Early Modern Period*, ed. by Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker (London: Routledge,1994) pp.101–17

— *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007)

Hubbard, Eleanor, *City Women: Money, Sex and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

Hunt, Arnold, 'The Lord's Supper in Early Modern England', *Past and Present* (1998) 161 (1), 39-83.

Hutton, Ronald, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994)

Ichikawa, Mariko, *The Shakespearian Stage Space* (Cambridge: Cambridge University
        Press, 2013)

Ingram, Martin,' "Scolding Women Cucked or washed": a crisis in gender relations in
        early modern England?' from *Women, Crime and the Courts in Early Modern
        England* ed. by Jenny Kermode and Garthine Walker (London: University
        College London Press, 1994), pp.48-80

—   'Custom, Memory and the Authority of Writing' in Paul Griffiths, Adam
        Fox and Steve Hindle eds. *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern
        England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1996)**.**

Ingram, William, *The Business of Playing: The Beginnings of the Adult Professional
        Theater in Elizabethan London* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992)

Johns, Adrian, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago:
        University of Chicago Press, 1997)

Johnson, Malcolm, *Outside the Gate: St Botolph's and Aldgate 950-1994* (London:
        Stepney Books, 1994)

Jowitt, Claire, *Voyage Drama and Gender Politics, 1589–1642: Real and Imagined
        Worlds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003)

Kermode, Lloyd Edward, ed., *Three Renaissance Usury Plays* (Manchester, Manchester
        University Press, 2009)

Kesson, Andy and Emma Smith eds., *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print
        Popularity in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013)

Korda, Natasha, *Labors Lost: Women's Work and the Early Modern English Stage*
        (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011)

—   'Women in Theater', *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Drama,* ed. by
        Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.456-473

Kirk, R.E.G. and Ernest F.Kirk, eds., *Return of Aliens dwelling in the City and Suburbs
        of London from the Reign of Henry VIII to that of James 1*, V.10.3 (Aberdeen:
        Huguenot Society of London, 1908)

Knutson, Roslyn L. 'Elizabethan Documents, Captivity Narratives and the Market for
        Foreign History Plays', *English Literary Renaissance,* 26.1(1996) 75-110

—   *Playing Companies and Commerce in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge:
        Cambridge University Press, 2001)

—   'Adult Playing Companies, 1593-1603' in *The Oxford Handbook of Early
        Modern Theatre* ed. by Richard Dutton (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
        2011), pp.56- 71

Kümin, Beat and Ann B. Tlusty, eds., *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002)

Lefebvre, Henri 'Space: Social Product and Use Value' in *State, Space, World: Selected Essays,* trans. by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner & Stuart Elden, ed. by Neil Brenner & Stuart Elden (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), pp.185-222

Leggatt, Alexander*, Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press,1973)

Leinwand, Theodore, *Theatre, Finance and Society in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Littleton, Charles, 'Social Interactions of aliens in late Elizabethan London: Evidence from the 1593 return and the French Church Consistory 'actes''', *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of Great Britain & Ireland,* 26.2 (1995),147-159

Lopez, Jeremy, *Theatrical convention and audience response in early modern drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

Low, Jennifer A., and Nova Myhill eds. *Imagining the Audience in Early Modern Drama, 1558-1642* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2011)

MacCulloch, Diarmaid, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd edn. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001)

Mack, Peter, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Manley, Lawrence, *Literature and Culture in Early Modern London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995)

— 'In Great Men's Houses: Playing, Patronage and the Performance of Tudor History' in *Rethinking Historicism from Shakespeare to Milton* ed. by Ann Baynes Coiro and Thomas Fulton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp159-180

Manley, Lawrence and Sally-Beth MacLean*, Lord Strange's Men and Their Plays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014)

Mayol, Pierre, 'The Neighbourhood' in Michel de Certeau, Luce Giard, Pierre Mayol, *The Practice of Everyday Living, Volume 2: Living and Cooking* ed. by Luce Giard, trans.by Timothy J. Tomasik (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998)

McCullough, Peter, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011)

McGurk, John, *The Elizabethan Conquest of Ireland: The 1590s Crisis* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009)

McIntosh, Marjorie Keniston, *Working Women in English Society,1300-1620* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

McKitterick, David, *Print, Manuscript and the Search for Order,1450-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)

McMillin, Scott and Sally-Beth MacLean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)

Mehl, Dieter, Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein, eds., *Plotting Early Modern London: New Essays on Jacobean City Comedy* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

Merritt, J.F., 'Contested Legitimacy and the Ambiguous Rise of Vestries in Early Modern London', *The Historical Journal,* 54.1 (2011), 25-45

Molekamp, Femke, ' "Of the Incomparable Treasures of the Holy Scriptures": The Geneva Bible in the early modern household' in Matthew Dimmock and Andrew Hadfield, eds., *Literature and Popular Culture in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp.121-136

Moretti, Franco, *Atlas of the European Novel 1800-1900* (London: Verso,1999)

Miyazaki, Mariko, 'Misericord Owls and Medieval Anti-Semitism', in *The Mark of the Beast: The medieval Bestiary in Art, Life and Literature,* ed. by Debra Hessig (New York: Garland, 2000)

Mukherji, Subha, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)

Muldrew, Craig, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 1998)

Mullaney, Steven, *The Place of the Stage*: *License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England*, revised edn. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995)

Munro, Lucy, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Nelson, Alan H., *Monstrous Adversary: The Life of Edward de Vere, 17ᵗʰ Earl of Oxford* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003)

Newman, Karen, 'City Talk: Women and Commodification, *Epicoene* (1609)' from *Staging the Renaissance* ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (London: Routledge, 1991), pp.181-195

— *Fashioning Femininity and English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001)

O'Callaghan, Michelle, 'Tavern Societies, the Inns of Court, and the Culture of Conviviality in Early Seventeenth-Century London' in Adam Smyth, ed., *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), pp.37-51

O'Neill, Stephen, *Staging Ireland: Representations in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007)

Orlin, Lena Cowen, *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994)

— ed. *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2000)

— *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007)

— 'Temporary Lives in London Lodgings', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 71.1 (2008), 219-242

Owen, Huw Gareth, 'The Liberty of the Minories: A Study in Elizabethan Religious Radicalism', *East London Papers*, 8 (1965), 81-97

— 'A Nursery of Elizabethan Nonconformity', *Journal Of Ecclesiastical History*, 17 (1966), 65-76

Park, James J., 'Practical Protestantism: Popular Belief in the Parish of St Botolph's Aldgate, London, 1558-1603' (unpublished master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, Canada, 2011)

Paster, Gail Kern, *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Georgia, Athens: University of Georgia Press,1985)

Peck, Linda Levy, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Pennington, David," 'Three Women and a Goose make a Market': Representations of Market Women in Seventeenth-Century Popular Literature", *The Seventeenth Century*, 25.1 (2010), 27-48

Poovey, Mary, *A History of the Modern Fact: Problems of Knowledge in the Sciences of Wealth and Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998)

Postles, Dave, 'Penance and the Marketplace', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* (2003), 441-468

Pound, John F., *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1971)

Pounds, N.J.G., *A History of the English Parish: The Culture of Religion from Augustine to Victoria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004)

Quarmby, Kevin A., *The Disguised Ruler in Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012)

Rappaport, Steve, *Worlds within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989)

Reinke-Williams, Tim, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014)

Richardson, Catherine, 'Tragedy, family and household' in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Tragedy* ed. by Emma Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Rowland, Richard,' "Speaking Some Words but of no Importance"?: Stage Directions, Thomas Heywood and *Edward IV'*, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 18 (2005)

— *Thomas Heywood's Theatre, 1599-1639* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010)

Ryner, Bradley D., *Performing Economic Thought: English Drama and Mercantile Writing, 1600-1642* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014).

Ryrie, Alec, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Salgādo, Gāmini, ed., *Four Jacobean City Comedies* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975)

— *The Elizabethan Underworld* (London: Dent,1977)

Sanders, Julie, *Adaptation and Appropriation* (London: Routledge, 2006)

— *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

Saunders, Ann, ed. *The Royal Exchange* (London: London Topographical Society, 1997)

Schofield, John, *The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell* (London: London Topographical Society, 1987)

— *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995)

— 'Medieval Parish Churches in the City of London: the archaeological evidence' in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, ed. by Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), pp.35-55

Seaver, Paul S., 'Middleton's London', *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* ed.by Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp.59-73

Shapin, Steven, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and science in seventeenth Century England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2004)

Shell, Marc, *The Economy of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978)

— *Money, Language and Thought* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993)

Sherman, William H., *Marking Readers in Renaissance England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008)

Sisson, C. J., *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936)

Slack, Paul, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988)

— *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998)

Smyth, Adam ed., *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004)

— *Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Stallybrass, Peter, 'Reading the Body and the Jacobean Theatre of Consumption: The Revenger's Tragedy (1606)' in *Staging the Renaissance,* ed. by David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (Abingdon: Routledge, 1991)

Steggle, Matthew, *Laughing and Weeping in Early Modern Theatres* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)

Stevenson, Laura Caroline, *Praise and Paradox: Merchants and Craftsmen in Elizabethan Popular Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984)

Stewart, Stanley, *The Enclosed Garden: The Tradition and Image in Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969)

Stock, Angela,' "Something Done in Honour of the City": Ritual, Theatre and Satire in Jacobean Civic Pageantry', pp.125-144; and with Anne-Julia Zwierlein, 'Introduction' to *Plotting Early Modern London: New essays on Jacobean City Comedy* ed. by Dieter Mehl, Angela Stock and Anne-Julia Zwierlein (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)

Stone, Lawrence, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1977)

Strong, Roy, *The Renaissance Garden in England* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1998)

Sullivan, Ceri, *The Rhetoric of Credit* (London, New Jersey and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 2002)

— 'London's Early Modern Creative Industrialists', *Studies in Philology*, 103.3 (2006), 313-328.

Swift, Daniel, *Shakespeare's Common Prayers: The Book of Common Prayer and the Elizabethan Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013)

Tawney, R.H. and Eileen Power, eds., *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England,* 3 vols. (London: Longmans, 1924)

Tennenhouse, Leonard, *Power on Display: The Politics of Shakespeare's Genres* (London: Methuen, 1986)

Thomas, Keith, 'Numeracy in Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 37 (1987),103-132

Thomas, Vivian, *Shakespeare's Political and Economic Language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015)

Thomson, Leslie, ' "As Proper a Woman as Any in Cheap": Women in Shops on the Early Modern Stage', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England,* 16 (2003), 145-161

Tomlin, Rebecca, 'A New Poem by Arthur Golding?', *Notes and Queries*, 59.4 (2012), 501-505

Tomlinson, Edward Murray, *A History of The Minories, London* (London: Smith, Elder & Co, 1907)

Trull, Mary, *Performing Privacy and Gender in Early Modern Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2013)

Vitkus, Daniel J., *Piracy, Slavery & Redemption* (New York & Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2001)

Warner, Marina, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Vintage House, 1983)

Welch, Evelyn, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy 1400-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005)

West, Arthur G.B., *The Church and Parish of St Dunstan in the East* (London: Simpkin Marshall, 1935)

West, William N., 'Talking the Talk: Cant on the Jacobean Stage', *English Literary Renaissance*, 33.2 (2003), 228-251

White, Hayden, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)

White, Paul Whitfeld, 'Interludes, Economics, and the Elizabethan Stage' in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Literature, 1485-1603* ed. by Mike Pincombe and Cathy Shrank (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp.555-570

Whitney, Charles, *Early Responses to Renaissance Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005)

Wiggins, Martin and Catherine Richardson eds., *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) vol.III (2013); vol.IV (2014); vol.V (2015)

Williams, Dorothy Anne, 'London Puritanism: The Parish of St Botolph without Aldgate', *Guildhall Miscellany,* 2 (1960), 24-38

Wood, Andy, *The Politics of Social Conflict: The Peak Country, 1520–1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

Woodbridge, Linda, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance Literature* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001)

— *Money and the Age of Shakespeare: Essays in New Economic Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)

Woodmansee, Martha, *The Author, Art, and the Market: Rereading the History of Aesthetics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Wrightson, Keith, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Hutchinson, 1982)

Zucker, Adam, *The Places of Wit in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

[8] Online Databases and Websites

Ancestry.co.uk <www.ancestry.co.uk>

British History On-Line, Institute of Historical Research <www.british-history.ac.uk>

British Library Online Gallery <www.bl.uk/onlinegallery>

British Museum Collection Database <www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database>

Clergy of the Church of England Database <www.theclergydatabase.org.uk>

Database of Early English Playbooks <www.deep.sas.upenn.edu>

English Broadside Ballad Archive <www.ebba.english.ucsb.edu>

English Short Title Catalogue <www.estc.bl.uk>

Google Maps <www.google.co.uk/maps>

Historic Cities, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the Jewish National and University Library < www.historic-cities.huji.ac.il>

Lexicons of Early Modern English <www.leme.library.utoronto.ca>

Magdalene College Website <www.magd.cam.ac.uk/high-finance-and-low-cunning>

National Archives Currency Converter<www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency/results>

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography <www.oxforddnb.com>

Oxford English Dictionary <www.oed.com>

Professor Mark Turner Homepage<www.cognitivescience.case.edu/faculty/mark-turner/Mark Turner>

ReScript Project <www.rescript.org> [decommissioned December 2014]

Tate Gallery Images Database <www.tate-images.com>

The Holinshed Project <www.cems.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/index.shtml>

The Unabridged Acts and Monuments Online or *TAMO* (Sheffield: HRI Online Publications, 2011), <www.johnfoxe.org>

Warburg Institute <www.warburg.sas.ac.uk>